Academy for Healthcare Science

Standards of Proficiency for Healthcare Science Assistants

Consultation

21st July 2017
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Introduction

Academy for Healthcare Science

The Academy for Healthcare Science (the Academy) is the voice of the healthcare science profession in the UK. Healthcare science is a broad term encompassing a highly diverse workforce. The aim of this workforce is to improve the health and well-being of patients and the public and is undertaken by a highly trained workforce practising alongside doctors, nurses, and other health and social care professionals.

The healthcare science workforce is an essential part of the clinical team and has the ability to cause real harm should things go wrong. In 2010 the UK Government decided not to extend statutory regulation, instead a system of accredited regulation was introduced. The Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care (PSA) oversees this accreditation. The PSA applies standards of governance, standard-setting, education and training, management of the register, complaints handling and information that accredited bodies must meet in order to achieve and maintain accreditation. The Academy gained PSA accreditation for the Practitioner part of the register in December 2014 extended to include the Higher Specialist Scientist part of the register in October 2015.

Apprentices completing the Level 2 Diploma in Healthcare Science successfully will be eligible to apply to join the appropriate part of the Academy’s PSA approved Register. The Academy therefore needs to develop a set of Standards of Proficiency to facilitate this.

This document sets out our proposed Standards of Proficiency for Healthcare Science Assistants which are based on the existing Practitioner Training Programme Standards, but revised to take account of the Healthcare Science Assistant Apprenticeship Standard, and the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation's level descriptors for Level 2 awards.

We welcome your views on whether these standards are reasonable, appropriate and necessary to ensure safe and effective practice by Healthcare Science Assistants.

How to respond to this consultation

You can respond to this consultation at any time between 24th July and 1st September 2017 by completing our online questionnaire at: https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/BDPVQ9X

Please note that we do not normally accept responses in writing, by telephone or in person. We normally ask that consultation responses are made via the survey. However, if you are unable to respond in writing, please contact us on admin@ahcs.ac.uk to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help you to respond.

Once the consultation period is competed, we will analyse the responses we receive. We will then publish a document which summarises the comments we received and explains the decisions we have taken as a result. This will be published on our website.

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1 Available at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-standard-healthcare-science-assistant
Consultation questions

We welcome your response to our consultation and have listed some question to help you. The questions are not designed to be exhaustive and we welcome your comments on any related issue.

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<th>Question</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Do you support our overall approach to these standards?</td>
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<td>2. Do you think the standards of proficiency are at a threshold level necessary for safe and effective practice?</td>
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<td>3. Do you think the standards of proficiency are adequate to mitigate the risks posed by Healthcare Science Assistants?</td>
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<td>4. Are there any standards that require particular attention and why?</td>
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<td>5. Do you think there are any standards which should be reworded?</td>
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<td>6. Do you have any comments about the language used in the standards?</td>
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<td>7. Do you have any other comments on the standards?</td>
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<td>8. Do you have any other comments?</td>
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About the Standards of Proficiency

To be and continue to be registered with us, Healthcare Science Assistants must be able to demonstrate that they are ‘fit to practise’. By fitness to practise, we mean that someone has the skills, knowledge, character and capacity to practise safely and effectively as a Healthcare Science Assistant, both on their first day of registration and throughout their professional career.

Standards of Proficiency set out the minimum standards that someone must meet at the time they first register with us.

Our Standards of Proficiency cover three areas:

1. Professional autonomy and accountability
2. Skills required for practice as a Healthcare Science Assistant

These standards are not the same as a person’s ‘scope of practice’. We define ‘scope of practice’ as the area or areas of a registrant’s profession in which they 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 them.

At registration and when renewing their registration, registrants will also need to demonstrate that they are of good character and of good health. We will ask all applicants and registrants to self-declare that they meet these requirements each year.
The proposed Standards of Proficiency

To be registered and continue your registration with us, you must demonstrate that you are able to:

Standard 1: Understand your role in Healthcare Science and its contribution to the delivery of high quality healthcare

1.1 Understand that your first concern is always the service user/patient and the public

1.2 Understand the need to respect and uphold the rights, dignity, confidentiality and autonomy of service users / patients in all aspects of your scope of practice

1.3 Maintain the highest standards of care and service, treating every individual with compassion, dignity and respect

1.4 Understand the need to take responsibility not only for the care that you personally provide (whether or not your role involves direct service user / patient contact), but also for your wider contribution to the aims of your team and the healthcare system as a whole

1.5 Understand the current structure and function of Health and Social Care services in the UK

1.6 Contribute to sustainably improving services by working in partnership with service users / patients, the public, colleagues, local communities and the public.

Standard 2: Practise safely and effectively within your scope of practice

2.1 Understand the need to work within the limits of your personal competence

2.2 Understand the need to work within your agreed scope of practice for lawful, safe and effective Healthcare Science

2.3 Know the limits of your practise and when to seek advice or refer to another appropriate colleague.

Professional autonomy and accountability

To be registered and continue your registration with us, you must demonstrate that you are able to:

Standard 3: Practise within the legal and ethical boundaries of your profession as a Healthcare Science Assistant

3.1 Understand the Standards of Proficiency, conduct and continuing professional development expected of you by the Academy for Healthcare Science

3.2 Know about, and meet the current legislation and policy applicable to your work.
Standard 4: Maintain fitness to practise

4.1 Understand the importance of maintaining your own health
4.2 Understand the need to maintain high standards of personal, professional conduct
4.3 Understand the need to maintain, develop and update your knowledge and skills once registered.

Standard 5: Work under direct and indirect supervision

5.1 Draw on appropriate skills and knowledge in order to follow specific protocols and use standard operating procedures
5.2 Know the limits of your practice and when to seek advice or refer to a senior colleague.

Standard 6: Be aware of the impact of culture, equality and diversity on practice

6.1 Understand the need to take account of a service user’s / patient’s individual physical, psychological, religious and cultural needs when delivering healthcare
6.2 Understand the need to respect and uphold the rights, dignity, values and autonomy of service users / patients
6.3 Understand the need to address issues of inequality of service provision for all communities.

Standard 7: Practise in a non-discriminatory manner

7.1 Understand that no-one is treated less favourably than others on the grounds of age, colour, creed, criminal convictions, culture, disability, ethnic or national origin, gender, marital status, medical condition, mental health, nationality, physical appearance, political beliefs, race, religion, responsibility for dependants, sexual identity, sexual orientation, or social class.

Standard 8: Understand the need for openness and transparency in the delivery of healthcare

8.1 Understand the need to protect service users / patients from risk or harm presented by another person’s conduct, performance or health and to act appropriately when concerns are identified or raised
8.2 Understand how to share information as appropriate with service users / patients, carers, colleagues and other services to support the quality of care, in line with published guidance and legal requirements, taking account of data protection and confidentiality
8.3 Understand that your conduct should at all times justify the trust of service users / patients, carers, colleagues and the public in the scientific profession.
Standard 9: Understand the importance of informed consent and be able to maintain confidentiality

9.1 Understand the need, when appropriate, to obtain informed consent

9.2 Understand the need to maintain the confidentiality of service users’ / patients’ information and records in line with published guidance, legal requirements and the wishes of the service user / patient

9.3 Understand that the requirements of confidentiality and informed consent extends to (for example) test results, recordings, digital images and illustrations.

Standard 10: Maintain records appropriately

10.1 Keep accurate records in accordance with applicable legislation, protocols and guidelines.

Standard 11: Communicate effectively

11.1 Understand how communication skills affect the provision of Healthcare Science and how the means of communication should be modified to address and take account of sensory and cognitive impairments

11.2 Demonstrate effective and appropriate skills in communicating information, general non-technical/technical advice to colleagues, service users / patients, their relatives and carers:

- Carry out quality control and/or quality assurance procedures in accordance with standard operating procedures, national and international guidelines.

Standard 12: Work appropriately with others

12.1 Understand the need to work with other support staff, professionals, service users / patients, carers and relatives in the ways that best serve the interests of individual service users / patients and the public

12.2 Understand the need to work effectively as a member of a multi-disciplinary team

12.3 Understand the need to respect the skills and contributions of your colleagues

12.4 Understand the need to share information with colleagues to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of service users / patients and the public.

Skills required for practice as a Healthcare Science Assistant

To be registered and continue your registration with us, you must demonstrate that you are able to:

Standard 13: Draw on appropriate Healthcare Science knowledge and skills required for safe and effective practice

13.1 Conduct appropriate routine healthcare science procedures, in line with your scope of practice, including the ability to:
• Understand the need to maintain the safety of both service users / patients and those involved in their care
• Work under direct and indirect supervision
• Use, or prepare, equipment, methods and other technology in routine technical and scientific procedures in accordance with standard operating procedures
• Present data clearly in accordance with agreed protocols
• Follow quality control and quality assurance techniques in accordance with standard operating procedures

13.2 Understand the importance of research and how you can contribute to it within your scope of practice
  • Understand that research is conducted within a regulatory framework including research ethics.

Standard 14: Reflect on, evaluate and review practice
14.1 Reflect on your performance or situations, and understand the need to record any actions you put in place as a result of that reflection
14.2 Understand the need to keep your professional, scientific, technical knowledge and skills up-to date.

Standard 15: Assure the quality of your practice
15.1 Understand your role in assuring the quality of healthcare delivered to service users / patients
15.2 Understand the need to contribute to regular and systematic audits
15.3 Understand the need to respond constructively to the outcome of audits, appraisals and performance reviews, undertaking further training where necessary.

Standard 16: Understand the need to establish and maintain a safe environment in which healthcare is delivered
16.1 Understand the need to take reasonable care of health and safety at work for yourself, other members of your team and others, and to cooperate with employers to ensure compliance with health and safety requirements
16.2 Operate to safety and risk management guidelines, taking appropriate action in response to incidents or emergencies
16.3 Understand the need to apply correct methods of disinfection, sterilisation and decontamination and deal with waste and spillages correctly.

Knowledge of Healthcare Science
To be registered and continue your registration with us, you must demonstrate that you are able to:
Standard 17: Understand the key concepts of the knowledge base relevant to Healthcare Science as appropriate to your scope of practice

17.1 Understand the role of healthcare science in patient care, and your role within it.

17.2 Understand the underpinning knowledge for the protocols and practices used in investigating and diagnosing disease and disorders

17.3 Recognise the role of other professions in Health and Social Care

17.4 Understand the basic principles and practice which underpin effective use of protocols, standard operating procedures relevant to your area of practice, to ensure effective and safe practice, and support continue improvement

17.5 Know the standards of practice and performance expected from the correct use of relevant equipment, methods and other technology and knowhow to seek advice when needed.