

Supporting Advancing Practice for Radiographers: ECF Framework

This work was commissioned and funded by NHS England.



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Project Report 6D.3: Supporting Advancing Practice for Radiographers: ECF Framework

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Project summary: Aligned to the College of Radiographers' Education and Career Framework (ECF)(2022), a project to change the College of Radiographers' (CoR) accreditation of individual practitioners working at the advanced and consultant levels of practice, to align with the CoR post-registration programme approval processes and taking account of the NHS England Centre for Advancing Practice; Ultimately supporting individual practitioners towards advancing practice through implementation of the ECF into practice through the development of learning needs analysis mapping resources at the enhanced, advanced and consultant levels of practice.

This project complements the work of other NHSE commissioned projects with SoR/CoR: *Projects 1.1 Maintaining the climate to maintain supply, 4.5 Educator ECF case study development, 6C.1 Enhanced level practice socialization project CHEERS: Championing Enhanced Level Practice in Radiography, 6C.2 WE-SEARCH Project, scoping enhanced, advanced and consultant education provision against current and future service needs.*

Project Objectives:

1. Scoping of current sector challenges/developments/opportunities within the advancing practice space in radiography and the wider healthcare arena.
2. Concurrently with Phase 3: Cessation of the CoR Advanced and Consultant Accreditation Schemes with associated member communications and supporting resource.
3. Concurrently with Phase 2: Planning of alternative provision to include self-assessment practice-level specific mapping documents for enhanced, advanced, consultant radiography practitioners in alignment with the ECF.

4. Development of alternative resources in place of the CoR Advanced and Consultant Accreditation schemes.
5. Final publication and dissemination of resources.

Background

Education and Career Framework ECF

In 2022, the College of Radiographers (CoR) revised and relaunched its [Education & Career Framework \(ECF\) for the Radiography Workforce](#), outlining the various levels of practice within radiography and associated educational standards, including the enhanced, advanced and consultant levels of practice. The overarching aim of the ECF is to improve outcomes for patients through the education, training and development of the workforce. The framework details the knowledge, skills and attributes (KSAs) across all levels and roles within radiography, in addition to the expected education, qualifications and practitioner contributions towards the four pillars of practice for each level of practice. The KSAs lay out the expected competencies for a practitioner at each level of practice and as such have been written to correspond to the academic level of learning associated with each specific level of practice. It is therefore intended that implementation of the ECF into practice will help to support and develop the collective competencies of the workforce, allowing them to grow their capabilities to be able to respond to the ever-changing context and challenges they may face.

CoR Accreditation

Since the mid-2000s, the College of Radiographers has offered CoR accreditation for advanced and consultant practitioners. The Advanced and Consultant Practitioner Accreditation Schemes were initially set up to support ongoing engagement in level-appropriate continuing professional development. However, since the introduction of the schemes, engagement has remained [low](#). As of May 2024, a total of 22 advanced practitioners and 12 consultant practitioners held CoR Accreditation.

After publication of the ECF, a planned period of review of the CoR accreditation schemes commenced, taking account of the rapidly changing external sector changes associated with advanced and consultant clinical practice.

The external sector changes have included growing awareness and implementation of national frameworks for advanced level practice (across all nations of the UK) and consultant level practice (England, Scotland, Wales), new systems for recognition, such as those established by the NHSE Centre for Advancing Practice (CfAP), and work from the regulators considering if regulation of advanced level practice should be introduced. Whilst the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) agreed in July 2021 that the case for additional regulation of advanced practice had not been made, the [Nursing and Midwifery Council \(NMC\)](#) recently announced that they will proceed to

develop an approach to the additional regulation of advanced practice for nursing and midwifery. The HCPC input into this work and [recently published a statement that their position remains unchanged](#). The HCPC are planning further work on the development of a common understanding and guiding principles for advanced practice, in addition to work on the importance of practice-level appropriate continuing professional development.

This changing external context, coupled with new government policy actively promoting and supporting transformation of the multi-professional workforce at scale, plus the publication of the CoR ECF providing greater clarity around the capabilities and educational requirements at the advanced and consultant levels of practice, have informed the College Board of Trustees' decision to close the accreditation schemes in favor of alternative provision which has been enabled through this project funding.

Alternative provision

Through the NHSE funding received, new resources have been developed to support greater understanding and awareness of the expectations associated with the enhanced, advanced, and consultant levels of practice for radiographers and sonographers. The outputs of this project have also been informed through the NHSE commissioned project 6C.2 WE-SEARCH, scoping of enhanced, advanced and consultant educational pathways against current and future service needs.

The new practitioner level- specific mapping resources will build on the existing ECF KSA programme mapping resources used by the CoR to assess and approve pre- and post-registration radiography education provision through the CoR programme approval process, therefore supporting the implementation of the ECF into practice both within, and through, education and clinical practice.

Practitioners will be able to use the newly developed practice level-specific mapping tools to map their current education, training, and expertise against the professional body expectations for each level of practice as detailed within the ECF. These resources will allow members to evaluate and identify any further education and development needs relative to either their current level of practice or future career goals.

Methodology

A 5-phase approach was taken to ensure the completion of this project:

Phase 1	Scoping review of the current sector challenges/developments/opportunities within the advanced practice space in radiography and the wider healthcare arena.
Phase 2	Concurrently with Phase 3:

	Cessation of the CoR Accreditation schemes and associated member communications and supporting resources (Appendix 1)
Phase 3	Concurrently with Phase 2 -Planning of alternative provision to include self-assessment practice level mapping documents for enhanced, advanced, consultant practitioners and supporting guidance.
Phase 4	Development of alternative resources – Practitioner mapping tools for enhanced, advanced and consultant level practice (Appendices 2-4)
Phase 5	Final publication of resources

Outputs & Conclusion

A copy of the communications and [supporting FAQs](#) regarding the closure of the CoR Advanced and Consultant Accreditation schemes can be found [here](#).

Practice level-specific ECF KSA mapping tools have been developed for the enhanced, advanced and consultant levels of practice to enable practitioners to undertake a learning needs analysis of their current learning and development and to support engagement with strategic continuing professional development activities, be that to develop in their current role and level of practice or to progress onwards towards higher levels of practice. This work will support the implementation of the Education and Career Framework of the Radiography Workforce into practice. Copies of each mapping tool can be found in Appendices 1-3.

Dissemination of the resources will be through publication on the SoR/CoR website, through training sessions with Union Learning Representatives who will support onward dissemination within clinical departments, and via various webinars and SoR/CoR stakeholder groups.

APPENDIX

1. College of Radiographers Education and Career Framework Practitioner Mapping Tool:
Enhanced Level Knowledge, Skills and Attributes
<https://www.sor.org/learning-advice/professional-body-guidance-and-publications/documents-and-publications/policy-guidance-document-library/education-and-career-framework-practitioner-mappin>
2. College of Radiographers Education and Career Framework Practitioner Mapping Tool:
Advanced Level Knowledge, Skills and Attributes
[https://www.sor.org/learning-advice/professional-body-guidance-and-publications/documents-and-publications/policy-guidance-document-library/education-and-career-framework-practitioner-ma-\(1\)](https://www.sor.org/learning-advice/professional-body-guidance-and-publications/documents-and-publications/policy-guidance-document-library/education-and-career-framework-practitioner-ma-(1))
3. College of Radiographers Education and Career Framework Practitioner Mapping Tool:
Consultant Level Knowledge, Skills and Attributes
<https://www.sor.org/learning-advice/professional-body-guidance-and-publications/documents-and-publications/policy-guidance-document-library/college-of-radiographers-education-and-career-fram>



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