



Department of  
**Health, Social Services  
and Public Safety**

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# **ADVANCED NURSING PRACTICE FRAMEWORK**

**Supporting Advanced Nursing Practice  
in Health and Social Care Trusts**



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## Acknowledgements

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Particular thanks to the Executive Director of Nursing and User Experience, Belfast Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust, who chaired the Steering Group and the Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council for Nursing and Midwifery (NIPEC), who managed the project. Thanks also for the commitment and contribution of the Steering Group members, who were representative of senior nurses in HSC Trusts, PHA, Regulation and Improvement Authority (RQIA), education providers, DHSSPS, Royal College of Nursing (RCN). Also represented on the Group were the Directors of Human Resource (HR) Forum, NIPEC Council and Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency (NIMDTA) (See Appendix 1).

In addition, it is important to acknowledge the role played by the HSC Trust Executive Directors of Nursing, who helped shape the Framework, and medical colleagues, who provided guidance in relation to the clinical aspects of this important nursing role. Finally, thanks to all those who contributed during and following the two workshops in April and June 2014, which helped further refine the Framework.

## 1.0 Purpose of the Advanced Nursing Practice Framework

Northern Ireland's Advanced Nursing Practice Framework was developed to provide clarity about the Advanced Nurse Practitioner role. The Framework

- provides a definition of Advanced Nursing Practice
- highlights the associated professional support and supervision required by Advanced Nurse Practitioners
- identifies the core competencies and learning outcomes essential for the Advanced Nursing Practice role
- acts as a guide for Commissioners, workforce planners, Executive Directors of Nursing, education providers, employers and managers of nurses, including nurses themselves.

The Advanced Nurse Practitioner role is a clinically focussed one. As it is continually evolving, the elements contained within this Framework will require periodic review.

## 2.0 What is Advanced Nursing Practice?

An Advanced Nurse Practitioner practises autonomously within his/her expanded scope of clinical practice, guided by The code: standards of conduct, performance and ethics for nurses and midwives (Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), 2008). The Advanced Nurse Practitioner demonstrates highly developed assessment, diagnostic, analytical and clinical judgement skills and the components of this level of practice are outlined in Table 1. See Appendix 2 for the characteristics which distinguish between Advanced and Specialist Nursing practice.

Table 1. Components of Advanced Nursing Practice	
Clinical Practice & Scope of Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• work autonomously, using a person-centred approach within the expanded scope of practice</li> <li>• undertake comprehensive health assessment with differential diagnosis and will diagnose</li> <li>• prescribe care and treatment, or appropriately refer and/or discharge patients/clients</li> <li>• provide complex care, using expert decision-making skills</li> <li>• act as an educator, leader, innovator and contributor to research.</li> </ul>
Supervision Requirement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• supervision relevant to the area of practice <sup>1</sup></li> <li>• professional nursing supervision.</li> </ul>
Service Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• work with DHSSPS and other relevant organisations to influence policy development and services</li> <li>• lead on service improvement initiatives.</li> </ul>
Education Requirement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have completed a Master's programme in the relevant area of practice</li> <li>• NMC recordable Non-Medical Prescribing V300.</li> </ul>

### 3.0 Core Competencies for Advanced Nursing Practice

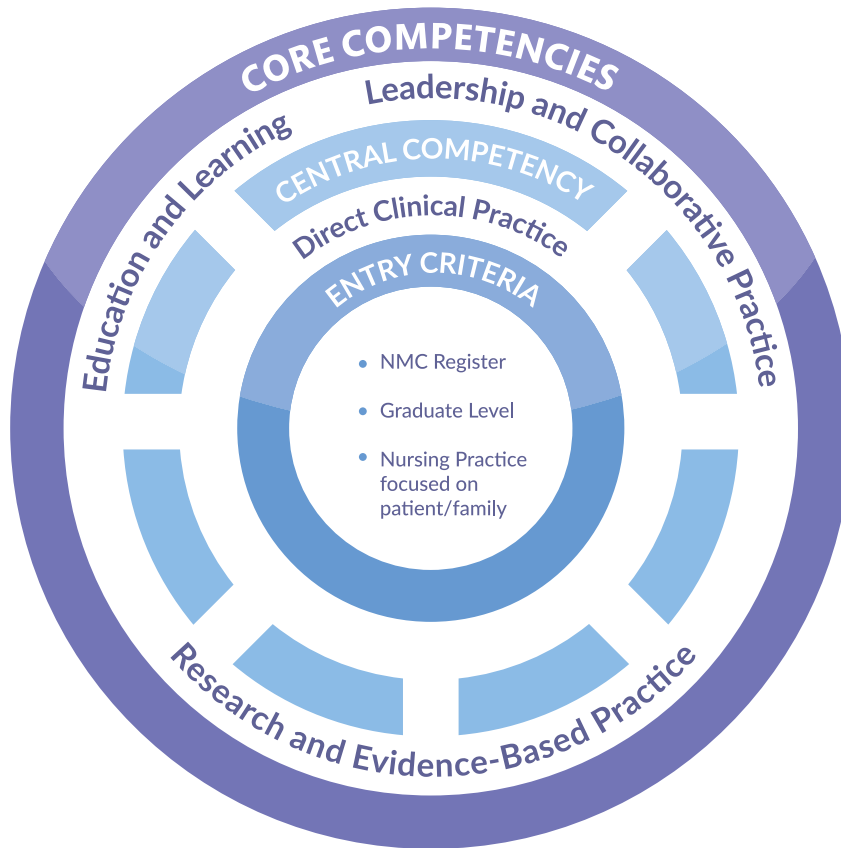
In Northern Ireland, the Advanced Nursing Practice role is supported by a set of four core competencies and related learning outcomes, which have been developed from the work already completed nationally and internationally in Republic of Ireland (2005), Scotland (2007), Hamric et al (2009), Wales (2010), England (2010), Australia (2011) and RCN (2012, revised).

**Direct Clinical Practice** is the first core competency of Advanced Nursing Practice and is supported by three additional competencies (see Figure 1):

- **Leadership and Collaborative Practice**
- **Education and Learning**
- **Research and Evidence-Based Practice**

<sup>1</sup> The Advanced Nurse Practitioner should receive supervision from an expert within the relevant area of practice. In some instances, this may be a practitioner from a discipline other than nursing for example, a GMC registered Consultant/Specialty Doctor grade or equivalent.

**Figure 1.** Entry criteria and Core Competencies of Advanced Nursing Practice.



*Based upon the work of Hamric et al (2009)*

## 4.0 The Advanced Nurse Practitioner Role

The Advanced Nurse Practitioner will undertake comprehensive health assessments, and will manage a range of illnesses and conditions that frequently present in the care settings within which the individual works. S/he will:

- practise autonomously within an expanded scope of practice
- demonstrate a person-centred approach to care delivery
- develop and sustain partnerships and networks to influence and improve healthcare outcomes and healthcare delivery
- educate, supervise or mentor nursing colleagues and others in the healthcare team
- contribute to and undertake activities, including research, that monitor and improve the quality of healthcare and the effectiveness of practice.

It must be noted that only those who meet the requirements of the role and who are employed as Advanced Nurse Practitioners, will be able to use the title.

## 5.0 Academic Preparation for Advanced Nurse Practitioners

The Advanced Nurse Practitioner role requires the nurse to have acquired a Master's educational and training programme in the relevant area of practice. The entry requirements for such academic programmes are highlighted in Figure 1 and include the following:

- be on the live register of the Nursing and Midwifery Council
- have a graduate level qualification
- be employed in the relevant area of clinical practice.

## 6.0 Application of Core Competencies

The four core competencies relevant to the Advanced Nurse Practitioner's role have specific core learning outcomes and are presented on pages 8 – 9. The learning outcomes have been developed to guide:

- curriculum development of the MSc Educational and Training programmes (commissioned by the DHSSPS)
- development of job descriptions for Advanced Nurse Practitioners
- ongoing learning and development of the individual employed in the role.

The core competencies and core learning outcomes will complement other generic competency frameworks which are relevant to the Advanced Nurse Practitioner's role, such as Knowledge and Skills Framework (DH, 2004); Healthcare Leadership Model (NHS Leadership Academy 2013); Attributes Framework (DHSSPS 2014).

## 7.0 MSc Advanced Nursing Practice Programmes

The MSc Advanced Nursing Practice Programmes are designed to prepare nurses to assess, diagnose and manage the plethora of conditions that present in their specific area of clinical practice. The modules within each MSc Programme focus on developing nurses' advanced skills in evidence-based practice, case management of patients with complex health needs and issues in advanced practice; they will also include the development and implementation of new roles.

The MSc Advanced Nursing Practice programmes have a significant emphasis on clinical acumen in the area of practice, and require over 500 hours of supervised practice in a variety of relevant settings. In addition, the programmes integrate research and evidence-based practice in each module, with the Extended Independent and Supplementary Prescriber (NMC V300 award) being an essential component of each programme.

It is important to note that the specific content of the direct clinical practice competency differs significantly by speciality and this will be reflected in each MSc Advanced Nursing Practice programme.

## 8.0 Core Competencies and Core Learning Outcomes

### **Core Competency 1. Direct Clinical Practice**

The Advanced Nurse Practitioner will:

1.	Practise autonomously, using a person-centred approach, within the expanded scope of practice.
2.	Demonstrate comprehensive skills for assessment, diagnosis, treatment, management and prescribing within the field of practice.
3.	Use clinical judgement in managing complex and unpredictable care events, drawing upon an appropriate range of inter-agency and professional resources in his/her practice.
4.	Demonstrate ability to manage and negotiate person-centred health related/care needs for patients and their families.
5.	Monitor and report quality issue affecting the provision of advanced nursing care delivery.



## Core Competency 2. Leadership and Collaborative Practice

The Advanced Nurse Practitioner will:

1.	Develop and sustain partnerships and networks to influence and improve healthcare outcomes and healthcare delivery.
2.	Engage stakeholders and use high-level negotiating and influencing skills to develop and improve practice, processes and systems.
3.	Provide professional and clinical advice to colleagues regarding therapeutic interventions, practice and service improvement.
4.	Demonstrate resilience as a clinical and professional leader.
5.	Develop robust governance systems by interpreting and synthesising information from a variety of sources in order to contribute to the development and implementation of evidence-based protocols, documentation processes, standards, policies and clinical guidelines and promote their use in practice.

## Core Competency 3. Education and Learning

The Advanced Nurse Practitioner will:

1.	Continue to keep knowledge and skills up to date by engaging in a range of relevant learning and development activities.
2.	Educate, supervise or mentor nursing colleagues and others in the healthcare team.
3.	Advocate and contribute to the development of an organisational culture that supports continuous learning and development, evidence-based practice and succession planning.
4.	Lead person-centred care using a practice development approach.
5.	Lead and contribute to a range of audit and evaluation strategies which inform education and learning.

## Core Competency 4. Research and Evidence-Based Practice

The Advanced Nurse Practitioner will:

1.	Contribute to and undertake activities, including research, that monitor and improve the quality of healthcare and the effectiveness of practice.
2.	Critically appraise the outcomes of relevant research and evaluations and apply the information to improve practice.
3.	Advocate and contribute to the development of a research culture that supports evidence-based practice.
4.	Lead and contribute to publications and dissemination of work.
5.	Demonstrate an understanding and application of a range of research methodologies.

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## Appendix 1.

### Membership of Steering Group

Brenda Creaney (Chair)	Director of Nursing, Belfast HSC Trust
Moira Mannion *	Co-Director of Nursing, Belfast HSC Trust
Elizabeth Graham *	Assistant Director of Nursing, Northern HSC Trust
Sharon McRoberts *	Assistant Director of Nursing, South Eastern HSC Trust
Lynn Fee *	Assistant Director of Nursing, Southern HSC Trust
Annetta Quigley *	Lead Nurse, Workforce Planning and Development, Western HSC Trust
Siobhan McIntyre	Regional Lead Nurse Consultant, Commissioning, Public Health Agency (also representing Health and Social Care Board)
Maryna Wylie	Assistant Director Human Resources, Northern HSC Trust (representing Directors of Human Resources Forum)
Roisin Devlin	Emergency Nurse Practitioner, Royal College of Nursing, NI Board
Linzi McIlroy	Senior Professional Development Officer, Royal College of Nursing
Catriona Campbell	Nurse Education Consultant, Clinical Education Centre
Caroline Lee	Nursing Officer, DHSSPS
Prof. Linda Johnston (until May 2014)	Head of School of Nursing and Midwifery, Queen's University, Belfast
Dr Kevin Gormley * (from June 2014)	Assistant Director of Education, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Queen's University, Belfast
Donna McConnell *	Lecturer, School of Nursing, University of Ulster
Christine Goan (until December 2013)	Corporate Improvement and Public Engagement Manager, RQIA
Kathy Fodey (from January 2014)	Director of Regulation and Nursing, RQIA
Dr John Collins	Associate Post-Graduate Dean (Careers), NIMDTA
Dr Vinod Tohani	Lay Council Member, NIPEC
Cathy McCusker * (Project Lead)	Senior Professional Officer, NIPEC

\* Members of the sub-group which developed the content of the Advanced Nursing Practice Framework.

## Appendix 2.

### Distinguishing characteristics between Advanced and Specialist Nursing practice.

Components of Practice	Advanced Nursing	Specialist Nursing
Clinical Practice & Scope of Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>work autonomously using a person-centred approach within the expanded scope of practice</li> <li>undertake comprehensive health assessment with differential diagnosis and will diagnose</li> <li>prescribe care and treatment or appropriately refer and/or discharge patients/clients</li> <li>provide complex care using expert decision-making skills</li> <li>act as an educator, leader, innovator and contributor to research.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>work as member of a team,</li> <li>usually consultant-led, within a defined area of nursing practice</li> <li>undertake comprehensive health assessment with differential diagnoses and may diagnose</li> <li>prescribe care and treatment or appropriately refer and may discharge</li> <li>contribute to education, innovation and research.</li> </ul>
Supervision Requirement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>supervision relevant to the area of practice</li> <li>professional nursing supervision.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>professional nursing supervision.</li> </ul>
Service Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>responsible for policy development, implementation and service development</li> <li>lead on service improvement initiatives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>contribute to policy and service development</li> <li>contribute to service improvement initiatives</li> </ul>
Education Requirement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>have completed a Master's programme in the relevant area of practice</li> <li>have NMC recorded Non-Medical Prescribing V300.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have completed a BSc (Hons)</li> <li>NMC recorded Specialist Practice qualification</li> <li>may have NMC recorded Non-Medical Prescribing V300.</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> The Advanced Nurse Practitioner should receive supervision from an expert within the relevant area of practice. In some instances this may be a practitioner from a discipline other than nursing for example, a GMC registered Consultant/Specialty Doctor grade or equivalent.

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