



Advanced Clinical Practitioner Post-Credentialing Strategy 2025

ACP Post-Credentialing Strategy

This strategy is designed to support the ongoing professional growth of Emergency Medicine Advanced Clinical Practitioners (EM-ACPs) after completing their Royal College of Emergency Medicine (RCEM) credentialing who are actively practising in the Emergency Department (ED). Its main goals are to **retain experienced staff** within the ED, **promote patient safety** through robust governance, and help EM-ACPs build **sustainable, fulfilling careers**.

Purpose

The core purpose of this strategy is to:

- **Support Continuous Professional Development (CPD):** Ensuring EM-ACPs continue to develop their skills and knowledge after credentialing.
- **Enhance Retention:** Keep this experienced workforce within the ED, addressing the high demands of Emergency and Urgent care.
- **Ensure Patient Safety:** Establish clear expectations and strong governance for advanced practice.
- **Foster Sustainable Careers:** Help EM-ACPs develop balanced careers that combine clinical work with lifelong learning and other responsibilities.
- **Promote a Blended Workforce:** Increase the number of dedicated, experienced clinicians in permanent patient-facing roles.

The strategy offers guidance to **credentialed ACPs (cACPs)** and departments across three key areas: **Individual CPD**, **Clinical Development** and **Governance**. It is intended to be a framework for individual progress in Advanced Practice in Emergency Medicine.

Background

Since 2015, RCEM has been instrumental in developing the ACP workforce, establishing the EM-ACP curriculum and credentialing process to provide a nationally recognised standard of practice (RCEM, 2022). With over a thousand ACP associate members making up more than 10% of RCEM total membership it is now vital to define the next steps for EM-ACP development. This ensures

standardisation and good governance as ACPs progress beyond initial credentialing. A journey on which many ACPs have already embarked.

EM-ACPs are permanent members of the ED workforce and should be employed with the expectation that they will work for a considerable amount of their career in the ED, delivering autonomous, high-quality clinical care. There are however increasing demands on Emergency and Urgent care which can be overwhelming (NHS England, 2025a). The demanding nature of constant clinical work in the ED necessitates a focus on well-being and career sustainability. As highlighted by the RCEM ACP sustainable careers document (RCEM, 2021), achieving this requires flexibility in direct clinical care, alongside lifelong learning, career development, and non-clinical responsibilities. Strong governance around evolving roles is essential to provide quality assurance and robust means of training, supervision, and assessment are crucial for supporting cACPs and ensuring patient safety.

RCEM suggests that building a portfolio career with specialist interests is the best approach for sustainable ED work. This involves integrating elements from all four pillars of Advanced Practice:

1. **Clinical Practice**
2. **Facilitating Learning**
3. **Leadership/Management**
4. **Research**

The balance of these pillars will be dependent on the individual ACP, their employer and their career aspirations, positively impacting workforce retention (NHS England, 2025b).

Continuing Professional Development

Lifelong learning and CPD are vital for all clinicians to stay updated with best practice and maintain care standards. RCEM already provides numerous CPD activities, including study days, conferences, and workshops for all members. Further ACP-focused study days are being developed to expand and maintain both practical and non-technical skills.

Guidance is also already available for other members on the amount and quality of CPD and minimum expectations for essential elements of competence. Therefore a comparable amount of 30-50 hours of relevant Continuing Professional Development (CPD) should be undertaken and documented per year by all practicing EM-ACPs.

Documentation of the above elements is currently through a variety of methods including e-portfolio and CPD diaries. The college already has a validated e-portfolio platform where all these elements can be documented and developed to ensure robust governance.

Objectives

The college will continue to develop ACP focused study days and specific appraisal, multi-source feedback and reflective forms for best practice.

Launch an ACP post-credentialing CPD e-portfolio that will allow individuals to document their CPD and include the above forms.

Set out minimum expectations for essential elements, in order for ACPs to maintain competence such as GCP, life support and trauma care.

Clinical Development

Post-credentialing development will be guided by both departmental and individual ACP needs. This development can encompass elements from any or all of the four domains of advanced practice (research, leadership, education, and clinical practice), as well as higher-level elements like corporate and strategy. The weighting of each of these domains would be specific to the individual cACP.

Any new skill development should include a standard programme of learning, programme of assessment and logbook followed by a consultant triggered assessment or faculty sign off specific to the competency.

This process, along with triangulation of evidence, should be consistently applied for all skill development throughout a cACP's career. Examples of such skills may include ultrasound, procedural sedation, or central line insertion, which may not have been part of the initial credentialing skill set. Other elements might include ACP led research, formal leadership and large-scale service development.

Objectives

To include consultant triggered assessment and faculty sign off forms for new skill acquisition within the post-credentialing portfolio.

Provide examples of national best practice in how ACPs could meet each domain of advanced practice.

Governance

Robust governance sets clear expectations and ensures practice prioritises patient safety. The existing ACP Curriculum and credentialing process establish a standard of practice for RCEM EM-ACPs. This standard must be maintained throughout the ACP's career practicing in the ED, with appropriate measures implemented.

The EM-ACP sustainable careers document already outlines key elements, including:

- Designated SPA (Supporting Professional Activity) time
- 10 days of professional leave annually
- Designated lead ACPs
- ACP contribution to service development

Other elements which are already set for other clinicians include access to a study budget and formal job planning. This will be extended to cACPs to ensure they can maintain a portfolio career for their length of working in ED.

Good practice guidance will be developed to provide a structured outline of essential and desirable elements for departments to foster a strong ACP workforce, from training through to senior roles. This will include study budget, job planning, specialist interests, training and support of cACPs and department's roles in training a sustainable ACP workforce.

Objectives

Encourage the implementation of the sustainable careers document throughout UK ACP programmes

Development of good practice guidance for creating and retaining an ACP workforce.

References

1. Emergency Medicine Advanced Clinical Practitioner Curriculum. 2022. RCEM. 2022: <https://rcem.ac.uk/acp-curriculum-2022/>
2. Urgent and Emergency Care Plan 2025/26. NHS England. 2025a: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Urgent-and--emergency-care-plan-2025-26.pdf>
3. RCEM Emergency Care Sustainable Careers. RCEM. 2021 https://rcem.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/RCEM_EC_ACP_Sustainable_Careers_January_2021.pdf
4. Multi-Professional Framework for Advanced Practice in England. NHS England. 2025b: <https://advanced-practice.hee.nhs.uk/mpf2025/downloads/>

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