

2025/2026

A guide to implementing and funding Advanced Practice



Advancing Practice across the North West



Foreword



This North West guidance is to support organisations in the region to develop advanced practice across services and to help grow the advanced practice workforce of the future.

Our investment is aligned with NHS England Workforce, Training and Education Business Plan, NHS People Plan (2020) and NHS Long Term Workforce Plan (2023) to ensure that across the region, there are the right numbers of staff, with the skills, values and behaviours, available at the right time to deliver quality care to our population.

Our North West multi-professional advanced practitioner workforce continues to grow and our practitioners are making a significant contribution to leading and responding to population health priorities. Our aim is to drive education and training quality to ensure Advanced Practitioners across the North West is responsive to system needs and will deliver the right number of staff, with the right skills, values and behaviours, at the right time and in the right place.

Our focus in the North West region will be:

- Collaboration with our Integrated Care Board (ICB) system partners, providers, advanced practice organisation and training hub leads,
- identify workforce demand with our NW Workforce, Training and Education colleagues; to enable transformation and impact in care pathways, through investment in workforce education and training development for advanced practice
- assuring the quality of advanced practice education and training by commissioning Centre for Advancing Practice accredited programmes, by working closely with our Higher Education Institute partners, and by supporting supervisor preparation to ensure the supervisory needs of advanced practice learners are met in practice.

We want to thank our colleagues and partners who work with us. Our continued shared commitment and collaboration will mean we can make a difference for our region.

This document has been aligned to the Faculty for Advancing Practice across the South East and the South West, and we want to thank them for their continued collaboration.

Annabella Gloster
Regional Lead Advanced Practice, North West Faculty for Advancing Practice

About the North West Faculty for Advancing Practice

The North West Faculty for Advancing Practice was established during the latter part of 2020 to drive pioneering workforce transformation for advanced practice at a regional level, recognising the impact that advanced practitioners can have on workforce transformation, providing highly skilled care that can drive service redesign, enhance patient care, and improve outcomes.



North west

1. Lancashire and South Cumbria
2. Greater Manchester
3. Cheshire and Merseyside

Vision

A future where advanced practitioners are integral to the design and delivery of every care pathway and system where they can make a positive contribution to transforming services and improving patient care

Purpose

- To provide system-level leadership for advanced practice workforce development
- To grow and support the development of a multi-professional workforce by funding and assuring high quality education and training
- Support effective advanced practice workforce planning in the short and longer term, at system, regional and national levels, through timely access to accurate advanced practice workforce supply and demand data and intelligence
- Commission high quality education and training in partnership with HEIs and other partners contributing to national targets
- Optimise workplace training, supervision and assessment
- Availability of accurate data and activity monitoring of regional advanced practice activity
- Ensure quality of practice learning is fully understood and assurance of all commissioned programmes, supporting accreditation by the Centre for Advancing Practice

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Annual Funding Timeline

Milestone	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25	Feb-25	Mar-25	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26
NHSE NW Faculty for Advancing Practice launch funding															
Funding application closes															
Funding application request being reviewed - Queries sent to organisations															
Offer letter sent from original applications															
Late submission launch - This will be targeted at speciality areas															
Deadline for organisations to accept / decline offer from original applications															
Organisations recruitment process in place															
Late submission funding application closes															
Offer letter sent for late submission															
Request for trainee information (Autumn intake)															
Deadline for trainee information to be submitted (Autumn intake)															
Waiting list launch this will be targeted for priority areas that have not yet submitted)															
Welcome email including trainee data collection form (Autumn trainees)															
Waiting list deadline															
Offer letter sent waiting list															
Request for trainee information (Spring intake)															
Deadline for accept / decline offer (waiting list)															
Deadline for trainee information (Spring intake)															
Welcome email including trainee data collection form (Spring trainees)															

Section 1 Advanced Practitioners in the Workforce

What is an Advanced Practitioner?

The Faculty for Advancing Practice in the region will support the provision of advanced practice education and workforce development which is consistent with the national definition of advanced contained in the [Multi professional framework for Advancing Clinical Practice in England](#):

“Advanced Practice (AP) is delivered by experienced, registered health care practitioners. It is a level of practice characterised by a high degree of autonomy and complex decision making. This is underpinned by a master’s level award or equivalent that encompasses the four pillars of clinical practice, leadership and management, education and research, with demonstration of core capabilities and area specific clinical competence.

Advanced Practice (AP) embodies the ability to manage clinical care in partnership with individuals, families and carers. It includes the analysis and synthesis of complex problems across a range of settings, enabling innovative solutions to enhance people’s experience and improved outcomes.”

All health and care professionals working at the level of an Advanced Practitioner should ensure that their knowledge and skills meet the standards outlined within the Framework.

The four pillars that underpin practice are:

- Clinical Practice
- Leadership and Management
- Education
- Research

The Faculty for Advancing Practice across the South East have used these short animation videos to demonstrate the pillars – [link](#).

How do I know if I need an advanced practitioner role in my service?

For successful delivery of high-quality services that are focused on meeting the person or population need, it is important that a structured workforce modelling and planning process is used to identify where advanced practice will have the greatest impact in a person's journey through health and care pathways, and the types of roles that may exist or need to be developed.

Many workforce planning and modelling tools exist which will support understanding of the needs of the population and how to build a workforce to meet those needs.

How do I develop an advanced practitioner role?

The Advanced Practice (AP) Lead in the organisation should be aware of staff currently working in advanced practice roles and provide advice of how they may transform services. In order to establish advanced clinical practice (ACP) roles, a business case will be required for this investment considering the population and system need. Job descriptions should be mapped to the [ACP Multi-Professional Framework](#) and job plans should support the four pillars of advanced practice.

Section 2 Commitments required for ACP Training

What commitment is expected of a trainee ACP while studying?

Trainees are required to attend university teaching days and undertake work-based place learning and assessment of identified competencies. It is expected that each trainee will dedicate many hours to independent study to successfully complete the masters programme.

What commitment does the trainee require from the employer?

Employers are expected to support the trainee(s) to meet the requirements of the MSc ACP programme as per HEI (Higher Education Institute) requirements. The employer will provide the trainee with sufficient time for attending taught sessions at the HEI, time to meet their supervisor regularly and time for work-based learning each week. The HEI programme lead will provide information on the total amount of study days required. It is important that ACP trainees have sufficient work-based learning time to develop their advanced skills.

How many hours does the trainee need to be employed for?

Trainees will be contracted to work a minimum number of 30 hours in order to meet the requirements of the programme and to meet apprenticeship requirements.

What supervision is required?

Trainees require a supervisor in practice who will oversee and coordinate their work-based learning which will require time to meet with them regularly to plan their individual educational needs and monitor their progress.

Good supervision is a key factor for successful completion of training and trainees who are not well supervised can struggle and withdraw from the programme. Each trainee ACP requires a named supervisor who has completed training in multi-professional supervision and is familiar with the requirements of advanced clinical practice. Supervisors must be willing and have protected time (in their job plan) to support the trainee. Trainees will need time to meet their supervisor regularly to plan their individual educational needs and monitor their progress. The requirements of supervisors are explained in more detail in the [Workplace Supervision for Advanced Clinical Practice](#) document, and [NHS England supervision resources](#).

Section 3 NHSE funding

NHSE North West (NW) Faculty for Advancing Practice support the development of Advancing Practice roles for workforce transformation by funding educational routes allocated to employers to address their population/service need. Funding for the MSc Advanced Clinical Practice is **not available** for individual/s' continual professional development.

What are the conditions of receiving funding?

Substantive funding arrangements must be in place to ensure that an appropriate Advanced Practice post will be available with the employer once the trainees have successfully completed their training.

What is the NW offer for Autumn 25 - Spring 26?

NHSE is supporting the development of Advanced Practitioner roles in 25/26 with our preferred funding method being the apprenticeship pathway;

1. **ACP Apprenticeship – Funding** for an Advanced Clinical Practice Integrated Degree Apprenticeship programme that has a typical length of 36 months **is paid via the apprenticeship levy**¹. NHSE will pay the employer an education training grant to support the training as detailed in the table below.

With exceptions, the faculty will consider the following funding options;

2. **ACP MSc – Funding for tuition fees** for a period of up to three years for an Advanced Clinical Practice MSc. NHSE will pay the full tuition costs plus an education training grant. The education grant is £30,000 in total, per individual paid directly to the employer. £2,600 of the education grant must be made available at service level to directly support the supervision of the trainee per year.
3. **ACP Top Up Modules** – for those requiring up to three modules with completion of the MSc Advanced Clinical Practice within the academic year or alignment with the HEI programme pathway. NHSE will only fund the tuition costs directly to the HEI. If more than three modules are required to complete the MSc Advanced Clinical Practice the request should be for funding of a full MSc programme. If the learner has prior L7 credits such as Non-Medical prescribing (NMP), the learner should discuss Accredited Prior Learning with their chosen Education Provider, with the potential of reducing the length of a full programme.

¹ **Levy paying employer** - you will only hold a levy if you have a payroll of more than £3 million. You need to contact your apprentice lead and ask them about the process that needs to be followed.

Non-Levy paying organisations - If your organisation/practice does not hold an apprenticeship levy (you will only hold a levy if you have a payroll of more than £3 million). You will need to process a levy transfer or reservation of funds co-investment.

4. **ACP Credential** – There are a number of NHSE endorsed specialty [credentials](#) in development that meet workforce development needs in high-priority areas. NHSE will consider funding a credential as an addition to the ACP MSc to meet the specialised training needs of your workforce as these become available.

Appropriate exceptions for other funding routes are:

- specialist training pathways which may not be offered via an apprenticeship route
- for non-levy paying organisations where levy transfer or reserve government co-investment has not been possible.
- If the recruited trainee is not suitable for the apprenticeship pathway.

What is the Education Training Grant?

The educational training grant is to ensure there is infrastructure around the trainee which enables their supported learning in practice. Examples include to:

- enable regular clinical supervision between trainee and supervisor
- develop robust governance structures for the training, supervision, and development of advanced practitioner's posts
- develop in-house educational resources to support advanced practitioners' development
- enable trainees to attend and present at local/national conferences
- provide sufficient study leave to attend university taught sessions and protected time for work-based learning per week
- Trainees have a minimum of one hour supervision per week by an appropriately trained supervisor and a minimum of £2,600 per year of the educational training grant used to support the funding for supervisory support.

Course Pathway	Tuition fees	Education Training Grant	HEI preference
Apprenticeship Pathway (Default route)	Paid by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The employer's apprenticeship levy Government co-investment (95%) and NHSE (5%) Via a Levy transfer More details available in section 4	A total of £30K <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly amount calculated pro rata according to programme duration NHS Trusts are paid via the Education Contract Schedule Non NHS Trust are paid through invoicing NHSE more details in Section 7 NB: £2,600 is used per year from the educational training grant for supervisory support 	Must be on the preferred supplier list Section 6
Fees Paid Pathway (Exceptions only)	Paid by NHSE directly to the Education Provider		
Specialist one year programmes	Paid by NHSE directly to the Education Provider	A total of £15k <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly amount calculated pro rata according to programme duration Paid via the Education Contract Schedule or invoicing NHS Trusts are paid via the Education Contract Schedule Non NHS Trust are paid through invoicing NHSE more details in Section 7 NB: £2,600 is used per year from the educational training grant for supervisory support 	
Modular Top Up Pathway	Paid by NHSE directly to the Education Provider. More details available below the table	No educational training grant contribution	
Credentials	To be determined per credential	To be determined per credential	Supplier list to be determined by the centre for advancing practice Credentials

Section 4 Additional Information for Apprenticeship Programmes

What are the different ways to fund the apprenticeship pathway?

There are three ways to access funding to pay for apprenticeship training fees and assessment (this funding does not cover salary costs – employers must fund the apprentice's salary):

- **Apprenticeship Levy.** Employers with a pay bill over £3 million each year, pay the apprenticeship levy. Levy paying employers can spend their apprenticeship levy funding on apprenticeship training. You can contact your apprenticeship lead.
- **Levy Transfers.** Levy paying employers can transfer some of their annual levy to other employers. These transfers cover 100% of the training costs of the apprenticeship (you still need to cover salary).
- **Reserve government co-investment.** If you don't pay the apprenticeship levy you can reserve funding, where the government pays 95% of the training costs and the employer pays the remaining 5%. NHSE will fund the 5% employer cost (training cost £600) if a reserve government co-investment is used. This is a one-off cost and will be paid to the employer with the payment that covers the end of the first year of training. It is the organisation's responsibility to agree the payment schedule of the 5% to the HEI and then make the necessary payments.

What steps are needed if a Levy Transfers or Reservation of Funds co-investment is required

- You must contact the North West Widening Participation Team at the earliest opportunity on levytransfer.nw@NHSE.nhs.uk
- Levy transfers **are not guaranteed** and **cannot be implemented retrospectively** – they must be in place before the person begins their apprenticeship.
- You can apply to the chosen Higher Education Institute for the apprenticeship, but you **must not** complete the HEI registration process until you have received confirmation that a levy transfer is in place.

What are the employers' responsibilities for the apprenticeship route?

There are various apprenticeship rules that must be adhered to by the employer and the apprenticeship training provider. These include:

- The apprentice must be employed with you.
- The apprentice must be able to complete the apprenticeship within the time they have available.
- Apprentices should not be asked to contribute financially to the cost of training, on programme or end-point assessment (this includes where the individual has completed the programme successfully or left the programme early).
- Apprentices must not use a student loan to pay for their apprenticeship.
- Apprentices must spend at least 50% of their working hours in England over the duration of the apprenticeship.
- Apprentices must have the right to work in England and have an eligible residency status.

- The job the apprentice is doing must have a productive purpose and should provide the apprentice with the opportunity to embed and consolidate the knowledge, skills and behaviours gained through the apprenticeship.
- As an employer you must allow the apprentice time to complete their programme of study and allow them access to opportunities to enable them to develop through their job role.
- As an employer you must ensure the apprentice has a suitable contract that covers the duration of their apprenticeship (including end point assessment).
- The cost of the apprentice's wages must be met by the employer.
- Apprentices must complete their apprenticeship (including any training) during paid working hours.
- Apprentices must spend at least 20% of their working hours doing OTJ training.
- The apprentice must work enough hours each week so that they can undertake sufficient regular training and on -the-job activity - this is to ensure the apprentice is likely to successfully complete their apprenticeship.
- The apprentice must have appropriate support and supervision on the job, by the employer, to carry out their job role and their apprenticeship.
- Further information about employer and apprenticeship training provider responsibilities can be found on the Government Website: [ESFA Funding Rules](#).
- Further information about apprenticeships can be found at the [HASO Website](#).

Section 5 NHSE funding request process

Below is the table of key dates of the annual funding request application process:

Stage	Launch date	Closing date for submission	Funding offers	Applications to Higher Education Institutions	Trainee and Supervisor names provided
Funding request	Mid November 2024	12 February 2025	Early April 2025	Cohort September 2025 April 2025 – End of June 2025	Cohort September 2025 August 2025
Late Submissions (by invitation only to align to identified priority areas)	Mid-late April 2025	28 May 2025	mid June 2025		
Waiting list for Spring 2026 (Dependent on available allocation)	Early September 2025	1 October 2025	Mid-late October 2025	Cohort January and March 2025 April 2024 – October 2024	Cohort January and March 2026 December 2025

Please note that the late submission and waiting list is not guaranteed if all funding has been allocated.

Prior to submission you need to ensure the following is in place:

- There has been an identified service/local population need for the development of an Advanced Practitioner
- The role on qualification, links directly to the key principles in NHS England [Multi-professional framework for advanced clinical practice in England \(2017\)](#)
- a business case or equivalent has been approved for the funding of a substantive Advanced Practice Level role on qualification
- a positive learning environment with a named identified supervisor and agreed supervision plan (providing at least one hour supervision per week),
- The employer has an identified lead for Advanced Clinical Practice or an accountable person for the workforce

NHSE North West Faculty for Advancing Practice can guide your organisation in embedding the appropriate governance required to receive NHSE funding for ACP MSc programme for further information please contact england.acp.nw@nhs.net

Where do I go to submit my funding request:

Primary Care (not including NHS Trusts), Private and Charity

- please access all our information and application form on [our webpage](#)

Primary Care services can contact their local Primary Care Training Hub. You can access their websites below:

- [Cheshire and Merseyside Training Hub](#)
- [Greater Manchester Training Hub](#)
- [Lancashire and South Cumbria Training Hub](#)

NHS Trusts

- please contact your AP Lead. If you are unaware of who this is please contact us england.acp.nw@nhs.net

Section 6 Higher Education Institutes (HEI) and their application process

What HEIs can individuals study at

NHSE funds Centre for Advancing Practice accredited ACP MSc programmes and those working towards accreditation. A full list of those accredited can be found [here](#). NHSE are currently going through a procurement exercise which in 2024-2025 will result in a definitive framework of Universities with whom we can commission education programmes.

If the employer/service is offered NHSE funding what are the next steps:

NHSE will provide you the next steps within the funding offer. This will include steps of contacting the Programme Lead of the HEI to agree tri-partite recruitment. The HEI will advise of their admissions process requirements.

NHSE preferred supplier list

The information provided below is as accurate as when written but may change due to the procurement exercise:

HEI	Pathway Apprenticeship/ Fees Funded	ACP Course Programme Title and link to course	Autumn or Spring	Cohort Start date	Cohort Duration (months)
Edge Hill University	Apprenticeship & Fees Funded	MSc Advanced Clinical Practice	Autumn	Sep 25	36
Liverpool John Moores University	Apprenticeship	MSc Advanced clinical practice-apprenticeship	Autumn	Sep 25	24
	Fees Funded	MSc Advanced Clinical Practice			
Manchester Metropolitan University	Apprenticeship	MSc Advanced Clinical Practitioner	Autumn & Spring	Sep 25 Jan 26	24 36
University of Bolton	Apprenticeship & Fees Funded	MSc Advanced Clinical Practice Pathways in: (Acute)	Autumn & Spring	Sep 25 Jan 26	24

HEI	Pathway Apprenticeship/ Fees Funded	ACP Course Programme Title and link to course	Autumn or Spring	Cohort Start date	Cohort Duration (months)
		(Geriatric) (Mental Health) (Oncology) (Primary Care) (Respiratory)			
University of Central Lancashire	Apprenticeship & Fees Funded	<u>MSc Advanced Clinical Practitioner</u>	Autumn & Spring	Sep 25 Jan 26	24
University of Chester	Apprenticeship Fees Funded	Advanced Clinical Practice apprenticeship <u>Advanced Clinical Practice MSc</u>	Autumn & Spring	Sep 25 March 26	36 36
University of Cumbria	Apprenticeship Fees Funded	Advanced Clinical Practitioner Apprenticeship <u>MSc Advanced Clinical Practice</u>	Autumn & Spring Autumn & Spring	Sep 25 March 26 Sep 25 March 26	36 36
University of Manchester	Fees Funded	<u>Advanced Clinical Practice (Paediatrics) MSc</u>	Autumn	Sep 25	36

HEI	Pathway Apprenticeship/ Fees Funded	ACP Course Programme Title and link to course	Autumn or Spring	Cohort Start date	Cohort Duration (months)
University of Salford	Apprenticeship	<u>Advanced Clinical Practitioner degree apprenticeship Pathways in (Mental Health) (Critical Care) – ACCP (FICM accredited) (Primary Care)</u>	Autumn	Sep 25	24 plus end point assessment
	Fees Funded	<u>MSc Advanced Clinical Practice Pathways in (Mental Health) (Critical Care) (Primary Care)</u>	Autumn	Sep 25	24
		<u>MSc Advanced Practice (Neonates)</u>	Spring	Jan 26	12

Specialist

HEI	Pathway Apprenticeship/ Fees Funded	ACP Course Programme Title	Autumn or Spring	Cohort Start date	Cohort Duration (months)
Sheffield Hallam University	Fees Funded	<u>MSc Advanced Clinical Practice (Radiotherapy and Oncology)</u>	Autumn & Spring	Sep 25 Jan 26	36
University of Bradford	Fees Funded	<u>MSc in Advanced Clinical Practice (Radiography)</u>	Autumn & Spring	Sep 25 Jan 26	36
University of Huddersfield	Apprenticeship	<u>Master of Podiatric Surgery (Advanced Clinical Practice Apprenticeship)</u>	Autumn	Sep 25	36
University of Sheffield	Fees Funded	<u>Ophthalmology Advanced Clinical Practice (Paediatrics)</u>	Autumn	Sep 25	36

Modular Top Up – North West

HEI	Pathway	ACP Course Programme Title	Cohort Start date (DD/MM/YY)
Edge Hill University	Modular	Advanced Clinical Practice	Earliest Start Date Autumn 2025
UCLan	Modular	Advanced Clinical Practice	Earliest Start Date Autumn 2025
University of Bolton	Modular	Advanced Clinical Practice	Earliest Start Date Autumn 2025
University of Chester	Modular	Advanced Clinical Practice	Earliest Start Date Autumn 2025
University of Cumbria	Modular	Advanced Clinical Practice	Earliest Start Date Autumn 2025

How NHSE education training grant will be paid

NHSE pay in **arrears** and is based on a validation process to confirm the individual has enrolled onto the programme and has been training. Payment is completed differently depending on the employer

- NHS Trusts – this will be paid directly to the Trust from NHSE through the education funding agreement with the agreed yearly finance schedule. Please contact your Advanced Practice Lead to understand how this is transferred to your service budget.
- Non NHS Trust – the organisation will be contacted directly with an invite to invoice. The total education training grant will be split by the programme duration (in months) and will be paid for the number of months linked to each payment schedule below:

Earliest Payment Dates	The months the payment aligns to:	For example, total number of months that will be paid for September 25 start
Mid February 2026	August - October 2025	2 months (due to commencement being September 24)
Mid July 2026	November 2025 - February 2026	4 months
Mid November 2026	March – July 2026	5 months

Note - This timeline is the same each academic year until the completion of the programme.

NHS England
Version 1 – November 2023

Please use england.acp.nw@nhs.net
For all enquiries relating to advanced practice