

Undertaking
research for
MSc Advanced
Clinical
Practice

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What is Advanced Clinical Practice?

Definition

*Advanced clinical practice is delivered by experienced, registered health and care practitioners. It is a level of practice characterised by a high degree of autonomy and complex decision making. This is underpinned by a master's level award or equivalent that encompasses the four pillars of clinical practice, leadership and management, education and **research**, with demonstration of core capabilities and area specific clinical competence.*

Advanced clinical practice embodies the ability to manage clinical care in partnership with individuals, families and carers. It includes the analysis and synthesis of complex problems across a range of settings, enabling innovative solutions to enhance people's experience and improve outcomes.

Multi-professional framework for advanced clinical practice in England (2017)

Advanced Clinical Practice – research pillar competencies

- 4.1 Critically engage in research activity, adhering to good research practice guidance, so that evidence-based strategies are developed and applied to enhance quality, safety, productivity and value for money.
- 4.2 Evaluate and audit own and others' clinical practice, selecting and applying valid, reliable methods, then acting on the findings.
- 4.3 Critically appraise and synthesise the outcome of relevant research, evaluation and audit, using the results to underpin own practice and to inform that of others.
- 4.4 Take a critical approach to identify gaps in the evidence base and its application to practice, alerting appropriate individuals and organisations to these and how they might be addressed in a safe and pragmatic way.
- 4.5 Actively identify potential need for further research to strengthen evidence for best practice. This may involve acting as an educator, leader, innovator and contributor to research activity and/or seeking out and applying for research funding.
- 4.6 Develop and implement robust governance systems and systematic documentation processes, keeping the need for modifications under critical review.
- 4.7 Disseminate best practice research findings and quality improvement projects through appropriate media and fora (e.g. presentations and peer review research publications).
- 4.8 Facilitate collaborative links between clinical practice and research through proactive engagement, networking with academic, clinical and other active researchers

LD and Autism ACP specific competency framework





Advanced Clinical Practice: Capabilities framework when working with people who have a learning disability and/or autism



Research competencies:

- Coproduce approaches to evaluating services and measuring impact, including the use of outcomes reported by people with a learning disability and/or autism, their families and carers.
- Promote a systematic approach to using and developing outcome measures to underpin current and future practice.
- Advocate for reasonable adaptations to enable people with a learning disability and/or autism to participate in audit, evaluation and research.
- Ensure research materials and processes are accessible for people with a learning disability and/or autism where appropriate.
- Critically appraise the ethical issues and influence processes related to conducting research with people with a learning disability and/or autism, including gaining consent to their participation.

The research components of my MSc course

- Research pillar competencies for portfolio
 - Submit evidence against each competency, sign off required for each by clinical supervisor
 - No limit to how many pieces of evidence per competency, and naturally some pieces of evidence could be matched to multiple competencies.
- Research methods module year 2
 - Research proposal
 - Data set analysis (qualitative and quantitative)
- Dissertation project in year 3 – 15,000 words

Final dissertation project - Initial thoughts and feelings

- Really not looking forward to it!
- Managing study while working full time – primarily only evenings and weekends but also negotiable study leave to work on study. Impact on free time and family.
- More than twice the length of undergraduate dissertation, reaching that seemed impossible!
- How would I maintain the passion for the study during the academic year?
- Would I feel supported by employer, clinical supervisor, academic supervisor?

Chosen research question

What are the experiences of independent and supplementary non-medical prescribers in learning disability teams?

Overview of my study

- Ethical approval granted by University of Worcester and employing trust research department.
- A literature review highlighted minimal research on the NMP in LD services, there were no qualitative studies that explicitly presented the view of LD NMP prescribers.
- Used social media to recruit participants (LD Nursing Facebook groups, Twitter, LinkedIn)
- Six participants recruited (all RNLDs - but at varying levels of practice such as ACP, and consultant RNLD), all worked in community teams (5 adult, 1 CYP).
- Semi-structured interviews conducted via MS teams (video interviewing seen as a legitimate method of interview, particularly since covid-19).
- Braun and Clarke approach to thematic analysis used to generate themes.

Personal barriers/challenges

- Participant recruitment
- New to research
- Juggling study alongside full time work and home life

My findings – a brief overview

- When training to becoming an NMP, RNLDs are often only RNLD in class cohort and find little to no LD related content in the course.
- Participants felt that their RNLD skill-set was well aligned to the NMP role, such as person centred approach to care and holistic assessment skills.
- NMPs participants were valued by people with LD they support, families/carers, and other members of the MDT.
- All participants involved in STOMP work to varying degrees including development of STOMP pathways, running STOMP clinics, training/education, and audit work.
- All participants experienced family/carer hesitancy when medicine reduction was proposed.
- Participants had a role in educating and empowering colleagues in their teams with knowledge of medication.

Next steps as a researcher

- Publishing dissertation
- Perhaps engage in further research from the recommendations for further research

Top tips

- Research questions involving interviewing patients will require more rigorous ethical approval, this can take time and really eat into the academic year – impact on project if this is rejected or you need to submit more information. Research involving staff required less rigour and ethical approval granted much quicker. Therefore think carefully about this if you have a deadline.
- Meet with your academic supervisor – if you are allotted a certain amount of time with them, use it! Go prepared with what you want to ask and get out of each meeting.
- My cohort found a Whatsapp group worked well to support each other and share helpful tips and resources etc.
- Utilise the resources on the institutions recommended reading list for the research module.
- Be clear on the learning outcomes for the research assignment.



Thanks for listening