

# **HEI Toolkit for Integration of the AHP Critical Care Capabilities Framework to PG Cert Critical Care Programmes**



# HEI toolkit

## Table of Contents

<b>Background .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Aims .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Intended audience .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Model of delivery.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<i>Intake and allocation .....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Module design and delivery .....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Assessment.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Course outcome and expectations in practice .....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Overview of process for AHPs to achieve course outcomes:.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Quality Indicators .....</i>	<i>4</i>
<b>Appendix 1 = Academic modules mapping .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Mapping of PG Cert Learning Outcomes & Assessment to AHP Framework .....	5
<b>Appendix 2 = Example Learning Contract Guidance &amp; Pathway.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<i>AHP Pathway: PG Cert Critical Care.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Identifying a Mentor .....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Competency Frameworks .....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Assessment of Learning Objectives .....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Process of Competency Development.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<b>Appendix 3 = Example Learning Contract.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<i>Initial Self-Assessment .....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Professional Development Plan Template .....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Final Assessment.....</i>	<i>14</i>

## Background

The delivery of post-registration education for nursing staff is well established in critical care units in the United Kingdom (UK) and a structured curricula exists to support its delivery. The Critical Care National Network Nurse Leads Forum (CC3N) have been central to this development, providing national educational standards<sup>1</sup> and a programme of competencies that direct the work-based assessment of nursing staff in practice<sup>2</sup>. This is supported by national guidelines<sup>3</sup>.

However, despite recommendations for access and structure to post-registration education for Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) in critical care, the opportunities for such education remain poorly established<sup>3</sup>. One mechanism to meet these needs is the delivery of multi-professional programmes of post-graduate education, and the integration of AHPs into existing courses. Recently established courses have successfully achieved this integration, delivering post-graduate education to a range of professionals working in critical care while accommodating profession-specific learning requirements. [The AHP Critical Care Capability Framework](#) is key to this process; forming the basis of assessment, identifying an individual's learning needs, and evidencing professional development on completion of the award.

The delivery of critical care specific education to the multiprofessional team increases opportunities for interprofessional education, developing a skilled and diverse workforce that learns with and from each other. A model of delivery for a multiprofessional post graduate critical care course has been established and is outlined in this document. This model uses the University of Liverpool's Post-Graduate Certificate in Critical Care as the benchmark. This course was initially funded by Health Education England and offers a fully combined and integrated approach. The institution has also created templates and clearly aligned outcomes for AHPs, and as such is considered an exemplar.

## Aims

This document aims to:

- Provide a model of delivery to successfully support multiprofessional post-graduate critical care courses

## Intended audience

This resource is designed for any region or institution delivering a Post graduate certificate for a nursing cohort, and so is applicable across the UK.

It may also be used by critical care managers, clinical leaders, educators, or staff aiming to deliver post graduate education to AHPs in critical care.

# Model of delivery

The core focus of the course remains to develop understanding of the nature of critical illness, as well as wider skills in service development and leadership. As such, the majority of content is applicable to multiprofessional groups that are involved in the management of critically ill patients.

## Intake and allocation

- Existing critical care courses should consider developing capacity to deliver the course to multiprofessional cohorts (nurses and AHPs)
- The entry requirements and processes for AHPs should match the requirements for nursing staff in the local programme
- Funding for courses will remain locally agreed as per the local policy

## Module design and delivery

- Existing module outcomes should be mapped to the AHP Critical Care Capability Framework, aligning with Enhanced level descriptors (Appendix 1).
- All module and course material including module descriptors, learning outcomes, marking criteria and assessments should use multiprofessional language.
- All factors relating to module content, structure, and delivery should continue to be developed and managed dependent on local requirements and resources. It is strongly recommended that there is representation from multiprofessional groups in all phases of course creation and delivery.
- A variety of educational methods should be utilised to facilitate inter-professional discussion and exploration of the topic, for example scenario or case-based discussion and group work
- Content relating to the knowledge of critical illness is applicable to all professions managing critically ill patients. Existing courses have reported the feasibility of adapting current content to multiprofessional groups, and content should be reviewed locally through multiprofessional discussion.

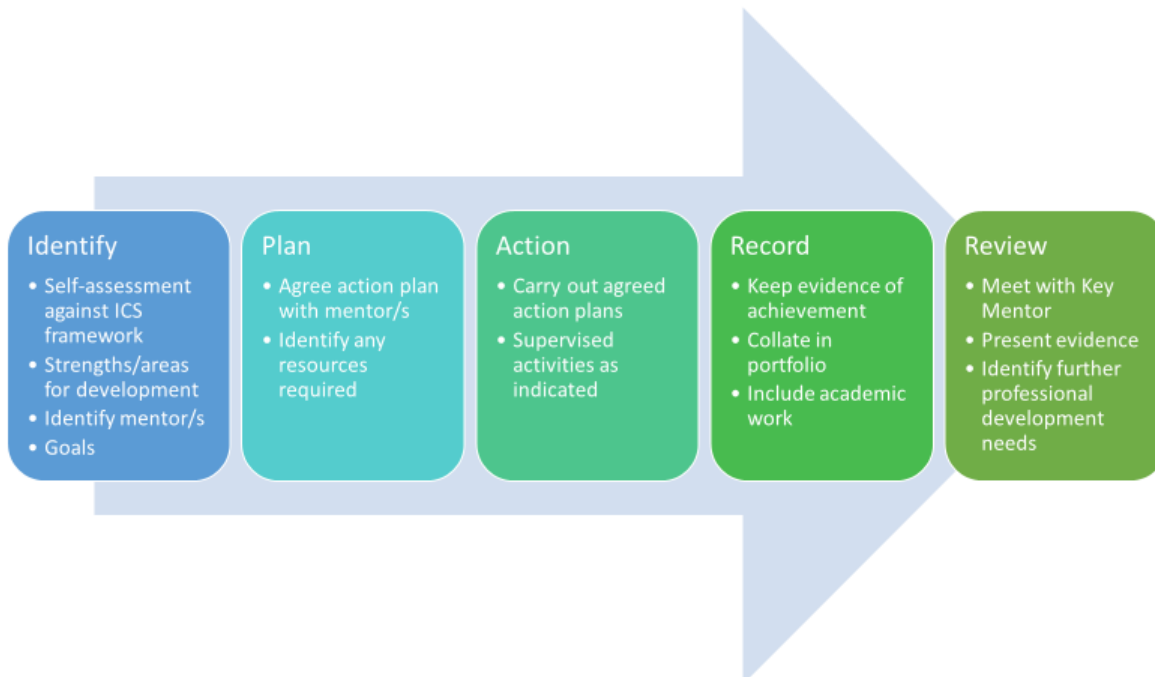
## Assessment

- The core methods of academic assessment are likely to be appropriate for multiprofessional groups. Assessment of outcomes for academic modules should relate to Enhanced Level descriptors in the AHP Critical Care Capability Framework
- Nursing cohorts will continue to complete work-based learning informed by the CC3N Step 2 & 3 competencies.
- AHPs should create a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate work-based learning alongside their academic studies. This work-based learning should be informed by a Learning Contract based on the assessment of learning needs prior to the course (Appendix 2). Individual Higher Education Institutions (HEI) may decide whether and to what extent such a portfolio contributes towards the academic assessment of the course.
- Assessment of learning needs and outcome should be mapped against the AHP Critical Care Capability Framework relevant to each profession (Appendix 1)

## Course outcome and expectations in practice

- After achieving the course award all of the multiprofessional graduates should continue to practice within their professional role and scope of practice.

## Overview of process for AHPs to achieve course outcomes:



## Quality Indicators

- Representation from AHPs in all phases of course creation and delivery including:
  - Curriculum design
  - Session delivery and facilitation
  - Assessment of learning outcomes
- Benchmarking of course content to Enhanced Level descriptors in the AHP Critical Care Capability Framework
- Portfolio of evidence collated by students aligned to the CPD profile required by the HCPC.

This model of delivery provides the structure required to integrate AHPs to existing postgraduate education in critical care. It recognises that there will be local variation to course size, capacity, structure, and delivery. These local requirements can be accommodated while using the structure provided to clearly demonstrate how the learning outcomes have been met by AHPs and learning applied to practice. The dedication of AHP resource to delivering course content, marking, and supervision or mentorship of candidates will remain locally negotiated based on capacity.

# Appendix 1 = Academic modules mapping

## Mapping of PG Cert Learning Outcomes & Assessment to AHP Framework

	Foundation	Enhanced	Advanced	Consultant
<b>Clinical Pillar</b>				
Clinical Practice				
<b>Clinical assessment</b>				
Subjective history		HEAL702		
Airway		HEAL702		
Breathing		HEAL702		
Circulation		HEAL702		
Disability		HEAL702		
Exposure		HEAL702		
Fluids		HEAL702		
Physical function		HEAL703		
Non-physical function		HEAL703		
Meaningful occupation		HEAL703		
Communication assessment		HEAL703		
Eating, drinking and swallowing		HEAL702		
Nutrition		HEAL702		
Screening		HEAL702 & 703		
Clinical reasoning		HEAL702		
<b>Intervention and management and rehabilitation</b>				
Airway		HEAL702		
Breathing		HEAL702		
Circulation		HEAL702		
Fluids		HEAL702		
Physical function		HEAL703		
Non-physical function		HEAL703		
Meaningful occupation		HEAL703		
Communication intervention		HEAL703		
Eating, drinking and swallowing		HEAL703		
Nutrition		HEAL703		
Patient transfer		HEAL703		
Pharmacology		HEAL702		
End of life		HEAL703		
Patient centred care				
Communication		HEAL703		
Multi-professional teamwork		HEAL703		
Coordination of care		HEAL703		

Personalised care		HEAL703		
Governance, safety and standards				
Legal and ethical		HEAL703		
Professional standards and guidance		HEAL703		
Patient safety, quality, and clinical effectiveness		HEAL702 & 703		
<b>Education</b>				
Learning and development				
Self-development		PG Cert		
Facilitating learning		HEAL703		
Creating the learning environment				
Learning resources		HEAL703		
Learning culture		HEAL703		
<b>Leadership</b>				
Leadership culture				
Collaborative working		HEAL703		
Compassionate and inclusive leadership		HEAL703		
Team development				
Influencing people		HEAL703		
Developing team and individuals		HEAL703		
Professional and organisational leadership				
Managing services		HEAL703		
Strategic thinking and innovation		HEAL703		
<b>Research</b>				
Evidence into practice				
Evidence-informed practice		HEAL702 & 703		
Service improvement and evaluation		HEAL703		
Research development				
Understanding and performing research		HEAL703		
Research Culture		HEAL703		

Module HEAL702 – Applied Physiology of the Critically Ill Patient, 30 Level 7 credits.

- Assessed by OSCE and written exam.

Module HEAL703 – Management of the Critically Ill Patient, 30 Level 7 credits

- Assessed by literature review assignment and quality improvement project presentation

Post-Graduate Certificate (Additional Pass/Fail Assessment):

- Professional Development Portfolio based on work-based learning alongside the 12-month programme

## Appendix 2 = Example Learning Contract Guidance & Pathway

### How to Develop your Learning Contract



#### AHP Pathway: PG Cert Critical Care

The learning contract informs the work-based learning part of the Post-graduate Certificate in Critical Care at University of Liverpool and runs alongside both academic modules (HEAL702 & HEAL703). Students will work in their practice area, supervised by their mentor/s, to achieve a set of learning objectives identified as key requirements for their practice in critical care.

The ethos behind the learning contract is self-directed learning whereby learning needs are identified by the student and a development plan is agreed between the student and their mentor/s. The student's achievement of their learning objectives can be demonstrated in a variety of ways (see *AHP Critical Care Capability Framework*), all of which should be evidenced and compiled in a portfolio (either electronic or hard copy) for the Key Mentor to review.

#### Identifying a Mentor

Where possible, students should work with a Key Mentor in clinical practice to achieve work-based competencies. Key Mentors will usually be working within the student's critical care workplace, be approved by managers and supported by the organisation to undertake mentorship and assessment roles. The Key Mentor is responsible for reviewing the learning objectives and determining whether the agreed learning outcomes have been met.

Due to the specialist nature of AHP roles within critical care, it may not be possible to identify a profession-specific clinical mentor working within the same organisation. In this case, students could:

- (i) identify a range of mentors such as their line manager, critical care medical consultant, critical care nursing practice educator facilitator (PEF) and/or other senior AHPs working within or aligned to critical care.
- (ii) If no suitable clinical mentors exist within the organisation, a clinical mentor from another organisation could be identified via professional networks as long as this mentor is registered with the HCPC and is an experienced critical care practitioner.



In these instances, the Key Mentor will likely be the student's line manager with additional input from the clinical mentors. All mentors should be listed in the relevant section of the learning contract.

## Competency Frameworks

In order to identify their own learning needs, the student should refer to the AHP Critical Care Capability Framework. Students should self-assess and map their current level of practice within the **four pillars of practice**:

- (i) Clinical Practice
- (ii) Education
- (iii) Leadership
- (iv) Research

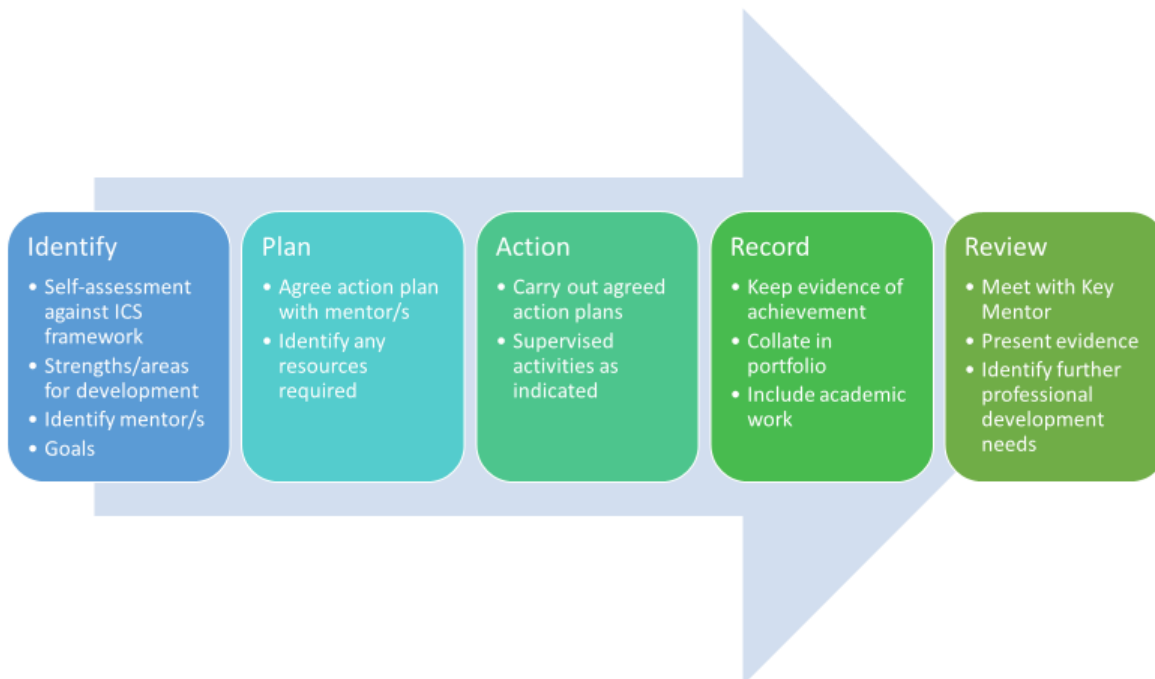
Following the initial self-assessment, using the descriptors within the framework, students should agree priorities for development with their mentor/s across all four CPD pillars. The priorities for development should be appropriate to the clinical area and job role.

## Assessment of Learning Objectives

Once the priorities for development have been agreed with the Key Mentor, a Professional Development Plan (PDP) should be agreed including learning objectives for each of the four pillars. It is anticipated that there will be more than one learning objective for each pillar depending upon the self-assessment. The PDP should indicate which form of evidence will be included in the portfolio in order to demonstrate the relevant competency. Examples of suitable evidence can be found in the AHP Critical Care Capability Framework, and some worked examples will be discussed during an introductory University session. Academic work completed as part of this PG Cert can also be included in the portfolio of evidence.

After each academic module, the student and Key Mentor should meet to review the student's progress and portfolio. By the end of the PG Cert programme, students should be able to show evidence of working to Enhanced level across all four pillars of practice. The completion of the agreed work-based learning objectives forms a pass/fail element of the assessment for the PG Cert. The Key Mentor decides (with input from the additional mentors and University tutors where appropriate) whether the submitted portfolio of evidence demonstrates the required level of performance against the agreed learning objectives and therefore whether the pass standard has been achieved. The portfolio of evidence will be submitted to the University for review and moderation by the course tutors.

## Process of Competency Development



# Post-Graduate Certificate in Critical Care AHP Pathway AHP Learning Contract

Student Name	
Profession & Band	
NHS Trust	
University Link Tutor	
Date of Course Commencement	
Anticipated Date of Course Completion	

### Key Mentor Details

Name	Profession	Band/Level	NHS Trust/Organisation

### Additional Mentors

Name	Profession	Band/Level	NHS Trust/Organisation

Please refer to the Learning Contract Information Sheet for notes and guidance on the completion of this document.

## Initial Self-Assessment

Taken from AHP Critical Care Capability Framework

Date of Initial Assessment:

	Foundation	Enhanced	Advanced	Consultant
<b>Clinical Pillar</b>				
Clinical Practice				
<b>Clinical assessment</b>				
Subjective history				
Airway				
Breathing				
Circulation				
Disability				
Exposure				
Fluids				
Physical function				
Non-physical function				
Meaningful occupation				
Communication assessment				
Eating, drinking and swallowing				
Nutrition				
Screening				
Clinical reasoning				
<b>Intervention and management and rehabilitation</b>				
Airway				
Breathing				
Circulation				
Fluids				
Physical function				
Non-physical function				
Meaningful occupation				
Communication intervention				
Eating, drinking and swallowing				
Nutrition				
Patient transfer				
Pharmacology				
End of life				
Patient centred care				
Communication				
Multi-professional teamwork				

Coordination of care				
Personalised care				
Governance, safety and standards				
Legal and ethical				
Professional standards and guidance				
Patient safety, quality, and clinical effectiveness				
<b>Education</b>				
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Collaborative working				
Compassionate and inclusive leadership				
Team development				
Influencing people				
Developing team and individuals				
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Managing services				
Strategic thinking and innovation				
<b>Research</b>				
Evidence into practice				
Evidence-informed practice				
Service improvement and evaluation				
Research development				
Understanding and performing research				
Research Culture				

Using the AHP Critical Care Capability Framework as a reference, indicate where you *currently* self-assess against each domain.

## Professional Development Plan Template

Pillar, Domain & Sub-Domain	Target Level	SMART Learning Objective	Action Plan	Evidence of Achievement (supply in appendix)	Deadline & Mentor
<i>e.g. Clinical =&gt; Person-centred care =&gt; Multidisciplinary teamwork</i>	<i>e.g. Enhanced</i>	<i>e.g. To set-up a multi-professional rehabilitation ward round within 6 months. Original statement: "Liaise with the multi-professional team to collaboratively develop local service delivery, identifying and negotiating any professional overlap."</i>	<i>e.g. Identify stakeholders Liaise with other AHP, medical and nursing professional leads Invite PPI group to participate. Consult literature regarding MPT ward rounds in critical care. Run pilot MP ward round. Evaluate pilot and plan launch of new ward round.</i>	<i>e.g. PowerPoint slides from quality improvement presentation (Appendix 1) Evaluation of pilot ward round from MP staff members (Appendix 2) Literature search regarding MPT ward rounds (Appendix 3)</i>	<i>e.g. 31/3/25 J.Smith</i>

*Additional rows can be added as required. PDP should be updated after the first academic module has been completed.*

## Final Assessment

Date of Final Assessment:

	Foundation	Enhanced	Advanced	Consultant
<b>Clinical Pillar</b>				
Clinical Practice				
<b>Clinical assessment</b>				
Subjective history				
Airway				
Breathing				
Circulation				
Disability				
Exposure				
Fluids				
Physical function				
Non-physical function				
Meaningful occupation				
Communication assessment				
Eating, drinking and swallowing				
Nutrition				
Screening				
Clinical reasoning				
<b>Intervention and management and rehabilitation</b>				
Airway				
Breathing				
Circulation				
Fluids				
Physical function				
Non-physical function				
Meaningful occupation				
Communication intervention				
Eating, drinking and swallowing				
Nutrition				
Patient transfer				
Pharmacology				
End of life				
Patient centred care				
Communication				
Multi-professional teamwork				
Coordination of care				
Personalised care				
Governance, safety and standards				
Legal and ethical				

Professional standards and guidance				
Patient safety, quality, and clinical effectiveness				
<b>Education</b>				
Learning and development				
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<b>Leadership</b>				
Leadership culture				
Collaborative working				
Compassionate and inclusive leadership				
Team development				
Influencing people				
Developing team and individuals				
Professional and organisational leadership				
Managing services				
Strategic thinking and innovation				
<b>Research</b>				
Evidence into practice				
Evidence-informed practice				
Service improvement and evaluation				
Research development				
Understanding and performing research				
Research Culture				

During your final assessment, you should present your evidence of completion of each learning objective to your Key Mentor. The key mentor then indicates by signature your level of performance against each domain on this chart.