



Specified Named Course Requirements: Approved Mental Health Professional





Introduction

1. This document sets out the requirements to which providers will have to conform to be approved by the Care Council for Wales (Care Council) to offer the Approved Mental Health Professional Award. This Award has been developed within the modular Post-qualifying (PQ) Framework for Wales. The Care Council has the power, under *section 5.1.c of the Approval And Visiting Of Post Qualifying Courses For Social Workers (Wales) Rules 2007*, to create Specific Named Awards, for which, in addition to the general requirements for modules approved within the framework, the Care Council may make specific requirements in relation to learning outcomes, credit volume and level, and/or assessment. The Approved Mental Health Professional Award in Wales is a Specific Named Award.
2. The role of Approved Mental Health Professionals (AMHP) was introduced by the *Mental Health Act 2007*, which amends the *Mental Health Act 1983*. However AMHPs, unlike their predecessors, approved social workers, may be drawn from a number of professions. In Wales these are listed in *The Mental Health (Approval of Persons to be Approved Mental Health Professionals) (Wales) Regulations 2008* and comprise: social workers registered with the Care Council or the General Social Care Council, Nurses registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Council, Occupational Therapists registered with the Health Professions Council, and Chartered Psychologists registered by the regulatory body.

The Care Council has been given the responsibility for drawing up the training requirements for the award for all professionals who may undertake it. Therefore the AMHP Award, although it will be recognised for social workers as part of the PQ framework of awards, will be open to other designated professionals, and the selection criteria have been adapted to reflect this.

3. The purpose of the AMHP Award in Wales is to equip experienced relevant professionals with the further knowledge and skills they need to exercise the responsibilities of an AMHP, as defined by the *Mental Health Act 2007* and subsequent relevant legislation. It will remain the responsibility of the local social services authority to approve individual professionals, who have successfully undertaken this or predecessor training in accordance with the *Mental Health (Approval of Persons to be Approved Mental Health Professionals) (Wales) Regulations 2008*.
4. The training for approved social workers under the preceding PQ Framework has been widely regarded as a particularly successful element of the framework, producing social workers with an in-depth knowledge of relevant legislation and procedures, an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of themselves and other professionals involved, and a commitment to a holistic approach to assessment and intervention. These requirements seek to build on that success.

5. However, the sector has also indicated that contemporary training needs to reflect some of the changes which have occurred since the original training was developed. These include: mental health professionals' greater awareness of the essential place in all social work training of service users and carers, (not simply in terms of their perspective, but also of direct involvement at all levels); greater and growing interprofessional working especially in the assessment and management of risk; the changing composition and expectations of the workforce; changing model of service delivery; the new emphasis on continuous professional development; a general commitment to "upskilling" the workforce.
6. In the light of these developments, the need to introduce a new Mental Health Award has been seen as an opportunity to ensure that the new requirements are fit for purpose in terms of contemporary best practice. In particular the requirements are seen by many respondents as an opportunity to create a mental health service which is service user centred, holistic and recovery-orientated. The Welsh Assembly Government has published Key Competences for AMHPs, and the learning outcomes in this document are mapped against these. The requirements are also drawn from those agreed for the revised Mental Health Award (Approved Social Worker), which were based on extensive consultation in 2007.
7. Providers may choose to link the generic requirements with modules which meet the PQ Framework's general requirements, and address other specialist areas of mental health work. This would provide PQ pathways for mental health workers who are not AMHPs, but would not, at present, constitute a Specific Named Award.
8. Providers may also wish to make further modules available to those who have completed or are undertaking the AMHP Award, e.g. in order to allow them to attain a Master's Degree. However, the Care Council has a responsibility to ensure that it does not, through its own regulations, inhibit the provision of sufficient AMHPs in the workforce. Where a provider wishes to provide the Award in Wales as a component of a bigger award, it must provide an exit point so that candidates can be assessed for and awarded the AMHP Award in Wales whether or not they complete the full Award.



Regulations

1. Applications to provide an AMHP Award in Wales must be made in writing, in a format provided by the Care Council.
2. The Award can only be provided through one or more Higher Education Institutions.
3. The provider must show, through signed partnership agreements that the award has been developed, and will be implemented, through a partnership with employers responsible for the approval of AMHPs.
4. The provider must show that the Award has been developed, and will be implemented, with the involvement of service user and carer representatives.
5. The provider must meet all of the general requirements for approval of the Modular PQ framework, as laid out in the Schedule to *The Approval and Visiting of Post Qualifying Courses for Social Workers (Wales) Rules 2007* (with the exception of the general rules for selection, which have been adapted below). A provider who has already been approved to offer modules within the framework will be deemed to have met those requirements for the purpose of this Specific Named Award. If more than one institution is involved in an application, each provider will need to demonstrate that they meet, or have already been approved as meeting, all the requirements.
6. The provider must show in the written application that the provision will meet all the requirements and specifications set out in this document.
7. The provider, if approved, will be subject to the Care Council's provision for ongoing Quality Assurance of PQ provision, as set out in *The Approval and Visiting of Post qualifying Courses for Social Workers (Wales) Rules 2007*.

Requirements for the Approved Mental Health Professional Award in Wales

1 Credit and Level

- 1.1 The Award will be worth a minimum of 60 credits at level 7 of the Credit and Qualification Framework for Wales (post-graduate).

2 Selection

- 2.1 Candidates for selection must demonstrate:
- they are registered with their relevant professional body;
 - they have sufficient knowledge and experience of the Mental Health sector to benefit from the programme;
 - that their previous academic study or experiential learning has adequately prepared them for level 7 study.

3 General PQ Rules

- 3.1 The demonstration of learning outcomes must include throughout, evidence that students are drawing on and critically appraising the research basis for knowledge and skills.
- 3.2 On completion of the programme, the student must demonstrate critical knowledge and understanding in the areas specified below.
- 3.3 The learning outcomes must be informed by the generic requirements for all modules within the Modular PQ Framework i.e. a demonstration as appropriate that the module reflects:
- current research and evidence;
 - the service user and carer perspective;
 - current legislation and policy;
 - the inter-professional context ;
 - the Code of Practice;
 - the Welsh context of social work (or the candidate's own profession).
- 3.4 In addition, the candidate must demonstrate the following values and learning outcomes in knowledge and skills.



4 Values

- 4.1 The candidate must demonstrate throughout commitment to and compliance with their professional Code of Practice.
- 4.2 In complying with this Code of Practice the candidate must specifically demonstrate:
1. a commitment to seeking the least restrictive health and social care for those dealt with under the Mental Health Act consistent with an assessment of their needs and safety, and the safety of others;
 2. their ability to exercise independence in making decisions regarding application under the Act;
 3. respect for individuals' qualities, abilities and diverse backgrounds;
 4. commitment to enabling service users and carers to contribute to decisions which affect their quality of life and which may affect their liberty;
 5. a commitment to identifying and countering any decision which may be based upon oppressive practice;
 6. a commitment to understanding the perspective and experience of service users and carers, individually and as a social grouping.

5 Learning Outcomes

The key competencies required of an AMHP are set out in schedule 2 of the *The Mental Health (Approval of Persons to be Approved Mental Health Professionals) (Wales) Regulations 2008*. The learning outcomes below are designed to meet the key competencies.

5.1 Knowledge Outcomes

The candidate must demonstrate a critical understanding of and ability to apply the following areas of knowledge.

5.1.1 Values and ethics

1. The service user perspectives on mental health services.
2. The carer perspectives on mental health services.
3. The professional and ethical debates relevant to the role of the AMHP.
4. The impact of all forms of discrimination on the incidence and identification of, and intervention in, mental disorder.
5. The role of organisational and institutional structures in promoting mental health, and in mental disorder.
6. The impact of power differentials in the context of mental disorder.
7. Linguistic, cultural and religious issues (including issues related to Welsh language and culture) in relation to mental health and mental disorder.

5.1.2 Legislation and systems

1. Current UK and Welsh Assembly Government Mental Health legislation, related Codes of Practice, and all associated or secondary legislation or guidance, including appropriate case law.
2. Other legislation and policies which are relevant to the AMHP role.
3. UK, national and local policies, guidance and procedures relating to statutory mental health functions.
4. The roles and functions of formal institutions and procedures within the mental health system.

5.1.3 Professional responsibilities

1. The role, responsibilities and accountability of the AMHP.
2. The roles and responsibilities of other involved professionals.
3. Models of effective interdisciplinary and interagency working.

5.1.4 Understanding mental disorder

1. The evidence for, and implications of the major models of mental disorder.
2. The social model of disability.
3. Impact and presentation of mental disorder in specific groups, such as children and young people, older people, people with learning disabilities, people with physical disabilities, mentally disordered offenders, homeless people, and asylum seekers.

4. Impact and presentation of mental disorder in relation to ethnicity and culture.

5. The relationship of mental disorder to alcohol, drugs and substance misuse, and implications for interventions.

5.1.5 Assessment and intervention

1. Models of effective assessment and care planning in the context of mental health services.
2. The major models of intervention in mental disorder, and the evidence for their effectiveness.
3. The resources, formal and informal, which are available for the support of service users and carers as an alternative to admission to hospital.
4. Crisis theory and models of crisis management.
5. Theories of risk management including the evidence base for indicators of risk and models of risk assessment.
6. The implications for intervention of specific forms of risk, including self harm and suicide, self-neglect, neglect of dependents, risk of violence or abuse towards and from others.
7. Models of effective and positive communication.
8. The implications of high levels of emotional arousal for communicating effectively with service users and carers, and methods to lower emotional arousal.



5.2 Skills Outcomes

On completion of the programme, the student must demonstrate the ability to apply the above knowledge by exercising the following skills:

5.2.1 Working in partnership with service users and carers

1. The ability to elicit and work respectfully with service users' own understanding of their situation, needs and desired outcomes.
2. The ability to elicit and work respectfully with carers' own understanding of their situation, needs and desired outcomes.
3. The ability to elicit and work positively with service users' and carers' evaluation of the successfulness of interventions and outcomes, including the worker's own use of self.

5.2.2 Communication skills

1. The ability to communicate effectively, in written and spoken forms, as appropriate, with service users and carers, including those who are in a state of high emotional arousal. (This includes the ability to communicate own and organisation's role and responsibilities).
2. The ability to enable service users and carers, where necessary, to communicate their needs, opinions and preferences in their preferred language, including the use of advocacy.
3. The ability to communicate through translators where necessary.

4. The ability to communicate effectively, in written and spoken forms, as appropriate, with other professionals.
5. The ability to promote effectively the role and autonomy of the AMHP.
6. The ability to present oral and written information and analysis clearly and effectively in formal situations (e.g. court hearings).

5.2.3 Conflict management and negotiation skills

1. The ability to recognise and plan for situations of potential conflict.
2. The ability to lower emotional arousal, in self and others.
3. The ability to demonstrate respect for the views of all parties.
4. The ability to challenge constructively the views of others.
5. The ability to explain, justify and where appropriate modify, own views.
6. The ability to work collaboratively with a range of networks and community groups, agencies and advocates.
7. The ability to identify potential solutions, and work with all parties to achieve them.
8. The ability to recognise and take action in situations where the safety of one or more parties (including self) is at risk.

5.2.4 Assessment

1. The ability to select and apply appropriate models of assessment in the context of mental disorder.
2. The ability to assess effectively in crisis situations.
3. The ability to explain the rationale for the outcomes of assessment effectively to service users, carers and other professionals.
4. The ability to identify situations and forms of risk, and the appropriate response.

5.2.5 Interventions

1. The ability to identify and justify appropriate forms of intervention.
2. The ability to manage effectively the relevant legal and practical processes including the involvement of other professionals as well as service users, relatives and carers.
3. The ability to plan, negotiate and, manage, compulsory admission to hospital, reception into guardianship or arrangements for supervised community treatment.
4. The ability to implement, seek feedback on, evaluate, and modify as appropriate, interventions.

5.2.6 Working with other professionals (including advocates and those in the voluntary, independent and informal sectors)

1. The ability to work positively with other professionals, while recognising their different roles, responsibilities and approaches.

2. The ability to manage and coordinate effectively the relevant legal and practical processes including the involvement of other professionals as well as service users, relatives and carers.
3. The ability to promote a holistic approach and the social model of working with people with a mental disorder.
4. The ability to identify and communicate, in an effective and timely way, information or opinions of significance to other professionals.
5. The ability to identify, and act on where appropriate, significant information from other professionals.
6. The ability to identify and elicit resources, information and skills held by others.

5.2.7 Self-management

1. The ability to prioritise multiple and conflicting demands on time and resources.
2. The ability to take and justify decisions in complex situations.
3. The ability to recognise and manage the personal emotional impact of the work.
4. The ability to evaluate, reflect on, and where necessary modify, performance and outcomes, using feedback from service users and carers, other professionals, and supervision, as appropriate.



6 Assessment of candidates

- 6.1 Assessment methods may assess a number of learning outcomes simultaneously.
- 6.2 Assessment methods must be appropriate to the learning outcome(s) being assessed, and directly relevant to practice as an AMHP.
- 6.3 The candidate's practice in relation to the role and responsibilities of an AMHP must be directly observed and assessed on a minimum of three occasions, of which at least two must be of direct work with a service user.
- 6.4 These observations must be made by an assessor who is experienced and trained as an AMHP or approved social worker. The assessor will provide a report on the skills and knowledge of the candidate, which should also draw on observations and feedback from service users, carers, and professionals, who have observed the candidate's practice.
- 6.5 In order to gain the AMHP Award, the candidate is required to produce a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate that each of the learning outcomes have been met.
- 6.6 The candidate portfolio must include a reflective and critical account by the candidate of their understanding of the role and responsibilities of an AMHP and of their own practice.





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