

Term: Accreditation

Definition: The term ‘accreditation’ can be used in two ways:

1. Independent kite marking for materials, courses and education that is recognised by regulators or other QA bodies;
2. Endorsement from a recognised and respected body of educational materials or courses developed by independent providers, to demonstrate to users that it is of high quality.

Term: Advanced & Consultant Level Framework (ACLF)

Definition: The ACLF is a professional development framework for pharmacy practitioners working at more advanced or complex levels of practice. It was used as a framework guide for the creation of NHS Consultant pharmacists via the Department of Health.

It was developed by the Competency Development and Evaluation Group (CoDEG) in 2004 and has been extensively piloted and validated in different specialties of pharmacy, at all levels of practice, and in hospital, community and primary care sectors. CoDEG have also produced a development framework for early years and more inexperienced pharmacists, called the General Level Framework (see [below](#)). The ACLF was designed by practitioners, for practitioners, using a grounded approach and evidence from other professions and literature.

Within the ACLF framework sit 6 clusters of competencies required for advanced practice. One cluster outlines ‘Expert professional practice’ which is adaptable for all sectors and specialities. The remaining five clusters are generic competencies such as ‘Management’ which are wholly applicable for all practitioners and independent of sector or speciality.

Each cluster has three defined levels of advancement: Foundation, Excellence and Mastery. This unique property makes it an effective tool for practitioner development and progression.

The ACLF is often used as an enabling framework to ‘host’ specialist curriculum (see [Professional curricula](#) below). The ACLF is not intended to be adapted for each pharmacy speciality, and does not constitute a “curriculum” for specialities.

This is a generic framework that has been used across the profession for specialist and advanced practice, as well as externally for generic leadership competencies across professions.

Current & future developments:

See www.codeg.org for more information on CoDEG and the ACLF, including publications of its development and validation.

A survey in December 2009 revealed that 31 organisations in England use the ACLF as either a practitioner development tool, a performance management tool, and/or for appointment to Consultant Pharmacists posts.

The ACLF is now being adapted for use by Australian and Singapore authorities.

CoDEG is currently reviewing the terminology used in the framework. For example, the term “Consultant” is only relevant to England. In addition, the levels of practice may be better termed Level 1, Advanced Level 1, Advanced Level 2, for example.

Term: Credentialing

Definition: See [Professional recognition](#)

Term: General Level Framework (GLF)

Definition: The GLF is a development and support framework for pharmacists in their early years of practice or for use in routine performance management.

It was developed by the Competency Development and Evaluation Group (CoDEG) in 2004 and has been extensively piloted and validated in different specialties of pharmacy, at all levels of practice, and in hospital, community and primary care sectors. There is an extensive bibliography available at www.codeg.org.

Within the framework sit four clusters of competencies which are independent of speciality, area and sector of practice.

Current & future developments:

CoDEG is currently reviewing the terminology used in the framework and is considering the use of the term “foundation” rather than “general” to better describe the regular users of this support tool.

A survey conducted in 2009 revealed that an estimated 81% of Band 6 NHS pharmacists across England, Wales and Northern Ireland are using the GLF to support their professional development. It is also used as a key assessment tool in many HEI postgraduate programmes.

The GLF has been adapted for use in [Australia, Singapore, Croatia and Serbia](#). It has also been used as a basis to develop the [Framework for Pharmacy Technicians](#).

As a developmental tool, the GLF has additionally been mapped against the HAG Competency & Training Frameworks (representing a topic specific “syllabus” for advanced services) to provide a complete training and support package for community pharmacists – see [here](#).

Term: Professional curricula

Definition: A curriculum encompasses the purposes, knowledge, evaluations, skills and experiences needed to define subject specific practice in any particular area.

Several specialist pharmacy groups, for example the UKCPA Critical Care Group and the UK Renal Pharmacy Group, have developed specialist curricula.

The [ACLF](#) is often used as a framework to ‘host’ any particular curricula and provide a means to identify the different knowledge, skills and experiences required at advancing levels of practice and in different competency areas.

This allows practitioners to easily identify what is required to advance in their area of practice. In summary, the ACLF will provide a framework for evidence gathering to show or support practice development for a practitioner; the professional curriculum will define the ‘syllabus’ or subject knowledge that underpins practice performance. There may be different curricula for different subject areas; and the ACLF is an overarching competence framework for all practitioners in all sectors.

The ACLF can also be used to validate the curricula – to ensure that it applies to the different levels of practice - Foundation/Excellence/Mastery – and by extension, is applicable to all NHS Bands or other such employee structures.

Many specialist curricula have ‘core’ content which is common to other specialisms (so called “subject adjacencies”), which highlights the ability for advanced practitioners to work in different therapeutic areas without having to re-train “from scratch” within a new specialism.

Current & future developments:

The Professional Curriculum Group (PCG), hosted by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS), develops (via the expert practitioners) and ratifies specialist curricula. Any specialist groups wishing to develop a specialist curriculum or have their curriculum ratified please contact laura.obiols@rpharms.com

The RPS is developing a ‘library’ of specialist curricula which will be accessible by all practitioners, whether specialist or general practice. There are currently (as of Spring 2011) around 30 specialist, clinical and non-clinical specialist groups engaged with this process.

The identification of common ‘core’ content across specialist curricula will allow the development of advanced *general* practice, applicable across sectors.

Term: Professional recognition

Definition: Also sometimes termed “credentialing”, this is a quality assured process which recognises a practitioner’s attainment of the required knowledge and skills at a particular level of practice. Crucially, this is a process conducted through professional peer review, and is not connected with a regulatory function. It exists for the purposes of validation of practice by peers, and demonstrates a recognition of practice which has value and merit for the general public and other members of the profession or professional colleagues.

Some countries have more developed credentialing system (for example, north America) and this concept, in pharmacy, is gaining credibility among the healthcare community. In medicine, it is a well developed concept, conducted through Royal medical colleges and other medical professional bodies. It is seen as a crucial element of career progression and development.

Current & future developments:

For further explanation and details of the concept of professional recognition and how it fits with professional curricula and development frameworks, please see the two papers recently published by the RPS Partners in the Pharmaceutical Journal: [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#).