

Guidance Notes for the Accreditation Process of New Learning Environments and Educators

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1.0 Background

NHS England Workforce Training & Education – London is responsible for the quality assurance of education and training of healthcare learners in London. Quality primary care placement experiences, within a positive learning environment, support the development of all healthcare professionals, to deliver safe and effective person-centred care.

The Quality Monitoring of Educational Environments and Educators in Primary and Community Care was created in September 2020 to ensure all individuals and organisations who provide education and training to healthcare learners, understand their responsibilities and expectations in relation to primary care placement learning.

This led to a review of the accreditation of educators and learning environments process, and subsequent launch of the [Education Quality Framework](#).

The accreditation process now incorporates the mandatory Domains for this framework to underpin the expected quality standards of clinical learning environments are adhered to.

In addition, the new accreditation process supports other tools developed by Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) to meet professional bodies' requirements of the General Medical Council (GMC), General Dental Council (GDC), Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) and the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).

2.0 The Accreditation Process

In addition to incorporating the Quality Framework domains into the accreditation process, we have moved to at scale accreditation, which ensures a single, multi-professional approach, to assist in increasing the primary care workforce by 6,000 GPs and 26,000 additional roles within 5 years, as outlined in the Long-Term plan.

At scale accreditation refers to the approval of learning environments and/or educators within a lead organisation - PCN, Neighbourhood or footprint larger than a single practice/location.

The lead organisation should nominate someone who takes leadership responsibility for the process, which includes collating all approvals onto a single form to submit to their ICS TH for assessment.

We have developed a new single application form with the aim of making it easier and more efficient to apply for at scale accreditation. This new single application form replaces the existing Form 1 and Form 2 documents and should now be used in all instances.

The process incorporates three types of accreditation:

- 2.1 *At scale learning environment only* approval.
- 2.2 *At scale educator only* approval.
- 2.3 *At scale learning environment **and** educator* approval.

3.0 Completing the application form

The application form has been redesigned to streamline the at scale accreditation process and make clearer the relevant sections that need to be completed based on the accreditation type.

3.1 At scale learning environment only approval

This is for learning environments that have never accommodated any type of learner before or undergone any formal accreditation assessment. This can include any linked community organisations if they are felt to be appropriate learning environments.

The application form can include a group of environments (and linked community organisations) from either a single PCN or local training hub (borough), or from an ICS footprint with environments from various PCNs and training hubs.

While physical supervision may not take place within the entity of PCNs, it is recommended that they too apply for accreditation. This helps foster a culture of learning, collaboration, and continuous improvement. Accreditation can increase training capacity, streamline educational processes to reduce administrative burden, improve the quality of care through enhanced learning and development, and promote multi-professional learning. If a PCN wishes to be approved, this can be recorded on the new application form.



This approval is multi-professional and once an environment is approved, it is approved for all types of non-medical primary care learners. If an environment wants to supervise medical learners, there must be an approved GP educator within the environment. This means environments do not have to reapply for approval when they want to take on new types of learners but will need to ensure there is the appropriately approved educator for the new learners.

Completing the new application form for learning environment only approval

The nominated lead completes a single application form which includes all environments applying for approval and is then responsible for submitting the fully completed form to the ICS facing training hub for assessment. This nominated lead enters their details on page 4 under *“Details of person and organisation submitting the approval form”*.

A single form which includes all environments can be completed either by:

1. Each environment individually completing their own form and sending to their lead organisation. The nominated lead then collates the individual responses into a single form and submits to their ICS facing TH for assessment. Or
2. Each learning environment, in turn, completes the single form e.g. practice A completes and sends to practice B, then onto practice C etc. Once all the environments have completed the one single form, it is returned to the lead organisation, where the form is checked for completeness, before submitting for assessment.

While either method is suitable, please be mindful that option 2 could have data sharing implications.

When completing the form, please ensure:

- *“Section 1: At Scale Learning Environment Approvals”* of the application form is fully completed.
- All individual environments seeking approval are included.
- Environments that are already approved are not included.
- All domain requirements are read and understood before providing the detailed evidence.
- The written evidence provided, of how each of the environments meet the requirements of the specific domain, is clear.
- Any actions that will be taken to meet any domain requirements that aren't currently being met, are clearly stated.

The assessment panel will confirm with the applicants prior to the day, if there are any supporting documents they wish to see during the assessment. If the panel require a learner or educator timetable, examples can be found in the appendix section at the end of this document. *[Note to reader: timetables will be added in due course].*

Once the form is fully completed and checked by the nominated lead for completeness, it can be submitted to the ICS facing training hub to initiate the assessment process.

3.2 At scale educator only approval

This is for all educators who will supervise primary care learners and are currently working within a learning environment that is already approved but themselves haven't undergone a formal educator accreditation assessment.

An application form can include educators from different professional groups, within either a single PCN or local training hub (borough). It can also include educators from various PCNs and training hubs within an ICS footprint.

***Important Note:** Any nurse educators who only wish to supervise nurse learners, do not need to be included in the at scale application form for NHSE approval. This is because the Nursing and Midwifery Council have their own mandatory SSSA educator course and approval process.*

Any nurse educators who want to supervise non-medical learners from other professional groups, should be included on the application form for NHSE approval.

Before applying for approval, each educator must have completed an appropriate educator course:

- The “Multi-Professional Supervisor Course for Educators in Primary Care” for non-medical educators. This is a fully funded, assessed course, organised and facilitated by NHSE-London. Contact your ICS facing training hub for details on applying.
- The “GP Supervisor Course” for all medical educators, organised and facilitated by NHSE-London - <https://london.hee.nhs.uk/gp-supervisor-course-new>.

Any equivalent educator course which has previously been undertaken, must be approved by the relevant ICS facing training hub, to ensure it covered the appropriate criteria for primary care education.

Educators and types of learners

Once an appropriate educator course has been completed and approval confirmed, educators are not limited to supervising learners from their own professional group:

- Non-medical educators who have undertaken the above Multi-Professional Supervisor Course:
 - can supervise learners from any non-medical professional group, except for nurse learners, unless they also have the SSSA.

- only nurse educators who have undertaken the SSSA course (see above) can supervise nurse learners, and do not need to be included in the approval process.
- Medical educators who have undertaken the above GP Supervisor Course or equivalent can supervise:
 - GP trainees.
 - foundation doctors.
 - medical students.
 - any non-medical learner (except nurses).

Completing the new application form for educator only approval

The nominated lead completes a single application form which includes all educators applying for approval and is then responsible for submitting the fully completed form to the ICS facing training hub for assessment. This nominated lead enters their details on page 4 under “*Details of person and organisation submitting the approval form*”.

A single form which includes all educator applicants can be completed either by:

1. Each educator individually completes their own form and sends to their lead organisation. The nominated lead then collates the individual responses into a single form and submits to their ICS facing TH for assessment. Or
2. Each educator, in turn completes the one single form e.g. educator A completes and sends to educator B, then onto educator C etc. Once all the educators have completed the single form, it is returned to the lead organisation, where the form is checked for completeness, before submitting for assessment.

While either method is suitable, please be mindful that option 2 could have data sharing implications.

When completing the form, please ensure:

- “*Section 2: Educator Approval*” of the application form is fully completed.
- All individual educators seeking approval are included.
- Educators that are already approved, or nurse educators only wishing to supervise nurse learner are not included.
- All domain requirements are read and understood before providing the detailed evidence.
- The written evidence provided, of how each of the educators meet the requirements of the specific domain, is clear and fully detailed.
- There is detail of any actions that will be taken to meet any domain requirements that aren’t currently being met.

The assessment panel will confirm with the applicants prior to the day, if there are any supporting documents they wish to see during the assessment. If the panel require a learner or educator timetable, examples can be found in the appendix section at the end of this document. *[Note to reader: timetables will be added in due course]*.

Once the form is fully completed with all the educators listed, and checked by the lead for completeness, it can be submitted to the ICS facing training hub to initiate the assessment process.

3.3 At scale learning environment and educator approval

This is for learning environments that have never accommodated any type of learner before and educators within those environments who haven't undergone any formal accreditation educator assessment.

All the points detailed above under “2.1 Learning Environment approval” and “2.2 Educator approval” including completion of the application form, need to be followed for this accreditation type.

4.0 The Assessment Process

Once the at scale application form is fully completed, the nominated lead must submit it to their ICS facing training hub to initiate the assessment process.

4.1 Application form review/check

The ICS facing training hub will review the completed form, to ensure all the relevant sections have been fully completed before arranging the assessment panel. The assessment panel may request copies of supporting documents from individual educators/environments to demonstrate domain standards either prior to or during the assessment panel. Notification will be given prior to the day. The ICS facing training hub will check the CQC website for the latest inspection report.

4.2 The assessment panel

The ICS facing training hub has the lead responsibility for the assessment panel and is ultimately responsible for assessing existing and proposed training environments and educators as per the Quality Framework domains. They will make recommendations to NHSE-London regarding the accreditation or ongoing accreditation of environments and educators. The ICS training hub will organise the assessment panel once they are satisfied the application form is fully completed. The panel, where possible, will be undertaken jointly, or after liaison, with other educational partners including Higher and Further Education providers and where appropriate regulators. The panel should consist of:

- A lead assessor nominated from within the panel assessors.
- An experienced educator and a registered member of one of the professional groups applying for approval.

- A minimum of 2 assessors (as above) drawn from training hub managers, clinical leads, and other experienced educators. A learner from one of the professional groups seeking approval can be part of the panel but does not change the requirement to have two qualified educator panel members.

Not all educators and learning environments reps being assessed will be required to attend the assessment. There can be nominated representatives to act on behalf of the group, to present findings and evidence to the panel. Attendance requirements will be confirmed by the ICS training hub, as part of the assessment panel arrangements.

4.3 The assessment panel outcome

Once the assessment panel have considered the evidence provided and finalised their findings, they will inform the environments and educators of the outcome:

- **Recommended for accreditation** – *all required criteria have been met.*
- **Recommended for accreditation subject to satisfactory completion of mandatory/recommended actions** – *all required criteria have been met, but further actions are required.*
- **Not recommended for accreditation** – *not all required criteria was met.*

The lead assessor, on behalf of the assessment panel, will forward the panel outcome to the Primary Care Team for ratification by the Primary Care Dean or their delegate.

Once ratified, the Primary Care Team will forward the final accreditation confirmation to the ICS facing training hub, who will then inform the assessed environments/educators of the final outcome. This will trigger the necessary databases to be updated:

- For non-medical educators - the educator directories held by:
 - NHSE – London.
 - ICS facing training hubs.
 - Locality training hubs.
- For medical educators:
 - NHSE – London's GP trainer directory.
 - Trainee Information System (TIS) – *enables new educators to be allocated a GP trainee.*
 - FourteenFish – *allows new educators access to their trainee's WPBAs.*
 - GMC educator register - *part of the GMC's broader role in quality assuring medical education and training.*
- For learning environments:
 - NHSE – London's GP learning environment directory.
 - Trainee Information System (TIS) – *if the environment was accredited for GP training.*

The accreditation status of learning environments and educators is indefinite, unless deemed necessary to temporarily (or permanently) revoke that status (**see section 5 [below](#)**).

In some cases, it may be necessary to review/reassess the accreditation status of an environment or educator, and additional actions may need to be taken for an additional assessment (**see Section 6 [below](#)**).

4.4 Appealing the assessment panel outcome

If any of the assessed environments or educators do not agree with the panel outcome, the right of appeal is granted. Any appeals with respect to the process or outcome must be made in writing within one month of notification of the decision and submitted to the Primary Care Team.

5.0 Continued and on-going governance

The accreditation status of learning environments and educators is permanent, unless deemed necessary to temporarily (or permanently) revoke that status.

As part of continued governance, all PCNs will need to undergo an annual self-assessment audit that provides assurance to NHSE– London, HEIs and Regulators, that the placement and educators are driving and constantly building on the quality to continue training.

Placements and educators will no longer go through a re-validation application after five years, as the initial approval is permanent. PCNs will conduct the self-assessment at scale and represent all locations and educators, then submit the tool directly to their ICS facing Training Hub for review.

6.0 Escalation of Concerns

NHSE-London is responsible for ensuring that there are high quality learning environments for all healthcare learners in England. NHSE-London recognition of placements in primary care and community settings is undertaken as part of NHSE-London's remit to make sure that people are protected when learners care for them, as part of their education and training, and those providing education and training meet the required quality standards. To protect the public, NHSE-London act on concerns when someone raises them, and the way NHSE-London applies this is set out in '*Raising and responding to concerns*'.

NHSE-London have signed an agreement to help us share concerns with seven other system and professional regulators more effectively. Page 11 of The '*Emerging Concerns Protocol*' seek to provide a clearly defined mechanism for organisations with a role in quality and safety of care provision to share information and intelligence that may indicate risk to users of services, their carers, families, or professionals. Such organisations may comprise NHSE/I, CQC and regulators.

Where risk or concerns are raised, NHSE-London Local Quality Teams and Primary Care School will work together with placement and education providers and to address these concerns in accordance with the emerging concerns protocol.

With respect to placements:

- In the event of a report of a very serious concern NHSE-London will remove the learner with immediate effect and place the learner at another site.
- If a concern is raised a whistleblowing report is received, a serious incident takes place, or NHSE-London intelligence suggests that a recognised placement provider is no longer meeting NHSE-London quality standards NHSE-London reserves the right to undertake a review.
- NHSE-London will share information and actions with Education Providers and Regulators and expects Education Providers and Regulators to do likewise.
- The purpose of the review is to identify if the placement provider continues to meet NHSE-London Quality Standards.
- If the outcome of the review identifies concerns the placement provider will be expected to put an action plan in place to mitigate these concerns and progress with addressing the concern/s via the action plan which will be monitored by the NHSE-London Quality Team.
- NHSE-London Quality and the Primary Care School, as well as local Training Hub networks will work with placement providers to develop solutions to concerns raised.
- Any interventions will be in accordance with the NHSE-London Intensive Support Framework. The policy of the Intensive Support Framework is to be supportive rather than punitive, but NHSE-London will suspend training if required in the case of serious concerns.

7.0 Notification of Major Change

It is appreciated that changes happen for various reasons, and NHSE-London, in conjunction with the ICS training hubs, are keen to support these changes where possible. It is vital therefore that any changes, either within a learning environment or with an educator, are communicated to the ICS training hub in the first instance, who will then work with NHSE-London to support those changes. There may be some scenarios where follow up actions need to be taken, but these will be confirmed at the point of notification.

7.1 Educators moving practices within London

An approved educator can move practices, either within their current PCN or to another PCN within London and remain an accredited educator but may have to undergo a recorded conversation with the new ICS training hub and/or (for GP educators) the Associate Director. If the new practice has existing approval status, trainee supervision can commence as soon as practically possible.

If the new practice isn't an accredited learning environment, the educator, while still maintaining accredited status, will be unable to supervise learners until the practice has undergone a positive accreditation process. The educator does not have to seek re-accreditation once the new practice has achieved accreditation status.

In either circumstance, the ICS training hub must be informed of the location change, who will inform NHSE-London so the necessary databases can be updated.

7.2 Educators moving practices outside London

If an educator moves to a practice outside of London, they will need to liaise with the relevant parties within the region to establish what their local procedures are for accreditation, as the requirements for joining accredited or non-accredited practices may differ to those for London.

The London ICS facing training hub must be informed if an educator is moving out of London so the educator's details can be removed from NHSE-London's databases.

7.3 Major changes to learning environments

All learning environments must inform the ICS facing training hub of any major changes. These include but not limited to; mergers, sale of practice, moving to new premises or changes to educators. Any changes should be communicated as soon as they occur and not wait for the yearly self-assessment. These changes will then be passed to NHSE-London.

7.4 Minor changes to learning environments

The ICS facing training hub and NHSE-London must be informed of any minor changes to learning environments. Minor changes can include; change in practice management or partnerships.

In any circumstance of change, the ICS facing training hub will liaise with NHSE-London to review the change and notify the placement provider of any action needed.

8.0 Use of data

NHSE-London's privacy policy explains how any information given, including any information about NHSE-London's sponsored training, education, and development will be used and protected.

NHSE-London process personal information because of legal obligations to do so or because it is necessary for the exercise of NHSE-London's statutory functions or any other functions in the public interest. This includes the quality assurance of training programmes and ensuring that standards are maintained.

The applicants, training hubs and NHSE-London Teams, on behalf of the London Regional Postgraduate Dean, must ensure that all data and information is securely stored in accordance with the requirements of the NHSE-London and the General Data Protection Regulations.

9.0 Further information

Additional information regarding the accreditation process, relevant contacts and helpful infographics can be found soon on the NHSE-London website [*Note to reader: webpages currently in development and will be added in due course*].

NHSE-London Primary Care Team
October 2025

10. Appendix

10.1 Examples of learner timetables

Note to reader: Example timetables will be added in due course.