Education and training
— a professional development framework

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A professional development framework, for the benefit of the pharmacy workforce with roles in education, training and workforce development, will be launched this month. This article describes the rationale for developing the framework and its use in practice

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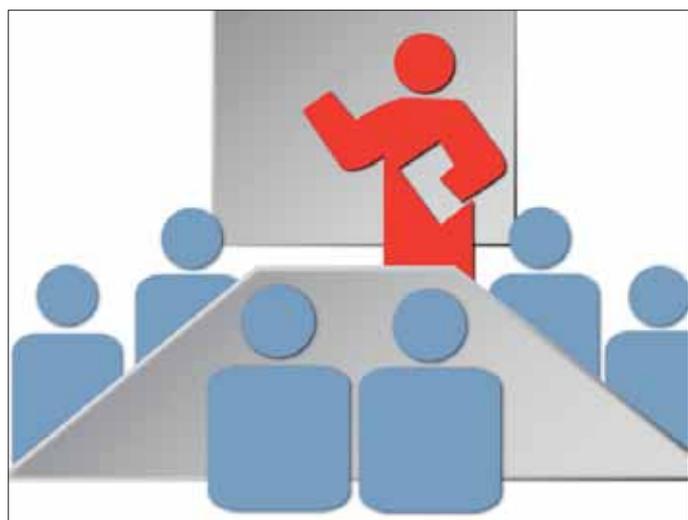
Pharmacy staff can use the framework to develop their role in education, training and workforce development

Education, training and development of others are essential activities undertaken by pharmacists and pharmacy support staff in all sectors of pharmacy practice. They come from diverse backgrounds, are at different stages of their careers and are in various areas of specialisation. Irrespective of the diversity in roles, competencies in all aspects of education and training involve similar and transferable skills that could be embodied in a single framework.

The NHS Pharmacy Education and Development Committee and the UK Clinical Pharmacy Association education and training group jointly identified a need to develop a single education, training and workforce development (ETWD) framework to:

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- Provide clarity and consistency across the profession in terms of the range of education, training and workforce development skills needed when developing others
- Define competencies for the diverse range of pharmacists and pharmacy support staff with roles in ETWD
- Support "higher level practice" across all sectors of pharmacy practice
- Act as a structured professional and career development tool for individuals

The aim was to develop a framework that can be used by any member of pharmacy staff (across any sector of practice) involved in the education, training and development of others, and that is suitable for those seeking to:

- Develop their roles as trainers and educators as part of their professional activities
- Become expert practitioners in pharmacy education, training and workforce development

Stakeholders, representing a range of organisations and sectors of pharmacy, were consulted through all stages of the

Cluster 1
Expert **P**rofessional **R**ole in **E**ducation and **W**orkforce **D**evelopment
plus
NOS for learning and development and workforce planning

Cluster 2
Building working relationships

Cluster 3
Leadership

Cluster 4
Management

Cluster 5
Education, **T**raining and **D**evelopment adapted from ACLF
plus
NOS for learning and development

Cluster 6
Research and evaluation

NOS = National occupational standards
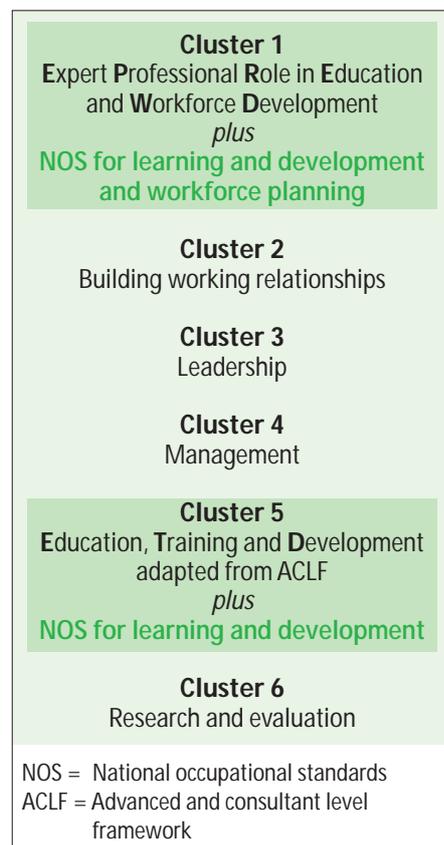ACLF = Advanced and consultant level framework

Figure 1: Structure of the framework

development process to ensure wide applicability of the framework across the profession.

Consideration was also given to how the framework can be used in conjunction with other competency frameworks and professional development approaches used by different pharmacy groups and in line with relevant national occupational standards (NOS). Links were also made between the ETWD framework and the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF).[1]

The framework

The structure of the ETWD framework (Figure 1) is based on that of the advanced and consultant level framework (ACLF) drawn up by the Competency Development and Evaluation Group (CoDEG).[2] This has been shown to be a valid tool to make judgements about an individual's current level of practice and to signpost future development needs.[3]

A new cluster, "expert professional role in education and workforce development" (EPREWD) was developed to be used as an alternative to the ACLF Cluster 1 for those aspiring to become expert practitioners in pharmacy ETWD.

Cluster 5 of the ACLF (education, training and development) was adapted for the ETWD framework by mapping NOS for learning and development[4] to this cluster. The NOS provide detailed guidance on how to develop knowledge and skills related to the competencies in this cluster. The NOS for learning and development and workforce planning[5] were also mapped onto the new Cluster 1.

Clusters 2, 3, 4 and 6 of the ACLF were retained as an integral part of the framework.

Usability testing

Following development of the ETWD framework, it was important to test that it met the needs of those who would be

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"Careers" articles

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using it. A total of 16 participants were selected to ensure diversity and test the usability of the framework across as broad a sample of participants as possible. Semi-structured interviews (telephone or face-to-face) explored:

● Participants' perceptions of their current level of practice (in relation to the framework)
● How the framework could be used to help participants achieve their career aspirations in ETWD
● Participants' career pathway to date and how the framework could have facilitated career development

Notes taken during the interviews were written up as case studies to illustrate descriptively how the framework can be used by pharmacy staff, with a variety of roles in ETWD in different sectors of practice and at different stages of their careers. Evidence provided by practitioners to support their level of practice in relation to the ETWD framework was also collated.

Benefits of the framework

Before the development of the framework there was no clear professional development pathway for pharmacy staff specialising in education and training — as one participant put it: "I stumbled into education and training almost by accident. . . . I was given the responsibility of the certificate programme without any thought of whether I had teaching skills or aptitudes. . .."

All participants commented on the usability and usefulness of the framework. The case study participants identified the following benefits of the framework:

● A structured tool for mapping relevant skills and competencies in ETWD
   "The framework helps me to identify the criteria and level of practice I should aspire to. It also benchmarks me, where I am at present and gives me confidence in the skill set and knowledge I have." — lead E&T pharmacist
● A model for further development and career progression for anyone with roles in education, training and workforce development
   "I may have excellent knowledge [of the subject I am teaching] but may not have the most excellent tools to deliver that knowledge. The framework and the National Occupational Standards that are mapped to it can help me identify what I don't know."
   — aseptics specialist
● A tool that supports other existing models for professional development and higher level practice
   "It would be interesting to map yourself on

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the framework and then run it back against your KSF outline and see how it cross references. This would enable you to see how the framework could move you along the KSF."
   — teacher practitioner
● A model that bridges the education/practice divide
   "As a teacher practitioner I have separate personal development plans for my university role and my NHS role. This framework is specific to me personally and cuts through all the roles." — teacher practitioner

The final stages of the validation of the ETWD framework are almost complete and the framework will be launched this month at the joint UKCPA/Guild of Healthcare Pharmacists conference. It is hoped that broad engagement and feedback from users will help refine the framework. To achieve this, the framework needs to be embedded in professional development across the pharmacy profession and should accommodate a wide range of individual users with a diversity of roles in education, training and development of others.

References

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3. Meadows N, Webb D, McRobbie D, Antoniou S, Bates I, Davies G. Developing and validating a competency framework for advanced pharmacy practice. Pharmaceutical Journal 2004;273: 789–92.
4. Skills for Health. National Occupational Standards: Learning and Development. Available at www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/tools/view_framework.php?id=83 (accessed 28 April 2008).
5. Skills for Health. National Occupational Standards: Workforce Planning. Available at www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/tools/view_framework.php?id=105 (accessed 28 April 2008).

Accessing the framework

The education, training and workforce development framework will be shortly be available online at the NHS Pharmacy Education and Development Committee website (www.nhspedc.nhs.uk) and the UK Clinical Pharmacy Association website (www.ukcpa.org).