

# A Competency Framework for Rheumatology

This document should be used in conjunction with the first edition of the RCN's Competency Framework for Rheumatology Nurses (2020) as guidance, this includes advice on the assessment process and on providing evidence. The competency framework is available at: [www.rcn.org.uk/professional-development/publications/pub-009004](http://www.rcn.org.uk/professional-development/publications/pub-009004)

# A Competency Framework for Rheumatology Nurses: Consultant Level Practitioner

Competency 1: Specialism knowledge				
Performance criteria	Evidence	Level achieved	Date	Assessor/self-assessed
Knowledge and understanding				
Has advanced knowledge of national and international innovations that contribute to rheumatology care in adults and children.				
Has undertaken specialist qualification at advanced level.				
Understands the individual and national health burden of rheumatological conditions and how this impacts patients and services.				
Understands the diagnostic criteria, aetiology, biology and pathophysiology of MSK and rheumatological conditions, co-morbidities, and differential diagnoses and risk factors, including complex autoimmune connective tissue diseases, vasculitis, rare metabolic bone disease or inherited connective tissue disease and treatment pathways.				
Understands the main classifications of drug therapy including analgesia, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory				



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Skills and behaviours	Evidence	Level achieved	Date	Assessor/self-assessed
Provides person-centred care in relation to the specific health care needs of patients with rheumatological conditions.				
Can autonomously manage complex autoimmune connective tissue diseases, vasculitis, rare metabolic bone disease and inherited connective tissue disease.				
Promotes rheumatology nursing practice as part of local health service delivery, utilising strategies for influencing national and local policy.				
Uses specialist knowledge to evaluate new and complex clinical ideas that are emerging in the most advanced arenas in rheumatology.				
Able to describe multifactorial issues in the development of rheumatological conditions and can explain these to patients and carers				
Acts as national resource, expert, adviser, researcher and author.				
Leads education strategy in rheumatology for the organisation ensuring there is provision of education for those encountering children, young people and adults with symptoms of rheumatological conditions.				

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Competency 2: Clinical assessment planning implementation and evaluation				
Performance criteria	Evidence	Level achieved	Date	Assessor/self-assessed
<b>Knowledge and understanding</b>				
Advanced knowledge of national and international innovations and guidelines that contribute to rheumatology nursing.				
Has undertaken specific accredited training and has indepth knowledge of the use of ultrasound scanning and advanced investigation techniques.				
Has indepth knowledge of all aspects of MSK and clinical assessment in rheumatological conditions incorporating latest clinical guidance and research into practice.				
Understands normal body movements and factors which might alter these; including child development, delayed diagnosis and access to care.				
Understands the importance of carrying out disease activity scoring and other outcome measures relevant to patient or condition.				
Understands the importance of correctly identifying and managing pain and develops an understanding of pharmacological and non-pharmacological approaches.				
Understands the reasons for appropriate requesting of investigations such as blood tests, radiological investigations, x-rays, US, CT and MRI.				
Accurately interprets a range of investigations using the results to derive a management plan.				
Understands the importance of potentially serious pathology (red flags) and reports to appropriate clinician.				
Understands infection prevention procedures and is specifically aware of infection risks for rheumatology				



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Has the ability to perform advanced procedures to aid clinical assessment decisions.				
Leads person-centred care planning and intervenes where needed.				
Ensures consistent shared decision-making behaviours across the service.				
Applies expert knowledge and critical thinking to support team members.				
Ensures compliance with national standards and registry data.				
Ensures accurate collection, collation and analysis of data and feed back to appropriate team or organisation.				
Leads audits of effectiveness of referral pathways and work				

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Initiates shared decision making in partnership with the patient based on experience and expertise to achieve the best outcome.				



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Ensures relevant specialism training is in place and monitors effectiveness of consultations.				
Audits effectiveness of referral pathways and works				

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Competency 3: Disease management				
Performance criteria	Evidence	Level achieved	Date	Assessor/self-assessed
Knowledge and understanding				

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Skills and behaviours	Evidence	Level achieved	Date	Assessor/self-assessed
Ensures consistency across service of information provision about OTC and complementary therapies.				
High level of autonomy and freedom to act to manage rheumatological conditions according to the latest research-based evidence.				
Supervises and supports team members to prescribe and monitor treatment plans and regular reviews.				
Uses expert knowledge and critical thinking skills to offer advice on referrals to other therapies and services.				
Critically review evidence for effectiveness of advanced therapies for rheumatological condition.				
Instigates further evaluation of effectiveness of advanced therapy provision.				
Supports the development of commissioning pathways for new biologic agents as evidence of effectiveness emerges.				
Ensures evidence-based consultation theory underpins MDT practice.				
Leads audit of clinical practice and addresses learning needs or professional development requirements arising from this.				
Leads the development and review of policies to ensure that rare side effects are acted upon.				
Undertakes risk assessment and capacity assessment of patient and carers and educates staff about this.				

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Advises where further assessment of capacity is necessary and seeks advice when needed.				
Able to support patient and family to select most appropriate medication and administration of medication and provides support for ongoing self-management and assesses treatment concordance.				
Educates staff, patients and carers regarding symptoms and side effects of treatments used and importance of concordance to treatment.				
Undertakes safe non-medical prescribing within agreed local protocols and recommends next steps in disease management, referring to other specialists as required.				
Undertakes safe use of PGDs within agreed local protocols. Evaluates reported side effects of treatments and actively manages these, seeking advice where needed.				
Advises on management of common and rare side effects and explores other treatment options where appropriate.				
Ensures processes are in place to manage and report side effects and contribute to active registers.				
Advises patients and carers on the appropriate use of OTC medications and supplements and the potential interactions with prescribed medications.				
Understands the use of 'off licence' prescribing. Counsels and supports patient and carer in safe administration of medication at home with knowledge of risk factors including use of off licence treatments.				
Competent to administer specialist prescribed treatments.				

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Safely administers Entonox for procedures as per local policies.				
Audits prescribing practice against national guidance.				
Demonstrates safe and accurate joint aspiration and joint injection				
Develops effective training for junior colleagues				

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Competency 4: Communication				
Performance criteria	Evidence	Level achieved	Date	Assessor/self-assessed
<b>Knowledge and understanding</b>				
Has high level of knowledge and understanding of various communication theories, methods and models.				
Understands factors effecting self-management and evidence-based approaches to patient education.				
Understands of national guidance documents within				

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Ensures secure systems are in place to provide resources and training to support evidence-based approaches to telemedicine.				
Is able to convey to wider clinical and non-clinical audiences the individual and national health burden of rheumatological conditions and how this impacts services.				
Ensures the development of information and programmes and monitors the effectiveness of these, revising them in accordance with patient feedback, outcome measures and the latest clinical evidence and national guidance.				
Shares outcomes within the organisation regionally and nationally.				
Monitor effectiveness of programmes and collates evaluation and satisfaction data and shares within the organisation and regionally and nationally.				
Drives person-centred care				







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Shares outcomes within the organisation regionally and nationally.				
Monitor effectiveness of programmes and collates evaluation and satisfaction data and shares within the organisation and regionally and nationally.				
Drives person-centred care within MDT and aware of local population needs accessing appropriate resources and services in the locality.				



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Skills and behaviours	Evidence	Level achieved	Date	Assessor/self-assessed
Manages clinical caseload safely, effectively and efficiently demonstrating excellent time keeping skills.				
Ensures systems are in place to support patients and carers where necessary.				
Manages service skill mix requirements, supporting team members to ensure core service delivery.				
Manages job planning to ensure appropriate time is allocated to core components of roles.				
Ensures consistency of care within the service. Leads reviews of pathways with the MDT and user groups.				
Provides guidance for theory-37.4 (y-37.4 (y-37. (l))-19.6-4.2 (46 0 -3.711 TD [(M 0 -3.66x3Tr-1.2y-37. (l))-19.6-4.2 (46 0 -3.711 T8 -3-17.8 (.s(i)-12.8 (d)-19 (e)-15.8 (s g)-20.1 (u)02(r)-3.3 (e)-15.9 (s c)-5 (o)-17.8 (2(s g) 0 -3).				

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Sound knowledge of patient pathways and the available expertise to support the triage processes to ensure appropriate referrals, and clinic, recognising those that are a priority and take action.				
Escalates where appropriate if service pressure is impacting upon the team. Identifies need for change in service delivery, assessing risk and mitigation for it.				
Uses financial acumen to support decision making when promoting strategies to enhance quality, productivity and value.				
Writes department policies regarding safe self-administration of medications.				
Ensures team offers transitional care to all young people where required with transfer options clearly defined.				
Ensures regular audit of transition process and liaison with follow on care services to ensure children and young people's needs are met.				
Provides teaching to young people at an age appropriate level to encourage self-administration and self-management.				
Presents teams outcomes at senior level.				

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Competency 6: Governance and accountability				
Performance criteria	Evidence	Level achieved	Date	Assessor/self-assessed
Knowledge and understanding				
Undertaken quality improvement module.				
High level of knowledge of the research and audit process, and methods to develop and lead projects for practice and service development for rheumatology nursing.				
Identifying and initiating audit and research projects.				
Contributes to finding solutions to any rheumatology risk register entries.				
knowledge of the research and audit process, and methods and Identifies and initiates research projects to direct quality improvement strategies for rheumatology nursing.				
Understands the principles of duty of care and the importance of reporting near misses and errors.				
Understands the use of audit in demonstrating effectiveness of own clinical interventions through the use of outcome measures.				

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Competency 7: Leadership and development				
Performance criteria	Evidence	Level achieved	Date	Assessor/self-assessed
Knowledge and understanding				
Knowledge of organisational change and leadership models including the characteristics of models of organisational change				



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Leads strategic planning, direction policy and protocol development to Improve patient outcomes and represents team at wider national and international meetings.				
Leads or participates in consultation on national or international public				

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<p>Contributes to specialism education, professional development of students and colleagues in the workplace.</p>				
<p>Can lead a meeting.</p>				
<p>Clearly defines expectations of contributions from the team adapting leadership style to the specific situation ensuring deadlines are met.</p>				
<p>Carries out regular appraisals of staff members.</p>				
<p>Regularly attends professional forums, local teaching, regional network updates on treatments and maintains own knowledge and competence to meet professional standards, CPD and revalidation requirements.</p>				

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Area identified for development	Review date	Outcome

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