

Northern Ireland

**Social**

**Care**

**Council**

**PROFESSIONAL IN PRACTICE  
HANDBOOK FOR THE INDIVIDUAL  
ASSESSMENT ROUTE**

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## **Introduction**

The Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) has responsibility for determining and managing the provision of post qualifying education and training for social work in Northern Ireland. This responsibility is carried out within NISCC by the Professional in Practice Partnership which reports to Council.

The Professional in Practice Partnership, chaired by a member of Council, comprises the main social work employers and Higher Education Institutions engaged in the provision of post qualifying education and training for social work in Northern Ireland.

NISCC is required, as part of its key roles and functions, to have arrangements and structures in place to facilitate individual submissions through the Individual Assessment Route. This function is delivered by the Professional in Practice Assessment Panel.

This guidance has been developed to provide candidates and assessors with the information they require to complete and assess IAR submissions across the range of assessment methods.

## SECTION ONE

### OVERVIEW OF THE PROFESSIONAL IN PRACTICE FRAMEWORK

The Professional in Practice Framework has three Professional Awards (see *Northern Ireland Post Qualifying Education and Training Framework in Social Work, DHSSPS, NISCC, December 2006*);

- 1. Consolidation Award in Social Work:-**  
For those staff consolidating and extending the knowledge and skills developed at basic qualifying level and preparing to move into more specialist work.
- 2. Specialist Award in Social Work:-**  
For those involved in complex work requiring high levels of responsibility and accountability.
- 3. Leadership and Strategic Award in Social Work:-**  
For those influencing developments and influencing others.

Each of the three awards is a separate entity and therefore a candidate can achieve each award or indeed can achieve an award more than once across a range of routes. Candidates can work towards achievement by using any of the following routes;

- **Individual Assessment** to the Professional in Practice Assessment Panel
- **Approved programmes/modules** which may have academic credits at Post Graduate level. The Approved Programme Handbook and list of approved programmes are available on the NISCC website [www.niscc.info](http://www.niscc.info)
- **Combined Route**, i.e. a combination of Approved Programme and Individual Submissions.
- **Credit Accumulation Route**

### Enrolment

All social workers seeking to access the Individual Assessment Route to gain Professional in Practice requirements and awards must be registered on the social work part of the NISCC register. Once registered, social workers are automatically **enrolled with the Professional in Practice Framework**.

Where the candidate wishes to achieve academic credits, they are required additionally to enrol with the relevant academic institution.

Enrolment with academic institutions is an arrangement between the candidate, their employer and the academic institution and is not a NISCC responsibility.

## **Equal Opportunities**

The NISCC is committed to the provision of equality of opportunity and access to assessment in the Professional in Practice Framework regardless of any real or perceived differences.

The Professional in Practice Committee is committed to fair and objective assessment.

Where a candidate feels he/she is being unfairly treated in respect of access to assessment or within the assessment process, an appeal may be made using the Policy on Reviewing an Assessment Decision (Appendix Five). Should further action be required the candidate should refer to the NISCC complaints procedure, available on [www.niscc.info](http://www.niscc.info).

Where a candidate has issues relating to post qualifying developments, provision or gaps in provision, these should be raised with their employer.

## SECTION TWO

### ASSESSMENT PROCESS

#### Assessment Panel

Assessment and achievement via the Individual Assessment Route is managed by the Assessment Panel, which is representative of the members of the Professional in Practice Committee. Each member body of the Partnership provides a member and a deputy for the Assessment Panel.

The Assessment Panel has responsibility for assessors undertaking assessment on its behalf (see *Appointment as a Professional in Practice Assessor* Appendix One).

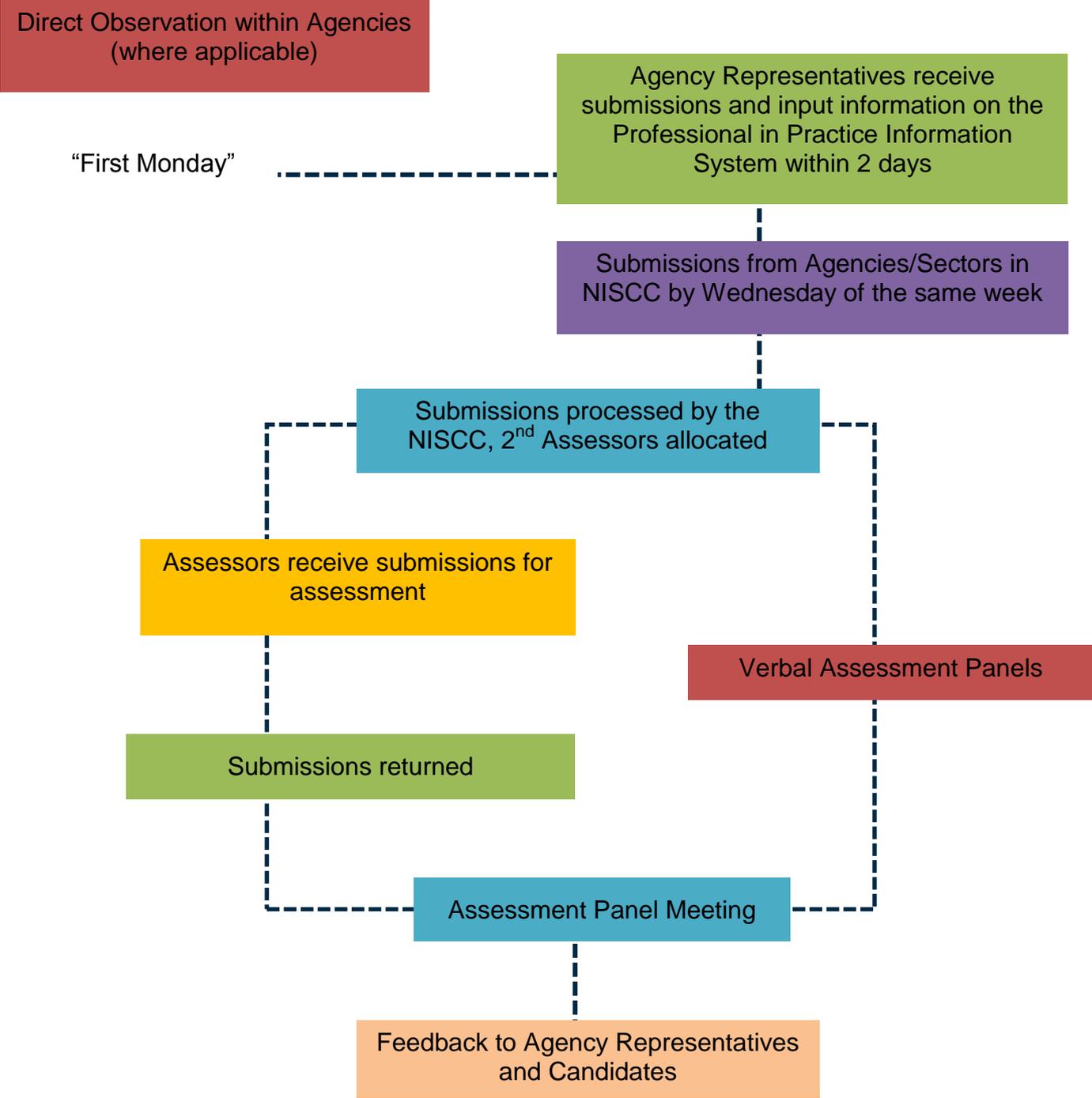
The Professional in Practice Assessment Panel provides two Submission Points per year within the Individual Assessment Route:

- Submission Point One – the first Monday in March
  - Submission Point Two – the first Monday in October
1. Submissions must be with the agency Professional in Practice representative by the first Monday in March or October. Agency Professional in Practice representatives will input details on the Professional in Practice Information System on-line assessment schedule within the specified timescale.
  2. Assessment Panel representatives ensure the delivery of submissions to the Professional in Practice Committee office within the specified timescale.
  3. **Extensions are not normally available and late submissions will not be accepted.**
  4. Each submission **must** include:
    - Professional in Practice submission Front sheet
    - Introduction to the agency, role and candidate
    - Statement of confidentiality
    - Statement of service user/stakeholder consent
    - Outline of the assessment method/s being used and statement on how the requirements have been met
    - Work to be assessed
    - Up to date references section
    - Outline of service user/stakeholder involvement and feedback as appropriate
    - Line Manager's verification report

(For the components of a resubmission see page 17).

5. Candidates are responsible for ensuring that submissions include **all the necessary components**. Submissions will not be assessed if they are incomplete.

# Professional in Practice Framework - Individual Assessment Route Process



## **Allocation Process**

1. Agencies are normally responsible for 'first marking' and direct observation of submissions in relation to their own employees and cross marking submissions from other agencies.
2. The agency Professional in Practice representative identifies the first assessor on the on-line assessment schedule.
3. Agencies normally receive an assessment allocation that is proportionate to the number of submissions they have made.
4. The Professional Adviser to the Assessment Panel manages the allocation of an approved assessor from an agency/sector unconnected to the candidate to cross mark. In the event of particularly specialised submissions, assessors with relevant expertise may be used.
5. Assessment Panel representatives nominate approved assessors from within their agencies to sit on verbal assessment panels. The numbers of assessors required from an agency is determined by the numbers of verbal submissions made by that agency. Normally a ratio of one assessor per three candidate submissions applies.
6. Assessors on verbal assessment panels do not normally assess candidates from within their own agency. In some instances, approved assessors with specialist knowledge of the subject area of a submission are asked to sit on a verbal assessment panel.
7. The week after the submission point, agencies receive their cross marking allocation at the Assessment Panel allocation meeting.

## Assessment Process

1. The process takes approximately ten weeks from the point of submission (first Monday in March and October) until feedback is available for candidates.
2. Assessors receive their allocated submissions from their Assessment Panel representative.
3. Assessors normally have up to four weeks to assess the submissions as per Professional in Practice Committee guidance, log the assessor's comments and the outcome of assessment on the Professional in Practice on-line assessment system and return the submissions to the Assessment Panel representative.
4. Verbal assessment panels convene to assess verbal submissions on dates set by the NISCC. Assessors and candidates are informed of dates and times in advance. The outcomes of verbal assessment are entered into the on-line assessment system on the day of assessment.
5. Submissions are returned to the NISCC on a predetermined date published in advance of the assessment point. If required, moderation is undertaken in the week following the return of all the submissions to the NISCC. \* **See additional guidelines below.**
6. All moderated submissions and the assessors' comments are seen by the External Examiner(s) who contributes to discussions at the Assessment Panel meeting. A final decision is made at the Assessment Panel.
7. All submissions referred for further work during the assessment process are seen by the External Examiner(s) along with a sample of competent submissions across the range of types. The External Examiner(s) reports overview comments to the Assessment Panel and provides a report to the Chair of the Assessment Panel.
8. The Assessment Panel meets to discuss and ratify results on a date predetermined by the Board and published by the NISCC in an assessment schedule. The meeting is chaired by the Chair of the Assessment Panel. The External Examiner(s) is also in attendance, as are all Assessment Panel members (or their nominated deputies in their absence). Assessors who have referred submissions or who have disputed assessments with their cross marker and have therefore triggered moderation of the submission, are invited to attend the Assessment Panel meeting.
9. Agencies are normally informed of the assessment outcomes in the week following the Assessment Panel meeting and final results are entered onto the Professional in Practice on-line assessment system.
10. Issues raised during the assessment process in respect of assessors or candidates are reported by the Chair of the Assessment Panel to the Professional in Practice Committee and in some instances directly to the Committee representative of the agency responsible for the individual.
11. Letters to candidates confirming assessment results are normally processed in the two weeks following the Assessment Panel. The candidate is directed to seek detailed feedback from their Assessment Panel representative who has access to assessor agreed summaries on the on-line assessment system.

12. Within two weeks of the Assessment Panel, the Chair and the Professional Adviser prepare a report on the assessment process and outcomes, for the Professional in Practice Committee.

## **Moderation – Additional Guidelines**

### **Assessors**

- An IAR submission should go for moderation only when there is a clear difference of opinion between the first and second assessor, which cannot be resolved between them, as to whether the submission is competent or should be referred.
- Assessors must specify through their Information System comments, the reasons why they are seeking moderation. Both markers must write comments.
- When a submission has been moderated at least one of the assessors must attend the Assessment Panel. Ideally both should attend but if this is not possible, the other assessor should ensure that there is someone present who can speak on their behalf.

### **Moderator**

- The moderator will be an experienced assessor selected by rotation from a previously compiled list. The moderator should not come from the same agency as the candidate.
- The moderator will have access to the comments of the original assessors via the Information System and may also contact them directly for discussion if necessary.
- The moderator will read the whole submission but will comment only on the areas deemed contentious by the original assessors.
- The moderator enters his/her comments on the Information System.
- The moderator must attend the Assessment Panel.
- The submission is sent to the External Assessor for comment.
- The submission is discussed by the Assessment Panel and a final decision is agreed.

## **Assessment**

### **Assessment via the Individual Assessment Route in the Professional in Practice Framework**

#### **Assessment of Professional Requirements**

The Professional in Practice Framework provides an opportunity for achievement of professional recognition within social work.

Fundamentally, competence is about demonstrating knowledge and skills appropriate to a context. Professional competence is about having knowledge and skills underpinned by professional ethics and values. Assessment within the Professional in Practice Framework is a measurement of professional competence.

Submissions for assessment for Professional in Practice requirements or full awards will be considered in respect of the following '*underpinning statements*' (See *Northern Ireland Post Qualifying Education and Training Framework in Social Work, DHSSPS, NISCC, December 2006*):

1. Critical reflection must be integral to all work to be considered in the Professional in Practice Framework.
2. A social work value base must be evident throughout all work to be considered in the Professional in Practice Framework.
3. Personal responsibility and initiative for independent learning to enhance continuous professional development must be demonstrated.
4. Successful postgraduate study is characterised by a number of criteria:
  - (i) Demonstrating a thorough and systematic grasp of the issues in relation to a particular field of inquiry
  - (ii) Showing independence of thought and originality. The Candidate must move beyond familiar ideas to develop thinking and application
  - (iii) Methodological rigour must also be evident. This is shown in the way that problems are analysed and dealt with in a systematic manner
  - (iv) Critical judgement must be applied to complex and demanding scenarios. This necessitates the weighing up of different arguments and courses of action.

#### **Academic Recognition**

The Professional in Practice Framework aims to be comprehensive and relevant and accessible. The Professional in Practice Partnership Committee in its endeavour to ensure that the Professional in Practice Framework achieves these aims, seeks to provide access for candidates to academic recognition of their achievements within the Individual Assessment Route.

All academic institutions have in place arrangements for Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) and academic recognition can be achieved using this route. Candidates in this instance are advised to discuss options with the academic institution of their choice.

Ulster University has also academically approved all of the professional requirements within the Consolidation, Specialist and Leadership & Strategic Award levels which candidates can access through the IAR.<sup>1</sup>

Candidates are advised to discuss options with the Programme Director at UU and are further advised that up to two thirds of a Masters degree can be achieved in this way. The final third must be achieved via a dissertation within the setting of the University Programme.

Candidates are advised that the Professional in Practice Framework is assessed at postgraduate Masters level, irrespective of whether or not academic credits are being sought.

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education sets out a range of descriptors for postgraduate study. Masters degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- (i) A systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study, or area of professional practice;
- (ii) A comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship;
- (iii) Originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline;
- (iv) Conceptual understanding that enables the student:
  - to critically evaluate current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline; and
  - to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of same and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.

Typically, holders of Masters level qualifications will be able to:

- (i) Deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences;
- (ii) Demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level;
- (iii) Continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level;

And will have:

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<sup>1</sup> Please note the In-Service assessment method does not offer academic credits as part of the MSc Professional Development Programme

- (iv) The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
- the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility
  - decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations and
  - the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development

### **Assessment Decisions**

Assessors within the Individual Assessment Route for the Professional in Practice Framework have the task of assessing a candidate's submission against the identified professional requirements of the particular Professional in Practice Award. Given that the Professional in Practice Framework is based at postgraduate Masters level, the standards for assessment must meet postgraduate level requirements. When arriving at a judgement, assessors will be guided by the assessment criteria specified in Table One (see below).

**TABLE: ASSESSMENT CRITERIA - Postgraduate Level**

<b>% Range</b>	<b>Content*</b> <b>(<u>must include professional ethics</u>)</b> <b>30</b>	<b>Application of Theory and Research</b> <b>20</b>	<b>Knowledge and Understanding</b> <b>20</b>	<b>Evidence of Reading</b> <b>15</b>	<b>Referencing (Harvard)</b> <b>5</b>	<b>Presentation, Grammar and Spelling</b> <b>10</b>
70 – 100	Critical insightful evaluation and synthesis of complex issues and materials. A high level of originality and reflection. Demonstrates the ability to pursue research at Doctoral level. Originality (21 – 30)	Extensive evidence of advanced applications and/or empirical data, where applicable, informed extensively by current research and practice in the area. Innovative and original use of knowledge. (14 – 20)	Exceptional knowledge and conceptual understanding of complex and/or specialised principles and concepts and the development and advancement of ideas and practice. High level critical judgement and confident grasp of complex issues. (14 – 20)	Extensive evidence of integrating current supplementary sources (12 – 15)	Outstanding referencing with current sources (5)	Outstanding, well-directed presentation, logically and coherently structured, using correct grammar, spelling and referencing. (8 – 10)
60 – 69	Critical evaluation and synthesis of complex issues and materials which includes some originality and a reflective approach. Well argued. (18 –20)	Clear evidence of relevant applications and/or empirical data, where applicable, informed by current research and practice in the area. Critical judgement and a grasp of complex issues. (12 –13)	Wide knowledge and depth of understanding of complex and/or specialised principles and concepts and the development of ideas and practice. (12 –13)	Evidence of extensive reading of current supplementary sources (9 –10)	Comprehensive referencing with current sources (4)	Very good presentation, logically structured, using correct grammar, spelling and referencing. (7)
50 – 59	Some critical evaluation and synthesis of key issues and material. Reasonably well argued. Largely descriptive. (15 –17)	Evidence of relevant applications and/or empirical data, where applicable, with some links to current research in the area. (10 – 11)	Good and appropriate knowledge and depth of understanding of key principles and concepts with some understanding of the development of ideas and practice. (10 – 11)	Evidence of reading supplementary sources (7 – 8)	Adequate referencing. Some current sources. ( 3)	Orderly presentation, clear structure and acceptable grammar, spelling and referencing. (6)
<b>COMPETENT</b>						
<b>REQUIRING FURTHER WORK</b>						
45 – 49	Some evaluation and synthesis of issues and material (12 – 14)	Occasional relevant applications and/or empirical data, where applicable. (8 – 9)	Basic knowledge and depth of understanding of key principles and concepts only 8 – 9)	Limited evidence of current reading (6)	Limited referencing. Sources not up to date. (2)	Weak presentation and structure, grammar, spelling and referencing. (5)
31 – 44	Limited evaluation and synthesis of issues and material (11)	Limited applications and/or empirical data, where applicable (7)	Limited and/or superficial knowledge of key principles and concepts (7)	Minimal evidence of current reading (5)	Inadequate referencing. (1)	Poor presentation and structure, grammar, spelling and referencing. (4)
0 – 30	Little or no evaluation and synthesis of issues and material (0 – 10)	Little or no evidence of relevant application and/or empirical data. (0 – 6)	Virtually devoid of any evidence of knowledge and understanding (0 – 6)	Little or no evidence of reading (0 – 4)	Inadequate referencing. (0 – 1)	Inadequate presentation, structure, grammar, spelling and referencing. (0 – 3)
<b>Total</b>						

\* Content refers to what extent the submission meets Professional in Practice Professional Requirements

## Assessment Outcome

The Individual Assessment Route has the following possible outcomes:

1. Awarding of Professional in Practice Requirements towards Consolidation, Specialist or Leadership and Strategic Awards or awarding of full Award.

or

2. Referral of the submission for further work by the candidate because it does not meet the standard. Referral can be for some or all of the Requirements submitted.

## Communication with Candidates

Once the assessment process is completed the outcome is logged on the Professional in Practice Information System.

The result is confirmed by letter from the Professional in Practice Assessment Panel. Candidates are invited to consult with their Professional in Practice agency representatives for further feedback.

## Re-submission Process

If a candidate's Professional in Practice submission is referred for further work, the candidate will normally be given the option **either**

- to re-submit the same material with revisions for re-marking **or**
- to make a new submission.

A **resubmission** is work which:

- Is submitted within a three year period from the date of the first submission **and**
- Uses the same method and case material and covers the same Professional in Practice requirement(s) as the original submission.

A candidate may present one resubmission of a 'referred' piece in the same format (e.g., portfolio, verbal submission or assignment) as the original work.

After three years, the case material loses currency and a new submission must be made.

All resubmissions must include:

- the letter of referral from the Professional in Practice Assessment Panel
- copy of the Agreed Summary
- updated information on the candidate
- an up to date line manager's report addressing the reasons for the 'referral'
- the date of the last submission(s) entered on the submission front sheet
- any new or adapted material printed on different coloured paper

A resubmitted piece of work will normally be assessed by one of the original assessors and one different assessor.

## **NEW SUBMISSION\*\***

A **new** submission must differ from the original in **at least one** of the following ways

- Different case material
- A different submission method (e.g. portfolio, assignment etc.)
- Different requirements or Award

New submissions can be made as long as the candidate's enrolment or re-enrolment remains current, but new case material must be used after three years.

## **\*\*CANDIDATES REGISTERED FOR ACADEMIC CREDITS**

Please note that if a candidate is registered for academic credits with Ulster University, the University's resubmission policy differs from the Professional in Practice resubmission policy. For further information refer to the University's IAR programme handbook, or contact [pgsocialwork@ulster.ac.uk](mailto:pgsocialwork@ulster.ac.uk).

## **Examples of work**

Candidates are informed on the front sheet of their submission that their work may be used as an example for training purposes. Submissions will be selected, anonymised and copied by the Professional in Practice office. These can then be used by Agency Representatives in work with prospective candidates and/or for standardisation or training events. Candidates can indicate on the front sheet if they do not wish their work to be used for these purposes.

## **Breaches of Confidentiality** (see Appendix Three)

Breaches of confidentiality, as defined in the Policy on Consent and Confidentiality can be minor, moderate or serious. See the policy for more detail.

## SECTION THREE

### SUBMISSION AND ASSESSMENT METHODS

Within the Individual Assessment Route, the Professional in Practice Committee provides a range of methods for submission and assessment across all three of the professional awards.

It is advisable that candidates seek guidance from their agency Professional in Practice representative as to which method best suits the piece of work being considered for submission.

The following methods are available:

- **Portfolio** – a minimum of one third of a Professional in Practice Award must be achieved using an evidence based submission i.e. two Consolidation Requirements or three Specialist Requirements or three Leadership and Strategic Requirements (\* see footnote).
- **Assignment** - a maximum of two thirds of a Professional in Practice Award may be attained by assignment **AND** no single assignment can cover more than one third of an Award.
- **Verbal Presentation** – a maximum of one third of a Professional in Practice Award may be achieved via verbal presentation using a substantive piece of work appropriate to the award and requirements being claimed.
- **Direct Observation** - a maximum of one third of a Professional in Practice Award may be achieved using direct observation. The direct observation must be undertaken by an approved assessor within the employing agency.
- **Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)**  
An APL claim can be made for any Requirement in any of the Awards within the Professional in Practice Framework – see more detailed guidance on page 38.
- **In-Service Training Submission Schedule** – An In-Service Training Submission Schedule claim can be made for any Requirement in any of the Awards within the Professional in Practice Framework – see more detailed guidance on page 38. The In-Service assessment method does not offer academic credits as part of the MSc in Professional Development.
- A **Combination** of these methods may be submitted at the one Assessment Point

**With every submission type, the candidate must make clear which Professional in Practice requirements are being addressed and how they have been met.**

\*Approved programmes which include an evidence-based assessment component will be considered as a 'portfolio' for the purposes of subsequent submissions made by a candidate to the IAR.

## **Portfolio Submission**

### **Eligibility Criteria**

- Candidates must be enrolled with the Professional in Practice Framework
- Candidates must be registered with the NISCC (on Part 1 of the Social Care Register).

### **Post Qualifying Requirements**

A minimum of one third of each award must be achieved using an evidence based submission/portfolio.

This means a minimum of:

- 2 Consolidation Requirements must be claimed by portfolio  
or
- 3 Specialist Requirements must be claimed by portfolio  
or
- 3 Leadership and Strategic Requirements must be claimed by portfolio

### **Policy on Word Count** (See Appendix Six)

Word count for **Consolidation** and **Specialist** Awards are as follows:

- 1 Requirement – 2,700 – 3,000
- 2 Requirements – 4,500 – 5,000
- 3 Requirements – 6,750 – 7,500

A maximum word limit of 9,000 words (in total) for 3 **Leadership and Strategic** Requirements.

### **A word count must be included on the submission.**

The core of each portfolio will be evidence of work and a critical review of this work to demonstrate how it meets the Professional in Practice requirement/s being claimed.

Work included in portfolios can relate to practice with a service user, management, training, research, project development, etc. depending on the requirements and the award being undertaken. Candidates should consult their Professional in Practice advisor regarding the selection of 'work' for a portfolio submission.

Each portfolio should contain the following:

- Professional in Practice submission front sheet (download from [www.niscc.info](http://www.niscc.info), Professional in Practice Social Work)\*
- Introduction to the agency, role and candidate\*
- Statement of confidentiality and consent\*
- Brief synopsis/case summary of the work submitted in the portfolio\*
- Matrix (see page 21 for template) linking evidence to the Professional in Practice requirement/s being claimed\*

- Critical review of the work to demonstrate competence in the requirement being claimed. A critical review should incorporate:
  - a. Context of the work, e.g. policy, legal, sociological etc.
  - b. Skills, knowledge and research used
  - c. Ethical context, including AOP
  - d. References to evidence
  - e. Reflection and learning
  - f. Word count
- Evidence section\*
- Outline of service user/stakeholder involvement and feedback as appropriate\*
- References section \*
- Line Manager's verification\*

\* Not included in the word count

## PROFESSIONAL IN PRACTICE PORTFOLIO MATRIX

Professional in Practice Requirement	Work Used	Evidence Used

## Assignment Submission

### Eligibility Criteria

- Candidates must be enrolled with the Professional in Practice Committee
- Candidates must be registered with the NISCC (on Part 1 of the Social Care Register)

### Post Qualifying Requirements

The assignment method can be used to claim up to two thirds of a Professional in Practice Award. **However** no single assignment can cover more than one third of an Award.

This means a maximum of:

- 2 Consolidation Requirements  
or
- 3 Specialist Requirements  
or
- 3 Leadership and Strategic Requirements

### Policy on Word Count (See Appendix Six)

Given the holistic nature of an assignment the following word limits apply:

Word count for **Consolidation** and **Specialist** Awards are as follows:

- 1 Requirement – 2,700 – 3,000
- 2 Requirements – 4,500 – 5,000
- 3 Requirements – 6,750 – 7,500

A maximum word limit of 9,000 words (in total) for 3 **Leadership and Strategic** Requirements.

**A word count must be included on the submission.**

### Assignment Guidance

An assignment can be used to claim any Professional in Practice requirement and can be completed drawing on work deemed relevant for demonstrating competence in the Professional in Practice Framework.

Work referred to in assignments can include practice with a service user, management, training, research, project development, etc. depending on the requirements and the award being undertaken.

The assignment affords the candidate the opportunity to claim Professional in Practice requirements by illustrating the integration of knowledge, skills and values within the work context. It also provides an opportunity for the critical review of work.

Each assignment should refer to a minimum of two pieces of work or a single substantive piece of work to exemplify the discussion. Work will be judged substantive in terms of complexity, impact, influence, depth and/or extent. It is the candidate's responsibility to outline why the work should be deemed substantive.

The assignment should be analytical, evaluative and theoretical in perspective and not merely a narrative history of the work undertaken. The work will be assessed at Post graduate level (see the Assessment Grid on page 15).

Candidates should consult with their Agency Professional in Practice representative regarding the selection of 'work' for assignments.

Candidates submitting assignments should use the Professional in Practice requirement/s being claimed as the basis of the assignment title. Assignments may be "Critical reviews of..."; "A comparative analysis of..."; "A critical evaluation of..." etc. The candidate should consult with their Professional in Practice advisor on the assignment title. The title should reflect the fact that this is a post graduate level assessment.

### **Examples of Assignment Titles**

*A critical evaluation of decision making within risk assessment processes for adults with learning disabilities. (Could be used for Consolidation Award 3 or 4 or 6).*

*A comparative analysis of the implementation of two crisis intervention methods for work with children in accordance with agreed national, occupational or recognised agency standards. (Could be used for Consolidation 1 or 2 or 3 or 5).*

*A critical evaluation of research used to develop and implement service user and where appropriate carer rights and participation in line with the goals of choice, independence and empowerment. (Could be used for Specialist 4 or 6).*

*A comparative analysis of methods of risk assessment and the development of a risk assessment system for young people leaving care. (Could be used for Specialist 3 or 4 or 5 or 7).*

*A critical review of social care supervision in a European context and application to the development of staff supervision strategy. (Could be used for Leadership and Strategic 2 or 3 or 4).*

*A critical evaluation of the impact of service user feedback on agency policy. (Could be used for Leadership and Strategic 8 or 9).*

### **Assignment Content**

Each assignment should contain the following:

- **Introduction, Roles and Responsibilities\***  
Candidates should provide a short introduction. In the event of two assignments being submitted, one introduction will suffice.
- **Statement of Consent and Confidentiality\*** (Appendix Three).
- **Commentary\***  
A brief synopsis of the work, including how it will meet the relevant Professional in Practice requirements.
- **Critical Review and Evaluation**  
A critical review of the work incorporating:
  - the context of the work, e.g. policy, legal, sociological, etc.
  - the skills and knowledge used
  - the ethical context including AOP.

- **Conclusion and Recommendations**  
A summary of key points and/or the recommendations drawn from writing of the assignment and/or completing the work.
- **Learning**  
Reflect upon the professional development acquired through the work, research and writing the assignment. Outline current learning needs and how these are to be met.
- **A References Section\***  
The references should be up to date and relevant (see Appendix Two).

\*Not included in word count

**NB** Assignments should not include direct evidence

## Verbal Presentation Submission

### Eligibility Criteria

- Candidates must be enrolled with the Professional in Practice Framework
- Candidates must be registered with the NISCC (on Part 1 of the Social Care Register)

### Post Qualifying Requirements

A verbal presentation may be used to claim up to one third of a Professional in Practice Award.

This means a maximum of:

- 2 Consolidation Requirements  
or
- 3 Specialist Requirements  
or
- 3 Leadership and Strategic Requirements

Candidates should discuss with their agency Professional in Practice representative their particular work focus and which requirements are best met by the verbal presentation method.

### Policy on Word Count (See Appendix Six)

The emphasis of this method of submission is on the verbal presentation therefore the following word limits apply to the critical analysis:

- **At least 1,200 and not more than 1,500 words PER REQUIREMENT**

**This applies to all three Awards.**

### Verbal Presentation Guidelines

#### Assessment Process

There are two stages to the assessment process:

- **Submission of a critical analysis, i.e. the basis of work for discussion**
- **Verbal presentation to a panel of assessors appointed by the Assessment**

**NB: Whilst the submission should be marked holistically, both elements must be passed for a successful outcome.**

#### Panel

Candidates submit a **critical analysis** of the work they intend to present to the verbal assessment panel.

**The Critical Analysis must include:**

- Introduction – outlining current work setting, roles and responsibilities\*
- Statement of consent and confidentiality\*
- Outline of the work to be presented incorporating a critical analysis of knowledge, skills and ethics
- References section \*

\* Not included in the word count.

**Two copies (three where academic credits are being sought) of the critical analysis are required at the point of submission.**

**The Verbal Assessment Panel**

Candidates present their work to a small panel of Professional in Practice Committee assessors. The presentation may last up to 40 minutes with a further 20 - 30 minutes for discussion.

The panel consists of two assessors drawn from the existing pool of Professional in Practice Committee approved assessors. At least one of the assessors is an approved academic assessor where the candidate has indicated they are seeking academic credits for their verbal submission.

Prior to the panel convening, the members will have read the candidate's written submission (critical analysis). The panel listens to the work presented by the candidate (30 – 40 minutes) and engages in discussion using a range of questions relevant to the Professional in Practice requirements being claimed (20 – 30 minutes). The discussion is an integral part of the process and candidates should come prepared for it.

Assessment is based on the written submission, the structure and content of the presentation, the candidate's presentation skills and materials and the discussion.

The presentation and discussion will be audio recorded for the purposes of quality assurance, external scrutiny and where required, academic assessment.

The External Assessor to the Assessment Panel reserves the right to observe a number of verbal assessment panels in action to ensure standardisation of the process.

## Direct Observation Submission

### Eligibility Criteria

- Candidates must be enrolled with the Professional in Practice Committee
- Candidates must be registered with the NISCC (on Part 1 of the Social Care Register)

### Post Qualifying Requirements

A direct observation may be used to claim a maximum of one third of a Professional in Practice Award.

This means a maximum of:

- 2 Consolidation Requirements  
or
- 3 Specialist Requirements  
or
- 3 Leadership and Strategic Requirements

Candidates should discuss with their Professional in Practice advisor, their particular work focus and which requirements are best met by observation.

### Policy on Word Count (See Appendix Six)

The emphasis of this method of submission is on the direct observation, therefore the following word limits apply to the preparatory statement and the critical analysis:

- A total of **two** Consolidation requirements or **three** Specialist requirements or **three** Leadership and Strategic requirements may be claimed through Direct Observation
- For either Consolidation or Specialist submissions the word count should be between 1,200 and 1,500 words **PER REQUIREMENT**
- For Leadership submissions the word count should be between 1,700 and 2,000 words **PER REQUIREMENT**

### Guidance for Candidates

#### Assessment Process

There are three components to the assessment process:

- completion of a prepared piece of work
- an observation of the work
- completion of a critical evaluation and reflection

**NB: Whilst the submission should be marked holistically, all three elements should meet the required standard for a successful outcome.**

## **Preparatory Statement**

This is completed by the candidate prior to undertaking the direct observation. A proforma is available (see page 30).

Candidates present the preparatory statement of work to the assessor who will be undertaking the direct observation, at least 5 days before the observation is due to take place.

The candidate must also indicate within this work, how they have sought permission from relevant stakeholders, e.g. line manager, training participants, supervisees, social work students.

The preparatory work should be analytical and informed by legislation, policy, theory and research. The candidate should be clear about the skills and methods to be used and why.

In the event that the candidate is being observed on more than one occasion, the candidate should address this in the preparatory statement.

## **Direct Observation**

The candidate's practice is observed by an experienced assessor from within their agency or nominated by the candidate's employer. The assessor must be approved by the Professional in Practice Committee and have undertaken appropriate assessor training.

Observation **cannot** be undertaken by a line manager or team member.

The observation must be for a minimum of two hours per submission. This may take place on one or more occasions.

One hour of observation must be recorded (DVD) for quality assurance and moderating purposes. Alternatively, a second assessor may sit in on the observation. It should be noted however that any candidate wishing to be assessed for academic credits, will be required to submit a DVD recording of the observation.

Any recording must take account of the principles and policy on consent and confidentiality (see Appendix Two).

It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that the recording meets the required technical specification in terms of format and quality. This information can be obtained from the NISCC.

The assessor completes a record of the direct observation as detailed on the proforma provided. This should be shared with the candidate as part of the feedback on the final assessment outcome.

## **Critical Evaluation/Reflection**

The candidate critically evaluates and reflects upon their observed work using the proforma provided (see page 33).

The critical evaluation and reflection is normally submitted to the candidate's Professional in Practice Representative within 4 weeks of receipt of assessor feedback or on a date arranged with the Professional in Practice Representative.

## **Assessment of Candidates**

All three assessment components and a copy of the DVD recording is submitted to the Assessment Panel at the appropriate submission point. The critical evaluation component will be allocated to a second assessor by Professional in Practice.

To successfully achieve the requirements, all three assessment components must be deemed competent.

The submission for assessment includes:

- Introduction – outline of current work setting, roles and responsibilities\*
- Statement of consent and confidentiality\*
- Direct observation preparation (candidate)
- Record of direct observation\* (assessor)
- Critical evaluation and reflection (candidate)
- Assessment summary (assessor)\*
- DVD record of the observation
- Supporting evidence e.g. handouts (not a requirement)\*
- References section \*

\* Not included in the word count.

**One copy (two where academic credits are being sought) of the submission is required at the point of submission (including a copy of the DVD recording of the observation).**

## PROFESSIONAL IN PRACTICE DIRECT OBSERVATION PREPARATION

This proforma is completed by the candidate prior to the direct observation and a copy provided to the assessor at least five days before the direct observation takes place.

- **Introduction** – outline of current work setting, roles and responsibilities\*
- **Outline of proposed observation:** Who? What? Why? When? Where?\*
- **Requirements to be claimed? Why? How?\***
- **Identify the core knowledge being applied in the work, including any underpinning legislation and policy**
- **Identify the methods and skills to be used and why?**
- **Identify the ethical implications of the work and any preparatory action**
- **What issues can be anticipated and how do you propose to deal with them?**
- **References Section\***

**Candidate's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

\*Not part of word count

## PROFESSIONAL IN PRACTICE ASSESSOR RECORD OF DIRECT OBSERVATION

- Context
- Review of candidate's application of knowledge
- Review of candidate's application of skills
- Review of candidate's application of values
- The candidate's strengths
- The candidate's learning needs
- In what way were the requirements claimed evident in the observation?

Practice Assessor's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This form should be completed by the assessor and shared with the candidate as part of the feedback on the assessment outcome. While the assessor can provide interim feedback to the candidate, it should be noted that the final assessment outcome will be determined by the Assessment Panel.

## PROFESSIONAL IN PRACTICE CANDIDATE CRITICAL EVALUATION AND REFLECTION

- Describe the observation\*
- Critically review the knowledge applied
- Critically evaluate the skills applied
- Reflect upon the ethical component/issues in the work
- Comment on the strengths/weaknesses of the work
- Provide an outline of recommendations as to how the context of the practice could be enhanced
- Identify your future learning needs and how you propose to meet them\*
- References\*

**Candidate's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

\* Not part of the word count

This critical evaluation should be completed by the candidate and submitted to the assessor no more than two weeks after the direct observation has taken place.

## PROFESSIONAL IN PRACTICE DIRECT OBSERVATION ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

(to be completed by the Assessor)

**Candidate Name:**

**Candidate Assessment No:**

**Candidate Agency:**

**Assessor:**

**Requirements claimed:**

<b>Assessment Component</b>	<b>Assessment Outcome (competent/not competent)</b>
<b>Preparation Summary</b>	
<b>Direct Observation</b>	
<b>Reflective Summary</b>	

All three components must be competent to achieve the requirement/s claimed.

**Overall Assessment Outcome:**

Requirement \_\_\_\_\_ competent/not competent

Requirement \_\_\_\_\_ competent/not competent

Requirement \_\_\_\_\_ competent/not competent

**Summary for Candidate:**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ (Assessor)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Date)

## **APL Submission Guidance**

The Professional in Practice Framework makes provision for candidates to obtain credit for and formal acknowledgement of learning and/or achievement already gained elsewhere. This process is known as Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) and can involve either learning that has been gained through experience (Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning -APEL) or through a formal, certificated programme of learning (Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning – APCL). An APL claim can be made for any Requirement in any of the Awards within the Professional in Practice Framework.

Candidates wishing to make an APL claim should refer to the **Guiding Principles and Arrangements for Accreditation of Prior Learning within the Professional in Practice Framework, revised NISCC, 2011.**

### **Making an APEL Claim (Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning)**

APEL claims can be made in respect of learning achieved through experience and critical reflection outside of education or training systems. Examples of experiential learning and development are wide and varied and may include for example, involvement in the improvement or development of practice, policies or service provision, publication of material or articles or research or evaluation.

Claims can be made for any requirements within any of the Awards of the Professional in Practice Framework. APEL can however only be used for two thirds of an Award. Academic credits **may be** claimed via an APEL submission.

To make an APEL claim, candidates must submit the following documentation:

- a completed Claim Form for APL (sections 1 & 2), countersigned by their line manager (available to download from the Professional in Practice Toolkit & Downloads section of the NISCC website – or [click here to download directly](#))
- a brief introductory statement on the context of the work, including the candidate's job role and responsibilities
- a mapping matrix identifying where within the body of work the Professional in Practice requirements are evidenced (available to download from the Professional in Practice Toolkit & Downloads section of the NISCC website – or [click here to download directly](#))
- a brief commentary (of no more than 600 words per requirement) identifying how the work produced, subsequent learning and application to practice meets the Professional in Practice requirements being claimed
- the body of work, or a sample of the work previously produced which evidences the learning that has occurred

**Please note: where the experience the candidate is drawing on has taken place more than 5 years ago, the submission must demonstrate currency and coherence and be supported by a line manager verification of currency statement.**

### **Making an APCL Claim (Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning)**

APCL claims can be made in respect of learning that has been previously assessed and certificated by an academic or other equivalent institution. The certificated programme must have been at postgraduate level, e.g. masters degree, doctorate, higher level professional award.

Claims again may be made for any of the Professional in Practice requirements within any of the Awards. In some instances, APCL may be used for achievement of a full Award. Academic credits **may not** be claimed via an APCL submission.

To make an APCL claim, candidates must submit the following documentation:

- a completed Claim Form (sections 1 & 3), countersigned by the line manager\* - (available to download from the Professional in Practice Toolkit & Downloads section of the NISCC website – or [click here to download directly](#))
- a copy of the certificate issued by the awarding body
- a sample of the original work submitted for assessment and/or or a copy of the course/programme handbook
- a mapping matrix identifying where within the body of work the Professional in Practice requirements are evidenced (available to download from the Professional in Practice Toolkit & Downloads section of the NISCC website – or [click here to download directly](#))
- a short commentary (of no more than 300 words per requirement) which identifies where/how the Professional in Practice requirements are demonstrated in terms of learning achieved and application to practice
- candidates **may**, if they wish, include additional pieces of selected evidence to support the original work

**Where the certificated programme was undertaken more than 5 years ago, the commentary must address how the learning has been updated and remains current in its application. This should be supported by a line manager verification of currency report.**

**It is important to note that, in all of the above circumstances, it is not just the experience of the activities alone, but more importantly, the achievement of learning or the outcome of that learning, that is being assessed.**

**The following points apply to all APL submissions (both APEL and APCL):**

- The focus of the work must be on links to the Professional in Practice Requirements
- The Requirement(s) being claimed must be evident in one or more of the following places:
  - (1) The original coursework/piece of work
  - (2) Supplementary evidence provided for the APL submission
  - (3) The commentary of the APL submission

- It should be noted that markers who are marking an APL submission are not marking the original submission again but should maintain their focus on how that work meets the Professional in Practice Requirements being claimed
- Candidates do not need to submit all of their original evidence as part of an APL submission. Only the sections which are relevant to the Requirements need to be submitted unless a necessary context is required by providing additional evidence. In this case, all references/links to the Requirements should be clearly signposted.



## PROFESSIONAL IN PRACTICE CLAIM FORM FOR APL WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK

(Please refer to the Guiding Principles and Arrangements for Accreditation of Prior Learning within the NI PQ Framework, revised NISCC, 2011 before completing this form)

### Section One: (To be completed by all candidates)

Candidate Name (in full): .....NISCC Registration No: .....

Employer: .....

Job Role: .....

### Section Two: (To be completed by candidates making an **AP<sup>E</sup>L** claim, i.e accreditation of prior experiential learning)

Please identify within which Award you wish to seek accreditation:

**Consolidation Award**

Please identify which Requirements you are claiming:

- 1  2  3  4  5  6

**Specialist Award**

Please identify which Requirements you are claiming:

- 1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9

**Leadership & Strategic Award**

Please identify which Requirements you are claiming:

- 1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9

Do you have existing Requirements within the Professional in Practice Framework? Yes/No  
If yes, please specify along with corresponding Award:

What presentation format do you wish to use? (see *Guiding Principles and Arrangements for Accreditation of Prior Learning within the NI PQ Framework, p11, point 17*)

What is the focus of the APEL work you are submitting? (e.g. mental health, child care, education and training, management)

What Evidence are you submitting to Support your Claim?

**Section Three:** (To be completed by candidates making an **APCL** claim, i.e accreditation of prior experiential learning)

Please identify within which Award you wish to seek accreditation:

**Consolidation Award**

Please identify which Requirements you are claiming:

1  2  3  4  5  6

**Specialist Award**

Please identify which Requirements you are claiming:

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9

**Leadership & Strategic Award**

Please identify which Requirements you are claiming:

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9

Name of Certificated Programme of Study Undertaken:

Focus of Programme of Study (e.g. mental health, management, research)

Academic Institution (or other) in which Programme was undertaken:

Duration of Certificated Programme:

Completion Date:

Academic Level of Certificated Programme:

Awarding Body/Bodies:

What presentation format do you wish to use? *(See Guiding Principles and Arrangements for Accreditation of Prior Learning within the NI PQ Framework, p11, point 17)*

What Evidence are you submitting to Support your Claim?

## Section Four: (To be completed by all candidates)

On completion of Section One, Two and Three please complete below.

### **Section Four: Signatures (to be completed by all candidates)**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Candidate)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Line Manager)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Date)

Northern Ireland

**Social**

**Care**

**Council**

**PROFESSIONAL IN PRACTICE**

**Mapping Matrix for APL Claims  
Suggested Template**

<b>Target Award</b>	<b>Requirement/s being claimed</b>	<b>Source of Evidence</b>	<b>Location of Evidence</b>
<b>Specialist Award in Social Work</b>	2	Masters Dissertation Literature Review & Methodology Sections	<b>Chapters 1 &amp; 2 pp 7-34</b>
	4	Masters Dissertation Findings, Analysis & Recommendations Sections	<b>Chapters 5, 6 &amp; 7</b>

These forms can also be downloaded from the NISCC website [www.niscc.info](http://www.niscc.info)

## **In-Service Training Submission Schedule**

The NISCC is committed to ensuring that the Professional in Practice Framework is accessible and flexible to all social workers irrespective of work setting or job role in providing opportunities for and recognition of their ongoing professional development. As part of its commitment to ensuring flexibility and accessibility, the NISCC also recognises the wide and varied range of non- Professional in Practice accredited training which social workers avail of throughout their careers. Most of this is provided in-house within their own organisational contexts and contributes to meeting ongoing professional development needs and equipping social workers to practise competently and effectively in a challenging and changing environment.

This submission schedule has been developed to enable social workers to achieve professional recognition within the Professional in Practice Framework for the learning achieved through non-accredited training programmes. While attending/completing a training programme is never an indication of competence in itself, nevertheless it can provide a vehicle for real engagement in a learning and developmental process.

N.B. The In-Service assessment method does not offer academic credits as part of the MSc in Professional Development.

### **Guidance Notes**

Candidates may use this schedule to make an In-Service Training submission to the Individual Assessment Route for any requirement/combination of requirements at Consolidation or Specialist Award or Leadership & Strategic Award level.

Candidates can achieve up to one third of a professional award using the In-Service Training Schedule assessment method, i.e. two Consolidation Award Requirements or 3 Specialist or Leadership & Strategic Award Requirements and are encouraged to make submissions based on this configuration.

It is important for candidates to consider in the first instance, which particular requirements/professional award their learning best demonstrates. Their agency Professional in Practice lead will be able to support candidates in this decision.

Submissions may be based on an individual training programme (where sufficiently substantive) or on a 'cluster' of shorter training inputs which are thematically linked. To be eligible to make a submission using the schedule, candidates must have attended a minimum of 5 days or 30 hours of training. This must be verified by their line manager.

The focus of the submission should relate specifically to the learning achieved and its application to practice and must be delivered from a critical and reflective perspective, drawing on an appropriate knowledge and evidence base.

Candidates must ensure that the professional requirement/s being sought are explicitly addressed within the context of their analysis.

Candidates will be required to demonstrate application of learning to two pieces of work or a single substantive piece of work. This may be case or 'project' based and can relate to practice, management, education and training, research or a combination of these areas.

Candidates must ensure that their submission is consistent with postgraduate level requirements, i.e. demonstrating:

- A wide repertoire of current and up to date knowledge drawn from a range of sources, including research
- Creativity and originality in application of knowledge
- Developed critical thinking skills
- Ability to plan and implement strategies to deal with complex situations
- Ability to communicate conclusions clearly

### **Components of the In-Service Training Submission Schedule**

The submission should include the following components:

1. Introduction, to include (a) service user consent and (b) statement of confidentiality \*
2. Basis for submission, i.e. details of training completed \*
3. Application and evaluation of learning using the Submission Schedule
4. References (using appropriate academic citation protocol, e.g. Harvard)\*
5. Line Manager's Verification Report (including verification of the training completed)\*

Candidates are not required to submit evidence.

The maximum word count for the Submission Schedule is as follows:

2,000 – 3,000 words for Consolidation Award submissions (based on 2 requirements)

3,000 – 4,000 words for Specialist Award submissions (based on 3 requirements)

5,000 – 6,000 words for Leadership & Strategic Award submissions (based on 3 requirements)

The word counts are per submission and not per requirement.

\* Not included in Word Count

## **PROFESSIONAL IN PRACTICE**

### **In-Service Training Submission Schedule**

#### **Introduction**

Introduce yourself within your current work setting, outlining your primary roles and responsibilities

#### **Statement of Consent and Confidentiality**

Comment on how you have sought consent from service users and how you intend to ensure confidentiality within this submission

## Basis of Submission

Provide details of the training programme/s on which you intend to base your submission:

Training Programme Completed	Date	Duration

Summarise the key learning/development outcomes for you in completing the above training programme/s with reference to prior identified learning needs. These should be considered from a knowledge, skills and values perspective

**With reference to two pieces of work (or one substantive piece of work), provide specific examples of how you have integrated your new knowledge, skills or abilities into your practice**

**Evaluate how you feel your learning achievements have benefited your practice and enhanced outcomes for service users**

**Identify your future learning needs and the professional development strategies you intend to use to meet these**

## **Bibliography**

## Line Manager Verification Report

Candidate Name:	
Candidate Job Role:	
Agency:	
Area of Work:	
Line Manager Name:	
Line Manager Job Role:	
Date of Submission:	
Type of Submission:	
*Professional supervisor (if applicable):	

1. Please confirm that the submission has been read in full by the line manager (and professional supervisor, if applicable):-      Yes     No

a) Please outline how this submission is typical of the candidate's performance?

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b) Please outline how this submission reflects the standard expected in the agency?

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2. Please indicate what support was offered to the candidate in the completion of their submission?

Planned Supervision Sessions

Release for Study Days

Workload Easement

Release for Support Sessions

Other

If Other, Please Specify:

---

3. I confirm that I have checked the submission for breaches of confidentiality.

***SERIOUS BREACHES OF CONFIDENTIALITY WILL RESULT IN THE WORK BEING REFERRED***

4. I confirm that service user consent has been given to use the work for the purposes of this submission.

Yes  No

If no, has the candidate followed the NISCC IAR policy on Consent?

Yes  No

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Line Manager

\_\_\_\_\_  
Candidate

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\*If the candidate's line manager is not a social worker the professional supervisor must contribute to the above report in consultation with the line manager

## SECTION FOUR

### SUPPORTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

#### Consent

Service user or carer permission must be sought before any material is submitted for assessment. A statement must be included in the submission indicating that permission was sought and confidentiality was explained to the service user. If consent was not sought or not granted, candidates must complete a thematic assignment which **does not directly identify casework**.

#### Confidentiality

Social workers have a professional responsibility to ensure that confidentiality in work submitted for assessment is maintained at all times. Failure to ensure that the identity of service users and others is protected demonstrates a breach of trust, a failure to meet the NISCC Standards of Conduct and Practice, Professional in Practice standards on submissions and Professional in Practice Requirements.

- 1.8 *Respecting and maintaining the dignity and privacy of service users;*
- 2.4 *Respecting confidential information and clearly explaining agency policies about confidentiality to service users and carers;*

*(NISCC Standards of Conduct and Practice).*

When submitting work for assessment to the Assessment Panel via the Individual Assessment Route, care must be taken to ensure that the information presented does not lead to the identification of a service user. A Consent and Confidentiality Policy is strictly applied to all methods of assessment (See Appendix Three).

#### Plagiarism

The Professional in Practice Committee defines plagiarism as, where any candidate includes, in a mode of assessment, unacknowledged and verbatim, substantial material which has been authored by another.

This definition includes unpublished work, for example, web sources, other people's portfolios and dissertations. Plagiarism is dishonest, involves the appropriation or purchase of the ideas and work of others. Within the context of a Professional in Practice submission plagiarism involves the misrepresentation of the candidate's level of competence. In this context, plagiarism is a breach of professional ethics and the NISCC Standards of Conduct.

- 2.1 *Being honest and trustworthy;*  
*(NISCC Standards of Conduct and Practice).*

For further information on Plagiarism and guidance on Referencing see Appendix Four and Appendix Two respectively.

## **Review of Decision**

The Professional in Practice Committee has developed standards and systems to ensure consistency, impartiality and accountability in the assessment of submissions to the Individual Assessment Route. There may be circumstances when candidates consider the assessment processes to be flawed. In such situations the candidate can request a review of the decision making process.

A candidate may request a 'Review' only on the grounds that there may have been procedural irregularities or administrative error of such a nature as to cause reasonable doubt as to whether the assessors would have reached the same conclusion had they not occurred.

The professional decision of the Assessment Panel and its External Examiner is **not** open to appeal.

For further information on the Review of Decision policy and processes please contact the NISCC office.

Where a matter is not satisfactorily resolved through this route, a candidate may make a formal complaint to the NISCC using the procedures outlined in the website ([www.niscc.info](http://www.niscc.info)).

## **Comments, Compliments and Complaints**

The Professional in Practice Committee encourages feedback from candidates on their experience of the assessment process and undertakes to use this knowledge to learn and enhance the systems.

Where a candidate has concerns about the assessment process within the Individual Assessment Route, they have the right to complain.

In the first instance, the candidate should attempt to resolve the issue via the Professional Adviser for the Assessment Panel or their agency Professional in Practice representative.

Where a matter is not satisfactorily resolved through this route, a candidate may make a formal complaint using the procedures outlined in the Comments, Compliments and Complaints policy available on the website ([www.niscc.info](http://www.niscc.info)).

Where a candidate wishes to offer a compliment or provide positive feedback on a particular aspect of the assessment process, the candidate may use a range of opportunities including: written feedback to the appropriate Chair or Professional Adviser, verbal feedback to their agency Professional in Practice representative or Professional in Practice Committee representative; or comment via the website ([www.niscc.info](http://www.niscc.info)).

## SECTION FIVE

### APPENDICES

- Appendix One - Criteria for appointment as a Professional in Practice Assessor
- Appendix Two - Referencing Guidelines
- Appendix Three - Policy on Consent and Confidentiality
- Appendix Four - Policy on Plagiarism
- Appendix Five - Policy on Reviewing an Assessment Decision
- Appendix Six - Policy on Word Count

## **Appendix One - Criteria for Appointment as a Professional in Practice Assessor**

Assessment within the Individual Assessment Route is undertaken by suitably qualified assessors nominated by the employer/organisation/institution. In order to assess submissions within the Individual Assessment Route the following criteria must be met.

- Must be a qualified social worker and registered with NISCC
- Must have a minimum of 4 years post qualifying social work experience
- Must have achievement within the PQ or Professional in Practice Framework and/or equivalent post-qualifying academic achievement
- Must have experience of PQ/ Professional in Practice assessment or other relevant assessment
- Must attend a minimum of one standardisation event per year
- Must have undertaken training for assessors provided by the Professional in Practice Partnership.

A register of suitably qualified Assessors will be retained by the Professional in Practice Partnership.

### **Monitoring and Standardisation**

#### **External Examiners**

The Professional in Practice Committee normally appoints an independent External Examiner/s from outside Northern Ireland to:

1. Monitor the efficacy of the assessment processes.
2. Monitor the standards and consistency of assessment.
3. Contribute to assessment decisions where appropriate.

The following criteria for appointment apply:

- Social work qualified and registered with their appropriate Social Work Regulatory Body
- Experience of social work post qualifying education and training in the UK
- Experience of postgraduate level assessment
- Commitment to attending Assessment Panel meetings
- Commitment to undertaking sample reviews of submissions
- Commitment to providing a written report
- Commitment to attending appropriate standardisation events

The Assessment Panel recommends the appointment of the External Examiner/s to the Professional in Practice Committee for approval.

The appointment is for an initial period of 3 years and may be reappointed on an annual basis for a further 3 year period.

### **Monitoring**

Assessor(s) receive feedback from the Assessment Panel on issues identified by the monitoring process through their agency Professional in Practice representatives on the Assessment Panel, via Assessment Panel reports and by attending standardisation events.

The areas monitored include:

- Assessors' understanding of the requirements, standards and processes
- The quality of assessor reports and feedback to candidates
- Attendance at standardisation, training and assessors' meetings

The performance of assessors can be monitored via the production of reports and analysis from the on-line assessment process. The agency Professional in Practice representative can access their own assessment reports after each assessment point.

To enable standardisation and quality assurance, the Assessment Panel undertakes an audit of assessment outcomes against individual assessors on an annual basis. This information is made available to respective Assessment Panel members.

### **Standardisation**

The purpose of standardisation is to develop and sustain assessment systems and practices and ensure consistency and fairness. It is an assessor's responsibility to ensure they attend a minimum of one standardisation event a year to maintain their efficacy as assessors and enable consistent assessment. The Professional in Practice Committee will offer a minimum of one standardisation event a year and all assessors are expected to attend. It is acknowledged that some assessors assess for a range of Professional in Practice Approved Programmes (at postgraduate level) as well as the IAR. In this instance it is acceptable that where an assessor has attended a standardisation event offered by one of the Professional in Practice Approved Programmes and informed the Professional Adviser at the NISCC of the name/date of same that this will be accepted as the one standardisation event for that year.

The External Examiner also plays a role in standardising assessment by bringing knowledge of practices in other post qualifying assessment systems, sampling submissions, contributing to discussions at the Assessment Panel, formally reporting on the quality of assessment and advising on improvements.

## **Appendix Two - Referencing Guidelines**

Candidates must acknowledge their sources with evidence, quotations, ideas and concepts being carefully attributed. There are two elements to the referencing system: that which goes in the text of the work and that which belongs in the references at the end.

Candidates who fail to acknowledge their sources are guilty of plagiarism which is contrary to NISCC Professional in Practice regulations and contravenes the NISCC Standards of Conduct and Practice.

The following link will take you to the General Guide to Harvard Referencing which is approved for use by Ulster University and the Professional in Practice Framework.

[General Guide to Harvard Referencing](#)

## Appendix Three - Policy on Consent and Confidentiality

### Consent and Confidentiality Policy

#### Guiding Principles

The Professional in Practice Committee requires candidates submitting to the Individual Assessment Route for assessment to adhere to standards on gaining consent from service users and standards on ensuring confidentiality. The Committee recognises that Consent and Confidentiality are two separate, though related issues. They have been placed together in one policy for clarity and ease of use.

Under the NISCC Standards of Conduct and Practice, Social Workers have a professional responsibility to ensure that confidentiality is maintained at all times:

- 1.8 *Respecting and maintaining the dignity and privacy of service users; (Standards of Conduct)*
- 2.4 *Respecting confidential information and clearly explaining agency policies about confidentiality to service users and carers; (Standards of Conduct)*

#### *NISCC Standards of Conduct and Practice*

Failure to ensure that the identity of service users and others is protected and that consent is obtained before service user information is used demonstrates a breach of trust, a failure to meet Professional in Practice standards for assessment and Professional in Practice Requirements:

*“Demonstrate a systematic understanding of their own practice and a critical awareness of current issues and challenges in the context of the NISCC Standards of Conduct and Practice, professional ethics, the principles of diversity, equality and social inclusion in a wide range of situations;”*

*Consolidation Award Requirement*

*“Apply independent critical judgement to systematically develop their own practice and that of others in the context of the NISCC Standards of Conduct and Practice, professional ethics, the principles of diversity, equality and social inclusion in a wide range of situations;”*

*Specialist Award Requirement*

*“Use independent critical judgement to take a leading role in systematically developing their own practice and that of others in the context of the NISCC Standards of Conduct and Practice, codes of professional ethics, the principles of diversity, equality and social inclusion in a wide range of situations;”*

*Leadership and Strategic Award Requirement*

The DHSSPS “Code of Practice on Protecting the Confidentiality of Service User Information” (January 2009) is applicable to all aspects of work in Health and Social Care including Social Work post qualifying education. The NISCC policy is based on the principles described in the Code.

## **CONSENT**

### **Using Direct Evidence**

A statement must be included in the submission indicating that informed consent has been obtained and that confidentiality was explained to the service user.

Where consent has been refused, or given but withdrawn at a later stage the work must not be used as part of a submission.

Where a submission indicates that consent has not been obtained and this has not been agreed by NISCC (see exceptional circumstances below) or where a statement on consent has been omitted the submission will not be assessed and will be returned to the agency representative.

If inclusion of the statement of consent was an oversight by the candidate and consent had been obtained the work can be resubmitted with confirmation of same for the current assessment point.

Please note that only in exceptional circumstances\* is it acceptable to submit case material for Professional in Practice assessment purposes without informed consent first having been obtained from the service user/s who are the subject of the work. It is contrary to best Social Work practice to use reports, records or any other evidence directly relating to service users without the service user's informed consent.

### **Exceptional Circumstances\***

In exceptional circumstances, a candidate and his/her line manager may believe there is a case for presenting work without informed service user consent having been obtained. The following process will then apply:

- The candidate should consider carefully whether this is the only piece of work which can be used
- If so, a request with line management support, outlining the basis for making a submission without consent should be presented at least three weeks in advance of the assessment point to the Professional Adviser at NISCC who will consider the matter.
- If NISCC agrees, then the work may be submitted for assessment without the usual consent and the assessors will be advised accordingly.
- If NISCC disagrees then the work will not be assessed and the candidate will be advised that either consent must be obtained or other work used. The candidate will not be disadvantaged in that he/she will not be considered to have made a submission

### **Using a Thematic Approach**

Some submission types, e.g. assignments, allow the candidate to take a thematic approach which does not involve the use of direct evidence. For example, the theme of risk assessment/management could be explored drawing on a candidate's experience across a range of work. It would be good practice to obtain service user consent in these circumstances where case material is referred to even indirectly. However, when this is impossible, a candidate may use the work without consent from the related service user provided that the work is used in purely thematic terms, using no direct evidence. Candidates should outline the structure of the assignment and how the themes chosen

illustrate the points they wish to make. **It is important that casework is not identified directly but that salient theme(s) from practice are discussed.**

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

When submitting work for assessment all care must be taken to ensure that the information presented does not lead to the identification of a service user. This includes information relating to the person's location or any unique or unusual circumstances which may lead to identification.

The term service user for our purposes is interpreted broadly to include other individuals such as relatives, carers, foster and adoptive parents and students. Care should also be taken in identifying other professionals unless their permission has been given

Candidates must include a statement as to how they have ensured confidentiality. Ensuring confidentiality generally means removing from the submission any information that could identify the service user. There are some absolutes such as removing names, addresses and phone numbers but the Candidate must make judgements as to whether there may be other identifying factors which should be removed.

No identifying features or fictitious names should be used which could lead to the identification of service users. Candidates are advised to use letters, such as Mr X rather than invent more involved pseudonyms which can lead to misunderstandings. Similarly, letters should not correspond to real names.

Candidates must ensure that information referring to colleagues, other individuals or agencies is not derogatory. If comments critical of practice are relevant to the Candidate's submission and are being included in the submission Candidates should ensure that the individual is not identifiable.

DVD and/or audio tapes which identify service users may not be submitted as evidence without the explicit, informed consent of the service user. When DVD is used for assessment purposes, e.g. Direct Observation the service user should not be able to be identified. The record must be deleted after the assessment process is complete. Deletion is the Candidate's responsibility and should be checked by the agency representative.

Relevant excerpts of transcripts are good samples of direct evidence

Where correction fluid or a black marker has been used to remove identification from evidence, the page with the corrections must not be submitted. The Candidate should submit a photocopy of the 'corrected' page.

The use of all agency records must be authorised by the Candidate's Line Manager and confidentiality assured in the Line Manager's Report before the submission leaves the agency.

When cases are high profile or in the public domain it may be more difficult to ensure, even when these guidelines are followed, that the case will not be recognisable to an Assessor. Candidates should not be discouraged from submitting such material but should ensure that their submission adheres to the guidelines. Assessors and NISCC staff are also bound by confidentiality.

## **Breaches of Confidentiality**

There should be **no** breaches of confidentiality in work submitted for assessment. A breach of confidentiality is a breach of professional ethics and the promise to the service user when seeking consent.

All submissions should be read in full. Assessors are requested to identify and comment on any breaches of confidentiality as part of the assessment process without replicating actual breaches in the assessment records.

Where breaches of confidentiality have been identified the Assessors should use professional judgement to determine the seriousness of the breach.

Assessors are required to bring breaches of confidentiality to the attention of the Assessment Panel where responses will be confirmed;

**Minor Breach:** For example, an oversight of a first name.

The Assessor confirms on the Professional in Practice database that there has been a minor breach of confidentiality in the submission.

The Agency Representative will be informed that such a breach has occurred.

The Candidate will be informed, in the outcome letter from the Assessment Panel, that there was a minor breach of confidentiality in their submission.

**Moderate Breach:** For example, a series of small oversights.

The Assessor confirms on the Professional in Practice database that there are moderate breaches in the submission.

The Candidate will be informed there are moderate breaches in the submission. They will be required to amend the breaches before the Assessment Panel meets. This will entail the Candidate coming to the NISCC office and removing the breaches.

The Agency Representative will be informed that there was a moderate breach of confidentiality in the submission.

It will be confirmed in the Candidates outcome letter from the Assessment Panel that there was a moderate breach in the submission and that the Candidate removed these prior to the result being confirmed.

**Serious Breach:** For example, surnames, addresses, dates of birth telephone numbers.

The Assessor will mark the submission in full.

The Assessor will confirm on the Professional in Practice database that there are serious breaches of confidentiality in the submission.

Serious breaches will result in referral on basis of a breach of professional values and Professional in Practice requirements.

The breach will be communicated by letter to the Candidate and to the Agency Representative.

The Candidate will be referred to the employer representative on the Professional in Practice Committee.

Where there has been a serious breach and the Candidate wishes to resubmit the work the candidate will;

- Amend all the breaches

*and*

- The Line Manager will address the issue of confidentiality in the Line Managers Verification Report.

Please note-

- The Chair of the Assessment Panel may designate a timeframe for this to be enacted.

## **Appendix Four - Policy on Plagiarism**

### **Professional in Practice Framework Individual Assessment Route**

For the purpose of this policy, plagiarism is defined, as: 'when any candidate includes, in a mode of assessment, unacknowledged and verbatim, substantial material which has been authored by another person.'

This definition includes unpublished work, for example, other people's portfolios and dissertations. Plagiarism is dishonest, involves the purchase or appropriation of others' ideas and work. Within the context of a Professional in Practice submission, plagiarism involves the misrepresentation of the candidate's level of competence. In this context plagiarism is a breach of professional ethics and the NISCC Code of Practice and Standards of Conduct.

2.1 *Being honest and trustworthy;  
NISCC Standards of Conduct and Practice.*

Plagiarism which is agreed by both assessors to be brief should not lead to suspension of assessment but the matter should be highlighted within the assessor's report.

Candidates must ensure that all verbatim material taken from another person or source (including websites) is acknowledged, e.g., if taken from a book or article it should be referenced and page numbers should be given for all direct quotes. Candidates may be breaking the law if material is used that was written by someone else without acknowledging the original author. Guidance on referencing is included in Appendix Two. There should be **no** plagiarism in work submitted for assessment.

#### **In the event of suspected Plagiarism**

Assessors are requested to identify and comment on plagiarism as part of the assessment process.

Where plagiarism has been identified, the assessors are required to bring the matter to the attention of the Assessment Panel where any subsequent action to be taken will be agreed. A minor plagiarism or possible referencing oversight will be treated in the same way as a breach of confidentiality, i.e. the candidate will be required to amend the submission before the assessment process progresses.

Should the plagiarism be more significant, the assessment will be suspended pending an investigation. The candidate will be informed in writing that the assessment of the portfolio has been suspended with an outline of the reasons. The candidate will be asked to forward an explanation in writing to the Chair of the Assessment Panel within 14 working days. The Chair of the Professional in Practice Committee and the candidate's agency representative on the Assessment Panel will be copied in on this correspondence.

After 14 working days and within 28 working days of the suspension, a Plagiarism subgroup will be convened by the Chair of the Assessment Panel. The subgroup will consist of the Chair of the Assessment Panel, an appropriate Assessment Panel member and the candidate's agency representative. The Professional in Practice Assessment Panel Professional Adviser will be in attendance. The subgroup will consider the nature of the suspected plagiarism and any explanation offered by the candidate.

The assessor who suspected the plagiarism will attend the subgroup meeting to provide relevant information.

The candidate will be invited to attend the meeting of the subgroup.

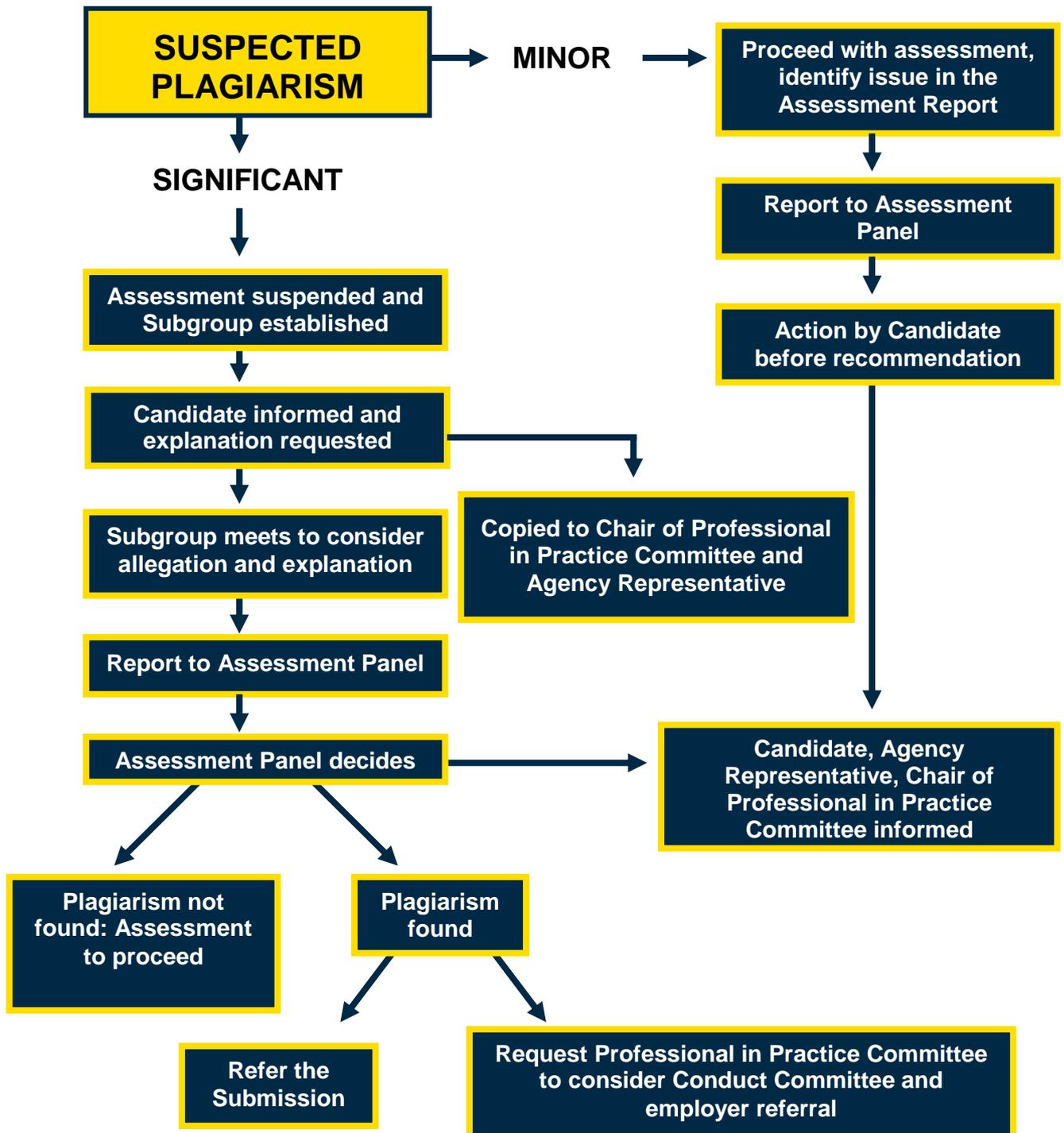
The Assessment Panel subgroup will establish:

1. if plagiarism has occurred or not
2. in the case of not finding plagiarism – assessment will proceed and will be completed within 28 working days
3. in the case of finding plagiarism – the subgroup can recommend the following
  - a) Referral of the submission;
  - b) Request the Professional in Practice Committee to consider referring the candidate to the NISCC Conduct Committee for a breach of the NISCC Standards and to their employer for action.

The subgroup will report to the Assessment Panel with conclusions and recommendations. The Assessment Panel will communicate all decisions in writing to the candidate, the Chair of the Professional in Practice Committee and the candidate's agency representative on the Partnership Committee within 7 working days.

The candidate has the right of appeal in relation to decisions taken at Point 3 above. The candidate can appeal under the terms of the Policy on Reviewing an Assessment Decision (Appendix 5) or can appeal directly to the Professional in Practice Committee who will establish an Appeals Committee consisting of an independent Chair and members who have not been involved in previous decisions related to the case.

**Figure 1: Process for Dealing with Suspected Plagiarism**



## Appendix Five - Policy on Reviewing an Assessment Decision

### Professional in Practice Framework Individual Route

#### Introduction

The Professional in Practice Framework has developed assessment and standardisation processes to ensure consistency, impartiality and accountability in the assessment of individual submissions for Professional in Practice Requirements. There may be circumstances when a candidate considers the assessment processes to be flawed. In such situations the candidate can request a review of the decision made.

A candidate may request a 'Review of Decision' only on the grounds that there were procedural irregularities or administrative errors of such a nature as to cause reasonable doubt as to whether the assessors would have reached the same conclusion had the irregularities or errors not occurred.

A procedural irregularity is normally regarded as a deviation from agreed assessment arrangements which has been applied to some but not all candidates making submissions.

The professional decision of the Assessment Panel and its External Examiner is **not** open to appeal.

#### The Process for a 'Review of Decision'

A request for a 'Review of Decision' must be submitted, in writing, to the Chair of the Assessment Panel not later than 28 days from the date of the letter informing the candidate of the outcome of the assessment phase.

The candidate should identify specifically the alleged procedural irregularity or administrative error.

Within 14 days of receipt of this communication, the Chair of the Assessment Panel will decide whether there were procedural irregularities or administrative errors which give sufficient grounds to continue the 'Review of Decision' process.

Whatever decision is taken at this stage, the candidate will be informed in writing.

Where a Review of Decision is to take place, the following procedures will apply:

- the original assessors will be asked to reconsider their decision in light of all new information.
- the External Examiner will be asked to review the submission again.

N.B. At the discretion of the Chair of the Assessment Panel, a new assessor may be allocated if appropriate.

Within one month, a subgroup of the Assessment Panel will be convened.

The subgroup will consist of the Chair of the Assessment Panel and the assessors, with the Professional Adviser in attendance.

The subgroup may take any of the following decisions:

- state that a new outcome has been reached
- permit the Candidate to resubmit their work without payment of additional fees
- confirm the original decision

The subgroup, as part of their decision making, will take cognisance of the feedback from the External Examiner.

The Chair of the Assessment Panel will inform the Professional in Practice Committee and the Professional in Practice agency representative of the decision reached and the reason for the outcome.

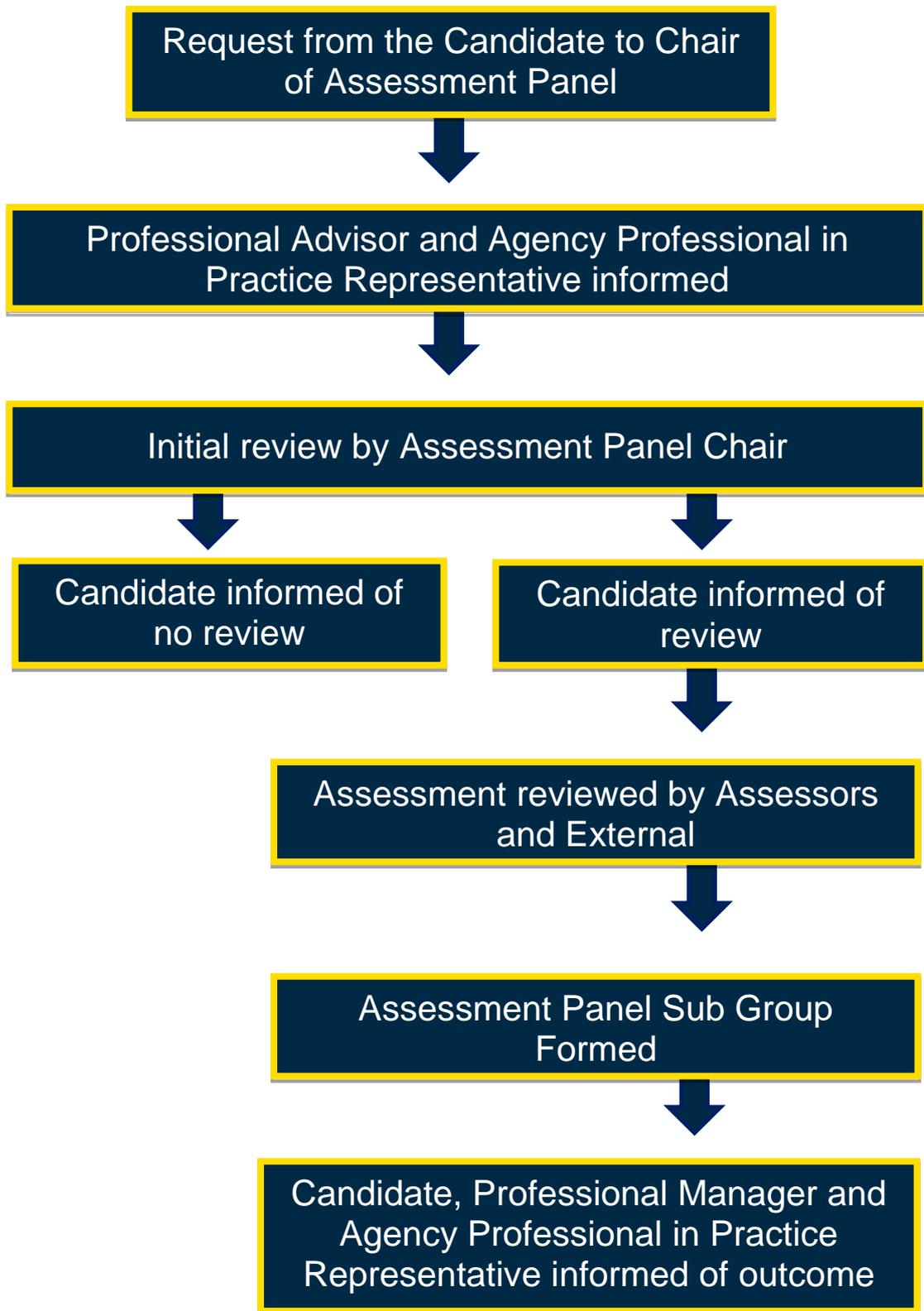
The Chair of the Assessment Panel will inform the candidate of the result.

This decision is final.

**Record of 'Review of Decision'**

The Professional in Practice Committee will be informed, by annual report from the Assessment Panel, of all Reviews of Decision received by the Assessment Panel and the outcomes.

## 'Review of Decision' Process



## Appendix Six - Policy on Word Count

### Professional in Practice Framework Individual Assessment Route

#### Portfolio Submission

A minimum of one third of each award must be achieved using an evidence based portfolio (or Approved programme/module which includes an evidence-based assessment component), i.e.

2 Consolidation Requirements

or

3 Specialist Requirements

or

3 Leadership and Strategic Requirements

Word count for **Consolidation** and **Specialist** Awards are as follows:

1 Requirement – 2,700 – 3,000

2 Requirements – 4,500 – 5,000

3 Requirements – 6,750 – 7,500

Word count for 3 **Leadership and Strategic** Requirements - A maximum word limit of 9,000 words (in total)

#### Assignment Submission

Word count for **Consolidation** and **Specialist** Awards are as follows:

1 Requirement – 2,700 – 3,000

2 Requirements – 4,500 – 5,000

3 Requirements – 6,750 – 7,500

Word count for 3 **Leadership and Strategic** Requirements - A maximum word limit of 9,000 words (in total)

## **Verbal Presentation Submission**

### **Per Requirement (Critical Analysis)**

1,200 to 1,500 words per requirement

**Consolidation Award** – a maximum of **two** requirements may be claimed

**Specialist Award** - a maximum of **three** requirements may be claimed

**Leadership and Strategic Award** - a maximum of **three** requirements may be claimed

### **All Awards**

30 – 40 minutes Presentation and 20 - 30 minutes Panel questions and discussion

## **Direct Observation of Practice**

### **Per Requirement**

1,200 – 1,500 words per Requirement (Consolidation and Specialist Awards), to include a preparatory statement and reflective statement.

1,700 – 2000 words per Requirement (Leadership and Strategic Award), to include a preparatory statement and reflective statement.

**Consolidation Award** - a Maximum of **two** requirements may be claimed

**Specialist Award** - a maximum of **three** requirements may be claimed

**Leadership and Strategic Award** – a maximum of **three** requirements may be claimed

(Further guidance on Direct Observations is included in the main Guidance documents for Assessors and Candidates)

## **Guidance on Word Count**

- The candidate must declare their word count for the submission type on their submission
- Multiple submissions from a candidate must indicate the word count on each
- Agency representatives must ensure a word count is indicated on each submission type
- NO margin of excess is permitted
- Submissions which are over the word count will NOT be marked. There is NO allowance on the word count
- Should it become apparent within the assessment process that a false word count declaration has been made, this will be notified to the Assessment Panel. The Chair of the Assessment Panel will refer the matter to the appropriate agency representative on the Professional in Practice Committee.

## WORD COUNTS for the INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENT ROUTE

<b>CONSOLIDATION AWARD</b>					
<b>PORTFOLIO</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>	<b>DIRECT OBSERVATION</b>	<b>VERBAL PRESENTATION</b>	<b>APCL<sup>i</sup>/APEL</b>	<b>IN-SERVICE TRAINING SCHEDULE</b>
<b>A minimum of 1/3 of Award must be achieved via Portfolio, i.e. minimum 2 Requirements*</b>	A maximum of 2 Requirements may be achieved via each Assignment	A maximum of 2 Requirements may be achieved via Direct Observation	A maximum of 2 Requirements may be achieved via Verbal Presentation	APCL any of the Professional in Practice requirements <b>up to and including a full Award</b> APEL a maximum of two thirds of award	A maximum of 2 Requirements may be achieved via In-Service Schedule
<u>Word Count</u> <b>1 Requirement - 2,700 – 3,000</b>  <b>2 Requirements - 4,500 – 5,000</b>  <b>3 Requirements – 6,750 – 7,500</b>	<u>Word Count</u> 1 Requirement – 2,700 – 3,000  2 Requirements - 4,500 – 5,000  3 Requirements – 6,750 – 7,500	<u>Word Count</u> 1,200 – 1,500 words <b>per Requirement</b> , to include preparatory statement and reflective account	<u>Word Count</u> 1,200 – 1,500 words of critical analysis <b>per Requirement</b>	<u>Word Count APCL</u> 300 words per requirement <u>Word Count APEL</u> 600 words per requirement	<u>Word Count</u> <b>2,000- 3,000 words based on 2 Requirements</b>
			<b>Presentation</b> <b>30 – 40 minutes presentation and 20 - 30 minutes discussion (in total for 1-2 Requirements)</b>		

# SPECIALIST AWARD

PORTFOLIO	ASSIGNMENT	DIRECT OBSERVATION	VERBAL PRESENTATION	APCL <sup>i</sup> /APEL	IN-SERVICE TRAINING SCHEDULE
<b>A minimum of 1/3 Award must be achieved via Portfolio, i.e. 3 Requirements *</b>	A <b>maximum</b> of 3 Requirements may be achieved via each Assignment	A <b>maximum</b> of 3 Requirements may be achieved via Direct Observation	A <b>maximum</b> of 3 Requirements may be achieved via Verbal Presentation	APCL <b>any</b> of the Professional in Practice requirements <b>up to and including a full Award</b>  APEL a maximum of two thirds of award	A <b>maximum</b> of 3 Requirements may be achieved via In-Service Schedule
<b>Word Count</b> 1 Requirement - 2,700 – 3,000  2 Requirements - 4,500 – 5,000  3 Requirements - 6,750 – 7,500	<b>Word Count</b> 1 Requirement - 2,700 – 3,000  2 Requirements - 4,500 – 5,000  3 Requirements - 6,750 – 7,500	<b>Word Count</b> 1,200 – 1,500 words <b>per Requirement</b> , to include preparatory statement and reflective account	<b>Word Count</b> 1,200 – 1,500 words of critical analysis <b>per Requirement</b>	<b>Word Count APCL</b> 300 words per requirement  <b>Word Count APEL</b> 600 words per requirement	<b>Word Count</b> <b>3,000- 4,000</b> words <b>based on 3 Requirements</b>
			<b>Presentation</b> <b>30 – 40</b> minutes presentation and <b>20 - 30</b> minutes discussion (in total for 1-3 Requirements)		

# LEADERSHIP & STRATEGIC AWARD

PORTFOLIO	ASSIGNMENT	DIRECT OBSERVATION	VERBAL PRESENTATION	APCL <sup>i</sup> /APEL	IN-SERVICE TRAINING SCHEDULE
A minimum of 1/3 Award <u>must</u> be achieved via Portfolio, i.e. 3 Requirements*	A maximum of 3 Requirements may be achieved via each Assignment	A maximum of 3 Requirements may be achieved via Direct Observation	A maximum of 3 Requirements may be achieved via Verbal Presentation	APCL any of the Professional in Practice requirements <b>up to and including a full Award</b>	A maximum of 3 Requirements may be achieved via In-Service Schedule
<u>Word Count</u> Maximum 3,000 words per Requirement	<u>Word Count</u> Maximum 9,000 words (in total for 3 Requirements)	<u>Word Count</u> 1,700 – 2000 words <b>per Requirement</b> , to include preparatory statement and reflective account	<u>Word Count</u> 1,200 – 1,500 words of critical analysis <b>per Requirement</b>	<u>Word Count APCL</u> 300 words per requirement  <u>Word Count APEL</u> 600 words per requirement	<u>Word Count</u> 5,000- 6,000 words <b>based on 3 Requirements</b>
			<u>Presentation</u> 30 – 40 minutes presentation and 20 - 30 minutes discussion (in total for 1-3 Requirements)		

\* Approved Programmes which include an evidence-based assessment component will be considered as a ‘portfolio’ for the purposes of subsequent submissions made by a candidate to the IAR

<sup>i</sup> Learning that has been previously assessed and certificated by an academic or other equivalent institution. The certificated programme must have been at postgraduate level, e.g. masters degree, doctorate, higher level professional award.



