

Specification for the Degree Apprenticeship

This document applies to Academic Year 2023/24 onwards

The Specification for Integrated Degree Apprenticeship should be read as a companion document to the Programme Specification for the academic award linked to the apprenticeship.

1.	Apprenticeship title	Advanced Clinical Practitioner (Degree)
2.	Qualifications	MSc Advanced Clinical Practice
3.	Level	Level 7
4.	Professional registration	Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) and Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) Independent & Supplementary Prescribing (V300) (MACP4007); General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) Principles and Practice of Independent Prescribing for Pharmacists (MACP4015)
5.	Duration	Part-time (30 - 36 months)
6.	Managing institution/Main Provider	University of Worcester
7.	Teaching institution(s)	University of Worcester
8.	Apprenticeship Standard and Number	Advanced Clinical Practitioner (Degree) ST0564. Approved – 27 March 2018
9.	Date of Apprenticeship Specification preparation/revision	Approved June 2020 August 2020 QAA reference updated August 2021 – AQU amendments August 2022 – ESFA and module updates August 2023 – updated programme spec link added

10. Distinguishing features of the apprenticeship

Higher level or Degree Apprenticeships combine higher education study and work-based/work-integrated learning to enable apprentices to achieve a higher-level award (e.g. a Foundation Degree, Bachelors or Masters qualification) whilst in work. The provision of an academic award is integrated with experience, practice and learning in the workplace where the apprentice has paid employment status. Higher level/Degree Apprenticeships are co-designed by training providers and employers to ensure that apprentices are equipped with the skills employers need and to develop apprentices' careers.

The Advanced Clinical Practitioner (ACP) role is reflected in the [NHS \(2019\) Long Term Plan](#) in its aim of delivering improved care for patients over the next 10 years. By completing this course ACP apprentices will have achieved the capabilities across the 4 pillars of advanced practice: clinical practice, leadership and management, education and research, outlined in the NHSE (2017) [Multi-professional framework for advanced clinical practice](#) and the [Apprenticeship Standard ST0564: Advanced Clinical Practitioner \(Degree\)](#) (Institute for Apprentices Technical Education (IfATE) 2018) which requires demonstration of knowledge, skills and behaviours to challenge areas of concern and work to best practice whilst being adaptable, reliable and consistent.

The ACP apprenticeship has been based on the occupational standard for Advanced Clinical Practitioner (Degree) as set out by the IfATE and approved for delivery by the healthcare trailblazer (March 2018). Given the broad scope of patient care of the University of Worcester (UW) Practice Partners', the focus of the UW ACP apprenticeship will be across a wide

spectrum with the ACP apprentices individualising their knowledge, skills and behaviours through an individual learning plan within their own area of practice.

The ACP apprentices will be taught alongside the fee-paying students studying the [Masters in Advanced Clinical Practice](#). This ACP apprenticeship (ACPA) is a flexible programme of study and it is anticipated that the majority of ACP apprentices will normally complete the end point assessment within 36 months of part time study.

11. Occupational Profile

Advanced Clinical Practitioners (ACP) are experienced clinicians who demonstrate expertise in their scope of practice. Advanced Clinical Practitioners lead manage defined episodes of clinical care independently, from beginning to end, providing care and treatment from the time an individual⁽¹⁾ first presents through to the end of the episode, which may include admission, referral or discharge or care at home. They carry out their full range of duties in relation to individuals' physical and mental healthcare and in acute, primary, urgent and emergency settings (including hospitals, general practice, individuals' homes, schools and prisons, and in the public, independent, private and charity sectors). ACPs combine expert clinical skills with research, education and clinical leadership within their scope of practice. Advanced Clinical Practitioners work innovatively on a one-to-one basis with individuals as well as part of a wider team. They work as part of the wider health and social care team and across traditional professional boundaries in health and social care.

⁽¹⁾ *Individuals includes patients, service users, clients and customers*

12. Admissions Requirements

Admissions policy

The University aims to provide fair and equal access to university education to all those who have the potential to succeed or benefit from it.

The Advanced Clinical Practice apprenticeship aims to recruit apprentices who are healthcare professionals registered with a Professional Statutory Regulatory Body. Applicants must be currently working in a health care environment for a minimum of 30 hours a week, in order for them to be in a position to develop an appropriate, safe level of competence in the ACP skills. ACP apprentices will be progressing in their skills, knowledge and behaviours in their own clinical areas, through work-based learning, supported by the academic programme.

Work-related entry requirements

Under UK Government requirements, Higher Level or Degree Apprentices normally must be employed for a minimum of 30 hours per week and must have the right to live and work in the UK. A Degree Apprentice cannot be self-employed.

All applicants must be employed in a role related to the subject matter of the apprenticeship and be sponsored by their employer. The support of the employer is articulated in an apprenticeship agreement. Applications can only be made through the sponsoring employer. Working in partnership with the employer the University will consider all such applications and will have the final decision whether to accept individuals based on whether they meet the minimum entry requirements for the academic programme as stipulated below.

Entry requirements

Before an applicant can be accepted onto the course the applicant must hold:

- A Contract of Service with the employer
- An Apprenticeship Agreement with the employer

- A signed Training Plan (formally commitment statement) compliant with the funding rules
- Professional registration with Professional Statutory Regulatory Body e.g. NMC/HCPC/GPhC
- A completed UW ACP declaration of good character form by employer
- Level 2 English and math (recognised equivalent)
 - Where an applicant has not obtained or the applicant cannot evidence achievement of a level 2 qualification (or acceptable alternative) in Maths and English, the Training Plan must include confirmation by the employer stating the applicant will be provided with *ADDITIONAL* study leave time to achieve this award.
 - Condition of apprenticeship completion is that level 2 in Maths and English (or acceptable alternative) is obtained *BEFORE* the gateway and apprentices will not be able to progress to the End Point Assessment (EPA) without evidence of achievement.
- **Either**
 - A lower second-class Honours degree (2:2) in a health-related subject or an overseas equivalent.
- OR**
 - Qualifications and experience considered to be equivalent to the above.

When assessing a non-standard applicant's suitability for entry onto the programme, candidates will need to demonstrate their potential to achieve the aims and outcomes of the programme, and that their experiences are equivalent to having achieved a 2.2 at undergraduate level

Students whose first language is not English will be expected to have reached a sufficient standard on admission to the programme; usually a minimum IELTS of 7.0 (with no less than 6.5 in any component). Other equivalent English qualifications will also be considered.

The Independent and Supplementary Prescribing modules (MACP4007 or MACP4015) have specific entry criteria, as they are associated with an award from a regulatory body (GPhC, NMC and HCPC). The entry criteria and admissions process are fully detailed in [the Independent and Supplementary Prescribing \(V300\) Programme Specification](#) Applicants for the MSc, wishing to undertake one of these optional modules must also complete a separate regional prescribing application form, prior to acceptance for the MSc.

Recognition of Prior Learning fees

Assessment of any RPL claims will be made by the UW Admissions Tutor in line with the University of Worcester's [Recognition of Prior Learning guidance and process](#). Where RPL is agreed negotiation to adjust the fees with the employer will be undertaken to reflect where the content, and/or duration of the apprenticeship has been adjusted to recognise prior learning.

On initial assessment UW RPL & RPEL policies will be enacted where there is credits can be transferred or awarded, the apprenticeship fee and learning programme will be adapted in line with employer and apprentice needs. To be an apprenticeship the minimum duration of the programme must be 12 months.

Appropriate employment in a suitable clinical environment is essential to complete this Advanced Clinical Practitioner Apprenticeship, which includes a requirement to have an appropriate Clinical Supervisor and therefore, apprentices must have identified a Clinical Supervisor for the duration of the apprenticeship and must have their line manager's approval and support, prior to acceptance for the apprenticeship.

Admissions procedures

All applicants apply via their employing organisation. Prior to application, candidates are advised to discuss their application with their line manager and to gain the support of their employing organisation. Employers will short-list applicants and select for interview. All shortlisted applicants are required to complete an initial needs assessment (INA) of the KSB's in partnership with their line manager to identify their starting point, any RPL and if the apprenticeship is appropriate for the applicant.

All shortlisted applicants who meet the entry requirements, will be required to attend an interview held in partnership with the university admissions tutor and employer. The interview will discuss the INA, ensure the applicant has realistic expectations of the course, appropriateness of the course for their role and to ensure that they have an appropriate Clinical Supervisor arranged to support them throughout the course.

Selection criteria

Following identification and nomination of an apprentice by an employer, the following selection criteria will be used to shortlist for ACP Apprenticeship interview:

- The applicant's potential to succeed in the Advanced Clinical Practitioner apprenticeship
- Academic or professional qualifications and grades, to meet the entry requirements above
- Relevant work or other experience required for the specific module entry requirements as above
- Applicants' own statements of interest in the course
- Reference(s) from the employer confirming the applicant's experience and appropriateness of the course for their role
- Successful demonstration of communication skills, team working and understanding of the ACP role
- Contextual consideration of merit and potential

13. Structure of the apprenticeship

Higher level or Degree Apprenticeships involve both work-integrated learning in paid employment and academic study. The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) specify that apprentices must have at least 6 hours per week involved in 'off-the-job' learning, while the remaining proportion takes place 'on the job' i.e. through their job role. The requirements for this apprenticeship will follow the academic programme as articulated in the MSc Advanced Clinical Practice programme's award map and programme requirements.

Below sets out the typical 'off-the-job' hours required each year, based on a course duration of 33 months before reaching the EPA gateway (this equates to approximately 7.5 hours per week excluding holidays):

Year	Theory hours (taught days)	Directed Study hours*	Work-Based Protected Learning Time hours	Total off-the-job hours
One (60 credits)	144	144	72	360
Two (60 credits)	144	144	72**	360

Three (40 credits)	22	206	NA	228
Total 160 credits***	310	494	144	948

*Directed study hours: this does not include all the hours identified in the module specifications. Additional directed study time forms part of the 'on-the-job' hours

** For apprentices not completing independent and supplementary prescribing they complete an additional 72 hours of 'off-the-job' hours in year 2, as identified on their Training Plan

*** Credits and 'off-the-job' hours exclude MACP4017, the EPA module (20 credits)

Completion of 'off-the-job' learning will be monitored through the completion of an individual learning log and will be reviewed at Individual Learner Progress Reviews (ILPRs) and discussed at employer reviews.

14. Knowledge, skills and behaviours

Higher level or Degree Apprenticeships support apprentices in progressively developing the knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) required to meet the relevant Apprenticeship Standard.

Grid showing the knowledge, skills and behaviours required by [Apprenticeship Standard Advanced Clinical Practitioner](#) mapped to the MSc Advanced Clinical Practice modules and the [NHSE \(2017\) Multi-professional ACP framework capabilities](#) are included in the Apprenticeship Handbook.

15. Learning and teaching

The programme adopts a student-centred approach to learning, teaching and assessment, supporting apprentices to achieve the learning outcomes. It incorporates, a balance of approaches, including *constructivist*, where construction of knowledge occurs through experiences and engagement. Apprentices are encouraged to take the initiative for their own learning experiences and behaviours, which focuses on learning that is observable. It uses a blended learning approach with modules being delivered by a blend of face-to-face and online activities. A number of modules are further complemented by supervised work-based learning in the apprentices' placement of employment.

Teaching

The role of the academics and clinical supervisors is highly valued to develop the clinical practice and learning of apprentices. The 'off the job' learning and teaching methods in University includes: lectures, flipped classroom, web-based learning using Blackboard to support an online discussion forum, Blackboard Collaborate, seminars and workshops, problem-based learning, observed and supervised learning, practical sessions, project supervision, independent self-study. Apprentices will undertake learning in their workplace guided by their clinical supervisors and utilise specialist resources such as the clinical skills laboratory for simulated practice.

Apprentices will commence the course with a mandatory first module (MACP4001), which introduces them to Level 7 study through an exploration of Advanced Clinical Practice. The University places emphasis on enabling apprentices to develop the independent learning capabilities that will equip them for lifelong learning and future employment, as well as academic achievement. A mixture of directed study, teaching and academic support from

[Student Services](#) and [Library Services](#), and also the [Personal Academic Tutoring](#) system enables apprentices to reflect on progress and build up a profile of skills, achievements and experiences that will help them to flourish and be successful.

Personal Academic Tutoring

[Personal Academic Tutoring](#) is central to supporting the ACP apprentices personally, professionally and academically. The programme team believe that the Personal Academic Tutor (PAT) system is fundamental to ACP apprentices' success. All ACP apprentices will be allocated a PAT from within team of lecturers. Opportunities will exist to meet PATs at induction; this early introduction is built on by regular meetings across the academic year. At the induction the PAT provides a group tutorial to support the development of capabilities for the work-based learning module (MACP4013). PATs will act as the first point of contact for ACP apprentices experiencing problems or concerns arising while at university, offering signposting to wider University support services. They promote the academic and professional development for the apprentice and provide an official University reference for their apprentices if it should be required.

Individual Learner Progress Reviews (ILPRs)

Individual Learner Progress Reviews (ILPR's) are tripartite meetings which are planned quarterly, they involve the University, Employer and Apprentice and are a requirement of all Higher-Level Degree Apprenticeships to monitor learning, ongoing progress and achievement against the KSB's of the Apprenticeship Standard and the Capabilities document. They also monitor 'off-the-job' learning time. For this programme, the ILPR will be undertaken in the practice learning setting (either in person or virtually) by the PAT (or a member of the Apprenticeship Education Team), the clinical supervisor and the ACP apprentice.

16. Assessment

Assessment for the theoretical modules will follow the award map set out for the MSc Advanced Clinical Practice.

In addition, the ACP apprenticeship assessment will include:

Gateway to end point assessment: In order to progress to the End Point Assessment, the apprentice must have:

- achieved 160 level 7 credits by completing the mandatory and optional modules
- completed the ACP Apprenticeship KSBs and ACP Capabilities
- evidence of achievement of Maths and English at Level 2
- evidence of continued registration on an appropriate professional register (NMC, HCPC or GPhC)
- signed Employer declaration that the apprentice is consistently working at or above the level set out in the occupational standard and is thus ready to take the EPA
- met the minimum duration for the apprenticeship (one year)
- evidence of 'off-the-job' learning (minimum 6 hours per week)

The requirements of the EPA gateway are formally recorded in a zero-credit module, MACP4018: End Point Assessment Gateway for Advanced Clinical Practitioner Apprentices.

Integrated end point assessment (EPA):

Apprentices will have access to a Virtual Online Learning Environment (VLE) Blackboard throughout their apprenticeship and this will continue as the designated online resource area once they have reached the Gateway. Confirmation for being ready to enter the gateway will be ratified by the Gateway examination board which will include completion of MACP4018. The EPA module will have a dedicated VLE site containing the EPA Guide (module guide for MACP4017: Advanced Clinical Practice Knowledge, Skills & Behaviours End Point

Assessment). This outlines the EPA assessment, assessment schedule and templates for assessment preparation. In addition, UW will provide access to study space for apprentices to independently work in preparation for the EPA.

During the ACP apprenticeship and before the Gateway, preparation for the EPA will have been offered through the achievement of the capabilities aligned to the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours, the ILPs, the ILPR's and some assessments for modules undertaken. For example, an assessment for Enhancing and Challenging ACP (MACP4001) requires the completion and submission of a change report based on the apprentice's area of practice and for Health and Social Needs Assessment for ACP (MACP4002) a case study is completed.

The EPA date will be set within 12 weeks of the Gateway and agreed by the Employer.

The EPA will consist of two assessments:

- A 2-hour open book examination comprising of 8 questions that are independently set and assessed by the EPA independent assessor. Apprentices submit three 1500-word case studies 5 days in advance of the examination and bring them to the EPA 2-hour open book examination.
- 1500-word (+/- 10%) clinical change report which is submitted 5 days in advance of a 35-minute presentation which includes 10 minutes for questions (+/-10%) to the EPA panel consisting of an independent university assessor and independent EPA assessor, the independent EPA assessor will be responsible for the final grade given for the EPA but will consider the panels views

Apprentices that have a Disability Student Support Plan will receive any extra time or resource identified in their individual plan.

Apprentices who fail the EPA will, in conjunction with employer support be offered one additional assessment attempt only.

17. Awarding the Apprenticeship

Upon successful completion of all the modules (180 credits) the apprentice will receive two awards the MSc Advanced Clinical Practice and the Advanced Clinical Practitioner Apprenticeship degree. The MSc Advanced Clinical Practice will be classified in line with UW degree classification and will include all 180 credits, including the EPA module. The classification of distinction, merit or pass for the apprenticeship will be awarded by the independent EPA assessor based on results of the assessments completed for MACP4017 End Point Assessment module.

18. Reference points

The following reference points were used in designing the apprenticeship:

[Advanced Clinical Practitioner \(Degree\) apprenticeship standard](#) (Institute of Apprentices 2018)

[Multi-professional framework for Advanced Clinical Practitioners](#) (NHS 2017)

[Characteristics Statement: Masters Degree](#) (QAA, 2020)

Part 1: [Standards framework for Nursing and Midwifery Education](#) (NMC, 2018)

Part 2: [Standards for student supervision and assessment](#) (NMC, 2018)

Part 3: [Standards for prescribing programmes \(NMC2018\)](#)

[Prescribing Competency Framework for All \(RPS 2016\)](#)

[HCPC Standards for Prescribing](#) (HCPC 2019)

Annexe 1 Delivery Plan for the ACP Apprenticeship

Year One ACP Apprenticeship (60 credits)		
Semester 1 (Winter)	Semester 2 (Spring)	Summer
MACP4001 Challenging and Enhancing Advanced Clinical Practice (15 credits mandatory)	MACP4003 Complex Decision Making in ACP (15 credits mandatory)	Clinical supervision; Directed Study as per ILP; ILPRs to support preparation towards EPA; demonstration of knowledge, skills and behaviours
MACP4002 Health and Social Needs Assessment in ACP OR MACP4014 Health and Social Needs Assessment for Pharmacists (30 credits mandatory)		
MACP4013 Advanced Clinical Practice Capability – ongoing through apprenticeship (0 credit, mandatory)		
Year 2 ACP Apprenticeship (60 credits)		
Semester 1 (Winter)	Semester 2 (Spring)	Summer
MACP4019 Leadership, Education and Developing Others (15 credits mandatory)	MACP4005 Research Methods (15 credits mandatory)	Clinical supervision; Directed Study as per ILP; ILPRs to support preparation towards EPA; demonstration of knowledge, skills and behaviours
* <i>Optional modules [30 credits] from those below. Apprentices can only take one Negotiated Learning Module</i>		
MACP4007* Independent and Supplementary Prescribing (V300) OR MACP4015* Principles and Practice of Prescribing for Pharmacists (30 credits optional)		
MACP4008* Negotiated Learning in ACP (30 credits optional)		
MACP4011* Newborn Physical Examination (15 credits optional) OR MHML4004* Negotiated Learning 1 (15 credits optional)	MACP4010* Professional Advocate (15 credits optional)	
MACP4013 Advanced Clinical Practice Capability – ongoing through apprenticeship (0 credit, mandatory)		
Year 3 ACP Apprenticeship		
Semester 1 (Winter)	March	April - June
MACP4016 Dissertation for Apprenticeship (40 credits mandatory)	MACP4018 End Point Assessment Gateway for Advanced Clinical Practitioner Apprentices (0-credits mandatory)	MACP4017 Advanced Clinical Practice Knowledge, Skills & Behaviours (End Point Assessment) (20 credits mandatory).

MACP4013 Advanced Clinical Practice Capability
(0 credit, mandatory)



**Process for Managing the Advanced Clinical Practitioner
Apprenticeship
Integrated End Point Assessment (EPA)
September 2022**

Advanced Clinical Practitioner Apprentices will successfully complete 160 credits at level 7 from the mandatory and optional modules identified in the MSc Advanced Clinical Practice programme specification. Each apprentices' module profile is reviewed at a pre-board (consisting of a chairperson, internal examiners and Registry Secretary) to confirm they are ready to progress to the EPA Gateway

Nursing Apprenticeships Administrator contacts employers to request they complete and return a 'Readiness for Completion' Gateway Declaration form, confirming the apprentice has consistently demonstrated that they meet the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSBs) of the occupational standard

Subject Module Exam Board (Gateway) (consisting of a chairperson, internal and external examiners, Head of Apprenticeships, and Registry secretary) confirms that the apprentice meets all gateway requirements:

- The subject module exam board (gateway) will formally review and record that each apprentice has achieved all gateway requirements as detailed in the gateway module (MACP2018):
 - Evidence of current registration with a statutory health and/or social care regulator (NMC/HCPC/GPhC)
 - Evidence of achievement of level 2 Maths and English
 - Successful completion of 160 credits from mandatory and optional modules from the MSc Advanced Clinical Practice detailed in the programme specification, taking into account any RPL and any mandatory protected learning time requirements associated with the modules
 - Employer confirmation that the apprentice has consistently demonstrated that they meet the KSBs of the occupational standard and is ready to progress to the EPA
 - Confirmation of actual and planned OTJ hours (minimum of 6 hours/week)
 - Completed and signed Clinical Capabilities document
 - Met the minimum duration for apprenticeship programmes (12 months)

Where an apprentice is unable to achieve the requirements of the EPA Gateway, despite appropriate academic and employer support, it will be recommended that the apprentice is awarded an exit award as detailed in the programme specification, either a Postgraduate Certificate or Postgraduate Diploma

The apprentice undertakes the 20-credits, Level 7, EPA module (MACP4017: Advanced Clinical Practice Knowledge, Skills & Behaviours End Point Assessment).

- The EPA will be completed in a maximum of three months
- The EPA will provide independent synoptic assessment of the knowledge, skills and behaviours of the apprenticeship standard
- The university as the EPAO will provide apprentices with resources via the virtual learning environment (Blackboard and PebblePad), to allow the apprentice to independently prepare for the EPA
- EPA dates and schedule
- During the EPA period the apprentice will write 3 case studies to a maximum of 1500 words each with references and write a 1500-word clinical practice change report using a provided template
- Where an apprentice as a learning support plan, the requirements of this will inform the EPA assessment
- The university as the EPAO, will appoint an independent assessor (no involvement with the delivery of the programme) to conduct the EPA. As a minimum the independent assessor must hold current professional registration and participate in on-going CPD as an Advanced Clinical Practitioner

The apprentice completes the EPA assessment:

- Open Book Examination (2 hours), using the three pre-prepared case studies. This is assessed by the independent assessor and graded as distinction, merit, pass or fail, using the apprenticeship standard EPA plan grading criteria. Moderation will be completed by an internal university moderator.
- Presentation of practice using the 1500-word clinical practice change report the apprentice will prepare a 35-minute presentation (25-minute presentation and 10 minutes of questions). This is assessed by an independent assessment panel comprising the independent assessor and independent university representative and graded as distinction, merit, pass or fail, using the apprenticeship standard EPA plan grading criteria

To pass the EPA and complete the apprenticeship the apprentice needs to successfully pass both parts.

A sample of both assessments will be reviewed by the external examiner, as part of the university quality assurance process.
The external examiner will report on the EPA process as part of annual reporting

The EPA module result will be ratified by the Award Examination Board.

The apprentice will receive two awards the MSc Advanced Clinical Practice and the Advanced Clinical Practitioner Apprenticeship degree:

- The MSc Advanced Clinical Practice will be classified in line with UW degree classification and will include all 180 credits, including the EPA module.
- The classification of distinction, merit or pass for the apprenticeship will be awarded by the independent EPA assessor based on results of the assessments for MACP4017 End Point Assessment module.

Apprentices who fail the EPA are entitled to one further reassessment attempt of one or both parts of the EPA.

- Reassessment will be offered after the EPA fail has been formally ratified by the Examination Board
- The employer must support the apprentice in retaking the EPA
- The reassessment of the EPA must be completed within three months of the EPA fail being ratified
- Reassessment is capped at a pass grade unless a claim for mitigating circumstances is successfully upheld

Registry claim ESFA apprenticeship certificates via the EPA hub