



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Programme Specification

A statement of the knowledge, understanding and skills
that underpin a taught programme of study leading to an
award from
The University of Sheffield

Programme Details

1. Programme title	Advanced Clinical Practice
2. Programme code	HEST027 (Neonatal pathway) HEST019 (General Practice pathway) HEST020 (Paediatric pathway)
3. QAA FHEQ level	7
4. Faculty	Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health
5. Department	Health Science School / Division of Nursing and Midwifery
6. Other departments providing credit bearing modules for the programme	Not applicable
7. Accrediting Professional or Statutory Body	Not applicable
8. Date of production/revision	17th February 2020, March 2026

Awards	Type of award	Duration
9. Final award	MMedSci Advanced Clinical Practice (Pathway)	3 years
10. Intermediate awards	PGDip Advanced Clinical Practice (Pathway)	2 years
	PGCert Clinical Practice (Pathway)	1 year

Programme Codes

11. JACS code(s) <i>Select between one and three codes from the HESA website.</i>	Paediatric B730	Neonatal B731	General Practice B714
12. HECoS code(s) <i>Select between one and three codes from the HECoS vocabulary.</i>	Paediatric 100280	Neonatal 100289	General Practice 100285

Programme Delivery

13. Mode of study	Part-time
14. Mode of delivery	Blended learning (includes both face-to-face and online learning)

15. Background to the programme and subject area

The NHS and social care in the 21st century faces many challenges, with workforce a top concern, staffing challenges are now as pressing as the financial challenge. Recruitment and retention of sufficient staff with the right skills and experience is increasingly difficult across the sector. These pressures are having a direct impact on Trusts' ability to deliver safe and sustainable high-quality care. One solution is new Advanced Clinical Practice (ACP) roles. Whilst these roles are valuable in their own right, they can offer a better alternative to medical locums and unstable Tier 1 hospital rotas (NHS England 2014).

There are key policy drivers that inform the development of this workforce including the Multi-professional framework for advanced clinical practice in England (Health Education England, 2017), Advanced practice standards (Royal College of Nursing, 2018), and Advanced clinical practice education in England guidance (Council of Heads and Deans 2018).

Experienced, registered health and care practitioners deliver advanced clinical practice. It is a level of practice characterised by a high degree of autonomy and complex decision-making. This practice is underpinned by a master's level award 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 clinical practice 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 improve outcomes.

The development of the ACP apprenticeship into one ACP programme with three pathways provides the opportunity to develop a community of advanced practice within the School. There will be close alignment between the three established programmes Paediatrics, Neonates and General Practice to the national guidance to ensure students completing the MSc ACP programme meet the requirements of the advanced academy and do not require later additional credentialing (HEE 2017, RCN 2018 Advanced Academy 2019).

Paediatrics

Paediatric ACPs work with babies, children, young people (CYP) from 0 to 18 years of age and their families in a range of settings across primary and secondary care. Paediatric ACPs can undertake acute or ongoing assessment of health and social needs; manage children with complex needs, acting as senior decision makers. They will undertake clinical assessments, diagnose, interpret investigations, plan, prescribe and evaluate treatment, make referrals, discharge and provide follow-up care, often without reference to medical practitioners (RCN 2017).

This programme equips paediatric ACPs with the skills to become future leaders of paediatric practice

and to play a pioneering role in multidisciplinary teams, making pivotal decisions about practice, leadership and management. A dynamic combination of theory and practice will equip the paediatric ACP with the knowledge, skills and behaviours to develop into this role. A mastery of broader contemporary knowledge commensurate with national guidance will prepare them to work effectively across traditional boundaries within the four pillars of advanced practice (HEE 2017).

Neonatal

UK Advanced Neonatal Nurse Practitioner (ANNP) education commenced in 1992 in response to changes in the working arrangements and training requirements of junior doctors which resulted in gaps in service provision (Smith and Hall, 2009). There are currently six ANNP courses available in UK Universities, the role is well established and ANNPs are a core element of the neonatal workforce. The focus of the role remains on clinical practice where capabilities include assessment and diagnosis of sick and preterm infants, resuscitation at birth and other neonatal emergencies. Additionally ANNPs deliver education and training to the junior medical and nursing colleagues, contribute to clinical governance and undertake incident investigation, audit projects and research. The Division of Nursing and Midwifery has developed an award that will advance the delivery of complex care to neonates and their families in a dynamic and ever changing environment

General Practice

General practice and primary care continue to evolve to meet the increasing and more complex demands of their communities (Skills for Health 2020). The general practice ACP will be adaptable and possess the knowledge, skills and behaviours to undertake acute, episodic or ongoing assessment of health, well-being and social needs. The general practice ACP works in partnership using shared decision making with people to manage complex needs across the lifespan. General practice ACPs can assess, formulate a well-evidenced differential diagnosis, instigate appropriate diagnostics, plan and prescribe treatment, tailored to individual patient characteristics, background and circumstances (Skills for Health 2019). They also assist people to change behaviour that can have a positive impact on their health and wellbeing.

16. Programme aims

Advanced Clinical Practitioner (Paediatric, Neonatal, General Practice) The MMedSci Advanced clinical practice aims to:	
A1	To enable the advanced clinical practitioner to gain the relevant underpinning bioscience and applied pathophysiology knowledge needed to inform judgements and decisions about clinical practice across a broad range of conditions; commensurate with an advanced practice role within their scope of practice.
A2	To enable the advanced clinical practitioner to gain mastery in health assessment and diagnostic reasoning across a range of clinical situations that informs evidence-based health interventions within their clinical environment.
A3	To acquire a systematic critical understanding and evaluation of a substantial body of knowledge to enable the demonstration of critical thinking and mastery of the contemporary knowledge, skills and attributes commensurate with their developing advanced practice role.
A4	To equip the advanced clinical practitioner with the knowledge, skills and behaviours to interpret data to order and review health interventions, including prescribing and referral across a broad range of conditions commensurate with their scope of practice.
A5	To develop evidence-based holistic advanced care delivery that is caring and collaborative to enhance practice through leading evidence based care, and supports the education of others.

A6	To synthesise evaluative information from practice to implement care and service improvements using leadership principles.
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17. Programme learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding		Links to Aim(s)
On successful completion of the programme, students will be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:		
		Links to Aim(s)
K1	A critical review the structure and function of major body systems.	A1
K2	A comprehensive knowledge and understanding of applied pathophysiology.	A1
K3	Mastery of consultation, history taking, health assessment and diagnostic reasoning from the well to critically ill, within your identified client group.	A1
K4	The sources of evidence and appraisal of evidence for the students area of specialist practice.	A3
K5	The appropriate creative application of evidence to clinical practice, including patients with complex needs, and to develop collaborative care.	A1
K6	Critical analysis and evaluation of research, theoretical and policy perspectives, which underpin their advanced practice role and identify gaps in the evidence.	A3
K7	A critical interpretation of the range of legal, ethical, professional and organisational policies, procedures and codes of practice that apply to their scope of practice.	A3, A5
K8	Advanced knowledge and skills in the delivery of holistic evidence-based care that addresses the physiological, psycho-social, developmental and cultural needs of the patient group who require specialist care.	A4
K9	The impact of pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics on the individual and the implications for prescribing practice.	A4
K10	Critical evaluation of the relevant legislation and its application to the practice of independent prescribing.	A4
K11	The critical appraisal of sources of information/advice and decision support systems in prescribing practice.	A4
K12	Justify leadership and change management approaches for quality improvement.	A5, A6
K13	Reflective practice including creative analysis of learning needs and strategies for personal practice development and mentoring of others.	A5

Skills and other attributes		
On successful completion of the programme, students will be able to:		
S1	Compassionate communication within a person-centred consultation to integrate evidence base into decision making about assessment and care	A3, A4, A5
S2	Conduct a systematic and critical review of the literature of an area of practice.	A3
S3	Demonstrate the application of pathophysiology to clinical practice.	A1
S4	Critically evaluate and appraise sources of evidence knowledge and understanding of applied pathophysiology to support effective patient care and therapeutic interventions.	A1, A2
S5	Critically analyse data and critically evaluate the level of care required identifying concerns and employing collaborative multidisciplinary liaison and referral.	A4, A5
S6	Demonstrate the ability to select and interpret common clinical investigations on the basis of the patient history and examination and process this information using diagnostic reasoning.	A4
S7	Promoting and supporting health and well being of individuals.	A3, A4, A5
S8	Critical appraisal and evaluation of the relevant prescribing legislation and policy and its application to the extended role of assessment, diagnosis and cost effective prescribing within advanced clinical practice.	A4
S9	Critical and reflective monitoring of individual safe and effective prescribing practice and the impact of the pharmacokinetic and pharmacodynamic effect on the patient with implications for ongoing personal learning and audit.	A4
S10	Reflect on and monitor own practice and can identify developmental needs and respond constructively to feedback.	A6
S11	Autonomous, accountable and capable assessment of needs, planning and implementing care for their specialist client group in complex situations.	A1, A2, A3, A4
S12	Demonstrate leadership behaviours that enable transformational practice across traditional boundaries.	A6
S13	Ensure safety of individuals and families through the appropriate management of risk.	A6
S14	Develop skills to audit practice and compile effective reports to ensure effective governance.	A6
S15	Demonstrate the ability to work in a changing and uncertain contexts whilst delivering an effective service.	A2

S16	Master advanced clinical skills relevant to sphere and practice and demonstrate evidence of the ability to carry out complex clinical skills independently.	A3
S17	Articulate reasoned decisions and appropriate solutions to complex patient scenarios clearly and confidently.	A3, A4
S18	Demonstrate critical analysis of the practice context and make recommendations for improvements in future practice.	A6
S19	Become a role-model with a responsibility to disseminate knowledge, mentor and motivate in an innovative, learning and responsive team.	A5, A6
S20	Advocate and contribute to the development of organisational culture that supports life-long learning and development.	A6
MMedSci Advanced Clinical Practitioner		Links to Aim(s)
K1	Acquires and critically evaluates evidence to be applied within their own clinical practice settings.	A3
K2	Critically explore and evaluate an issue or problem pertinent to their area of practice with a defensible rationale and methodological approach and evaluation of evidence.	A3
K3	Has the capability and ability to lead work with others to innovate and lead practice change and quality assurance.	A6

18. Learning and teaching methods

Advanced Clinical Practitioners are experienced clinicians who demonstrate expertise in their scope of practice. Advanced Clinical Practitioners manage defined episodes of clinical care independently, from beginning to end, providing care and treatment from the time an individual first presents through to the end of the episode, which may include admission, referral or discharge or care at home. They carry out their full range of duties in relation to individuals' physical and mental healthcare and in acute, primary, urgent and emergency settings (including hospitals, general practice, individuals' homes, schools and prisons, and in the public, independent, private and charity sectors). They combine expert clinical skills with research, education and clinical leadership within their scope of practice. Advanced Clinical Practitioners work innovatively on a one to one basis with individuals as well as part of a wider team. They work as part of the wider health and social care team and across traditional professional boundaries in health and social care (Advanced Clinical Practitioner Apprenticeship Standard 2017).

In order to prepare an advanced clinical practitioner who is able to contribute positively to delivering the health needs of their client group, the educational and learning process concerns itself with the integration and application of theory to practice. It supports the notion that evidence based knowledge acquisition is central to competent and safe advanced practice. Consequently, the student is seen to be at the centre of learning and teaching and will develop the ability to reflect critically on practice and respond proactively to change, whilst delivering quality person centred care.

A wide range of learning and teaching strategies provide opportunities for the progressive acquisition of subject-specific knowledge, understanding and skills, as well as wider generic and post-graduate skills. The learning and teaching approaches have been selected to ensure that students exiting the University of Sheffield ACP programme are equipped to undertake the ACP role. The nature of

evidence and the skills of searching, retrieval, appraisal, utilisation, dissemination and implementation of evidence in health and social care, underpins the notion of level seven practice. Engaging with online learning packages, online presentations and discussion forums in the evidence based practice module at the start of the programme ensure students are suitably prepared for their Masters degree.

Students require a robust knowledge base of the anatomy and physiology of the major body systems of their client group and understanding of associated pathophysiology. Blended learning approaches of pre-reading and using online resources will precede face to face instruction. Educational preparation and work based learning requires students to develop high levels of autonomy. Students will be encouraged to explore their transition from registered healthcare practitioner to trainee Advanced Clinical Practitioner through critical reflection and peer discussions. The programme level approach in year one is on developing knowledge, skills and behaviours to develop mastery in consultation, clinical assessment and core advanced skills for their scope of practice. Advanced skills apply to a skillset that may have traditionally been the remit of other disciplines so that the ACP can enhance the care and experience of individuals they care for. By the end of the year the student will demonstrate their competence through their work based eportfolio and at tripartite review in managing episodes of care under senior supervision.

Lead lectures from clinical and academic experts will ensure the requisite knowledge and access to positive role models on developing professional advanced practice. Students are also required to master an enhanced skill set that builds on this evidence base. Learning and teaching activities will include skills practice and simulated high fidelity activities in dedicated skills laboratories. Where appropriate the patient as educators resource will be utilised to create higher fidelity learning and ensure patient feedback on progress is central in the development of students' skills mastery. Students will be selecting, undertaking or requesting a range of appropriate clinical tests and assessments to help make a diagnosis.

Year two scaffolds new learning onto these robust underpinnings and develops the student to make decisions in partnership with patients and families and act in complex and unpredictable situations. The non medical prescribing module utilises lectures for developing knowledge base, supplemented by additional online study materials. Practice Learning with supervisor support is integral to achieving prescribing competence. The combination of prescribing competence and an understanding of oneself as a change agent and leader through exploring leadership behaviours will provide the students with the competence to manage diagnostic uncertainty and demonstrate through their work based eportfolio and tripartite review their management of complex care under senior supervision.

Year Three expands the students newly developed clinical mastery to ensure the advanced clinical practitioner has the knowledge, skills and behaviours to become a role-model with a responsibility to disseminate knowledge, mentor and motivate as an innovative practitioner within their scope of practice encompassing the four pillars of advanced practice (Health Education England 2017). The students will drive service improvements, and further develop their area of expertise to improve care and services for the client group they are treating. The completion of the eportfolio provides assurance to the student, partners and the University that the required level of practice has been achieved.

Blended learning approaches: Blended learning is defined as the “effective integration of various learning techniques, technologies, and delivery modalities to meet specific communication, knowledge sharing, and informational needs” (Finn and Bucci, 2004).

- **Directed revision:** Of their existing knowledge e.g. in anatomy and physiology and preparation to understand the higher level of knowledge required for the programme.
- **Lectures:** Guided study which provides a structured opportunity to disseminate information, this is the medium by which students access the main knowledge base through the programme.
- **Skills workshops:** Practical exposure to consultation and assessment skills and simulation of complex psychomotor and communication skills to safely prepare students for advanced clinical practice.
- **Seminars:** which are either staff-led or student-led are used throughout the programme. They

are designed to either reinforce information imparted through lectures or to discuss clinical cases by facilitating students to explore, analyse, understand information. They are used to enable students to create new knowledge and make the link between theory, policy and clinical practice.

- **Group tutorials:** are meetings arranged between a lecturer and a small group of students in order to clarify a particular problem experienced by the student(s) in the understanding of material or to support the student(s) in the process of preparation for a seminar or assessment and can be used to gather informal evaluation of the module or programme.
- **Individual tutorials:** are meetings arranged between a lecturer and an individual in order to confirm progress on the programme. They can also clarify a particular problem experienced by the student(s) in the understanding of material or to support the student(s) in the process of preparation for a seminar or assessment.
- **Case study:** Case studies must respect anonymity and confidentiality. Each case study should be able to demonstrate that some or all of the knowledge, skills and behaviours in the Multi-professional framework for advanced clinical practice in England (Health Education England, 2017) have been achieved.
- **Tripartite Reviews:** There is the opportunity for regular tripartite progress reviews involving the student, the employer and the HEI.
- **Independent Learning:** is used to assimilate and clarify material explored in lectures, to prepare for seminars and assessments and to generally examine literature pertinent to the module outcomes.
- **Reflection:** Students are encouraged throughout their learning to reflect on their own clinical area and their own practice. This approach encourages critical and analytical thought and changes to practice and will be evidenced in the eportfolio.
- **Supervised Clinical Practice:** This will be negotiated with relevant nominated supervisors in practice to enable the development of practice through supervision and assessment of the required clinical skills and non medical prescribing competence. Records of meetings will be part of the eportfolio.
- **Service user involvement:** Service user involvement in learning and teaching is important and will be utilised to enrich the educational experience of the student cohort. This will include not only inviting expert patients and service users and carers in to speak with students and in some clinical assessments but also to use videos, patient stories and narratives and reports where lessons can be learned for all health care practitioners.

19. Assessment and feedback methods

The programme will deploy a variety of assessment methods, including examinations, essays, task based assignments, presentations, skills and a portfolio. Each method of assessment is supported by clear criteria for marking. This assessment strategy provides a varied range of assessments (detailed below) to ensure the trainee ACP has the requisite knowledge, skills and behaviours to meet the requirements of advanced practice and the University for conferment of the award. The educational aim is to scaffold knowledge, skill and behaviour development across the three years and ensure that by the time the student is ready to graduate they are fully prepared to qualify as an Advanced Clinical Practitioner.

Formative work is threaded through the programme and session activities feed into summative work e.g. developing reflective writing in class builds towards the first reflection, class presentations of reports develops peer review and provides tutorial support. Formative work that provides feedback and feedforward purpose is detailed in the relevant E1 documentation for each module.

Students are provided with opportunities to practice exam techniques for both written exams and practical exams and feedback is given at the time with a focus on developmental feed forward. For example digitising practical assessments means that examiners in formative assessments can release written feedback through Pebblepad as soon as it is completed. Students are also

encouraged to constructively self assess their progress and develop personal development plans to aid development, these form a part of the portfolio of evidence.

[Table of assessments](#)

20. Programme structure and student development

The MMedSci Advanced clinical practice programme brings together three distinct advanced practice pathways into one overarching programme with three pathways (Paediatric, Neonatal & General Practice). Whilst there is commonality in Programme aims and Programme learning outcomes, learning and teaching approaches and assessment strategy there is significant differences at a modular level with a clear focus on pathway specific content.

Programme structure

The programme will comprise 180 credits, please see course plans

[Course Plans](#)

The programme supports students in the development of knowledge, skills and behaviours to meet the requirements for Advanced Clinical Practice through a range of experiences which promote independent learning. The programme is developed in a structured way to ensure there is a Programme Level Approach (PLA), which is about approaching taught academic programmes from the student perspective. It means taking a holistic rather than modular approach to programme design and delivery, so that students get the most out of their learning. In adopting this approach, we give students more opportunities to develop the deep knowledge, broad skills, and range of attributes they need to become assured and confident advanced clinical practitioners. Concepts are explored, revisited and developed with increasing complexity across the programme. The inclusion of a work based Portfolio which will model the professional requirements of qualified advanced clinical practitioner, scaffolds the learning to develop the required knowledge, skills and behaviours.

All modules are core. However there will be a number of students who will have already undertaken a non medical prescribing module prior to the commencement of the apprenticeship. These students will be identified during the recruitment cycle. Students who have undertaken non medical prescribing at level six will undertake a top up module (SNM677) where they will explore their prescribing practice in the context of advanced practice competencies. Students who have achieved non medical prescribing at level seven will RPL their credits into the programme. RPL can only be used when the module credit has not previously been used to achieve an academic award within the University or at another HEI.

Where students with a level 7 non medical prescribing qualification have previously used the credits to receive an academic award this RPL will not be considered due to the concept of double counting the credit. Please see the University guidance on double counting

https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.489780!/file/Policy_on_Double_Counting_.pdf It will be important to maintain records through copies of certification that the student has been previously awarded a non medical prescribing qualification. For the students who are unable to RPL non medical prescribing they will need to undertake an additional thirty credits of level 7 study and this can be from the faculty level 7 options or a relevant module at an alternative HEI. Any students requiring this bespoke plan will need to negotiate additional learning opportunities with the University and the employer.

Normally students would undertake the programme as advised in the course plan. However there is work nationally on the Advanced Practice 'equivalence' route that is planned to be live from the Summer of 2020. In order to ensure that we can compete in the marketplace it would be sensible to be able to offer modules in a more bespoke pathway than we would advise for starting the apprenticeship with no RPL. However, the work based module in year one must precede the work based module in year two.

Exit Awards

PGCert Clinical Practice (Route)

Students will be able to exit the award with a postgraduate certificate in clinical practice (Pathway) on successful completion of all the year one modules for their pathway.

PGDip Advanced Clinical Practice (Route)

Students will be able to exit the award with a postgraduate diploma in advanced clinical practice (Pathway) on successful completion of all the year one and year two modules for their pathway.

Detailed information about the structure of programmes, regulations concerning assessment and progression and descriptions of individual modules are published in the University Calendar available online at <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/calendar/>.

21. Criteria for admission to the programme

Normally a minimum of a grade C in GCSE English Language and Maths or equivalence.

Normally a good undergraduate degree (2:2 or above) in a related health discipline e.g. nursing, physiotherapy, paramedic science, pharmacy.

Healthcare professional registered with appropriate professional body e.g. NMC, HPC. Evidence required on application.

2 years post registration experience working in specialist area.

Reference with statement of support from employer.

Academic or consultant supervisor reference.

22. Reference points

The learning outcomes have been developed to reflect the following points of reference:

Subject Benchmark Statements

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/subject-guidance/Pages/Subject-benchmark-statements.aspx>

Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (2008)

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/The-framework-for-higher-education-qualifications-in-England-Wales-and-Northern-Ireland.aspx>

University Strategic Plan

<http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/strategicplan>

Learning and Teaching Strategy (2016-21)

<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/staff/learning-teaching/our-approach/strategy2016-21>

Advanced Practice Academy (2019). *Standards of Education and Training for Advanced Clinical Practice and Consultant Programmes leading to recognition with the academy*. London: Health Education England.

Biggs, J. (1996). Enhancing teaching through constructive alignment. *Higher Education* 32(3) 347–364.

Council of Deans of Health (2018). *Advanced clinical practice education in England*. London: CODH.

Health Education England (2017). *Multi-professional framework for advanced clinical practice in England*. London: HEE.

NHS England (2014). *NHS Five Year Forward View*. London: DH.

Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (2015). *Facing the Future: Standards for Acute General Paediatric Services*. London: RCPCH.

Royal College of Nursing (2018). *Advanced Practice Standards*. London: RCN.

Royal College of Nursing (2017). *Specialist and advanced children's and young people's nursing practice in contemporary health care: guidance for nurses and commissioners*. London: RCN.

Skills for Health (2019). *Paramedic Specialist in Primary and Urgent Care Core Capabilities Framework*. London: Skills for Health.

Skills for Health (2020). *The Core Capabilities Framework for Advanced Clinical Practice (Nurses) Working in General Practice/Primary Care in England*. London: Skills for Health.

Smith, S.L. and Hall, M. (2009). *Advanced neonatal nurse practitioners in the workforce: a review of the evidence to date*. *Archives of Disease in Childhood*. doi:10.1136/adc.2009.168435.

South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw Advanced Practice Faculty (2019). *Standards for education and training*. Available at

https://www.healthandcaretogethersyb.co.uk/application/files/7715/5324/6950/Faculty_Strategy_2019-20_final.pdf

23. Additional information

This specification represents a concise statement about the main features of the programme and should be considered alongside other sources of information provided by the teaching department(s) and the University. In addition to programme specific information, further information about studying at The University of Sheffield can be accessed via our Student Services web site at <http://www.shef.ac.uk/ssid>.