

Professional development framework FAQs

This is a list of questions sent in by attendees at a series of RCSLT webinars about the professional development framework (February-May 2024). With many thanks to those attendees for their engagement.

Contents

1. [Getting started](#)
2. [How does it align with HCPC standards?](#)
3. [Students](#)
4. [Newly qualified practitioners](#)
5. [Preceptorships](#)
6. [Supervision](#)
7. [Independent practice](#)
8. [SLTs working alone in a setting](#)
9. [Enhanced practice](#)
10. [Advancing practice](#)
11. [Consultants](#)
12. [Growth-based careers](#)
13. [International affiliates](#)
14. [Other Allied Health Professions](#)
15. [Embedding into my work context](#)
16. [The future of the framework](#)

1. How do I get started with the Professional Development Framework?

When and how do I use the framework to guide and support my CPD? What are the most necessary modules of the framework for a basic member's first step of using the framework?

To start with, familiarise yourself with the structure including:

- Five core components (practitioner wellbeing, impact, inclusion and diversity, sustainability, co-production)
- Four domains of practice (professional practice; facilitation of learning; evidence, research and innovation; leadership and management)
- Professional development levels (foundation, proficient, enhanced, advanced, expert)

There is no right or wrong way to use the RCSLT Professional Development Framework – it has been designed to be used flexibly to meet your needs (see Figure 2 in the framework).

Depending on the time you have, you can do all or some of the following and use the outcome when planning your learning, career development and progression plans:

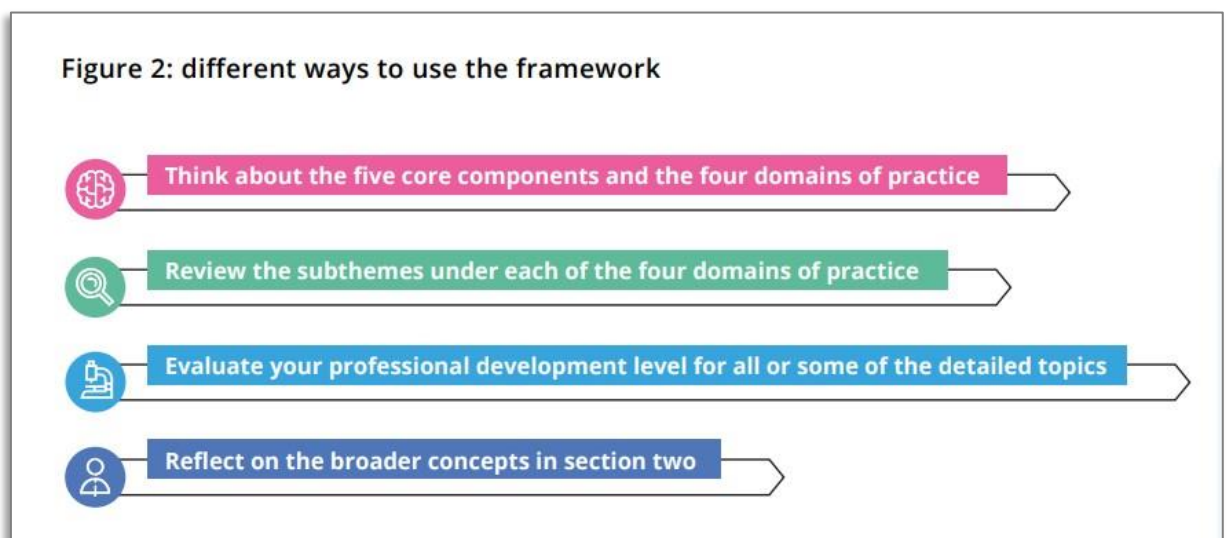


Diagram from p10 of the [Professional Development Framework](#).

How do we practically apply this day to day? Does it link to our CPD diary/goals?

You can apply this as flexibly as you like. Yes, you can align it to your CPD diary and goals. The framework is designed to:

- be used flexibly to guide practitioners, teams, and organisations
- be used as a whole or in parts, returning to it at different times within your career
- identify existing knowledge and skills with individuals and teams
- inspire future learning for knowledge and skills development
- provide a structure to support the CPD Diary (where appropriate)

Is it time-consuming to use?

How long you spend is up to you. It could take a long while if you do it all in one go. However, it is better to break the framework into sections and doing them at different times. This allows you breaks for reflection.

How can it be used as a tool in the appraisal process?

This is a very good tool for use in appraisal. The appraisee can map themselves in and reflect on where they want to develop and where they have developed over the previous period.

Is there an interactive version?

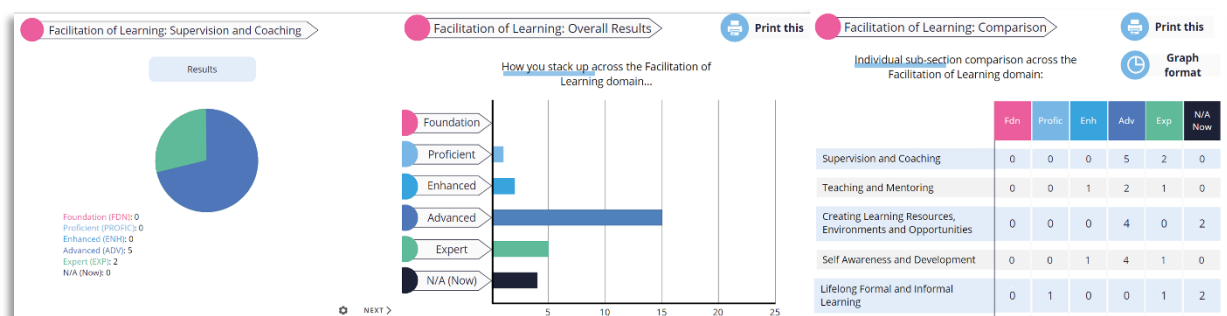
Yes, it is out and available from our Professional Development Framework area: <https://www.rcslt.org/learning/professional-development-framework/>

Is there any way of connecting the results to our CPD log on RCSLT, or would this need to be added as an attachment and inputted manually?

The interactive version is not connected to your CPD log or account on RCSLT so you will need either use the 'Print' button on the overall sections results page, or screen-shot the summary graphs, and save these images somewhere safe. Also, there is no automatic reminder to check in on the interactive version – though you could add looking at it as a goal in your CPD diary.

Can you use the interactive version to compare responses over time?

As the interactive tool does not save your responses, you'll need to either use the 'Print' button on the overall sections results page, or screen-shot the summary graphs, and save these images somewhere safe. You can then refer back to them at a later stage and compare newer results to see where you're improving, and where you still need or want to focus your development.



Screen shots to show the [interactive tool](#) at individual sub-section and overall stages. Note the 'Print this' button'.

I'm still not really sure what the difference is between knowledge and skills, enhanced and advanced knowledge and skills, and expert. Can you explain?

The professional development levels are adapted from and based on work originally proposed by Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1980) and subsequently developed into health and care by Benner (1982). You are invited to reflect on your level of knowledge and skills with

each detailed topic, appreciating that any form of self-evaluation is based on the view we have of ourselves at that moment in time.

Figure 4: Professional development knowledge and skills at different development levels

Professional development level	What this looks like (short version)	People at this development level may use their knowledge and skills to:
Foundation	I am informed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Apply and critically analyse ● Make decisions within protocols and processes ● Manage rapidly changing events within specific situations
Proficient	I am knowledgeable and skilled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Apply and critically analyse ● Use reasoning to justify deviating from protocols when appropriate ● Manage a range of situations in different contexts
Enhanced	I have enhanced knowledge and skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Critically evaluate and create ● Manage risk and function in an unpredictable environment ● Make complex decisions ● Seek guidance for major decision making
Advanced	I have advanced knowledge and skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Critically evaluate and create ● Manage extensive risk in unpredictable environments ● Make decisions which involve high level of complexity
Expert	I have expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Critically evaluate and create ● Manage extensive risk across a system ● Make decisions which involve high level of complexity

Diagram from p20 of the [Professional Development Framework](#).

2. How does it align with HCPC standards?

How does the framework relate to the new CPD requirements from the HCPC?

The HCPC requires registrants to comply with its five standards for CPD <https://www.hcpc-uk.org/standards/standards-of-continuing-professional-development/>. The framework is designed to work with those requirements. The HCPC provides general standards for all its registrants whereas the framework relates to professional development within the area of speech and language therapy.

3. Students

How we can support this in the undergraduate setting?

It is not targeted at students or NQPs as they have a lot to fit in with the curriculum or NQP goals. However, we think it is worth students and NQPs having an awareness of the

framework to help them start thinking about career opportunities and development. We'll be thinking about that linking between career stages this year as we will be reviewing both the curriculum and NQP goals and want closer alignment with all our documents to make transition easier.

How can the framework be utilised for developing graduate capital and agency in their employability journey?

Very good question! It is a great tool for an individual to map themselves into so that they have an awareness of their skills and can talk about these – and it might be that some of these came from before speech and language therapy course or from another aspect of their life. It gives graduates understanding of what development they need and can therefore be more proactive in seeking opportunities. It's a great tool for discussions with employers, supervisors and mentors.

4. Newly qualified practitioners

How can it benefit newly registered SLTs?

How can I use the framework as a NQP?

It is not targeted at students or NQPs as they have a lot to fit in with the curriculum or NQP goals. However, we think it is worth students and NQPs having an awareness of the framework to help them start thinking about career opportunities and development. We'll be thinking about that linking between career stages this year as we will be reviewing both the curriculum and NQP goals and want closer alignment with all our documents to make transition easier.

When was this created and why are we not signposted towards it when we are studying to qualify?

This came out in March 2023 and we have been doing online and face to face awareness events since that time – including this webinar series. We do take on board that there is much to do in raising awareness so will consider how we involve students and universities in that. Over the next year we are going to be working hard to think about ways to help it align with pre-registration and NQP stages.

5. Preceptorships

How can we use this to support preceptorship?

It depends what career stage you are thinking about.

If it is for someone who has *already completed their NQP goals* – eg getting ready to move from a band 5 to a band 6; or transition into a different setting; or return to work; then the framework is an excellent tool for someone to map themselves into and then to use to think about career goals.

If you are thinking in terms of *newly qualified* then we would recommend them referring

to the NQP goals first as the profession-specific framework to be using to get a person to fully registered. However, we are starting a project to look at the NQP goals and as part of that we will be coming out to members – watch out for that soon. We are thinking of ways that we bring the NQP goals, preceptorships and the Professional Development Framework more in line. If you interested in preceptorships we would urge you to get involved in these discussions.

6. For supervision

How do people use it as a tool to support the supervision process?

This is a very good tool for use in supervision. A lot of its power is in giving space and structure to reflective conversations. You can be quite broad, or very narrow in focus.

7. For independent practice

Interested in how to apply to independent practice, working in mainstream school.

How can you apply this within independent practice effectively?

The framework is designed for all speech and language therapists and any setting in which they work. You can use it by yourself or with a manager or supervisor, critical friend, or peers. You can use it at formal periods of contact with others such as appraisals, or more informally as a starting point for conversations about your career, your CPD needs and your aspirations.

Is there a provider who is recommended for Independent SLTs to use to complete mandatory training for AHPs?

We cannot recommend particular providers as we have a duty to remain impartial. However, CPD providers pay for advertising in the back of Bulletin and on our website on our course listings page: <https://www.rcslt.org/course-listings/>

What support, development opportunities are there if you are not employed by the NHS?

How will RCSLT support SLTs that work outside of the NHS, i.e. education, third sector, independent? It seems that the progression opportunities are very much tied to NHSE.

We recommend thinking about is available to you. For example, if you are a member of the RCSLT you will have access to: events, webinars, conferences, podcasts, elearning, guidance, Bulletin, CENs, professional networks and minor grants. Have a look at your member home page to find out more: <https://community.rcslt.org/s/>

You may choose to develop your skills by finding a mentor, or becoming one yourself, or offering placements.

8. For SLTs working alone in a sector

How can the professional development framework tie in with and help me in my work in school as I'm the only SLT in the setting?

The framework can help in several ways. Use it to:

- Map and articulate your competencies to the school.
- Support conversations around your professional development needs.
- Give you a sense of your professional identity within the multi-disciplinary work environment.
- Support conversations with your supervisor.
- Think about your career more broadly.

To note that these ideas also apply to SLTs working alone in other settings.

9. Enhanced practice

Where would someone with decades of experience, but maybe not post-graduate qualifications, fall on the ratings?

The professional development framework is a self-assessment tool and it is important to remember that you would place yourself on the rating scale where it feels appropriate to you. The purpose of being able to rate yourself is to identify your strengths and then areas you may want to work on. Someone may be a natural leader but also may not have completed any CPD for leadership. This does not mean they cannot rate themselves as 'expert' or 'advanced' as this is a skill of theirs. Similarly, someone with decades of experience is likely to rate themselves more highly in the areas where they have obtained that experience even if they do not have official post graduate qualifications.

Have I understood this correctly; I cannot say I have advanced practice without a masters or equivalent qualification?

When filling in the professional development framework you could absolutely say you are advanced in the areas that you feel advanced in. This is a tool for yourself and identifying whichever level feels appropriate for you. In service, this may be different. There is significant variation not only between nations, but also between services. Some services may require evidence of qualification to apply for a role, others may not. It is important to address this with your service lead and/or AP lead for your area.

10. Advancing practice

How do SLTs not get left behind in the advancing practice arena?

This is a relevant concern and something RCSLT are entirely committed to working on this. Some options to prevent SLTs being left behind would include:

- Maintain up to date CPD and attend relevant training sessions.
- Be innovative with thinking and approaches.

- Develop understanding of MDT working and be prepared to supervise and support clinicians from various backgrounds.
- Engage with other SLTs considering the AP space, offering guidance and support
- Support RCSLTs #PrescribingNow campaign.
- Engage with RCSLT projects in the area, RCSLT are currently looking at developing opportunities in community settings.

Would you be expected to have a wider understanding of Education if that's the setting you work in rather than just healthcare settings, for Advanced career stage?

Absolutely. You would be expected to have a wider understanding of the setting you work in. So, if you work in education, you may also be expected to have an understanding of social services for example.

Why only link with RCOT? In some community/inpatient settings SLTs are more akin to Clinical Psychology than occupational therapy.

The main reason we have only linked up with RCOT for this project is because they were the only other professional group that showed interest in working on this together. Other professions such as physiotherapy and podiatry are often more aligned with the medical approach that AP has typically had. The funding for this project from NHSE was only provided to AHPs so other professions including clinical psychology may not have the same focus as us right now. We do completely agree and recognise similarities between speech and language therapy and clinical psychology so this is something we will remain aware of and engaged in where possible.

11. Consultants

Can it be used to support writing job descriptions for consultant posts?

Yes, this could be used for consideration of JDs for consultant posts.

In general, these vary significantly and more often than not, it seems like people have to write their own job descriptions once they get to this level. I have looked into opportunities to create a general template but feedback indicated that this may not be overly helpful due to the variation of content.

We developed an 'advanced' clinical academic JD – this is the highest level and can be found here: <https://www.rcslt.org/members/get-involved/current-rcslt-projects/workforce-reform-programme/clinical-academic-job-descriptions/#section-2>

If you get in touch we have examples - in acute and in neurosciences - and can put you in touch with a relevant clinical advisor.

How does the RCSLT see the progression and contribution of advisory consultative models of working, in prevention?

By this we presume the question refers to roles that do not have their own caseload but provide consultation and support. For example an SLT with a brief to work in the justice sector to prevent escalation for those with SLCN. Prevention could be quite broad, encompassing universal services for children and young people, mental health, public health, justice and rehabilitation - areas in which SLTs are already embedded.

RCSLT definitely sees a need growing in mental health and justice sectors.

In terms of the progression, that will be dependent on the environment and its maturity.

The key to nurturing progress, will be relationships across the Multi-disciplinary team and the clinician gaining 'trusted' professional respect as part of the 4 domains of practice.

12. Growth-based careers

Can you tell me what a 'growth-based career' is please?

A growth-based career is one where there is less emphasis on promotion and the career ladder and more on growth and experienced based progression. So this might mean taking a sideways move; taking a portfolio career approach; doing a secondment; staying in your current role but adding depth and breadth to your skill set; or moving to a different sector.

We cover this on p41-42 of the framework. There is also information available here:

<https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/allied-health-professions/enable-workforce/growth-based-career-planning>

Is there an opportunity for facilitation with the application of the Kawa model to support self-reflection and that of others?

Great question! Yes, the last part of the Professional Development Framework covers thinking differently about your career and links to the Kawa model. For those not familiar, The Kawa Model is a therapeutic method developed in Japan by occupational therapists.

Kawa is the Japanese word for 'river'.

The Kawa Model uses the natural metaphor of a river to depict one's life journey, but it can also apply to career journeys. The varying and chronological experience of life is like a river, flowing from the high lands down to the ocean. Along its meandering path, the quality and character of its flow will vary from place to place, from instance to instance.

There might be difficulties such as waterfalls, or rocks, but there might be aids, like bridges. The idea is to map out your career, thinking of how it looks as a river. What might be your blockages? What may help you on your way along the river, eg mentors, CPD, shadowing?

13. For International Affiliates

Does this framework apply if you are an international affiliate?

We have created this with a UK audience in mind, having consulted with members and stakeholders there. However, this tool is very flexible and so could be considered if you are working in other countries.

14. For other Allied Health Professions

Could use of the framework support development to AHP?

Apologies but we are not quite sure what this question means:

If it means developing a student, then yes, it is a good point of reference but bear in mind we already have NQP goals.

If it is talking about stretching to other AHPs then yes:

Yes, we have heard a few examples of this framework being used beyond speech and language therapy and with other allied health professions in some services.

15. Embedding into my work

Do you have suggestions on how to build this into trust policies?

It will vary on where you are but you should have an SLT lead.

If you are in England you should have an SLT lead in your AHP faculty and council. There are equivalents in health boards in Wales; the health and social care trusts in Northern Ireland and boards in Scotland.

Can you talk with them about the framework? Do you have evidence of where it has been effective. Identify the pain points for them such as retention and wellbeing of staff. The safety reasons for a continually developing workforce. How can the framework help that?

Tips for having these conversations with managers? It opens up conversations around changes in team structures potentially (and therefore funding)?

I'd advise keeping to growth and development rather than funding and structures.

Supporting staff with their growth benefits everyone: the therapist feels more engaged in their role; the service user benefits from being treated by someone who is continuously developing; and staff are more likely to stay in the service. You might like to refer to the Joint Principles of CPD, which sets out the employer's responsibility to support CPD and lifelong learning: <https://www.rcslt.org/members/lifelong-learning/#section-6> This has been developed by over 20 health and care professions and unions, including the RCSLT.

I am based in Scotland so wonder how this fits with TURAS?

The framework was developed with input from members and stakeholders across all four nations of the UK. The framework acts as a broad overview of areas in which SLTs can work whereas competence documents focus in on particular areas. The framework is flexible enough to sit alongside competence documents.

How does this relate to movement between NHS pay bands?

The framework is not about pay or terms and conditions of employment. Rather, it provides a structure to guide you towards areas of learning and professional development for your career because service users expect us to have up-to-date knowledge and skills.

Is there a resource like pebble pad that the RCSLT recommends that can be used to log and manage CPD and link to the framework?

We recommend using the RCSLT CPD diary which can be found by logging into our website. This is for RCSLT members only.

How does this align to other competence documents when they are reviewed?

The framework acts as a broad overview of areas in which SLTs can work whereas competence documents focus in on particular areas. The framework is flexible enough to sit alongside competence documents. As RCSLT develops new competence frameworks or reviews existing ones we will be ensuring that any mapping with the framework is made explicit.

How do we rate staff on cultural competence?

It is the ability to show cultural humility and cultural responsiveness. From the framework, p53:

Word or phrase	Definitions
Cultural humility	A lifelong commitment to self-evaluation and critique, to redress power imbalance and to develop non paternalistic partnerships (Tervalon and Murray-Garcia 1998). Cultural humility requires us to acknowledge we are constantly learning, we recognise without shame that everyone has knowledge gaps, we expect differences between and within cultures, we work to identify biases to promote positive change and we recognise power dynamics and their effects (Agner 2020).
Culturally responsive	Ability to understand and consider the different cultural backgrounds of the people you offer services to, including across all protected characteristics (adapted from Cambridge Dictionary, 2023)

The future of the framework

How do you see the framework developing in future?

How is RCSLT going to monitor uptake of the Framework amongst members? Is there a review period planned for?

In 2024 we want to keep raising awareness. We will then be evaluating it and making any relevant updates. We will also be looking to see how it aligns with other frameworks across the career journey and listening to members about any points where we can make it easier to move between them. Please share your experiences via social media using #RCSLTProfDev. We value hearing about how you use the framework in practice and in particular the impact it has on your learning, development and career progression.