Aspirant Cancer Career and Development (ACCEND) Programme

An Implementation Guide

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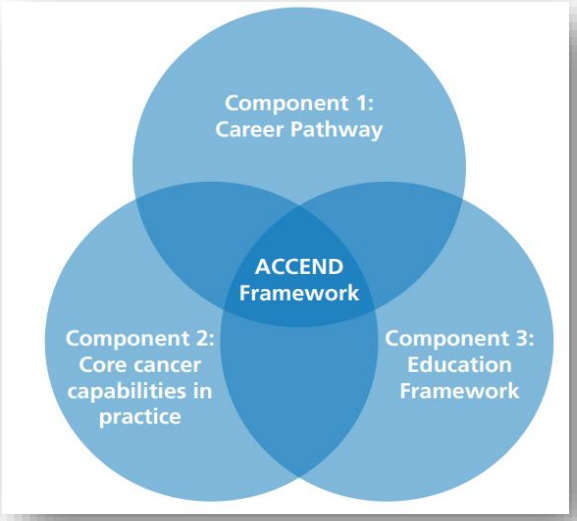
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This document has been created by the workforce team at Wessex Cancer Alliance (WCA) to support with the local implementation of the ACCEND framework. It has been designed to answer questions that the workforce may have regarding the framework and how they can benefit from utilising it for their own development.

What is the Aspirant Cancer Career and Education Development (ACCEND) Programme?

The ACCEND programme was created to acknowledge and value the vital role of the workforce in delivering cancer care, while also addressing workforce challenges. Launched in January 2023, ACCEND provides a multiprofessional framework to support the development of the workforce providing care to people affected by cancer, with access to education, training, and career pathways. It also provides guidance on the knowledge, skills and capabilities required as part of the framework.

The framework has 3 components:



1. **Career Pathway** Identifies career levels for the workforce providing general and specialist cancer care. The levels of practice are distinguished as supportive, assistive, pre-registration, registration, enhanced, advanced and consultant levels. These levels of practice are used instead of roles or job titles. The career pathway aims to provide insight and guidance for the knowledge, behaviours and skills required to be working at each level of practice to enable the workforce to grow. It focuses on clinical careers, roles in research, academic, clinical education and strategic leadership are beyond the scope of this framework. However, version 2 of the framework, to be published later in 2026 will include roles in research and clinical education. This component distinguishes the levels of practice and the expected academic level education and relevant work-based development.
2. **Core Cancer Capabilities in Practice (CiPs)** Capabilities are the expected knowledge, skills and behaviours for practitioners at different levels of practice and allow them to demonstrate and develop their capability. The core cancer CiPs are aligned to the four pillars of practice: Clinical, Leadership and Management, Education and Research. These are spilt into different domains within the framework and are broken down for each level of practice.
3. **Education Framework** The education framework provides high level learning outcomes, syllabus and suggested assessment strategies for each part of the career pathway, supporting the knowledge requirements of the core cancer CiPs. The education framework includes:
    - Core knowledge for supportive, assistive and pre-registration levels identified in a module format called ‘Foundations of Cancer Care’.

- Core knowledge for registration, enhanced, advanced and consultant level practice identified in a module called ‘Fundamentals of Cancer Care’.

  High level learning outcomes for postgraduate certificate, Diploma and Masters awards which incorporate and develop the core knowledge identified in the ‘Fundamentals of cancer care’.

Practitioners may develop and demonstrate their knowledge, skills and capability through a range of education opportunities including work-based learning, online and university accredited courses.

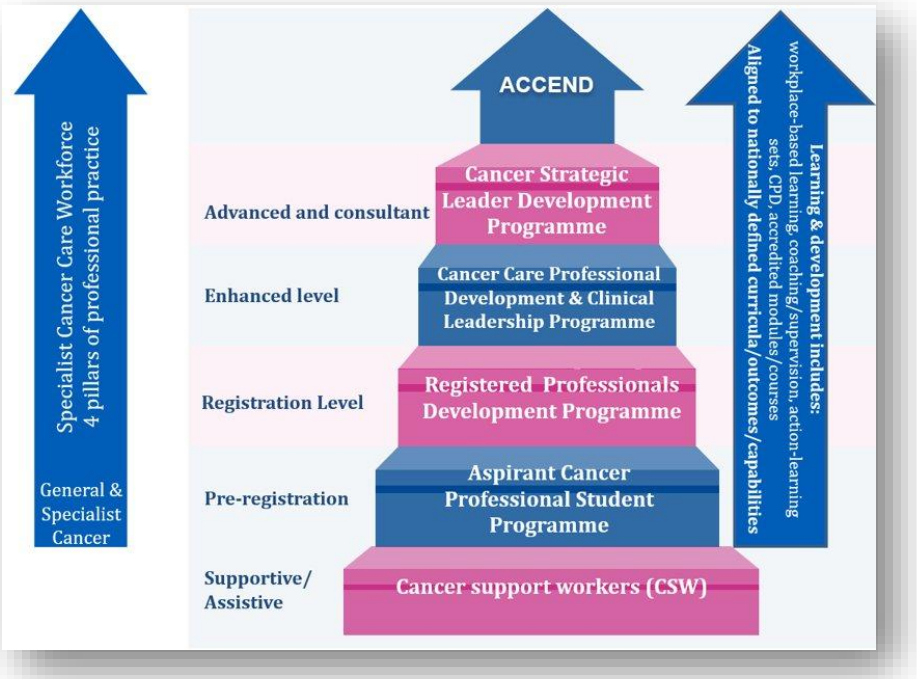
More information and recommendations for education at each level of practice can be found at Career Pathway, Core Cancer Capabilities and Education Framework p21,22. Further recommendations will be added to this over the next year for those working at advanced/consultant level.

The ACCEND Course Explorer helps you discover education, training and resources aligned to ACCEND and includes information on over 250 courses. You can use it to explore the CiPs by section or individually and find training and education to help you meet particular capabilities. You can also use it to check which capabilities are covered by training you may have already undertaken and help you consider further development to address any gaps.

Combined, these three components support practitioners at all levels of the career pathway to develop the core knowledge, skills and behaviours to care for people affected by cancer.

What are the levels of practice?

The Framework focuses on levels of practice rather than specific roles or banding. This is due to the variation in role, job description and scope of practice across the UK. The diagram below provides a summary of each of the levels:



What are the benefits of ACCEND for the workforce?

The ACCEND programme has been created to support with the development of staff, to make the workforce feel valued and to allow the workforce to explore opportunities and aspirations. Ultimately this will improve patient care.

This Framework will assist staff in the development of a portfolio of evidence of capability and can be used to support revalidation requirements with the regulatory bodies.

The framework enables employees and managers to demonstrate that the workforce meets core cancer specific knowledge and capabilities and have development plans in place, along with the necessary supervision to ensure patient safety. It can also inform workforce planning.

The ACCEND framework has been included in the National Cancer Plan and the NHSE Long term workforce plan (LTWP), aligning to several national priorities. In Wessex Cancer Alliance, we have included the local implementation of the framework as part of our workforce programme plan.

Who is the framework for?

The framework has been created for anyone who cares for people living with cancer in generalist and specialist cancer services in roles as part of multi-professional teams across UK, including:

- cancer support workers
- Pre-registrants
- nurses
- allied health professionals
- pharmacy services
- psychological services

It provides clarity about capabilities and requirements to practice at each level and offers a structure of core cancer knowledge and capabilities that enable practice at each level. These roles all fit within defined levels of practice within the framework.

We recognise that some professionals or specialities have existing frameworks for practice e.g. the Multiprofessional Framework for Advanced Practice, Lung Cancer Framework for Lung Cancer CNS's, Royal College of Occupational Therapists Career Development Framework and the Career and Education Framework for Children and Young People with Cancer. ACCEND is cancer specific and is designed to complement these frameworks.

Where can I find more information?

To read the framework and the accompanying implementation guides & self-assessment tools, visit the HEE ACCEND webpage.

You can also find out more about the framework and the ACCEND programme by viewing a recording of a short presentation by Professor Vanessa Taylor, author of the framework.

Alternatively, you may wish to watch a recording of our webinar -

Demystifying ACCEND Webinar - Welcome to Wessex Cancer Alliance

Local information on ACCEND, education, training & opportunities -

Academy - Welcome to Wessex Cancer Alliance

We have partnered with Greater Manchester Cancer Academy and purchased a digital version of the ACCEND self-assessment tool, known as the Career ePortfolio. To learn more, visit -

Cancer Alliance Education ePortfolio – GM Cancer Academy

To get started you will need to register and set up an account. For detailed instructions on how to use the Career ePortfolio, click here: How to use the ePortfolio

Frequently Asked Questions

Individuals

How do I know which level of practice my role sits within?

The diagram below identifies a variety of roles typically associated with each level of practice. Discuss this with you Line Manager. For further information on levels of practice descriptors please refer Career Pathway, Core Cancer Capabilities and Education Framework p34-38

Level of practice	Example Roles
Consultant	Registered nurse (all fields), registered AHP, registered pharmacist practicing as a consultant practitioner.
Advanced	Registered nurse (all fields), registered AHP, registered pharmacist practising as an advanced practitioner (AP)
Enhanced	Registered nurse (all fields), registered AHP, registered pharmacist. Experienced practitioners who work in a role which requires in-depth role specific cancer knowledge and skills or training following registration, for example cancer treatment administration/side effects management/site or pathway specific to undertake complex work managing a discrete aspect of patient care related to their sphere of practice. Role titles may vary.
Registration	Registered nurse (all fields), registered AHP, registered pharmacist. At point of registration and during preceptorship.

Pre-registration	All pre-registration nursing, AHP, pharmacy students and trainee nursing associates undertaking pre-registration foundation, undergraduate and post graduate degree courses leading to registration with the HCPC, GPhC or NMC.
Assistive	Registered nursing associate (England only), assistant practitioner, registered pharmacist technician.
Supportive	Healthcare support worker, cancer support worker, cancer care co-ordinator, healthcare assistant, therapy assistant, allied health support worker, cancer navigator.

Alternatively, you can use the Level Checker ACCEND Course Explorer to support you in identifying a suggested ACCEND level of practice. Please discuss with your Line Manager –

ACCEND Course Explorer (ACE) | Find Cancer Education & Training Courses

Things to consider:

- A role may require a blend/mix of capabilities in different levels of practice to meet service needs.
- As a practitioner continues to develop, they will begin to build on capabilities across levels of practice.

Examples:

- A role may include some registration and some enhanced level core capabilities as they develop within role and prepare for progression.
- An enhanced practitioner may begin to build on capabilities to develop some level 7 academic knowledge or advanced level capabilities in a particular pillar of practice relevant to their role before doing an accredited training across all 4 pillars of professional practice. (The Multiprofessional Framework for Advanced Practice (HEE 2017) defines advanced level practice as level 7 capabilities across all 4 pillars of professional practice).

How do I know which capabilities I require for my level of practice?

The core cancer capabilities in practice (CiPs) set out the knowledge, skills and behaviours for practitioners at each level of practice. The core CiPs are aligned to the four pillars of practice: Clinical, Management & Leadership, Education and Research.

The capabilities in the ACCEND self-assessment tool are colour coded to define the minimum core capabilities for each level of practice. This approach should enable practitioners to demonstrate their current level of knowledge, skills and capability, as well as to identify any areas for development. Please refer to Career Pathway, Core Cancer Capabilities and Education Framework document for full mapped CiPs (p40-69)

For convenience the team at Wessex Cancer Alliance have divided the national ACCEND self-assessment tool into two separate documents.

For the supportive and assistive workforce:

CS56103-WCA-Supportive-Workforce-Capabilities-2023-v1.docx

For the enhanced, advanced and consultant workforce:

ACCEND-Enhanced-Advanced-and-Consultant-Workforce-Capabilities.docx

How do I get started and assess myself against the framework?

We have partnered with Greater Manchester Cancer Academy and purchased a digital version of the ACCEND self-assessment tool, known as the Career ePortfolio. This tool will allow you to self-assess against the core capabilities and record your training, reflections and certificates. The Career ePortfolio will allow you to log your learning achievements, enabling:

- opportunity to highlight areas for development.
- support more informed, meaningful appraisal conversations.
- ability to plan and focus career progression.
- support nurses to collate and export evidence for revalidation

To register for an account, follow this link - Cancer Alliance Education ePortfolio – GM Cancer Academy

For a visual summary of how to get started please go to Appendix (i)

What is a portfolio?

A portfolio is a collection of documents, evidence or materials that showcase an individual's skills, achievements, experiences, and progress over time.

Your portfolio should contain a range of evidence linked to the core cancer capabilities. Each piece of evidence should state why it demonstrates capability. It is often the case that one piece of evidence can demonstrate more than one capability.

All members of the cancer workforce should develop and maintain a portfolio as they can be used for appraisals and revalidation processes.

How can I demonstrate that I have achieved the capabilities?

These are some examples of how you may want to evidence your capabilities –

- Current job description and/or curriculum vitae
- Written feedback transcripts of verbal feedback from colleagues, patients, carers, excerpts from appraisals.
- Critical reflective accounts that evidence multiple competencies.
- CPD, attendance at study days or conferences, online learning activities, courses, signed competencies.
- Academic qualifications (accompanied by learning outcomes).
- Personal development plans, strength finding/team analysis.
- Evidence of delivering education and/or training, mentoring, supervision, coaching and/or practice assessment
- Evidence of participation in service development/audit/research activity
- Conference presentation and/or publications

A range of tools supporting you to collate evidence is available in the ACCEND Framework User Implementation Guide and Appendices P142-155.

I have self-assessed myself against the framework and identified the gaps in capabilities in practice, what next?

Once you have completed the self-assessment against the framework you can create a learning action plan based on the gaps you have identified. You can discuss your learning

action plan with your line manager and agree on the priority areas setting out timescales against your action plan. These can then be reviewed as part of your 1:1s and appraisal conversations.

What is the expected timeframe to achieve the competencies?

There is no set expectation. This should be a discussion with your line manager prioritising what is important for your development and the needs of the service.

I am an Advanced Clinical Practitioner and already have a portfolio to provide evidence of my competencies. How can ACCEND compliment what I already do?

The cancer specific learning outcomes and core cancer CiPs included in ACCEND are different to the education requirements and generic capabilities for advanced practitioners set out in the Multiprofessional Framework for Advanced Clinical Practice, HEE (2017) and cannot be achieved by the academic content of the MSc in Advanced Practice. The Greater Manchester ePortfolio could be used as the sole portal of evidence as it can map entries across multiple frameworks e.g. ACCEND and the Acute Oncology Passport. Whilst the ACCEND framework will not be required to evidence an advanced practice role for those already holding an evidenced portfolio, it is an excellent resource for supporting and demonstrating where individuals are moving into consultant level practice and for those who are earlier on in recording competency.

I am an Allied Health Professional and use my professional framework. What does this mean for ACCEND?

An Allied Health Professional (AHP) career framework aligns with the ACCEND framework by creating a unified, structured approach to career development that supports organisational, professional, and personal growth. ACCEND is cancer specific and can be used as a tool to inform your development alongside your professional framework.

I have been in my role for 10 years and have met all the capabilities for my level of practice. What is the benefit of using the ePortfolio?

The ACCEND framework has been designed to support with the development of staff, make the workforce feel valued and allow individuals to explore opportunities and aspirations. Ultimately this will improve patient care. As the diagnosis, treatment and management of cancer have become increasingly more complex with continuing innovations, ongoing learning and development is essential. Never has there been a greater need to focus on education, training and development. The eportfolio is a valuable tool for identifying development needs and facilitating conversations with your line managers about your personal development. It also helps collate evidence for revalidation with your professional body, ensuring you meet the required standards for ongoing professional development.

Line Managers

How do I use the ACCEND framework to support with 1:1 conversations and appraisals?

- Agree the levels of practice for the roles within your team. This may need discussion with the management team or ACCEND lead in your organisation.
- Encourage staff in your team to use the ePortfolio and self-assess against capabilities relevant to the role, consider focusing on a few capabilities each quarter or a domain.

- Identify gaps in capabilities - encourage staff in your team to self-assess against the core capabilities and bring to 1:1s and appraisal conversations. Then agree a personal development plan.
- Use the evidence gathered in 1:1s and appraisals to identify gaps in knowledge, skills and capabilities within your team and develop a plan to meet the needs of your service.
- Use the education framework to identify development opportunities supporting development across different domains.

How do I use the framework to support with recruitment?

Some suggestions for line managers to consider:

- Ask candidates about ACCEND as part of the interview process e.g.
- "Are you aware of the ACCEND framework and the capabilities recommended for this level of practice? Can you explain?
- Have you assessed yourself against the capability framework? What did you discover?
- Develop interview questions based on the core capabilities for the level you are recruiting e.g. supportive or advanced.
- Include information about ACCEND in job adverts, job descriptions and person specifications aligning to the framework capabilities.

How can I use the framework to support the induction of a new member of the team?

Introduce ACCEND and the eportfolio during induction and encourage the individual to self-assess against relevant capabilities to inform their development plan. This will form part of discussions in 1:1's and appraisal conversations.

A toolkit, aligned to ACCEND, has been developed to support the induction of Clinical Nurse Specialists - WCA-CNS-induction-toolkit-Ver1.1-July-25-003.pdf

Glossary of Terms

(From Skills for Health (2022) Standardisation of Frameworks: Guidelines and standards for the production and revision of capability and competency frameworks)

Term	Definition
Capabilities / capability in practice (CiP)	The attributes (skills, knowledge and behaviours) which individuals bring to the workplace. This includes the ability to be competent and beyond this, to manage change, be flexible, deal with situations which may be unpredictable and continue to improve performance.
Competencies	The same as capabilities. The term capabilities is recommended to make a clear distinction from competences.

Competences / competency	Defined standards of performance, focused on the outputs of work and observable performance. Competences include the ability to transfer and consistently apply skills and knowledge to a range of situations/contexts – although tend to describe practice in stable environments with familiar problems.
Domain	A group of related capabilities/competences in a framework.
Level	A level of practice in a framework.
Scope	The area and level of practice described by a framework (including any limitations such as relevant age group or applicable country/region).

Key Contacts

In Wessex Cancer Alliance we have a team dedicated to implementation of the framework:

- Sinead Parry, WCA Programme Manager (ACCEND Implementation Lead) Sinead.parry@wca.uhs.nhs.uk
- Jane Winter, WCA Director of Nursing and AHPs jane.winter@wca.uhs.nhs.uk
- Kathy Cooke, WCA Workforce Programme Manager Kathy.cooke@wca.uhs.nhs.uk

Please get in touch via email with any questions you may have.

Lead within your organisation: .....

NHS England National ACCEND team: england.accend@nhs.net

Useful Websites

- National ACCEND website - www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/cancer-diagnostics/aspirant-cancer-career-education-development-programme/accend-framework
- Wessex Cancer Academy website - Academy - Welcome to Wessex Cancer Alliance

Appendix (i)


1
Familiarise yourself with ACCEND & the language
2
Agree level of practice for your role with your Line Manager
3
Reflect on your knowledge, skills, experience & activities relating to the 4 pillars of clinical practice.
4
Register and set up an account for the GM Career ePortfolio
5
Upload your learning achievements
6
Self-assess against a few cancer core capabilities agreed with your Line Manager
7
Identify development opportunities and agree the priorities with your Line Manager