



Standards of Proficiency

July 2019 Version 2

FOREWORD

The standards of proficiency are the threshold standards necessary for safe and effective practice. These standards play a key role in ensuring that registrants practise safely and effectively. The RCCP standards of proficiency have been developed in line with its application for acceptance to the Register by the Health Professions Council.

We approve education programmes to make sure that they allow students to meet these standards when they satisfactorily complete the programme. We also assess applications from individuals who have trained outside of the UK and some applications via our 'grandparenting' process against these standards. Any applicant who meets these standards is eligible to apply for registration.

INTRODUCTION

This document sets out the standards of proficiency. These are the standards we have produced for the safe and effective practice of the profession. They are the minimum standards we consider necessary to protect members of the public. You must meet these standards when you first become registered.

The standards of proficiency in this document include both generic elements, which apply to all our registrants, and profession-specific elements. The generic standards are written in black, and the profession-specific standards are written in blue to help you distinguish between them. The generic standards explain the key obligations that we expect of you.

A note about our expectations of you

The standards of proficiency play a central role in how you can gain admission to, and remain on, the Register. It is important that you read and understand this document. If your practice is called into question, we will consider these standards in deciding what action, if any, we need to take. The standards set out in this document complement information and guidance issued by other organisations, such as your professional body or your employer.

Your scope of practice

Your scope of practice is the area or areas of your profession in which you have the knowledge, skills and experience to practise lawfully, safely and effectively, in a way that meets our standards and does not pose any danger to the public or to yourself.

We recognise that a registrant's scope of practice will change over time and that the practice of experienced registrants often becomes more focused and specialised than that of newly registered colleagues. This might be because of specialisation in a certain clinical area or with a particular client group, or a movement into roles in management, education or research.

Your particular scope of practice may mean that you are unable to continue to demonstrate that you meet all of the standards that apply for the whole of your profession. As long as you make sure that you are practising safely and effectively within your given scope of practice and do not practise in the areas where you are not proficient to do so, this will not be a problem. If you want to move outside of your scope of practice you should be certain that you are capable of working lawfully, safely and effectively. This means that you need to exercise personal judgement by undertaking any necessary training or gaining the necessary experience.

The RCCP register for Audiology includes Audiologists, Hearing Therapists and Educational Audiologists and it should be noted that they perform audiology related clinical physiology procedures in different contexts and with different patient populations.

Meeting the standards

It is important that our registrants meet our standards and are able to practise lawfully, safely and effectively. However, we do not dictate how you should meet our standards. There is normally more than one way in which each standard can be met and the way in which you meet our standards might change over time because of improvements in technology or changes in your practice. As an autonomous professional you need to make informed, reasoned decisions about your practice to ensure that you meet the standards that apply to you. This includes seeking advice and support from education providers, employers, colleagues and others to ensure that the wellbeing of service users is safeguarded at all times. In particular, we recognise the valuable role played by professional bodies in representing and promoting the interests of their members. This often includes guidance and advice about good practice which can help you meet the standards laid out in this document.

Please note these standards may change in the future and will be disseminated via our website, professional bodies, and contact with registrants.

Summary of standards for Clinical Physiologists

Expectations of a health Professional

1a: Professional autonomy and accountability

Registrant clinical physiologists must:

- 1a.1 be able to practise within the legal and ethical boundaries of their profession
 - understand the need to act in the best interests of service users at all times
 - understand what is required of them by the Registration Council for Clinical Physiologists
 - understand the need to respect, and so far as possible uphold, the rights, dignity, values and autonomy of every service user
 - including their role in the diagnostic and therapeutic process and in maintaining health and wellbeing
 - be aware of current UK legislation applicable to the work of their profession
- 1a.2 be able to practise in a non-discriminatory manner
- 1a.3 understand the importance of and be able to maintain confidentiality
- 1a.4 understand the importance of and be able to obtain informed consent
- 1a.5 be able to exercise a professional duty of care
- 1a.6 be able to practise as an autonomous professional, exercising their own professional judgement
 - be able to assess a situation, determine the nature and severity of the problem and call upon the required knowledge and experience to deal with the problem
 - be able to initiate resolution of problems and be able to exercise personal initiative
 - know the limits of their practice and when to seek advice or refer to another professional
 - recognise that they are personally responsible for and must be able to justify their decisions
- 1a.7 recognise the need for effective self-management of workload and be able to practise accordingly
- 1a.8 understand the obligation to maintain fitness to practise
 - understand the need to practise safely and effectively within their scope of practice
 - understand the need to maintain high standards of personal conduct
 - understand the importance of maintaining their own health
 - understand both the need to keep skills and knowledge up to date and the importance of career-long learning

1b: Professional relationships

Registrant clinical physiologists must:

- 1b.1 be able to work, where appropriate, in partnership with other professionals, support staff, patients, clients and users, and their relatives and carers
- understand the need to build and sustain professional relationships as both an independent practitioner and collaboratively as a member of a team
 - understand the need to engage service users and carers in planning and evaluating diagnostics, treatments and interventions to meet their needs and goals
 - be able to make appropriate referrals
 - be able to work flexibly within their scope of practice and the changing role of health care science
- 1b.2 be able to contribute effectively to work undertaken as part of a multi-disciplinary team
- be able to respond to enquiries regarding the service they provide when dealing with clinical and non-clinical colleagues
- 1b.3 be able to demonstrate effective and appropriate skills in communicating information, advice, instruction and professional opinion to colleagues, service users their relatives and carers
- be able to communicate in English to the standard equivalent to level 7.0 of the International English Language Testing System, with no element below 6.5
 - understand how communication skills affect the assessment of service users and how the means of communication should be modified to address and take account of factors such as age, physical ability and learning ability
 - be able to select, move between and use appropriate forms of verbal and non-verbal communication with service users and others
 - be aware of the characteristics and consequences of non-verbal communication and how this can be affected by culture, age, ethnicity, gender, religious beliefs and socio-economic status
 - understand the need to provide service users (or people acting on their behalf) with the information necessary to enable them to make informed decisions
 - understand the need to use an appropriate interpreter to assist service users whose first language is not English, wherever possible
 - recognise that relationships with service users should be based on mutual respect and trust, and be able to maintain high standards of care even in situations of personal incompatibility

- be able to provide guidance, and to explain the nature, purpose and techniques of rehabilitation to patients, clients and carers, understanding the need to establish and sustain a therapeutic relationship
- be able to evaluate diagnostics, treatments and interventions to meet clinical needs
- be able to interpret and act upon information from other health care professionals
- be aware of the general working of health care services
- be able to summarise and present scientific ideas in an appropriate form to patients, clients, carers and members of the public
- be able to advise other health care professionals about the relevance and application of diagnostic, therapeutic and other procedures
- understand the psychology of illness, anxiety and uncertainty and the likely behaviour of patients, clients, undergoing diagnostic and therapeutic procedures, as well as that of their families and carers

1b.4 understand the need for effective communication throughout the care of the service user

- recognise the need to use interpersonal skills to encourage the active participation of service users
- enable patients, clients and users to understand sensitive, scientific and technological information, in order to allow them to participate in their care
- be able to adopt a patient-centred approach and establish a rapport in order to motivate and involve the patients, client & users in their care
- understand the value, when working with and for disabled people, of the concept of empowerment, with the aim of enhancing access and opportunities for all

The skills required for the application of practice

2a: Identification and assessment of health and social care needs

Registrant clinical physiologists must:

2a.1 be able to gather appropriate information

- understand the need to take account of psychological, social, cultural, and other factors when collecting case histories and other appropriate information
- be able to identify when specialist input is needed to safeguard vulnerable patients, clients
- be able to utilise clinical information to adapt the planned procedure
- be able to use observation to gather information about the communication and functional abilities of patients

2a.2 be able to use appropriate assessment techniques

- be able to undertake and record a thorough, sensitive and detailed assessment, using appropriate techniques and equipment
- be able to listen to a patient, client's story in order to plan for the future
- be able, through interview and individual discussion, to understand the values, beliefs and interests of patients, clients and their families and carers
- be able to identify the clinical decision which the procedure will inform
- be able to respond to and deal with clinical situations requiring immediate attention

Registrant Audiologists, Hearing Therapists and Educational Audiologists:

- be able to select relevant assessment tools to identify communication needs in the areas of family, social and leisure activity, and employment
- understand the need to consider the assessment of both health and social care needs of clients and carers
- understand the need to make provision for identification and assessment of educational, occupational, physical, psychological, cultural and environmental needs/problems

Registrant Audiologists and Hearing Therapists:

- be able to use standardised and non-standardised assessments to gather information in relation to communication, tinnitus and balance dysfunction as well as barriers to social inclusion

Educational Audiologists:

- be able to use standardised and non-standardised assessments to gather information in relation to communication and tinnitus as well as barriers to social inclusion

2a.3 be able to undertake or arrange clinical investigations as appropriate

- be able to identify the clinical decision which the procedure will inform:

Neurophysiology:

- Within current guidelines, to prepare, perform and manage safely:
 - electroencephalographs (across range of patient population, levels of consciousness & cognitive impairment)

GI Physiology:

- Within current guidelines, to prepare, perform, and manage safely
 - intubation and/or investigation of the GI tract.
 - be able to safely manage and perform the implantation and the aftercare of implantable devices
 - be able to be able to contribute to therapeutic care pathways of the GI tract.

Cardiac Physiology:

- Within current guidelines, to prepare, perform and manage safely:
 - 12 lead resting ECG
 - ambulatory monitoring (ECG and BP)
 - exercise tolerance testing
 - cardiac catheterisation
 - pacemaker implant & follow up

Respiratory Physiology:

- Within current guidelines, to prepare, perform and manage safely:
 - measurements of dynamic and static lung volumes
 - gaseous exchange
 - blood gas status
 - exercise capacity
 - bronchodilator and steroid response

Audiology (including Audiologists, Hearing Therapists and Educational Audiologists):

- Within current guidelines, to prepare, perform and manage safely:
 - determining hearing threshold of adults

Audiology (including Audiologists and Educational Audiologists):

- Within current guidelines, to prepare, perform and manage safely:
 - determining hearing threshold of children

Audiology (including Audiologists and Hearing Therapists):

- Within current guidelines, to prepare, perform and manage safely:
 - assessing balance function in adults

Audiology (including Audiologists):

- Within current guidelines, to prepare, perform and manage safely:
 - assessing the impact of tinnitus in adults and children

- assessing balance function in children

Sleep Physiology:

- Within current guidelines, to prepare, perform and manage safely:
 - Overnight Pulse Oximetry
 - polygraphy (without EEG)
 - mask Fitting
 - CPAP Compliance

2a.4 be able to analyse and evaluate the information collected

- be able to interpret and use the data/information to provide a report in some or all of the following:

Neurophysiology:

- electroencephalographs (across range of patient population, levels of consciousness & cognitive impairment)

GI Physiology:

- physiological measurement of the GI tract
- data obtained from implantable devices

Cardiac Physiology:

- 12 lead resting ECG
- ambulatory monitoring (ECG and BP)
- exercise tolerance testing
- pacemaker implant & follow up
- Tilt Table studies

Respiratory Physiology

- measurements of dynamic and static lung volumes
- gaseous exchange
- blood gas status
- exercise Capacity
- bronchodilator and steroid response

Audiology (including Audiologists and Hearing Therapists):

- be able to appropriately select and fit hearing aids and other technologies as appropriate in order to provide applicable management
- be able to appropriately manage balance dysfunction in adults and children

Audiology (including Audiologists, Hearing Therapists and Educational Audiologists):

- be able to appropriately adjust and/or verify hearing aids and other technologies, as appropriate, in order to provide suitable management
- be able to appropriately manage tinnitus in adults and children

Sleep Physiology:

- Overnight Pulse Oximetry
- polygraphy (without EEG)
- mask Fitting
- CPAP Compliance

2b: Formulation and delivery of plans and strategies for meeting health and social care needs

Registrant Clinical Physiologists must:

2b.1 be able to use research, reasoning and problem-solving skills

- recognise the value of research to the systematic evaluation of practice
- be able to conduct evidence-based practice, evaluate practice systematically, and participate in audit procedures
- be aware of methods commonly used in health and social care research
- be able to demonstrate a logical and systematic approach to problem solving
- be able to evaluate research and other evidence to inform their own practice
- be able to develop and critically appraise scientific and clinical literature as well as other sources of information
- be able to develop the aims, objectives, and experimental protocol associated with a project
- be able to undertake qualitative and/or quantitative research and interpret results and present results

2b.2 be able to draw on appropriate knowledge and skills in order to make professional judgements

- be able to change their practice as needed to take account of new developments
- be able to demonstrate a level of skill in the use of information technology appropriate to their profession
- be able to manage complex and unpredictable situations, including the ability to adapt planned procedures, interventions or treatments as emerging results may require
- be able to manage adverse and critical incidents
- be able to prioritise workload and use of resources

2b.3 be able to formulate specific and appropriate management plans, including the setting of timescales

- understand the requirement to adapt practice to meet the needs of different client groups distinguished by, for example, physical, physiological, environmental, cultural or socio-economic factors

Audiology (including Audiologists and Hearing Therapists):

- in partnership with patients, clients, carers, families and other stakeholders act as facilitator to allow service users to choose between a range of options for rehabilitation of their hearing impairment, tinnitus, balance disorder including fitting hearing aids, where appropriate

Educational Audiologists

- in partnership with patients, clients, carers, families and other stakeholders act as facilitator to allow service users to choose between a range of options for rehabilitation of their hearing impairment and tinnitus including fitting hearing aids, where appropriate.

2b.4 be able to conduct appropriate diagnostic or monitoring procedures, treatment, therapy or other actions safely and skilfully

- understand the need to maintain the safety of both patients, clients and users, and those involved in their care
- be able to perform a range of scientific diagnostic and/or therapeutic procedures appropriate to their discipline with accuracy and precision
- be able to commission, quality assure, field test specialist equipment for diagnostic and therapeutic procedures
- be able to problem solve during procedures related to equipment and/or clinical application

2b.5 be able to maintain records appropriately

- be able to keep accurate, legible records and recognise the need to handle these records and all other clinical information in accordance with applicable legislation, protocols and guidelines
- understand the need to use only accepted terminology (which includes abbreviations) in making clinical records

2c: Critical evaluation of the impact of, or response to, the registrant's actions

Registrant clinical physiologists must:

- 2c.1 be able to monitor and review the ongoing effectiveness of planned activity and modify it accordingly
- be able to gather information, including qualitative and quantitative data, that help to evaluate the responses of patients, client and users to their care
 - be able to evaluate management plans against treatment milestones, using recognised health outcome measures, and revise the plans as necessary in conjunction with the patient, client or user.
 - recognise the need to monitor and evaluate the quality of practice, and the value of contribution to the generation of data for quality assurance and improvement programmes.
 - be able to make reasoned decisions to initiate, continue, modify or cease treatments, or the use of techniques or procedures, and record the decisions and reasoning appropriately.
 - understand that outcomes may not always conform to expectations, but may still meet the need of patients, client or users
 - be able to authorise the withdrawal of medication, prior to investigation, within the limits of their practice
 - give medication in line with local protocols, within the limits of their practice
 - understand and take personal responsibility for clinical decisions taken on the basis of results reported
- 2c.2 be able to audit, reflect on and review practice
- understand the principles of quality control and quality assurance
 - be aware of the role of audit and review in quality management, including quality control, quality assurance and the use of appropriate outcome measures
 - be able to maintain an effective audit trail and work towards continual improvement
 - participate in quality assurance programmes, where appropriate
 - understand the value of reflection on clinical practice and the need to record the outcome of such reflection
 - recognise the value of case conferences and other methods of review
 - be aware of new and emerging scientific advances and developments

Knowledge, understanding and Skills

3a: Knowledge, understanding and skills

Registrant clinical physiologists must:

3a.1 know the key concepts of the biological, physical, social, psychological and clinical sciences, relevant to their profession-specific practice

- understand the structure and function of the human body, relevant to their practice, together with a knowledge of health disease, disorder and dysfunction
- be aware of the principles and applications of scientific enquiry, including the evaluation of treatment efficacy and the research process.
- recognise the role of other professions in health can social care
- understand the theoretical basis of, and the variety of approaches to, assessment and intervention
- have detailed understanding of the structure and physiological function of the human body generally, and to a more advanced level in the specialist area e.g. central and peripheral nervous, auditory, respiratory, cardiac and gastrointestinal and endocrine systems
- have detailed knowledge and understanding of the concepts related to physics and instrumentation within the area of practice
- know the diagnostic procedures, investigations and physiological symptoms which result in patients being referred for investigations
- understand and interpret scientific data produced by physiological procedures within their specialist area
- understand the pathophysiology of disease processes and have a detailed knowledge within the area of practice
- understand concepts of therapeutic intervention, including pharmacology, in particular related to the area of practice
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Registrant Audiologists, Hearing Therapists and Educational Audiologists must:

- be aware of the origins and development of rehabilitation, including the current emphasis on autonomy and empowerment of individuals, groups and communities
- understand the theoretical concepts underpinning rehabilitation, specifically in relation to the social nature of human beings and how they function in everyday activities
- be able to analyse human communication from a holistic perspective, and the demands made on individuals in order to engage in social activities

- understand the impact of communication dysfunction on individuals, families, groups and communities and recognise the importance of restoring opportunities
- recognise the socio-cultural environmental issues that influence the context within which people communicate and function

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Registrant Audiologists and Hearing Therapists:

- be able to utilise the foundation sciences fundamental to everyday practice, and be able to interpret them in relation to human communication, tinnitus and balance functioning and dysfunction

Educational Audiologists:

- be able to utilise the foundation sciences fundamental to everyday practice and be able to interpret them in relation to human communication and tinnitus.

3a.2 know how professional principles are expressed and translated into action through a number of different assessments, treatment and management approaches, and how to select or modify approaches to meet the needs of an individual

3a.3 understand the need to establish and maintain a safe practice environment

- be aware of applicable health and safety legislation, and any relevant safety policies and procedures in force at the workplace, such as incident reporting, and be able to act in accordance with these
- be able to work safely, including being able to select appropriate hazard control and risk management, reduction or elimination techniques in a safe manner in accordance with health and safety legislation
- be able to select appropriate personal protective equipment and use it correctly
- be able to establish safe environments for clinical practice, which minimise risks to patients, clients and users, those treating them, and others, including the use of hazard control and particularly infection control.
- be aware how personal health problems may affect safety of patients and colleagues and understand the role of Occupational health in maintaining fitness to practice
- keep all relevant vaccinations up to date