

Advanced Practice Programme Handbook 2026/27

NHS England, London

This information is for Advanced Practitioner trainees, Supervisors, Advanced Practice Leads, Consultant Practitioners, and anyone interested in implementing Advanced Practice in their organisation.

The following is a set of frequently asked questions and answers to assist employers in London to put forward their expressions of interest for Advanced Practice funding in 2026/27.

If you have other questions not included in this document and need an answer prior to applying, please contact England.acpenquirieslondon@nhs.net

Contents

Section 1 - Advanced Practitioners and Trainees	5
Q1. What is an Advanced Practitioner?	5
Q2. Is an Advanced Practitioner a specialist practitioner?	5
Q3. What is a trainee Advanced Practitioner?	5
Q4. What learning can a trainee Advanced Practitioner expect to receive?	5
Q5. What commitment is expected of the trainee Advanced Practitioner whilst studying?	5
Q6. How much time will the trainee Advanced Practitioner be away from their job studying?	6
Q7. I understand Advanced Practice training can include a Non-Medical Prescribing (NMP) element, what happens if I already have it, or I don't need it?	6
Q8. What supervision is required?	6
Section 2 – NHSE Funding and Support	7
Q9. What is NHSE London's Advanced Practice funding offer in 2026/27?	7
Q10. Is there funding available to support apprenticeship programmes following the change to Apprenticeship Levy use for Level 7 apprenticeships?	8
Q11. What is the training grant?	9
Q12. What criteria do employers need to meet to be eligible for the Advanced Practice funding offer?	9
Q13. How should the training grant be utilised?	10
Q14. How is the training grant calculated for part time staff?	11
Q15. Can a trainee fund their own Advanced practice programme?	11
Q16. What are the minimum hours trainees Advanced Practitioners should be employed?	11
Q17. Which organisations can apply for funding and what preparation is needed to support advanced practice trainees?	12
Q18. Is this funding for new or existing employees and does NHSE have a preference?	12
Q19. What about continuing Advanced Practitioner trainees?	12
Section 3 – HEI's and Student Support	13
Q20. At which HEIs in the London region can individuals study?	13
Q21. Which Advanced Practice academic programmes will the London AP Faculty support?	13
Q22. What support can trainee Advanced Practitioners expect during their study?	13
Q23. What happens if the employee discontinues their Advanced Practice programme before it is completed?	13
Q24. What happens if the trainee Advanced Practitioner leaves the employer that NHSE is currently funding, for another employer?	14
Q25. What should trainees do if they fail an NHS England funded module?	14
Q26. What should trainees do if they need to interrupt studies?	14
Section 4 – NHSE Funding Application Process	15

Q27. How do I submit an expression of interest?.....	15
Q28. Who should complete the application?	15
Q29. What happens after the organisation has submitted an application?	15
Q30. What if I am successful in obtaining funding but then unable to employ the trainee Advanced Practitioner in time?.....	15
Q31. Do Advanced Practice students from abroad working in the NHS doing an MSc pay home (tuition) fees?	15
Appendix 1 – NHSE Advancing Practice Faculty Contact List	16
Appendix 2 – NHSE Advancing Practice Faculty Commissioning Process	17

Section 1 - Advanced Practitioners and Trainees

Q1. What is an Advanced Practitioner?

Answer: Advanced Practice 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 an academic level 7 master's award or equivalent that encompasses the four pillars of clinical practice, leadership and management, education, and research, with demonstration of area specific clinical competence. Advanced Practitioners come from a range of professional backgrounds such as Nursing, Midwifery, Pharmacy, and the Allied Health Professions. The [Multi-Professional Advanced Clinical Practice Framework](#) provides a clear and consistent approach to the development of advanced practice across England.

Q2. Is an Advanced Practitioner a specialist practitioner?

Answer: No, Advanced Practice is quite different from specialist practice. Specialists are experts in their chosen clinical area, for example in diabetes or asthma care and have a **depth** of competencies in that specific area. Advanced Practitioners have a **breadth** of competencies and capabilities that extend across the four pillars of advanced practice (clinical practice, leadership & management, education, research). It should however be noted that Advanced Practitioners may work in either generalist or specialist areas of practice, and the two roles are therefore not mutually exclusive.

Q3. What is a trainee Advanced Practitioner?

Answer: A trainee Advanced Practitioner is an experienced healthcare professional employed in a funded training post specifically to undertake the required training to work at the level of Advanced Practice. The training comprises study at master's level (academic level 7) and work-based learning to develop competence across all four pillars of the AP Multi-professional Framework.

Q4. What learning can a trainee Advanced Practitioner expect to receive?

Answer: The timetables and study time required will vary according to the training route and the specific Higher Education Institution (HEI), but all trainees will need periods of study leave to attend university and will be required to produce course work, write essays, undertake work-based assessments, and produce a portfolio of evidence. Trainees may also benefit from rotations or placements in other areas to gain the required breadth of experience.

Q5. What commitment is expected of the trainee Advanced Practitioner whilst studying?

Answer: Trainees are required to attend university teaching days, practise clinical skills in their workplace and complete workplace-based assessments of competencies. They will also 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 [HEE ACP Toolkit](#) and the [NHSE Minimum Standards for Supervision](#) guidance. It is expected that each trainee will dedicate many hours to independent study to become successful in achieving the qualification. The notional number of hours of study and teaching expected is approximately 100 hours per 10 academic credits (which includes both contact hours and independent study hours) however, the actual time spent may be

more, or less, dependent on individual learners. It is therefore important for Advanced Practitioner trainees to have sufficient work-based learning time to develop their advanced skills.

Q6. How much time will the trainee Advanced Practitioner be away from their job studying?

Answer: For trainees on academic level 7 Advanced Practice apprenticeship and MSc programmes, generally, 80% of an apprentice's/trainee's time will be training in the workplace with 20% at the HEI. Employers are expected to provide the trainee with sufficient study leave for university-based modules and protected time for work-based learning each week. The HEI programme lead will provide information on the total amount of study days required. For trainees who are not registered on a full programme and only require top-up modules, the time required for study leave will vary according to individual need.

Q7. I understand Advanced Practice training can include a Non-Medical Prescribing (NMP) element, what happens if I already have it, or I don't need it?

Answer: If a student already has the NMP qualification or doesn't need it the training provider is likely to provide a choice of module(s) that the student can undertake instead and agree this with their employer. NMP qualification is not an essential requirement for an Advanced Practitioner, but the Advanced Practitioner job description may dictate that NMP is necessary in a particular role.

Q8. What supervision is required?

Answer: Good workplace-based supervision is a key factor for successful completion of Advanced Practitioner training. Trainees who are not well supervised can struggle and some have failed to complete their programmes. Each trainee Advanced Practitioner requires a named workplace co-ordinating educational supervisor (with possible associate supervisors depending on trainee need) who can undertake multi-professional supervision and is familiar with the learning requirements of advanced practice. Supervisors must have protected time in their job plan to support the trainee. The expectation is that Advanced Practice trainees will have supervision over the course of their training adhering to the principles of the [HEE Quality Framework](#), [Multi-Professional Advanced Clinical Practice Framework](#) and [Minimum standards for supervision](#) for all learners. National guidelines on Advanced Practice supervision were published in 2020 and can be accessed here: [National Guidance](#)

Section 2 – NHSE Funding and Support

Q9. What is NHSE London's Advanced Practice funding offer in 2026/27?

Answer: NHSE is supporting the development of Advanced Practitioner roles in 26/27 by offering a package of funding that must be used to support trainees. There are three Advanced Practice training pathways and employers are invited to put forward requests for funding under the training pathways outlined below. There is the intention, subject to budget signoff, to provide funding as detailed below:

- **Advanced Practice MSc Qualification:** Funding for tuition fees for a period of up to three years for an Advanced Practice programme. NHSE will pay the full tuition costs directly to the HEI. In addition, NHSE offer a training grant of £2,627 per annum, per individual paid to the employing organisation or NHS host. The purpose of the grant is to support Advanced Practitioners with workplace-based supervision and assessment. (Please see section on training grant for examples of how the grant can be used)
- **Advanced Practice Apprenticeship:** For organisations accessing apprenticeship pathways for their AP trainees, NHSE's contribution to workplace supervision is £6,304 per annum. This is available for each new and continuing student undertaking a programme of study in the 2026/27 academic year and will be paid to employers after the named individual student has enrolled. **Please note that government funding of tuition fees of Level 7 apprenticeships changed on 1st January 2026.** See Q10 for details of funding for the apprenticeship pathway in 2026/27.
- **Advanced Practice Top-Up Modules:** Only top-up module requests for conversion of NHSE-funded Post Graduate Diplomas (PGDip) to the full MSc will be funded by NHSE London. Any requests for stand-alone modules that could complete an established Advanced Practitioner mapping of capabilities against the domains of the Multi-Professional Framework for Advanced Clinical Practice would be directed to the national e-Portfolio (Supported) Route process to receive recognition by the Centre of Advancing Practice. All e-portfolio (Supported) routes requests must be discussed with the Employer named Advanced Practice Lead. For more information on the e-Portfolio (Supported) Route, please see the website: [ePortfolio \(supported\) Route - Advanced Practice](#)

The requests for funded training places will be prioritised where the following conditions are met in the following order. With each subsequent level of prioritisation only supported where budgetary capacity can support demand:

Priority	Description
1	Places on Centre-accredited Advanced Practice programmes (Standard or apprenticeship MSc, generic or specialty pathways)
2	Top-Up modules required to convert a NHSE-funded Advanced Practice PGDip to a full MSc on a Centre-accredited programme

3	Places on speciality Advanced Practice programmes that have not yet achieved Centre accreditation but are actively engaged in the process. Requests must fulfil a specific organisational or system Advanced Practice workforce development need.
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Overview of 2026/27 funding offer:

Training pathway	Tuition fees	Training grant
Advanced Practice MSc Qualification	Full tuition fees paid to the HEI for a period of up to 3 years practice.	£2,627
Advanced Practice Apprenticeship	L7 apprenticeship mitigation funding paid directly to employers via the Education Funding Agreement (see Q10 for details)	£6,304
Top-up modules required to complete a full AP programme of study:	Tuition fees paid to the HEI for named modules as agreed between NHSE and the employer. Modules must be completed within the academic year and must upskill the individual to fully meet the Multi-Professional Advanced Practice Framework	N/A

Please refer to Q12 for additional details of the criteria employers are expected to meet to be eligible for the Advanced Practice funding offer.

Q10. Is there funding available to support apprenticeship programmes following the change to Apprenticeship Levy use for Level 7 apprenticeships?

From 1 January 2026, Level 7 apprenticeships will only be government-funded for apprentices who, at the start of their apprenticeship training, are either aged 16-21, or aged under 25 and have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan and/or have been, or are, in the care of their local authority. Any individual who started a level 7 apprenticeship before 1 January 2026 will continue to be funded through to completion via levy.

Following the withdrawal of funding for Level 7 apprenticeship programmes by the Department for Education, NHS England has secured alternative funding (referred to as the L7 apprenticeship mitigation fund) that enables employers to directly cover the cost of apprenticeship programmes with HEIs. Please note that this funding does not come from the employer's apprenticeship levy but is part of a mitigation fund secured by NHS England's National Apprenticeship team specifically for five level 7 apprenticeships identified as central to achieving the workforce transformation ambitions of the NHS 10 Year Plan.

This funding is time limited for 2026-27, 2027-28 and 2028-29 cohorts only and there is a finite number of available funded places across England. The current proposed level of funding is £4,000 per year of training, per trainee. Funds are to be utilised to cover tuition fees. This funding remains subject to annual funding approval via the comprehensive spending review.

Organisations whose trainees who will be undertaking apprenticeship accredited advanced practice programmes will have opportunity to register their interest in this mitigation funding through the standard scoping processes of the London Faculty for Advanced Practice. The Faculty's existing eligibility criteria for

funding will apply to all expressions of interest. Further additional eligibility criteria aligning to the 10 Year Plan aspirations may also be applied should demand exceed the available funding.

In addition to tuition funding, the London Faculty for Advancing Practice will continue to provide a training grant **of £6,304 per annum** for each new and continuing student undertaking a programme of study in the 2026/27 academic year. This grant will be paid to the employer after the named individual has enrolled. Choosing the apprenticeship route supports the government's wider goals of **workforce growth, social mobility, and widening participation**, while enabling organisations to build workforce capacity aligned with the **NHS 10 Year Plan**.

Employers should ensure that individuals undertaking the apprenticeship are committed to completing the full programme of study. To view the Apprenticeship Standard for an Advanced Practitioner, click [here](#).

Q11. What is the training grant?

Answer: A £2,627 grant per trainee, per annum, is available for those on a full Advanced practice MSc that is funded by NHSE (£6,304 for those on apprenticeship pathways). This offer is to support organisational costs of supporting an Advanced Practitioner with workplace-based supervision and assessment. This is available for each new and continuing student undertaking a programme of study in the 2026/27 academic year and will be paid to employers after the named individual student has enrolled. A data validation exercise will take place between HEIs and NHSE to confirm enrolled students. Where a student expects their programme to be undertaken for a longer period than three years, the student and employer are advised to contact the faculty to discuss this further, as we cannot guarantee the payment of a training grant for longer than a three-year period.

A lack of support often results either in individuals withdrawing from the programme or seeking alternative employment; employers should consider whether they can fully support individuals before seeking funding for training.

The training grant should be used to support the employer in relation to the associated costs in helping the employee achieve their qualification. A data validation exercise will take place between HEIs and NHSE to confirm enrolled students. Payments will then be made on a pro rata basis, aligning to the financial years spanned by the trainee's academic year of enrolment. The following mechanism of payments will be in place:

- Trusts: The grant will be paid directly to the employer after an individual has enrolled and started the programme, based on the validation exercise.
- Primary Care: ICB Lead Training Hubs will invoice NHSE for the training grant for their local Training Hubs and then reimburse the employing practice for each Advanced Practice trainee.

Q12. What criteria do employers need to meet to be eligible for the Advanced Practice funding offer?

Answer: In accepting the Advanced practice funding offer, employers are required to meet the following expectations:

1. They should be able to articulate *a clear case for the Advanced practice role*, demonstrating that it is an organisational priority in line with their workforce transformation plans and service requirements.
2. They should, wherever possible, be able to articulate how new Advanced Practitioner numbers connect to system level recovery priorities.
3. Should, wherever possible, be able to provide assurance that there will be *an Advanced Practice post on completion of training*. This is necessary to avoid investing in the upskilling of staff who cannot then put their advanced skills into practice.
4. Where assurance of roles on completion cannot be provided, requests from services able to provide evidence of the following will be considered on a case-by-case basis:
 - a) Advanced practice workforce development plans with ICB, executive or senior leadership support,
 - b) Transformation of high priority areas of practice requiring development of advanced practice roles,
 - c) High vacancy rates and agency expenses within existing advanced practice establishment requiring increased career development pipeline.
5. Must *identify an appropriately trained supervisor* who will be able to apply the [Principles of Workplace Supervision](#) and the [Minimum standards for supervision](#)
6. They should ensure that Advanced Practitioner trainees will have supervision over the course of their training adhering to the principles of the [HEE Quality Framework](#), Multi-Professional Advanced Clinical Practice Framework and The [Minimum standards for supervision](#) for all learners. This should include provision of a suitable workplace-based learning environment and opportunities to gain competence across the 4 pillars of advanced practice (clinical practice, leadership/management, research, and education).
7. They must ensure trainees are provided sufficient study leave for university training. It should not be expected that Advanced Practitioner trainees take unpaid or annual leave for dedicated training days.
8. All trainees funded by NHSE are required to complete the [National Education and Training Survey \(NETS\)](#), **London Faculty EDI Survey** and **Student Satisfaction Survey** annually for each year they receive funding for their training.
9. All trainees are required to completed London Faculty internal quality surveys
10. Employers must complete the training grant report form each year and ensure that is returned to NHSE within the timeframe specified.

The training grant must not be used for equipment or capital costs.

Where these expectations are not met, or the annual training grant report form has not been completed, funding may be discontinued and future Advanced Practice funding requests declined.

Q13. How should the training grant be utilised?

Answer: The training grant is intended to support the overarching supervision and workplace-based learning experience of trainees within the organisation. Below are examples of how organisations have successfully utilised the grant in previous years. This list serves as a guide and is not

exhaustive. If you have any innovative ideas for using the grant and are unsure whether they align with NHSE expectations of employers, please contact the faculty to discuss further.

Example Uses:

- Embedding the principles of the Multiprofessional Framework for Advancing Clinical Practice in England within organisational governance
- Identifying and developing both coordinating educational supervisors and workplace supervisors, in line with NHSE guidance and frameworks
- Ensuring supervision of advanced practice trainees is included in both trainees' and supervisors' job plans
- Providing training for supervisors to enhance their skills, in line with [National Guidance](#)
- Accessing external coaching or mentoring services for trainees
- Establishing cross-professional or cross-organisational support networks for trainees of particular areas of specialism
- Strengthening and standardising organisational or system-wide governance, coordination and quality assurance of Advanced Practice workplace-based learning and supervision

Q14. How is the training grant calculated for part time staff?

Answer: All employers receive the same amount of training grant per learner irrespective of whether the student is working full time or part time. This is because both the apprenticeship and MSc programmes generally require the student to work for a minimum of 30 hours per week.

Q15. Can a trainee fund their own Advanced practice programme?

Answer: For most trainees, self-funding a master's level Advanced Practice programme is not recommended for several reasons. Advanced Practice roles can only make the desired impact on patient care when integrated and fully supported by organisations as part of a strategic plan, rather than individuals self-funding their own professional development. Work placed based learning and supervision is an essential and mandated aspect of the Advanced Practice MSc and therefore requires the support of the employer. It should be noted that Advanced Practice is a level of practice and such to practice at this level also requires the agreement and appropriate governance of the employer. . Please contact your Advance Practice Lead in your organisation should you wish to access NHSE funding for your Advance practice training.

Q16. What are the minimum hours trainees Advanced Practitioners should be employed?

Answer: For the apprenticeship programme it is a minimum of 30 hours per week. For the Advanced Practice MSc, this will differ at each University but again, this will generally be a minimum of 30 hours. If the employer is recruiting a new person as a trainee Advanced Practitioner, then it is suggested they are recruited on a minimum contract of 30 hours. For existing employees, if they work less than 30 hours per week, please contact the relevant programme lead at the HEI to discuss their suitability for the programme. Please note that we are happy to support trainees in part time roles and we ask that you discuss these individuals with the faculty so we can support them accordingly.

Q17. Which organisations can apply for funding and what preparation is needed to support advanced practice trainees?

Answer: NHS organisations such as Trusts and GP Practices (via their ICB Lead Training Hub) in the NHSE London region are invited to submit their expressions of interest for Advanced Practice training for new learners. Private, Independent and Voluntary Organisations (PIVO) providing NHS services are also invited to submit their expressions of interest, although these applications will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to ensure there is a mechanism in place for payments to be transferred; please contact the Faculty for advice.

The following should be considered by organisations preparing to employ an advanced practice workforce and support the development of trainee advanced practitioners:

- Trainees on Advanced Practice pathways require regular educational and workplace supervision, opportunities for work-based learning across the 4 pillars of Advanced Practice and adequate study leave throughout their educational programmes.
- Workforce planning is essential to ensure the success of Advanced Practice training and reduce the risks of attrition from academic programmes or workforce.
- NHSE London have developed a [Readiness Checklist](#) and [Primary Care Readiness Checklist](#) to assist employers in considering the infrastructure needed to fully support Advanced Practice trainees.
- It is recommended that the regional readiness checklists are read in conjunction with The Centre for Advancing Practice's [Governance Maturity Matrix](#). This resource aims to support providers to put anticipatory governance arrangements for their advanced practice workforce, keep their effectiveness under review and strengthen governance arrangements to optimise how advanced practice roles contribute to workforce development and deployment, service delivery and improved patient care.

Q18. Is this funding for new or existing employees and does NHSE have a preference?

Answer: The funding offer is for both new and existing NHS staff and NHSE welcome applications for both. However, for employers who are planning on recruiting a new member of staff, it is recommended financial commitment for the recruitment is obtained as soon as possible and with plenty of time prior to the HEI admissions process.

Q19. What about continuing Advanced Practitioner trainees?

Answer: Due to the changes in the commissioning process in 2021/22 academic year, continuing students who were previously funded to PGDip level have been given the option to transfer onto the Advanced Practice MSc pathway. Continuing students will be reviewed through our monitoring process with HEIs, who will confirm which students are still on their programmes. The training grant for employers will be made available for up to 3 years only, which is the standard time frame for completion of the Advanced Practice MSc.

Section 3 – HEI's and Student Support

Q20. At which HEIs in the London region can individuals study?

Answer: The centre for Advancing Practice has a process for accrediting Advance Practice programmes to assure the education quality. While this process is not mandated, HEIs across the region can apply for programme accreditation. On completion of this process HEIs can award practitioners a '[Digital Badge](#)' for individuals to demonstrate that they have completed a NHSE recognised accredited [programme](#). The faculty will prioritise the funding of accredited programmes. However, where speciality programmes exist or programmes that have not yet undertaken the accreditation process exist they will be considered on a case by case basis through discussion with the Advanced Practice Lead.

The London Faculty for Advancing Practice will fund accredited programmes delivered within the London region, as listed on the Centre for Advancing Practice's [website](#). Funding requests for programmes outside of London are not routinely supported but may be considered on an exceptional, case by case basis.

When completing the expression of interest application, organisations are asked to indicate their preferred HEI for delivery of training. Please note that this does not guarantee placements with HEIs. It provides NHSE with an indication of demand for HEI courses across London.

If funding is agreed by NHSE, individuals are responsible for successfully applying to the HEI programmes. Funding will then be paid from NHSE to HEIs directly unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Q21. Which Advanced Practice academic programmes will the London AP Faculty support?

Answer:

The London AP Faculty will fund AP programmes at London based universities/Higher Education Institutions that have secured accreditation by the Centre for Advancing Practice. A list of these are included in the following link: [List of Accredited Programmes in England](#)

The faculty will consider supporting Out of London programmes on a case-by-case basis. Please contact the regional team to discuss.

Q22. What support can trainee Advanced Practitioners expect during their study?

Answer: All HEI programmes will be taught by lecturers and expert clinical practitioners in their field who will offer dedicated academic support and guidance, and students will be allocated a named personal tutor. The HEIs also offer support through a dedicated librarian and a comprehensive student support service. Students also find their cohort of colleagues of immeasurable value as a support network.

Q23. What happens if the employee discontinues their Advanced Practice programme before it is completed?

Answer: It is recognised, from time to time, some students may have to suspend their study e.g., for long term sickness, change of employment, personal reasons etc. Where a student discontinues their studies but will be returning to complete them and have indicated the timescales to the HEI, this is called 'stepping off' and NHSE will consider resuming funding when the student returns to study. However, these are reviewed on a case-by-case basis as it is dependent on whether the student can complete the course within the timescales available on their return. We ask that the faculty are informed by the Advanced Practice Lead as soon as possible when a student pauses or steps off programme.

Where a student is not returning to study, NHSE will discontinue the clinical training grant at the point they leave the programme. In all circumstances NHSE should be informed immediately by contacting england.acpenquirieslondon@nhs.net

There are implications on the use of levy funding for not continuing an apprenticeship programme and these should be discussed with your employer on a case-by-case basis.

Q24. What happens if the trainee Advanced Practitioner leaves the employer that NHSE is currently funding, for another employer?

Answer: All such instances will be looked at on a case-by-case basis and no guarantee of continued funding can be provided to either the employer or employee. As the funding offer is for the employer rather than the employee, if a trainee wishes to continue on programme with a new employer then the new employer must contact the faculty and agree to support the individual and meet the requirements of the funding as outlined in this handbook and the educational contracts.

Q25. What should trainees do if they fail an NHS England funded module?

Answer: Trainees must in the first instance inform faculty via this email address england.acpenquirieslondon@nhs.net, they should then liaise with their HEI programme lead and their employer to discuss individual circumstances and suitability to repeat failed modules and continue on programme. NHS England will not routinely cover any additional course fees incurred from repeating modules already funded in a previous academic year. Requests for funding subsequent modules required to complete an MSc advanced practice programme will need to be submitted in the usual way by Trust / training hub AP Lead via the regional demand scoping survey.

Q26. What should trainees do if they need to interrupt studies?

Trainees must in the first instance inform the faculty via this email address: england.acpenquirieslondon@nhs.net. Each case will be reviewed with the student, employer and HEI. Each case is unique and therefore is decided case by case for the reason and the length of time granted. It is worth noting that interruption of more than 12 months are not normally granted and will require a new funding application. Maternity falls outside of this process, however we still need to be informed.

Section 4 – NHSE Funding Application Process

Q27. How do I submit an expression of interest?

Answer: All expressions of interest are required to be submitted by the organisations nominated Advanced Practice lead via the template that NHSE will share directly with organisations. Templates which are not completed fully will not be accepted.

Prior to submitting expressions of interest, organisations are encouraged to read the [Readiness Checklist](#) and [Primary Care Readiness Checklist](#) to assist you in considering the infrastructure needed to fully support Advanced Practitioner trainees. It is also recommended that all employers of an advanced practice workforce work through the [Governance Maturity Matrix](#).

The funding application processes is outlined in Appendix 1.

Q28. Who should complete the application?

Answer: NHSE requires the Advanced Practice lead (or an individual responsible for Advanced Practice with an organisation) for each employer to submit applications for this funding. This person will act as the key liaison for all enquiries relating to the applications for which funding is being applied. This is to ensure there has been appropriate scrutiny applied to the application including agreement for recruitment (where needed) and alignment with organisational workforce development needs. Applications from individuals seeking funding will not be accepted.

Q29. What happens after the organisation has submitted an application?

Answer: NHSE will review all expressions of interest and the indicative demand. Funding will be confirmed where possible within two weeks of the submission, depending on the allocated budget for the current financial year. It may not be possible to provide funding for all applications received and where organisations are not successful, they will be notified. For applications to be successful please include the *student names* and *professions*. This facilitates a more efficient validation exercise with the HEIs.

Q30. What if I am successful in obtaining funding but then unable to employ the trainee Advanced Practitioner in time?

Answer: You must inform NHSE as soon as possible so that the funding place can be reallocated to another employer.

Q31. Do Advanced Practice students from abroad working in the NHS doing an MSc pay home (tuition) fees?

Answer: Advanced Practice MSc Students from abroad who are working in the NHS may not be entitled to Home Student Fee Status; this may depend on the student's residency in the UK and must be discussed with the university and the employer at application to the HEI. NHSE London's Faculty only have the capacity to pay home tuition fees for all students (regardless of fee status) on the MSc and Top-up Module pathways.

Appendix 1 – NHSE Advancing Practice Faculty Contact List

Contact	Role	Contact Details
Nick Sullivan	Regional Advancing Practice Faculty Lead	England.acpenquirieslondon@nhs.net
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Sector	Education & Development Lead	Contact Details
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SEL Hospital Trusts	Anne Addison	anne.addison4@nhs.net

Appendix 2 – NHSE Advancing Practice Faculty Commissioning Process





