



Case Study - Manchester Metropolitan University's experience implementing the Level 7 Advanced Clinical Practitioner apprenticeship standard

The need for the Advanced Clinical Practitioner (ACP) apprenticeship at Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU)

The provision of ACP in HEIs has undergone a recent shift from trainee advanced practitioners undertaking a traditional MSc in ACP towards the completion of a level 7 ACP apprenticeship and the use of the apprenticeship levy funding stream.

Both the ACP standard and the HEE multi professional framework (2017) support the delivery of ACP differently involving a combination of on programme (university based learning) and consolidation and application of newly acquired skills, knowledge and behaviours in the workplace.

It was essential that any future ACP provision was reflective of current service needs and met the 4 pillars of advanced practice (HEE, 2018, <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/advanced-clinical-practice/multi-professional-framework>)

How this ACP apprenticeship was developed (employer engagement)

In 2017, two years prior to the commencement of the ACP apprenticeship at Man Met, a task and finish group was set up. The group consisted of academic staff developing the programme, local employers involved in the recruitment and development of Advanced Practitioners and existing Advanced Clinical Practitioners from a range of health care disciplines.

The main focus of the group was to develop a curriculum that not only met service needs but also ensured that the four pillars of Advanced Practice were met.

The innovative curriculum developed by the group allowed apprentices to develop both generalist and specialist skills by undertaking 140 core credits and in partnership with their employer, choose 2, 20 credit flexible or specialist options.

The task and finish group met quarterly for 2 years to ensure relevance and prepare for university approval. University approval was gained in July 2018. Our first multi professional cohort of 28 ACP apprentices started in January 2019 on a 3 year programme. They attend university one day a week, which meets the IfA requirements for 20% off the job training.

Our inaugural cohort consists of Nurses, physiotherapists and a paramedic from a range of primary and secondary care settings from 19 different employers.



Lessons learnt

- **The value of the skills coach:** what has been crucial in supporting ACP apprentices across the apprenticeship has been the development of the skills coach role. The ACP is delivered via an apprenticeship, and as such, there was great emphasis on the application of knowledge, skills and behaviours in the workplace and the mentors assessment of clinical competencies in clinical practice. The skills coach has been positively evaluated by both apprentices and employers in terms of bridging the gap between university and the workplace.
- **Level of commitment to the ACP programme from employers:** it works particularly well if there is engagement from the employer and that the workplace allows apprentices time to develop new skills to prepare adequately for an ACP role.
- **The value of employer involvement in shaping the current and future curriculum:** it was essential to work in partnership with local employers to ensure that modules designed met service needs for example Advanced Care of the Frail and Older Person, one of our optional specialist units.

Future plans

A **2 year ACP apprenticeship programme** has been developed and will also be offered from September 2019. This may better suit employers who are able to release staff for university attendance 2 days a week.

The 2 year programme is delivered at a faster pace and may suit those who are used to studying at level 7 and may be able to gain credit for previous level 7 work.

There is ongoing liaison with local employers via an **ACP advisory group**. This is to consider and develop new flexible options to meet ongoing and new service need.

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