

## Visitors' report

<b>Name of education provider</b>	Academy for Healthcare Science
<b>Programme name</b>	Certificate of Attainment
<b>Mode of delivery</b>	Full time
<b>Relevant part of the HCPC Register</b>	Clinical scientist
<b>Date of visit</b>	11 – 12 June 2014

## Contents

Executive summary .....	2
Introduction.....	3
Visit details .....	6
Sources of evidence .....	7
Recommended outcome .....	8
Conditions.....	9
Recommendations.....	12

## Executive summary

The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) approve educational programmes in the UK which health and care professionals must complete before they can apply to be registered with us. We are a statutory regulator and our main aim is to protect the public. We currently regulate 16 professions. All of these professions have at least one professional title which is protected by law. This means that anyone using the title clinical scientist must be registered with us. The HCPC keep a register of health and care professionals who meet our standards for their training, professional skills, behaviour and health.

The visitors' report which follows outlines the recommended outcome made by the visitors on the ongoing approval of the programme. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 26 August 2014. At the Committee meeting, the ongoing approval of the programme was re-confirmed. This means that the education provider has met the conditions outlined in this report and that the programme meets our standards of education and training (SETs) and ensures that those who complete it meet our standards of proficiency (SOPs) for their part of the Register. The programme is now granted open ended approval, subject to satisfactory monitoring.

## Introduction

The HCPC visited the programme at the education provider to consider major changes proposed to the programme. The major change affected the following standards - programme management and resources, curriculum and assessment. The changes primarily fell within the following themes:

- the development of two new specialist areas (Critical care science and Reconstructive science); and
- governance changes related to the organisations involved in the delivery of the programme.

The programme was already approved by the HCPC and this visit assessed whether the programme continued to meet the standards of education and training (SETs) and continued to ensure that those who complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for their part of the Register.

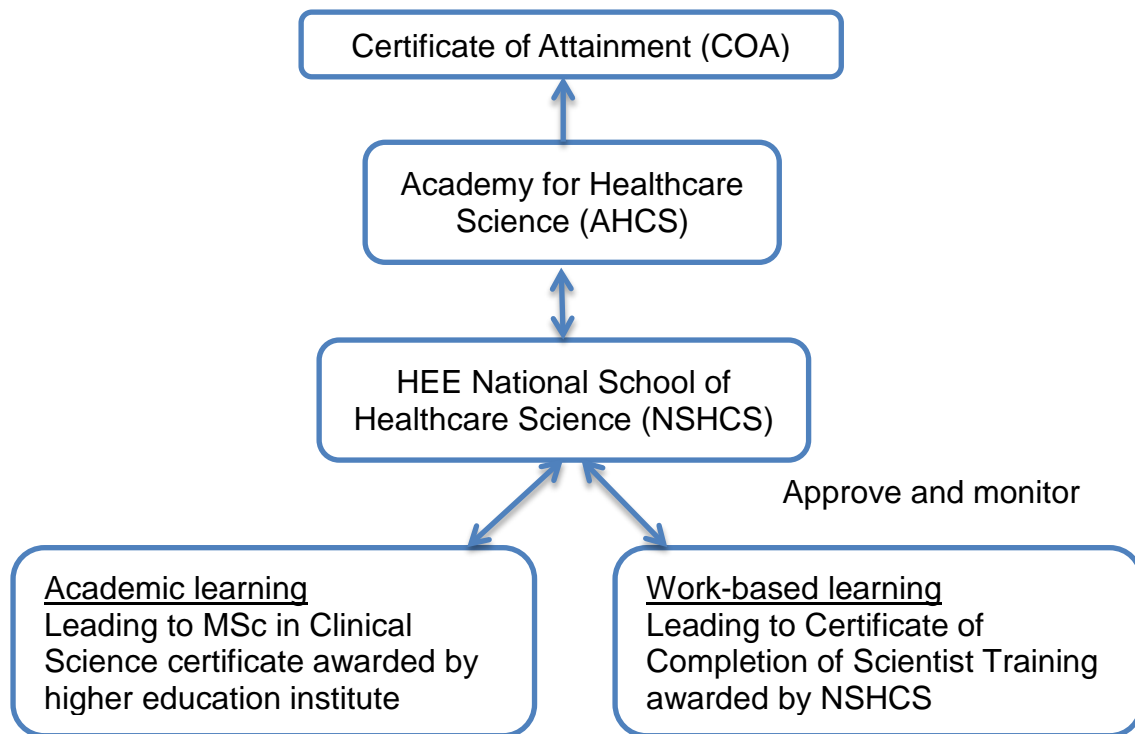
This visit was an HCPC only visit. The education provider did not validate or review the programme at the visit and the professional body did not consider their accreditation of the programme. The education provider supplied an independent chair and secretary for the visit. The visit also considered a different programme – the Certificate of Equivalence. A separate visitors' report exists for this programme.

The Academy for Healthcare Science (AHCS) awards the Certificate of Attainment to individuals who have successfully completed the academic and work-based learning elements of the Scientific Training Programme (STP). The Certificate of Attainment is an approved programme and leads to eligibility to apply for registration and inclusion on the HCPC Register. The HCPC therefore regard the AHCS as the education provider.

The STP was developed as part of the Modernising Scientific Careers: The UK way forward policy and comprises of an academic award (MSc in Clinical Science) with a period of work-based learning.

Figure 1 below provides a simplification of the organisations involved in the delivery of the Certificate of Attainment. In summary, the changes which have occurred are that from the 1 April 2013, the NSHCS became part of Higher Education England (HEE). On the 1 April 2014, the quality assurance of the academic element of the STP moved from the HEE's Modernising Scientific Careers Team (MSC) to the NSHCS.

Figure 1: Illustration of the organisations involved in the delivery and assessment of the Certificate of Attainment



The education provider mapped the learning outcomes and competencies of the STP against the HCPC SOPs. The assessment processes are quality assured through the accreditation processes undertaken by the NSHCS for the academic learning and work-based learning elements.

The education provider's role is to work with the NSHCS to bring together the academic and work-based learning elements of the STP and award the Certificate of Attainment. Accordingly, the education provider has expressed confidence that anyone receiving the Certificate of Attainment will have demonstrated an ability to meet the SOPs for the profession.

The approval process for the approval of the Certificate of Attainment was formed of two stages. The first stage of the approval process allowed HCPC visitors to review the documentation related to the STP for Critical care science and Reconstructive science submitted by the education provider. Visitors from each of the specialist areas reviewed the competencies to ensure that they were linked to Clinical scientist SOPs in ways relevant to the specialism. For this first stage, HCPC visitors did not attend the AHCS offices. The stage 1 assessment was undertaken on 1 May 2014 and outcomes forwarded to the education provider shortly afterwards. The outcomes of the stage 1 assessment for Critical care science and Reconstructive science are included as Appendix 1 of this report.

Stage 1 reviewed documentation relating to the learning outcomes, indicative content and competences of the academic and work-based learning elements of the STP.

The second stage of the approval process took the form of a visit to meet the stakeholders involved with the delivery of the STP and Certificate of Attainment. The visit reviewed how the SETs continue to be met by the programme.

## Visit details

Name of HCPC visitors and profession	Patrick Kimmitt (Clinical scientist) Melvyn Myers (Clinical scientist) William Gilmore (Biomedical scientist)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Tracey Samuel-Smith
HCPC observer	Hollie Latham
Proposed student numbers	Approximately 260 across all the specialisms
First approved intake	October 2012
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	September 2014
Chair	Pat Oakley (Kings College London)
Secretary	Suzie Normanton (Academy for Healthcare Science)

## Sources of evidence

Prior to the visit the HCPC reviewed the documentation detailed below, sent by the education provider:

	Yes	No	N/A
Programme specification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Descriptions of the modules	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SETs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SOPs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practice placement handbook	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student handbook	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
External examiners' reports from the last two years	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Admissions documentation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Higher Education Institution guide for the approval and monitoring processes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work-based learning guide for the approval and monitoring processes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good Scientific Practice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The HCPC did not review the external examiners reports prior to the visit as the education provider did not submit it.

The HCPC did not review the programme specification prior to the visit as a programme specification has not been created for this award type.

During the visit the HCPC saw the following groups or facilities:

	Yes	No	N/A
Senior managers of the education provider with responsibility for resources for the programme	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programme team	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Placements providers and educators / mentors	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Specialist teaching accommodation (eg specialist laboratories and teaching rooms)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

The HCPC did not review the learning resources or any specialist teaching accommodation as the training necessary to deliver the Certificate of Attainment is delivered by Higher Education Institutions and work-based learning providers.

## Recommended outcome

To recommend a programme for ongoing approval, the visitors must be assured that the programme meets all of the standards of education and training (SETs) and that those who complete the programme meet our standards of proficiency (SOPs) for their part of the Register.

The visitors agreed to recommend to the Education and Training Committee that a number of conditions are set on the programme, all of which must be met before the programme can be approved.

The visitors agreed that 42 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining five SETs.

Conditions are requirements that the education provider must meet before the programme can be recommended for ongoing approval. Conditions are set when certain standards of education and training have not been met or there is insufficient evidence of the standard being met.

The visitors have also made a recommendation for the programme. Recommendations are observations on the programme or education provider which do not need to be met before the programme is recommended for ongoing approval. Recommendations are normally set to encourage further enhancements to the programme and are normally set when it is felt that the particular standard of education and training has been met at, or just above the threshold level.



## Conditions

### 3.2 The programme must be effectively managed.

**Condition:** The education provider must revise programme documentation to reflect the latest governance arrangements applicable to the Certificate of Attainment.

**Reason:** During discussions with the senior, programme, MSC and NSHCS teams, the visitors learnt of the changes which had occurred to the governance of the programme since the initial visit in 2012. In April 2013, the MSC Team and NSHCS became part of HEE and in April 2014, the NSHCS took over responsibility for the approval and monitoring of the academic learning environments. The visitors were satisfied the governance changes were appropriate for the programme, but recognised the programme documentation did not fully reflect the changes. To avoid any confusion among the trainees, the visitors require the programme documentation to clearly outline the roles and responsibilities of the organisations currently involved in the delivery of the Certificate of Attainment. By reflecting the latest governance arrangements, the visitors would be satisfied this standard continues to be met.

### 3.3 The programme must have regular monitoring and evaluation systems in place.

**Condition:** The education provider must ensure regular external monitoring and evaluation systems are in place which cover all aspects of the programme.

**Reason:** With the senior and programme teams, the visitors discussed the monitoring and evaluation systems in place relating to the assessment of the academic and work-based learning environments. They also discussed the systems in place for the Objective Structured Final Assessment (OSFA). The visitors were satisfied these monitoring mechanisms were appropriate for the programme.

From the assessment regulations, the visitors learnt that “The AHCS appoints an external examiner to oversee the quality of assessment across the AHCS certification processes. The AHCS external examiner must be from the appropriate part of the HCPC register”. The visitors did not receive a copy of the external examiner report or education providers response to this as part of the documentation submitted before the visit. In addition, the education provider confirmed there was no external monitoring and evaluation systems specifically of the processes used to determine whether trainees who have successfully completed the STP, achieve the Certificate of Attainment. The visitors recognised that the traditional higher education role of an external examiner within may be inappropriate for this model of education and training. However, it is important for there to be some form of external monitoring and evaluation of these processes to give the education provider oversight of the whole programme and allow them to fully evaluate the programme’s effectiveness. In addition, the HCPC requires education providers to submit their external examiners reports and responses to them as part of the annual monitoring for the programme.

To ensure this standard continues to be met, the visitors require evidence of the regular external monitoring and evaluation systems of the processes used to determine whether trainees who have successfully completed the STP, achieve the Certificate of Attainment.

### **3.5 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.**

**Condition:** The education provider must demonstrate there will be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to undertake the accreditation and monitoring of the academic learning environments.

**Reason:** From discussions with the senior, programme and NSHCS teams, the visitors learnt about the change which took place in April 2014 which moved the accreditation and monitoring of the academic learning environments to the NSHCS. The visitors were confident the financial support was in place and the same processes used by the MSC Team to approve and accredit these environments were being adopted by the NSHCS. However, the visitors also learnt the NSHCS would employ new staff to undertake these activities. For this programme, it is important to ensure there will be an adequate number of appropriately qualified staff to ensure consistency and appropriateness in the accreditation and monitoring processes. The visitors therefore require further evidence to show how the education provider ensures the NSHCS has sufficient numbers of appropriately qualified and experienced staff to undertake the academic visits and monitoring in order for this standard to continue to be met.

### **3.8 The resources to support student learning in all settings must be effectively used.**

**Condition:** The education provider must revise programme documentation to ensure it accurately reflects the current landscape of regulation for clinical scientists.

**Reason:** The visitors noted in the programme documentation submitted by the education provider several instances of inaccurate terminology associated with the HCPC. For example, page 16 of the Frequently Asked Questions for Applicants states "...a Certificate of Attainment which will lead to registration as a Clinical Scientist with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)" and page 24 of the NHS Scientist Training Programme Trainee Handbook 2013 states "...a Certificate of Attainment from the AHCS and will be eligible to register with the HCPC as a clinical scientist". These are inaccurate as students are eligible to apply for registration but this does not necessarily mean they will be registered, as the HCPC performs a health and character test at the point of registration. It is important trainees are equipped with accurate information. To ensure students are not unintentionally misinformed about the role of HCPC, the visitors require the education provider revises the programme documentation to correct all instances of inaccurate terminology. In this way the visitors can determine how the resources to support student learning continue to be effectively used.

### **6.6 There must be effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place to ensure appropriate standards in the assessment.**

**Condition:** The education provider must demonstrate how the processes used to determine whether trainees who have successfully completed the STP achieve the Certificate of Attainment are externally moderated.

**Reason:** With the senior and programme teams, the visitors discussed the monitoring and evaluation systems in place relating to the assessment of the academic and work-based learning environments. They also discussed the systems in place for the

Objective Structured Final Assessment (OSFA). The visitors were satisfied these monitoring mechanisms were appropriate for the programme.

From the assessment regulations, the visitors learnt that “The AHCS appoints an external examiner to oversee the quality of assessment across the AHCS certification processes. The AHCS external examiner must be from the appropriate part of the HCPC register”. The visitors did not receive a copy of the external examiner report or education providers response to this as part of the documentation submitted before the visit. From the discussions, the visitors could not identify any external monitoring and evaluation systems specifically related to the processes used to determine whether trainees who have successfully completed the STP achieve the Certificate of Attainment. Nor could they identify how any feedback gained through such a mechanism would feed into the programmes internal review. The visitors recognised that the traditional role of an external examiner may not be appropriate for this model of education and training. However, they felt it was important for there to be some form of external monitoring of these processes to ensure they are appropriate and consistently implemented and any areas for development are identified and fed back to the programme team. The visitors therefore require further evidence to ensure this standard continues to be met.

## Recommendations

### **6.6 There must be effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place to ensure appropriate standards in the assessment.**

**Recommendation:** The visitors recommend the education provider considers how external moderation of the Objective Structured Final Assessment (OSFA) could be undertaken by an individual(s) independent to the delivery of the programme.

**Reason:** From the documentation and discussions at the visit, the visitors learnt that the OSFA is managed by the NSHCS and is the final examination trainees undertake whilst in the work-based learning environment. Appropriately registered individuals from the AHCS Professional Groups undertake external moderation of this assessment and provide the NSHCS with feedback. The visitors felt that to enhance the monitoring of this element of the programme independent external moderation should take place of the OSFA to ensure impartiality in feedback. The visitors recommend the programme team and NSHCS consider how feedback can best be obtained and the benefits of independent feedback.

Patrick Kimmitt  
Melvyn Myers  
William Gilmore