

Enhanced Clinical Practitioner Apprenticeship FAQ's

What is enhanced practice?

Enhanced practice is a level of practice within the healthcare workforce. It is delivered by experienced registered professionals (first level statutory registration or a managed voluntary registration) who undertake complex work and manage day to day risk, including risks on behalf of, or with patients. Enhanced practice occurs in multiple settings including secondary, community and primary care.

What is an Enhanced Clinical Practitioner (ECP) Apprenticeship?

The [Enhanced Clinical Practitioner Apprenticeship](#) (ECP) was approved for delivery in May 2021. This apprenticeship recognised the enhanced level workforce and provided an additional educational pathway for enhanced practice staff.

The apprenticeship does not seek to replace existing or previously educational pathways, but instead provides an additional education route. The apprenticeship co-exists alongside traditional education for the enhanced workforce such as post qualification certificates, professional development courses, degree, or master's level qualifications.

It is envisaged that the apprenticeship would be well suited to staff who following qualification (i.e., professional registration and preceptorship) are expected to operate at an increased **level of complexity that requires them to develop greater complex knowledge and expertise.**

It should be noted that experienced staff who have completed post qualification study and who are acting at an enhanced level of practice would not normally need to undertake the apprenticeship, as they are already recognised to be utilising enhanced practice knowledge, skills, and behaviours in their daily practice.

What are the benefits of the ECP apprenticeship to my workforce?

- 1. The enhanced workforce is a valuable mission critical resource but can have high rates of turnover and retention issues¹. The ECP apprenticeship offers an additional retention tool; allowing staff to see progression pathways that will provide additional autonomy, pay and responsibility.**
- 2. The ECP apprenticeship offers standardisation of education that, in turn, can provide quality assurance and governance to clinical practice.**
- 3. The ECP apprenticeship celebrates and recognises enhanced practice as not merely a transitional post to advanced practice, but as a legitimate career destination that contributes significantly to patient care, quality, safety, and efficiency. It also provides opportunities for individuals to consolidate their practice, potentially avoiding premature career progression.**

¹ Alison Leary 2022. Enhanced Practice: Principles

How is enhanced practice different to advanced practice?

An Enhanced Clinical Practitioner is an extended role rather than an advanced role, enhanced practitioners operate at an enhanced level of practice with specific knowledge and skills in a field of expertise. They manage a discrete aspect of a patient's care within their current level of practice, which will be particular to a specific context, be it a client group, a skill set or an organisational context. This is in contrast to Advanced Practitioners who have developed their knowledge and skills to an advanced level of practice and would manage the whole episode of a patient's clinical care, from the time they first present, through to the end of the episode.

Enhanced Practice

Uses reflection in action to function in unpredictable environment

Manages risk but defers major decision making

Uses freedom to act within own scope of practice

Found in different settings and across professions

Has a specific body of knowledge

Uses complex clinical decision making but confers with others for overall plan

Often manage a caseload, sometimes providing interventions as part of a dedicated clinical pathway

Post registration qualification / CPD and occasionally masters qualification

Evaluates and creates

will work within national and local protocols where these exist

Proficient

Advanced Practice

Uses reflection in action extensively in an unpredictable environment

Manages risks

Uses freedom to act, and provides professional leadership and supervision in situations that are complex and unpredictable

Found in different settings and across professions

Has a highly developed specific body of knowledge

Uses a high level of complex clinical decision making, including complete management of episodes of care

Manages defined episodes of clinical care independently, from beginning to end

Masters Level

Evaluates and creates

will shape the design and delivery of local protocols where these exist

Expert

What level is the ECP apprenticeship?

The ECP apprenticeship is level 6. There is no mandatory qualification which means that employers may choose a non-mandatory qualification as long as it overlaps with the knowledge, skills and behaviour requirements of the apprenticeship standard. In reality any non-mandatory qualification would be at level 6 or level 7 to ensure a close match. The Enhanced Clinical Practitioner is an occupational level 6 apprenticeship with a funding band of £7,000, with a typical duration of 18 months.

Are any qualifications delivered as part of the ECP apprenticeship?

There are no mandated qualifications as part of the Enhanced Clinical Practitioner apprenticeship, during the programme apprentices must compile a portfolio of evidence.

Whilst there are no mandated qualifications within the Enhanced Clinical Practitioner apprenticeship, some employers may wish to work with training providers who deliver academic qualifications as part of their apprentices training. This may include modules, units or qualifications that enable apprentices to meet the KSBs of the occupational standard. Regardless of approach during the programme apprentices must compile a portfolio of evidence.

Is the ECP apprenticeship multidisciplinary / multi-professional?

Yes, the ECP apprenticeship is multidisciplinary and can be found across many professions such as:

- Dietetics
- Dental
- Healthcare Science
- Mental health
- Physiotherapy
- Nursing
- Ambulance urgent care
- Oncology

What are the entry criteria for the ECP apprenticeship?

A stipulation of the entry criteria for the apprenticeship is that clinicians need to be registered with either one of the statutory healthcare regulators, Social Work England or with one of the following accredited voluntary registers: The Academy for Healthcare Science, Register of Clinical Technologists or Registration Council for Clinical Physiologists. They must undertake revalidation processes or audit of their continuing professional development where these apply.

Can the ECP apprenticeship lead to advanced practice?

Enhanced practice can be a precursor or preparation for advanced practice, equally it can be a destination career where people want to stay.

Where level 7 content is delivered in the ECP apprenticeship there may also be the opportunity for accreditation of prior learning (APEL) into the ACP apprenticeship and reduce the content and duration. It would therefore be advisable for employers to work closely with their education providers regarding the content of the ECP where they envisage APEL to ACP may occur. This will also depend on specific HEI APEL/RPL requirements and ACP award specifics.

How can the ECP apprenticeship support professional and clinical speciality?

The ECP apprenticeship provides the opportunity to develop enhanced practice education that is relevant to professions within a speciality, by supporting upskilling in professional roles to meet the needs of employers, for example the curriculum of the ECP could be co-designed to ensure that staff moving into Senior Occupational Therapist roles develop enhanced clinical

skills that are relevant to their sphere of practice as an occupational therapist, this allows healthcare professionals to work across organisational boundaries, bridging the community, primary and secondary healthcare settings together.

Employers and systems should critically evaluate their workforce requirements to ensure that the content on the ECP apprenticeship can meet their future workforce needs.

Have any education providers been procured to deliver the ECP Apprenticeship?

HEE has facilitated a national procurement with Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust who manage a supported procurement service. Multiple Universities were awarded for the ECP apprenticeship. To receive a list of those awarded please contact sft.commercial@nhs.net

Why do I need to procure apprenticeship education?

Apprenticeship levy funding is counted as public money and therefore demonstration of best value is required.

Where can I find education providers who are delivering the ECP apprenticeship?

The ECP apprenticeship is a relatively new apprenticeship, and as such universities are in the process of developing their curriculum in conjunction with employers and professional bodies to meet the needs of employers. Therefore, please note that those awarded via the procurement process may not have a course ready immediately, but employers are advised to work with their systems and universities to influence course design and content. Where can I find out more? You can access dedicated apprenticeship support through your regional [HEE Talent for Care Regional Apprenticeship Relationship Managers](#), who work closely with employers, training providers, HEE colleagues and other key stakeholders. The HEE Talent for Care Regional Apprenticeship Relationship Managers have extensive apprenticeship expertise and are on hand to support all employers across the health care system.

Where can I find more information?

You can find full details of the apprenticeship standard [HERE](#)

You can also find lots of useful information about apprenticeships on our website, where you will find a wide range of apprenticeships, case studies, resources and all the latest apprenticeship news - <https://haso.skillsforhealth.org.uk/>