



Skills Escalator
achieving your potential



HOME

CAREER ROUTEFINDER

JOBS A-Z

WHAT IS THE SKILLS ESCALATOR?

NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

CAREER FRAMEWORK

AGENDA FOR CHANGE

NEWS AND INFORMATION

What is the Skills Escalator?

The [NHS Plan](#) sets out a vision of a modernised NHS, redesigned around the patient's journey, to radically improve the patient's experience. The opportunity for all staff to learn and develop is a key factor in achieving this goal.

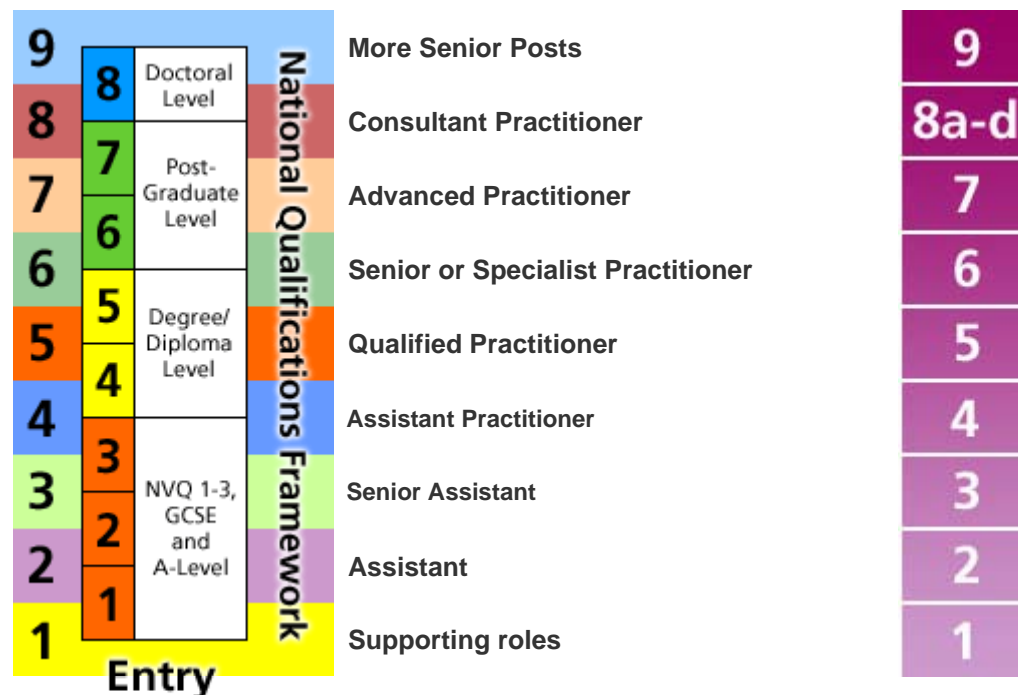
The Skills Escalator is the structure by which the NHS will enable all levels of the workforce to acquire new skills and invest in professional development. Staff are encouraged through a strategy of life learning to constantly renew and extend their skills and knowledge giving them greater influence over their careers.

The Skills Escalator is also about attracting a wider range of people to work within the NHS. This has the dual benefit of growing the NHS workforce whilst also tackling problems of longer-term unemployment and social exclusion, which have such a high correlation with poor health.

The picture below shows how the idea of the Skills Escalator links together [qualifications](#) (National Qualifications Framework), [job responsibility](#) (Career Framework) and [pay](#) (Agenda for Change). These links are not exact relationships, and there are overlaps, they give an impression of how learning links to progression in the NHS.

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Career Framework



[Back to top](#)

National Qualifications Framework

The level indicators in the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) are a guide to the range of qualifications and levels available. They describe the learning and achievement that happens at each level and show how the skills and knowledge relate to job roles. The indicators are not intended to be precise or comprehensive – they are working guides.

Further information about the National Qualifications Framework can be found on the [Qualifications Curriculum Authority website](#).

NQF Level	Level Description	Sample Qualifications
Entry	Entry level qualifications recognise basic knowledge and skills and the ability to apply learning in everyday situations under direct guidance or supervision. Learning at this level involves building basic knowledge and skills and is not geared towards specific occupations.	Entry Level
Level 1	Level 1 qualifications recognise basic knowledge and skills and the ability to apply learning with guidance or supervision. Learning at this level is about activities which mostly relate to everyday situations and may be linked to job competence.	NVQ 1; GCSEs Grades D-G
Level 2	Level 2 qualifications recognise the ability to gain a good knowledge and understanding of a subject area of work or study, and to perform varied tasks with some guidance or supervision. Learning at this level involves building knowledge and/or skills in relation to an area of work or a subject area and is appropriate for many job roles.	NVQ 2; GCSEs Grades A*-C
Level 3	Level 3 qualifications recognise the ability to gain, and where relevant apply a range of knowledge, skills and understanding. Learning at this level involves obtaining detailed knowledge and skills. It is appropriate for people wishing to go to university, people working independently, or in some areas supervising and training others in their field of work.	NVQ 3; A levels
Level 4	Level 4 qualifications recognise specialist learning and involve detailed analysis of a high level of information and knowledge in an area of work or study. Learning at this level is appropriate for people working in technical and professional jobs, and/or managing and developing others.	NVQ 4; Certificate of Higher Education
Level 5	Level 5 qualifications recognise the ability to increase the depth of knowledge and understanding of an area of work or study to enable the formulation of solutions and responses to complex problems and situations. Learning at this level involves the demonstration of high levels of knowledge, a high level of work expertise in job roles and competence in managing and training others. Qualifications at this level are appropriate for people working as higher grade technicians, professionals or managers.	Diplomas of Higher Education and Foundation Degrees; Foundation Degrees; Higher National Diplomas; BTEC
Level 6	Level 6 qualifications recognise a specialist high level knowledge of an area of work or study to enable the use of an individual's own ideas and research in response to complex problems and situations. Learning at this level involves the achievement of a high level of professional knowledge and is appropriate for people working as knowledge-based professionals or in professional management positions.	Bachelors Degrees Graduate Certificates and Diplomas
Level 7	Level 7 qualifications recognise highly developed and complex levels of knowledge which enable the development of in-depth and original responses to complicated and unpredictable problems and situations. Learning at this level involves the demonstration of high level specialist professional knowledge and is appropriate for senior professionals and managers.	Masters Degrees; Postgraduate Certificates and Diplomas
Level 8	Level 8 qualifications recognise leading experts or practitioners in a particular field. Learning at this level involves the development of new and creative approaches that extend or redefine existing knowledge or professional practice.	Specialist awards; Doctorates

[Back to top](#)

Career Framework

The Career Framework, produced by the NHS Modernisation Agency, aims to provide a guide or and partner organisations on the implementation of a flexible career and the skills escalator conc enabling and individual with transferable, competency-based skills to progress in a direction which meets workforce, service and individual needs.

CF level	CF Level Name	CF Level Description
1	Initial Entry Level Jobs	Jobs such as 'Domestics' or 'Cadets' requiring very little for education or previous knowledge, skills or experience in delivering, or supporting the delivery of healthcare.
2	Support Workers	Frequently with the job title of 'Health Care Assistant' or 'He Care Technician' – probably studying for or has attained NV Level 2.
3	Senior Healthcare Assistants/Technicians	This is a higher level of responsibility than support worker, probably studying for or have attained NVQ Level 3, or Assessment of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL).
4	Assistant/Associate Practitioners	Probably studying for Foundation degree, BTEC higher or F Some of their remit will involve them in delivering protocol-b clinical care that had previously been in the remit of register professionals, under the direction and supervision of a state registered practitioner.
5	Practitioners	Most frequently registered practitioners in their first and sec post-registration / professional qualification jobs.
6	Senior/Specialist Practitioners	Staff who would have a higher degree of autonomy and responsibility than 'Practitioners' in the clinical environment; who would be managing one or more service areas in the n clinical environment.
7	Advanced Practitioners	Experienced clinical professionals who have developed the skills and theoretical knowledge to a very high standard. Th are empowered to make high-level clinical decisions and wi often have their own caseload. Non-clinical staff at Level 7 typically be managing a number of service areas.
8	Consultant Practitioners	Staff working at a very high level of clinical expertise and/or responsibility for the planning of services.
9	More Senior Staff	Staff with the ultimate responsibility for clinical caseload decision-making and have full on-call accountability.

[Back to top](#)

Agenda for Change

Agenda for Change is the new NHS pay system and is based on the principle of equal pay for wc equal value. It offers:

- Greater scope to create new kinds of jobs, bringing more patient-centred care and more v and stimulating roles for NHS staff
- Fairer pay based on job evaluation
- Harmonised conditions of service for NHS staff
- Better links between career and pay progression.

Who will be covered?

National roll-out is will be implemented across the NHS from December 2004. The new pay syste apply to all directly employed NHS staff, except doctors and dentists and the most senior manage or just below board level.

The Pay Bands

The Agenda for Change pay structure is broken down into eight pay bands with band eight having levels (Ranges A-D):

Band	Minimum*	Maximum*
1	£11,494	£12,539
2	£11,879	£14,739
3	£13,694	£16,389
4	£16,004	£19,248
5	£18,698	£24,198
6	£22,328	£30,247
7	£26,943	£35,527
8 Range A	£34,372	£41,246
8 Range B	£40,036	£49,496
8 Range C	£48,176	£59,395
8 Range D	£57,745	£71,494
9	£68,194	£86,240

All eligible jobs will be placed in the correct pay band using the new NHS Job Evaluation Scheme is done by either:

- Matching your post to an appropriate national profile, (these can be viewed on the [Department of Health's Agenda for Change website](#)) or
- A local job evaluation. This is a means of fairly rewarding people by measuring their job-related skills, knowledge and responsibilities.

Progressing up a pay band

Within each band, there are a number of pay points. As you successfully develop your skills and knowledge, you will normally progress through one pay point each year, up to the maximum in your band.

[Back to top](#)

[Back to home](#)

If you have any queries regarding the Skills Escalator programme, please contact the [Skills Escalator Project](#) on 0116 295 7562.