

## Frequently Asked Questions Trainee Advanced Clinical Practitioner Funding (19/20) - HEE North West



### Version 1.1 – 11th March 2019

The following is a set of frequently asked questions and answers to assist employers in Cheshire and Merseyside and Lancashire and South Cumbria, submit an application for Advanced Clinical Practitioner funding in 2019/20. The document will be updated and re-published as new frequently asked questions emerge.

If you have other questions not included in this document and need an answer prior to submitting an application, please contact your STP area lead:

- For Cheshire and Merseyside please email [joanne.hancock@hee.nhs.uk](mailto:joanne.hancock@hee.nhs.uk)
- For Lancashire and South Cumbria please email [paul.meadows@hee.nhs.uk](mailto:paul.meadows@hee.nhs.uk)

## Section 1 - Advanced Clinical Practitioners and Trainees

### Q1. What is an Advanced Clinical Practitioner (ACP)?

**Answer:** Advanced Clinical Practice (ACP) is delivered by experienced, registered health care practitioners. It is a level of practice characterised by a high degree of autonomy and complex decision making. This is underpinned by a masters level award or equivalent that encompasses the four pillars of clinical practice, leadership and management, education and research, with demonstration of area specific clinical competence. ACP's come from a range of professional backgrounds such as Nursing, Pharmacy, Paramedics and Occupational Therapy.

### Q2. Is an ACP a specialist practitioner?

**Answer:** No, Advanced Clinical Practice is quite different from specialist practice. Specialists are experts in their chosen clinical area, for example in diabetes or asthma care and have a **depth** of knowledge in that specific area. ACPs have a **breadth** of knowledge and work across traditional professional boundaries.

### Q3. What is a Trainee ACP?

**Answer:** A Trainee ACP is a person employed specifically to undertake the required training to become an Advanced Clinical Practitioner. The training prepares practitioners who aspire to be an ACP, to function at an advanced level of practice and directly influence the care of individuals through leadership and change management strategies. Health Education England is supporting the development of ACP roles in 19/20 by offering funding for trainee ACP's. HEE has also developed the [ACP Multi-Professional Framework](#) the aim of which is to provide a clear and consistent approach to the development of advanced clinical practice across England.

### Q4. What learning can a Trainee ACP expect to receive?

**Answer:** In terms of course work, programmes will vary according to the timetables of the specific Higher Education Institution (HEI) but all students will be required to produce course work, assignments and essays, undertake Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) and deliver presentations and produce a portfolio of evidence. From time to time, students may also be required to gain experience and learning in other service areas.

### Q5. What commitment is expected of the Trainee ACP whilst studying?

**Answer:** In addition to HEI attendance and work-based learning of practical clinical skills, it is expected that each student will dedicate many hours to independent study in order to become successful in achieving the qualification. The notional number of hours of study and teaching expected is approximately 100 hours per 10 credits (which includes both contact hours and independent study hours) however, the actual time spent may be more, or less, dependent on individual learners.

## Q6. How much time will the Trainee ACP be away from their job studying?

**Answer:** For the apprenticeship programme, generally, 80% of an Apprentice's time will be training in the workplace with 20% at the HEI. For the MSc Advanced Clinical Practice Programme HEE requires the employer to provide the trainee with a minimum amount of protected time for HEI learning and work based learning per week. This will likely be a minimum of two days per week on a two-year course and one day per week on a three-year course but will be confirmed on offer of funding.

## Q7. I understand ACP training can include a Non-Medical Prescribing (NMP) element, what happens if I already have it or I don't need it?

**Answer:** HEE require training providers to include Non-Medical Prescribing (NMP) as a module on ACP programmes. If a student already has the NMP qualification or doesn't need it the training provider is likely to provide a choice of module(s) that the student can undertake instead and agree this with their employer. HEE will not fund NMP separately for those on an ACP Pathway.

## Section 2 – HEE Funding

### Q8. I am thinking of employing a Trainee ACP, what is HEE's funding offer in 19/20?

**Answer:** There are three potential funding educational pathways available:

- **ACP Fees Funded pathway**– A two-year MSc Advanced Clinical Practice Programme (three years within Cumbria) available at a HEE recognised training provider. HEE will pay the full tuition costs direct to the training provider plus a Training Grant of £9k per year paid directly to the employer. To further support applications from Primary Care an increased Training Grant will be made available of 18K per year.
- **ACP Apprenticeship pathway**– A national Level 7 Advanced Clinical Practice Apprenticeship programme that has a typical length of 36 months. HEE will provide a Training Grant at the same overall value as the MSc Advanced Clinical Practice programme (above).
  - **Example 1** - If the 2-year MSc Advanced Clinical Practice Programme receives a total Training Grant of £18K (£9k per year) HEE will match fund the £18K over the life of the 3-year apprenticeship programme. This would be equivalent to a Training Grant of £6k per year (£18k / 3).
  - **Example 2** - If the 2-year MSc Advanced Clinical Practice Programme receives a Training Grant of £18K per year (£36K in total) HEE will match fund the £36K over the life of the 3-year apprenticeship at £12K per year ((£36K / 3).
- In addition, for non-levy payer's that choose the apprenticeship pathway for funding, HEE will also fund the 10% tuition costs.
- **ACP Top Up - Part Qualified Staff** – The possibility of completing a number of modules associated with the MSc Advanced Clinical Practice Programme to achieve the full masters qualification. HEE will fund a modular offer to staff that have existing academic

and workplace capabilities and that can be further supported to achieve the full ACP requirements. This is in recognition that a number of students do not need to embark on the full apprenticeship or masters programme to achieve all the learning they need to operate as an ACP. Further details of the criteria for accessing this funding will be published in due course, but at application stage employers are asked to express an interest.

### **Q9. What is HEE's Training Grant for and what is the responsibility of the employer on receiving this?**

**Answer:** The Training Grant is used to support the employer in relation to the associated costs in helping the employee achieve their qualification. It is paid directly to the employer and is currently paid three months in arrears, following the submission of an invoice to HEE. The Training Grant can help support the following:

- A contribution to salary costs for the Trainee ACP
- Costs associated with Trainee ACP study time away from work
- Costs associated with the employer providing learning support within their organization i.e. designated practice mentors and facilitators.

### **Q10. What are the minimum hours the employee needs to be employed, to be a Trainee ACP?**

**Answer:** For the apprenticeship programme it is a minimum of 30 hours per week. For the MSc Advanced Clinical Practice Programme, this will differ at each University but again, this will generally be a minimum of 30 hours. If the employer is recruiting a new person as a Trainee ACP, then it is suggested they are recruited on a minimum contract of 30 hours. For existing employees, if they work less than 30 hours per week, please contact the relevant programme lead at the HEI to discuss their suitability for the programme.

### **Q11. How is the Training grant calculated for part time staff?**

**Answer:** All employers receive the same amount of Training Grant per student irrespective of whether the student works full time or part time. This is because both the apprenticeship and MSc programmes, generally require the student to work for a minimum of 30 hours per week.

### **Q12. Which organisations can apply for funding?**

**Answer:** The Funding is available to the following organisations in HEE's North West region:

- NHS organisations e.g. Trusts, CCGs, GP Practices
- Organisations undertaking commissioned work on behalf of the NHS delivering within the North West of England
- Private, voluntary and independent sector organisations. These organisations must be 'not for profit'.

**Q13. Is this funding for new or existing employees and does HEE have a preference?**

**Answer:** The funding offer is for both new and existing staff and HEE welcome applications for both. However, for employers who are planning on recruiting a new member of staff, then it is recommended financial commitment for the recruitment is obtained as soon as possible and with plenty of time prior to the Universities admissions process

**Q14. I am considering employing a Trainee ACP, why would I choose the Apprenticeship route rather than the existing MSc Advanced Clinical Practice Programme?**

**Answer:** HEE funding for the MSc Advanced Clinical Practice Programme is limited and therefore funding support is being offered on the Apprenticeship programme to encourage further adoption of the ACP level of practice via all available routes. Universities and employers will be delivering the apprenticeship through a full masters award, as opposed to more loosely defined 'masters level' education which otherwise includes PGCerts, PGDip and experiential learning routes. Whilst larger levy paying employers will use their levy to pay the £12,000 tuition fees, for non-levy payers HEE will cover the 10% tuition costs, which is aimed to further encourage applications via the apprenticeship route. HEE encourage ACP Leads to consider apprenticeships as their primary option, to enable support to be provided for an increased number of applicants. To view the Apprenticeship Standard for an Advanced Clinical Practitioner, click [here](#).

## Section 3 – HEI's and Student Support

**Q15. What HEI's in the North West region can the employee study at and could they study further afield?**

**Answer:** A list of HEI's that provide the ACP learning in the North region is shown in the **ACP Principles 2019/20** document, Appendix 2. This should be viewed prior to making an application. Also, within the electronic application form that needs to be completed when seeking funding, lists the available HEI's and asks the applicant to indicate first and second choice for their Trainee ACP(s). If a funding offer is made to the employer, HEE will aim to allocate based on the first HEI choice indicated.

HEE North will be establishing an ACP HEI Preferred Supplier List (PSL) prior to September 2019 and will only support the **ACP Fees Funded Pathway** for providers that are recognised on the PSL. There may be opportunities for students to attend HEI's outside the north region but it is likely it will only be for HEI's delivering specialist Trainee ACP pathways.

**Q16. What are the HEI's admission requirements for a Trainee ACP?**

**Answer:** Please check with the HEI directly on their specific entry requirements, which can often be found on their website. Entry requirements will likely consider; current professional registration, significant post-registration experience of professional practice, evidence the employee is / will be operating in a role that will offer the opportunity to practice at an advanced level within their profession and evidence of professional and academic development, including any international qualifications and levels of English and Maths.

## **Q17. Can students APEL any previous academic credits and therefore reduce the overall length of their course?**

**Answer:** APEL (Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning) is the process where credit is sought for learning which has not previously been assessed and awarded credit by an academic institution. Most HEI's have a scheme for the recognition of prior learning and will allow students to import a number of credits up to a specified maximum. The credits which can be imported will vary according to HEI rules and regulations but will not normally exceed one third of the credits required for the degree. Students wishing to import credits should discuss their individual case with the relevant admissions tutor before the commencement of a programme of study.

## **Q18. What support can Trainee ACP's expect during the study and if a student is failing will the employer be informed?**

**Answer:** All HEI programmes will be taught by lecturers and expert clinical practitioners in their field who will offer dedicated academic support and guidance and students will be allocated a named personal tutor. The HEI also offers support through a dedicated librarian and a comprehensive student support service. Students also find their cohort of colleagues of immeasurable value as a support network. In the case of failing students, the matter would be discussed with the student in the first instance. Where there are data protection regulations restricting the sharing of student grades directly with employers, HEE will work with the HEI's to explore options for the employing organisation to be informed.

## **Q19. What happens if the employee discontinues their ACP programme before it is completed?**

**Answer:** It is recognised, from time to time, some students may have to suspend their study e.g. for long term sickness, personal reasons etc. Where a student is discontinuing their studying but will be returning to complete this and have indicated the timescales to the HEI, this is called 'stepping off' and HEE will consider resuming funding when the student returns to study. However, these are reviewed on a case by case basis as it is dependent on whether the student is able to complete the course within the timescales available on their return. Where a student is not returning to study, HEE will discontinue the Training Grant payment at the point they leave the programme. In all circumstances HEE should be informed immediately so that the Training Grant payments can be suspended/stopped.

## **Q20. What happens with if the Trainee ACP leaves the employer that HEE is currently funding, for another employer?**

**Answer:** All such instances will be looked at on a case by case basis and no guarantee of continued funding can be provided to either the employer or employee. However, in reviewing the situation, HEE would first consider how it can continue funding the current employer who was granted the funding for a Trainee ACP and where that is not possible look to see how the Trainee ACP can continue to be supported.

## Section 4 – HEE Funding Application Process

### Q21. Where can I find the application form?

**Answer:** All applications are required to be submitted electronically. Please click [here](#) or copy and paste the below link into your web browser:

<https://healtheducationyh.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/advanced-clinical-practitioner-copy>

### Q22. Who should complete the application?

**Answer:** HEE requires a single lead contact for each employer to submit applications for this funding. This is called the ACP Designated Lead and it is the person who will act as the key liaison for all enquiries relating to the applications for that type of ACP funding being applied for. This is to ensure there has been appropriate scrutiny applied to the application including agreement for recruitment (where needed) and alignment with organisational workforce development needs. Applications from individuals seeking funding where they are not considered an ACP Designated Lead, will not be accepted.

### Q23. I note there are five types of Trainee ACP programme listed in the electronic application form, do I need to complete an application for each type of ACP programme I am seeking funding for?

**Answer:** The electronic application form only allows you to choose one type of Trainee ACP programme for which you are seeking funding. You must choose either: 'Advanced Clinical Practitioner', 'Advanced Paediatric Nurse Practitioner', 'Advanced Neonatal Practitioner' 'Advanced Critical Care Practitioner' or 'ACP Specialist Pathway'. Therefore, in a single application, the applicant can apply for funding for as many employees as they like for that type of ACP.

### Q24. What is covered under the type of Trainee ACP programme called 'Advanced Clinical Practitioner'?

**Answer:** The majority of ACP programmes at University will be for this generic ACP type. This includes Nurses, Paramedics, Physiotherapists and other type of Allied Health Professional. You would choose this option in your application in all cases, unless you are specifically seeking funding for 'Advanced Paediatric Nurse Practitioner', 'Advanced Neonatal Practitioner' 'Advanced Critical Care Practitioner' or 'ACP Specialist Pathway'

### Q25. What is the ACP Specialist Pathway?

**Answer:** There are a number of Universities in the North West now offering specialist ACP training e.g. The University of Manchester offering an ACP programme in Cancer. Where you are seeking funding for these programmes you should choose the ACP Specialist Pathway in the electronic application form.

### **Q26. What if I am seeking funding for two types of Trainee ACP programmes e.g. 'Advanced Clinical Practitioner' and 'Advanced Critical Care Practitioner'?**

**Answer:** If you are the designated lead for both these types of ACP's in your organisation, you will need to complete two separate applications as the application form only allows you to choose on type of Trainee ACP Programme at a time.

### **Q27. How do I decide which HEI to choose in the application form if I have a number of employees that wish to study at different HEI's?**

**Answer:** At application stage, employers can only indicate two HEI's for each application – a first and second choice. This assists HEE to establish the level of demand at each HEI for commissioning purposes. If a funding offer is made to the employer, HEE will aim to allocate based on the first HEI choice indicated in the application form, so it is important applicants choose the most preferred HEI's as indicated by their employees, if they are seeking funding for multiple Trainee ACP's.

### **Q28. What information do I put in the application when confirming 'Service Need'?**

**Answer:** You are required to define the need for the Trainee ACP within your organisation. This should include the overall objective for this role and outline the benefits for your organisation in having a Trainee ACP e.g. to improve certain services / patient outcomes / staff skills and abilities. This is an important section taken into account when determining funding requests.

### **Q29. What information do I put in the application when confirming 'The Role'?**

**Answer:** Whilst the Job Description will list the key day to day tasks and accountabilities of the Trainee ACP, please provide supplementary information here to further outline the role. This could include; how you envisage the role working in practice, how it will provide leadership to the workforce and how the role might transform services and allow you to work differently or with other organisations. This is also an important section in helping to decide on funding.

### **Q30. What do I need to submit with the application?**

**Answer:** You must compile and submit a single generic Job Description (JD) for each electronic application you complete and send it to the email provided in the electronic application, remembering to quote on the JD, the unique application reference number generated by the system. Example generic JD's (and some specific ones) can be obtained from HEE at the contacts on page one. Whilst they may not exactly match your requirements, they may help in compiling your own JD.

### **Q31. Can I part complete an application and come back to it later, to finish?**

**Answer:** Yes, the application can be saved prior to submitting, however once an application form is submitted amendments cannot be made.

## Q32. What happens after I have submitted my application?

**Answer:** HEE will review your application(s) along with your JD(s) and notify you whether a 'funding offer' can be made. However, it may not be possible to provide funding for all applications received and where you are not successful, you will be notified. At that point, if you wish, your application can be placed on a reserve list that is used to replace any employers that decide not to ultimately accept HEE's funding offer.

## Q33. What if I am successful in obtaining funding but then unable to employ the Trainee ACP in time?

**Answer:** You must inform HEE as soon as possible so that the funding place can be re allocated to another employer.