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# SPECIFICATION OF REQUIREMENTS TEMPLATE

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# Specification of Requirements

#### 1. Introduction

The Centre for Advancing Practice ("the Centre") serves as the operational branch of NHS England's National Advancing Practice Programme. Its primary role is to oversee and ensure the quality of education and training for advanced practitioners across England, verifying that these programs meet NHS England's established standards. The Centre also manages the recognition process for practitioners' education, training, and professional experience.

Practitioners who fully demonstrate the capabilities outlined in the Multi-professional Framework for Advanced Clinical Practice in England (2017) are eligible for recognition through various routes provided by the Centre. This process is integral to the growth targets outlined in the Long-Term Workforce Plan, which aims to increase the number of advanced practice trainees from 3,000 in 2023/24 to 6,300 by 2031/32.

The Centre's ePortfolio (Supported) Route is a new pathway for recognising equivalence in advanced practice education and training. It is a critical component in meeting the ambitious targets set by the Long-Term Workforce Plan. With three cohorts already recruited interest in the fourth cohort is exceptionally high, with over 2,000 practitioners expressing interest in the program.

The upcoming evaluation will provide essential evidence to ensure that only clinicians who meet the established standards of equivalence are granted recognition. This evaluation will support ongoing quality improvement and is a vital aspect of patient safety.

NHS England is inviting suppliers with proven experience in conducting nationallevel reviews and assessments in the healthcare sector to bid for the contract to evaluate the ePortfolio (Supported) Route.

The contract will span a period of 18 months.

#### 2. Background

NHS England's primary mission is to support the delivery of high-quality healthcare and health improvements for the people of England by ensuring that today's and tomorrow's workforce is equipped with the right skills, values, and behaviours, in the right numbers, at the right time, and in the right place.

The advanced practice workforce in England consists of professionals from a range of regulated health and care fields working across different settings. This workforce has expanded organically in recent years and now numbers several thousand. However, there has not been a standardised minimum level of education and training for these demanding roles. While many education providers offer advanced practice programs and some professional bodies provide uni-professional pathways to recognise (or "credential") individuals as equivalent to the advanced practice level, there remains a need for a consistent multi-professional approach.

The Centre for Advancing Practice aims to partner with these professional bodies to establish a multi-professional recognition process that ensures equal opportunities across professions for validating the equivalence of education and training. It is important to note that any assessment of fitness to practice or specific job roles falls outside NHS England's remit.

Enhancing, retaining, and transforming the workforce through advanced practice is a key strategic priority for the NHS and is featured prominently in the NHS Long-Term Workforce Plan, NHS Long-Term People Plan This involves two main pathways for achieving advanced practice recognition:

- Successfully completing a Centre-accredited advanced practice program.
- Successfully completing a recognised ePortfolio route.

The Centre's ePortfolio (Supported) Route is designed to provide registered practitioners with a supported pathway to achieve recognition of their advanced practice equivalence. This route is especially beneficial for those who have not had the opportunity to undertake an accredited advanced practice programme or prefer not to pursue other recognition pathways.

Through the ePortfolio (Supported) Route, practitioners can have their education, training, and experience recognised at an advanced practice level, on par with

those who have followed other recognition routes. To be granted recognition, practitioners must demonstrate through an ePortfolio submission that they meet the capabilities outlined in the Multi-professional Framework for Advanced Clinical Practice in England (2017).

This pathway is currently a funded, time-limited option for experienced NHS clinicians who can provide a portfolio evidencing their equivalence to level 7 educational standards.

Individuals seeking the ePortfolio (supported) route may already have a clinical MSc or PGDip in Advanced Clinical Practice, or other equivalent formalised or experiential learning which can be mapped to the multi-professional framework. These individuals, may, with appropriate support and specific, targeted interventions, subsequently be able to demonstrate educational equivalence based on their knowledge and skills. This route is intended to be more reflexive to the individual needs of these experienced clinicians and provide value for money and equality of opportunity across professions, NHS sectors and specialties to access recognition.

#### 3. Scope of the Procurement

NHS England seeks to offer the opportunity for a supplier with demonstrable experience of delivering national based reviews/ assessments within the healthcare sector or a deep understanding of the health and care landscape to bid for and be awarded contracts to evaluate NHS England's ePortfolio (supported) Route.

The supplier will also have the expertise to adapt these methods to meet NHS England's needs while maintaining quality, integrity, principles and sensitivity to the subject matter. They will be required to work closely with NHS England's National Workforce, Training and Education Directorate to develop a patient safety review of this recommended education and training equivalence recognition route. This evaluation is designed to provide this evidence and inform a continuous improvement approach.

It is expected the supplier will collaborate and co-author with the Centre for Advancing Practice team a report or reports on the research study for joint submission to a peer-reviewed academic journal(s) and presentation at professional conferences of at least Research Excellence Framework three-star quality, being internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour. It is

anticipated that this activity will be delivered by a single provider working with the current providers of the ePortfolio (supported) Route and the regions.

#### 4. Aims & Objectives

The objectives of the evaluation are to:

- Explore the effectiveness of the design and delivery of the ePortfolio (supported) Route.
- Explore system engagement with and trust in the route as a way of safely and efficiently identifying and recognising practitioners who can demonstrate their educational equivalence.
- Appraise whether and how the route and its mode of delivery provides a safe, effective, and proportionate means of evidencing and testing educational equivalence.
- Measure the potential and achieved value of the route, from the perspectives of meeting population, patient care, service delivery, and workforce development and deployment needs.
- Appraise the profile of practitioners who are supported to engage with the route, including from equality, diversity, and inclusion perspectives.
- Collect information and identify lessons which can be taken forward by the Centre for Advancing Practice to determine on-going education and training equivalence recognition of Advanced Practitioners (refinements, enablers and barriers to delivery).

# **Evaluation Plan, Outputs, and Timescales**

The successful evaluation partner will be expected to develop a detailed evaluation plan at the start of the contract. This plan will confirm the purpose of the evaluation, the key research questions, the counterfactual, the evaluation scope (process, impact and economic), and the timescales. It will also include an articulation of the logic model, more detailed research questions and the design of the analytical methods and data sources that will be used to answer these. It will include a detailed schedule of tasks, timelines, the finalised evaluation governance arrangements, communications, risks and risk management, quality assurance and reporting arrangements.

It is expected that the evaluation will take 18 months including production of the report.

It is expected that the final evaluation report will be presented, including a threepage executive summary, and a full report to include an overview of the evaluation methodology; the report should be accompanied by technical appendices as required.

It is anticipated that, once completed, a summary of the evaluation will be published in a peer-reviewed journal and that the evaluation partner will collaborate with NHS England colleagues to co-author the publication and identify the most suitable publication route.

# **Expected outputs**

The successful evaluation provider will be required to provide the following:

- Updates as required by project management team.
- Interim (mid-point) report (includes recommendation of continuous improvement)
- Draft (full) evaluation report for review and editorial changes by the national team.
- Final (full) evaluation report which will signal project close.
- If appropriate submission to a scientific peer-review article submitted for publication in a UK or international journal of good standing.
- If appropriate an abstract submission for national or international conference application or an academic poster

# **Constraints and Dependencies**

#### Constraints:

- **Practitioner Engagement**: The evaluation is constrained by the current engagement levels, a focus on cohorts 2, 3 and 4 only will be available for the evaluation.
- Education Provider Involvement: All education providers associated with the ePortfolio (supported) Route must be actively engaged in the evaluation process to ensure comprehensive insights.
- Cohort Priority: Cohort 4 is currently live and must remain a priority for the NHS England Centre team, potentially impacting resource allocation and focus the evaluation – every effort will be made to work with the timelines of the evaluation partner.

• **Team Responsibilities**: The involvement of multiple team members with different responsibilities in the ePortfolio (supported) Route may introduce complexity in coordination and communication.

#### Dependencies:

- Engagement with Education Providers: Successful engagement with all education providers is critical for gathering data and feedback, which will inform the evaluation process.
- Cohort Activity: The ongoing activities and outcomes of Cohort 4 are dependent on the Centre's resources and attention, which may influence the evaluation.
- Operational Group Coordination: Effective collaboration among team members, whose roles are defined through the ePortfolio operational group, is essential for smooth project execution and information flow.

#### 5. Requirements

The successful evaluation partner will be expected to develop a logic model for the NHS England advanced practice ePortfolio (supported) Route to guide all aspects of the evaluation. This will need to be undertaken within the first month of contract award. The logic model will show the relationship between inputs, processes / activities, outputs, and outcomes and how value will be generated from the initiative.

The intention is to oversee the programme through a KPI monitoring dashboard developed by the evaluation partner set up to ensure comprehensive coverage. accurate and timely data. The evaluation partner will need to develop a taxonomy, associated data collection templates for stakeholders and processes for the dashboard to be kept up to date. The dashboard will be informed by the development of the logic model.

The patient safety review evaluation partners are invited to suggest the best mixed methods research strategy available to collect information, analyse quantitative data, undertake qualitative thematic analysis, and triangulate findings to develop key findings in the following areas.

• Explore the effectiveness of the design and delivery of the ePortfolio (supported) Route.

- o Is the process clearly defined, fit-for-purpose, and implemented in line with intentions? This includes in relation to:
  - Activities undertaken by providers to correctly identify the development needs of practitioners.
  - Activities undertaken by providers to navigate practitioners through the development route appropriate to their identified individual learning needs, such as the initial Learning Needs Analysis (LNA).
  - Activities undertaken by providers to make available the right level of academic and clinical support to individual practitioners to address their identified individual learning needs.
  - Activities undertaken by providers to assess practitioners and report the outcome with the Centre.
  - Analyses of individual outcomes of whether a practitioner is successful, including to collate trend data (in relation to individuals, between providers and at a collective/aggregate level).
- Explore system engagement with and trust in the route as a way of safely and efficiently identifying and recognising practitioners who can demonstrate their educational equivalence.
- Appraise whether and how the route and its mode of delivery provides a safe, effective, and proportionate means of evidencing and testing educational equivalence.
- Measure the potential and achieved value of the route, from the perspectives of meeting population, patient care, service delivery, and workforce development and deployment needs.
- Appraise the profile of practitioners who are supported to engage with the route, including from equality, diversity, and inclusion perspectives.
- Collect information and identify lessons which can be taken forward by the Centre for Advancing Practice to determine on-going recognition of Advanced Practitioners (refinements, enablers, and barriers to delivery).

The mixed methods research approach of the patient safety review evaluation will be expected to acquire research ethics approval and to comply with the basic principles set out in the Government Social Research Unit Professional Guidance: Ethical Assurance for Social Research in Government. All data used in the evaluation, regardless of its source, must be collected, transferred, stored, processed, and deleted in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation

(GDPR), and any specific required security processes (including registration with the Information Commissioners Office and Data Security Protection Toolkit).

The successful evaluation partner and its employees shall be expected to observe and follow the HM Government Supplier Code of Conduct (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/648c3ab5b32b9e000ca968c3/Suppl ier Code of Conduct v3.pdf) in delivering the services set out within this Specification Requirements document at all times.

#### **Detailed requirements**

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# Stakeholder Engagement

The successful evaluation partner will be expected to engage with a wide range of stakeholders as indicated in Figure 1 below. Introductions to stakeholders will be provided by the buyer to the supplier.

Figure 1: Stakeholder Engagement		
Stakeholder	Nature of Engagement	
Patients	People Advisory Forum	
Practitioners	<ul> <li>Survey of Participating Practitioners (Cohort 2 and 3)</li> <li>Potential survey/call for evidence from non-participants and views.</li> </ul>	

	<ul> <li>Qualitative case studies to show differences in the journey of a practitioner across different professions.</li> </ul>
Employers	<ul><li>Survey of participating employers</li><li>Potential survey-/-call for evidence from non-participating employers</li></ul>
Education Provider partners	<ul> <li>Survey of participating providers</li> <li>Potential survey-/-call for evidence from non-participating providers</li> <li>Selected interviews-/-focus groups and workshops with providers as needed to answer research questions</li> </ul>
Professional Bodies	Selected interviews, as needed, to answer research questions
Regulators	Selected interviews, as needed, to answer research questions
Centre for Advancing Practice/Regional Faculties for Advancing Practice	<ul> <li>Selected interviews/focus groups and workshops with the Centre and regional teams as needed.</li> <li>Feedback and evaluation report</li> </ul>
Other	<ul> <li>To be agreed as part of the development of the detailed evaluation plan</li> </ul>

### **Evaluation Plan, Outputs, and Timescales**

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- If appropriate an abstract submission for national or international conference application or an academic poster

# **Timescales & Implementation**

Contract shall be awarded for a period of 18 months without the option to extend.

Full timescale to be agreed as part of contract kick off, with monthly reports and contract review meetings. The following is the expected timeline to be agreed during initiation.

#### 1. Project Initiation (Month 1)

- o Kick-off meeting to outline project goals, objectives, project plan and stakeholder roles.
- Establish communication channels and reporting structure with the Centre for Advancing Practice team and the ePortfolio Operational Team.
- Agree timeline.

#### 2. Stakeholder Engagement (Months 1-2)

- o Identify and engage key stakeholders, including education providers and practitioners.
- Conduct introductory meetings to gather initial insights and establish collaboration.

#### 3. Development of Evaluation Framework (Months 2-3)

- o Create a detailed evaluation plan, including methodologies, data collection methods, and success metrics.
- o Finalise the framework and obtain stakeholder approval.

#### 4. Data Collection Phase 1 (Months 4-7)

- o Implement surveys, interviews, and focus groups with practitioners from cohorts 2 and 3.
- o Collect qualitative and quantitative data on experiences and outcomes.

#### 5. Data Analysis Phase 1 (Months 8-9)

- Analyse data collected during Phase 1.
- o Identify trends, challenges, and areas for improvement.

#### 6. Progress Review (Month 10)

- Conduct a mid-project review report to assess progress against obiectives.
- Mid project report on recommendations to date.
- o Adjust timelines and strategies based on findings and stakeholder feedback.

#### 7. Data Collection Phase 2 (Months 11-12)

- Extend data collection to include feedback from Cohort 4 participants.
- Continue engagement with education providers to refine the evaluation.

#### 8. Data Analysis Phase 2 (Months 13-14)

- o Analyse data from Phase 2 and compare results across all cohorts.
- o Identify key findings and insights for the final report.

#### 9. Report Development (Month 15-16)

- o Compile a comprehensive evaluation report, including findings, recommendations, and conclusions.
- Share draft report with NHS England colleagues.
- o Review and revise the report based on feedback from stakeholders.

#### 10. Final Presentation and Dissemination (Month 17)

- o Present findings to stakeholders and the NHS England Centre team.
- o Disseminate the final report to all relevant parties and ensure accessibility.

#### 11. Project Closure (Month 18)

- o Conduct a project closure meeting to discuss lessons learned and celebrate successes.
- o Finalise documentation and ensure all project materials are archived appropriately.
- Agree publication plan.

#### Location

The evaluation project requires a supplier based in the United Kingdom (UK) or Great Britain (GBR). While the majority of the work will be conducted virtually, the supplier should be able to accommodate any in-person meetings or site visits within the UK if necessary within the contract envelope.

The supplier must ensure that their team can effectively participate in remote collaboration and adhere to UK time zones for virtual meetings and communications.

# 6. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities	
	- Provide introductions to stakeholders for engagement	
NHS England/ Centre for Advancing Practice		
Advancing Fractice	- Review and provide feedback on plans and reports prior to competition / publication	
	- Ensures compliance with the contract terms and conditions.	
	- Manages contract amendments, extensions, and any disputes.	
Contract Manager (NHSE)	- Oversees financial tracking and ensures payments are aligned with deliverables.	
	- Monitors adherence to the project plan and timelines.	
	- Maintains accurate documentation of contract-related activities.	
	- Oversees the overall project execution and ensures objectives are met.	
Duais at Managar (assembles)	- Manages the project schedule, resources, and budget.	
Project Manager (supplier)	- Acts as the main point of contact between the supplier and stakeholders.	
	- Monitors progress and addresses risks and issues.	
	- Develops the evaluation framework and methodology.	
	- Oversees data collection and analysis.	
Evaluation Lead (supplier)	- Ensures the evaluation meets quality standards and project objectives.	
	- Prepares evaluation reports and presents findings to stakeholders.	
	- Conducts data analysis and interpretation for the evaluation.	
	- Ensures data accuracy and consistency.	
Data Analyst (supplier)	- Provides insights and supports the preparation of evaluation	
	reports.	
	- Manages data visualization and presentation of findings.	
	- Coordinates communication with stakeholders, including	
Stakeholder Engagement Lead	education providers and NHS teams.	
(supplier)	- Manages stakeholder expectations and addresses concerns.	
(and brief)	- Organizes meetings, workshops, and updates for key	
	stakeholders.	

	- Gathers feedback to inform project adjustments.	
	- Supports project documentation and record-keeping.	
Administrative Support	- Assists with scheduling meetings and managing logistics.	
(supplier)	- Tracks action items and follows up with team members.	
(supplier)	- Ensures smooth operation of virtual meetings and	
	communication channels.	
	- Identifies and monitors project risks and mitigation strategies.	
	- Ensures the project adheres to regulatory and compliance	
Risk and Compliance Officer	requirements.	
(supplier)	- Conducts regular risk assessments and updates the risk	
	register.	
	- Provides guidance on risk management best practices.	

#### 7. Management Information & Governance

The governance framework for the evaluation project will ensure robust oversight, accountability, and quality management. The key components include:

#### 1. Contract Management and Oversight:

- The National Advancing Practice Programme will coordinate contract management. The evaluation partner will be required to appoint a Project Manager/Lead who has the authority to represent their organization and oversee the delivery of the project.
- o The frequency and approach to reporting will be agreed upon with the selected evaluation partner, with regular updates anticipated on a monthly basis.

#### 2. Reporting Requirements:

- The evaluation partner will provide quarterly performance reports, including both activity and financial data, to the National Advancing Practice Programme to facilitate ongoing monitoring of progress.
- Additional Management Information (MI) must be supplied to NHS England in accordance with contractual requirements, ensuring that all data is timely and accurate.

#### 3. Ownership and Use of Intellectual Property:

o All Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) arising from the evaluation including the dashboard will be retained by NHS England.

#### 4. Data Management and Information Systems:

o The evaluation partner is expected to operate and maintain systems, processes, and records that support the timely delivery of Management Information and adherence to the provisions of the contract.

The governance structure ensures alignment with project objectives, fosters clear communication, and establishes a systematic approach to performance monitoring and quality assurance.

#### 8. Performance and Measurement

KPI	Description	Target	Measurement Method
Logic Model Development	Completion of a logic model outlining the relationship between inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes within the first month.	Logic model completed and approved within 30 days of contract start.	Review by the National Advancing Practice Programme.
KPI Monitoring Dashboard Setup	Development of a KPI monitoring dashboard, including taxonomy, data templates, and processes, informed by the logic model.	Dashboard operational within 60 days of contract start.	Review of dashboard functionality and data accuracy.
Detailed evaluation plan	Deliver a comprehensive and detailed evaluation plan, including objectives, methodology, timelines, and key deliverables.	Drafted and shared within 3 months of contract start.	Review by the National Advancing Practice Programme.
Stakeholder Engagement Compliance	Regular engagement with all key stakeholders, including NHS England, practitioners, employers, education providers, and regulators.	100% of required stakeholder engagement activities completed on schedule.	Tracking of stakeholder engagement logs and feedback.

Data Collection and Analysis Quality	Comprehensive data collection, including quantitative and qualitative methods, analysis of findings, and triangulation of results.	High-quality data collection with no significant data gaps; quarterly reviews.	Evaluation of data accuracy and quality assurance checks.
Ethical and GDPR Compliance	Adherence to ethical guidelines and GDPR for data handling throughout the evaluation process.	100% compliance with ethical and data protection standards.	Audits of data handling procedures and ethics approval documentation.
Effectiveness of Evaluation Plan Execution	Development of a detailed evaluation plan, including research questions, methods, data sources, and schedules.	Evaluation plan approved within 60 days of contract start.	Assessment against the specified evaluation plan requirements.
Interim Report Submission	Delivery of an interim evaluation report with recommendations for continuous improvement.	Interim report submitted within 9 months.	Review by the National Advancing Practice Programme team.
Final Evaluation Report Quality and Timeliness	Submission of a final evaluation report, including an executive summary, detailed findings, and technical appendices.	Final report submitted within 18 months and meets quality standards.	Review of final report quality and adherence to requirements.
Publication and Dissemination Efforts	Collaboration with NHS England to prepare and submit findings for peer-reviewed publication and conference presentations.	At least one submission for a journal article or conference presentation.	Tracking of submission efforts and publication outcomes.
Continuous Improvement Recommendations	Provision of actionable recommendations for improvements to the ePortfolio (supported) Route based on evaluation findings.	Continuous improvement suggestions included in interim and final reports.	Review of report content and stakeholder feedback on recommendations

# 9. Budget

Expressions of interest are invited up to the maximum value of £240,000 exclusive of VAT which will be split quarterly based on time and materials (excluding expenses).

#### 10. Sustainable Development Requirements

Providers are required to comply with the <u>Greener NHS Plan</u> and the <u>NHS Roadmap</u>.

#### 11. Appendices

Key resources:

Multi-professional framework for advanced practice in England (2017) - Advanced Practice (hee.nhs.uk)

ePortfolio (supported) Route - Advanced Practice (hee.nhs.uk)

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This publication can be made available in a number of alternative formats on request.