Foreword by the Regulation Council Chair

As Chair of the Academy’s Regulation Council, I would like to reflect and share with you some achievements of our registrants, plus making you aware of a consultation about the future of healthcare science regulation.

This year has seen the full use of the Continuing Personal and Professional Development (CPPD) systems for registrants to demonstrate that they have maintained their knowledge and skills in a formal way; we use a sampling approach to monitor registrants’ CPD activity and require submission of evidence, which is scrutinised.

It is important that registrants understand the nature of professionalism and we have to investigate any concerns that are brought to our notice. One investigation resulted in no further action being required; however a lot of learning did occur on our part, one example being the differences in the Scottish and English legal systems.

Another fitness to practise case was helpfully brought to our attention by a professional body, in this case about the questionable use of social media which highlighted that a professional’s actions outside the work setting are still within scope. It also means that during 2017 we will be producing guidance for you on use of social media. This case was resolved successfully, and was a very good example of how we value the contribution of professional bodies and groups.

In another very exciting development, the first group of scientists have joined our Higher Specialist Scientific Register (HSSR) following successful completion of an equivalence route; the first set of trainees are in progress under the aegis of the National School. It is fantastic that such highly skilled and qualified scientists have formal recognition for the first time in the UK; this is now linked to employment in the Consultant Scientist role.

After a significant piece of work between the Committee for the Accreditation of Medical Illustration Practitioners (CAMIP) and the Academy, the medical illustrators joined the AHCS Register in March, and we would like to say a warm welcome to those registrants.

I believe healthcare science regulation faces interesting times in 2017; A long-awaited DH consultation on professional regulation aims to review the whole of the present UK system which is currently both confusing and messy; exploring the status of statutory regulation for some and the continuum of regulation for everyone. This is an important issue, which is critically about having appropriate levels of Registration to protect patients and the public, and help to support those who are registered. Do make sure you read it and comment when it arrives.

As a Registrant, you can use the Academy and PSA logos to show you are part of a government-backed initiative which gives the public independent assurance that you are registered with a body that is trusted to protect the public and promote good practice. The quality mark gives patients reassurance about your technical competence, personal behaviour and business practice, and you’ll be recognised by NHS employers, commissioners and the public as being committed to good practice and professionalism.

So, you should be proud to be registered with the Academy and to use the logo. It demonstrates that you have taken a decision to stand up and show that you are committed to reducing risk and putting patients first.

Thank you.

Patricia Le Rolland
Regulation Council Chair
1. Introduction

Reducing risk and keeping patients safe

The healthcare science workforce is an essential part of the clinical team with the potential to do real harm to patients should things go wrong. The Academy for Healthcare Science (AHCS) Regulation Council’s core purpose is to reduce this risk and aim to keep patients safe. This is achieved through structures and processes, including maintaining Registers, for healthcare science workers that are not regulated by statute.

The AHCS Register was accredited by the Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care (PSA) in December 2014 for Practitioners, extended to include Higher Specialist Scientists in October 2015 and Medical Illustrators in February 2017. Accreditation demonstrates that the register meets the PSA high standards in governance, standard-setting, education and training, management of the register, complaints handling and information.

This Annual Report summarises the Regulation Council programme of work for 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017 and shows progress against the 5 objectives from the Regulation Council strategic vision and Statement of Regulatory Intent: Business Plan 2014-2017. Performance against this plan was reported to, and monitored by the Regulation Council.
2. The Healthcare Science Workforce and AHCS Registration

Members of the healthcare science workforce perform a range of different roles depending on their qualifications, experience, and level of specialisation. Although the workforce comprises approximately 5% of the overall healthcare workforce in the UK, their work underpins 80% of all diagnoses as well as therapeutic interventions such as radiotherapy. It has been estimated that over 50,000 individuals make up the healthcare science workforce.

**By March 2017, the AHCS register comprised three parts totalling 824 registrants:**

The number of individuals awarded Equivalence or the Certificate of Competence were:

---

---
3. Keeping Patients Safe

The core purpose of the AHCS is to reduce the risk and potential to do real harm and thereby keep patients and service users safe, and its main process for achieving this is through the registration of healthcare scientists not regulated by statute; should a registrant not meet the required standards, they may be removed from the register or face other sanctions.

As an accredited register, the AHCS is required to meet the standards established by the Professional Standards Authority; for example, Standard 10(e) means that the Academy:

‘Recognises decisions regarding professional conduct made by regulatory bodies and other registers accredited by the Professional Standards Authority when deciding whether a person should be admitted, kept on or removed from their register’

The intention of this standard is to protect the patients/service users and the public by preventing registrants who have been struck off one register from joining another register without the public knowing any professional conduct action has been take or sanction applied. The intent is to allow patients/service users and the public to feel secure that in using or employing a registrant from an accredited register, they will avoid practitioners who have been found to be unsafe, whether through dishonest or predatory behaviour or through lack of competence.

Professional conduct decisions include both the behaviour of the registrants and their competence, and cover both positive and negative outcomes. It is expected that accredited registers will accept the professional conduct decisions of other registers, unless to do so would be unlawful.

The PSA has assessed all accredited registers’ complaints and professional conduct processes against the same common standards, and so registers should have confidence in the decisions made by each other. For example, a registrant who has been struck off one register for misconduct or dishonesty will not be admitted to any other accredited register. Registers in the same occupation will be able to recognise each other’s decisions regarding lack of competence, except where the facts turn on such matters as seniority of practice and specialisms.

It is possibly a reflection on healthcare scientists that, to date, the AHCS has not received a complaint or allegation against one of its registrants. However, as the number of registrants and practitioners increases, it is reassuring to know that the Academy’s procedures and processes are in place and fit to deal with any matters brought to its attention.
4. Progress against Strategic Objectives

Strategic Objective 1: Establish and maintain a register of the healthcare science workforce, while maximising the coverage and minimising the costs of registration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What we said we would do</th>
<th>What we did</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attract existing/potential registers to merge under our regulation framework</td>
<td>Delivered the Higher specialist part of the register. Incorporation of the Medical Illustrators with a subsequent increase in registrants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deliver Communication and Marketing Plan activities for existing parts of the Register</td>
<td>Employed a Marketing organisation to support some of the marketing and communications activities. Supported the increase and uptake of registration through liaison with key stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure that information provided is patient and public friendly, and that the IT platform is easy to navigate and content jargon free</td>
<td>Work is in progress, parts still need updating, and this work will continue into the next financial year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raise the profile of the workforce, the potential risks posed and the status of the accredited register</td>
<td>Met with patients, healthcare science students, public and lay organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote uptake of graduates onto the Register</td>
<td>Met with and presented at Higher Education Institutions (HEI) via the HEI Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase uptake from the current workforce through equivalence routes to registration</td>
<td>Conducted a series of reviews of processes to check for efficiency and effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmonise the regulation framework across healthcare science (HCS), simplify for users and minimise duplication and cost</td>
<td>Met regularly with the Professional Standards Authority, and with the Health and Care Professions Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote Accredited Registers</td>
<td>Linked with PSA’s ‘working together’ campaign</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Objective 1 Outcome**

- Increased numbers of Higher Specialist Scientist registrants
  - The numbers are increasing steadily
- Increased numbers of Practitioner level registrants
- Engaged with Higher Education Institutions that deliver Practitioner training programs
- Linked to and worked on the apprenticeship level 6 which maps to the Practitioner level standards
- Increased numbers on the Register through incorporation of Medical Illustrators

---

Page 6 of 11
Strategic Objective 2: Set, maintain and review standards of ethics, competence, conduct and performance and continuing professional development for members of the healthcare science workforce

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What we said we would do</th>
<th>What we did</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review Standards documents</td>
<td>Standards Documents reviewed with minimal or no change and uploaded to website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify a process for managing future document reviews in a more timely manner</td>
<td>Diary to include in next year’s Annual Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Scientific Practice (GSP) to be reviewed during 2016/17, to include actions from the Education, Training and Professional Standards Committee (ETPSC) and Regulation Council joint workshop</td>
<td>GSP review has commenced to be completed in 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress on the actions from the joint workshop have been reported at Regulation Council, although the work is to be completed in 2017</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undertake a Practitioner Continuing Personal and Professional Development Audit (CPPD)</td>
<td>Completed a CPPD audit sample in 2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Objective 2 Outcome

- Standards and Rules reviewed and published
- Successful resolution of all complaints with zero unresolved concerns or inconsistencies across the register.
- Practitioner CPPD audit
Strategic Objective 3: Meet and maintain the Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care (PSA) standards for accreditation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What we said we would do</th>
<th>What we did</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continue to implement PSA’s service user and public engagement strategy</td>
<td>In 2017 we will look at innovative ways of involving our registrants in this strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through ETPSC, ensure the quality assurance work including the Standards of Education and Training remain fit for purpose</td>
<td>Quality Assurance team assisted with work around the development of the cluster model: an innovative way to grow our register to accommodate right touch regulation within that framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote patient safety</td>
<td>All new work, including the directories, is based upon the principle of promoting patient safety and within the principles of good regulation to promote public confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Regulation Council will demonstrate credibility and sustainability through expansion of the register to other career framework levels and other areas of the healthcare workforce</td>
<td>There has been significant work to maintain the register for the current registrants and to deliver new registrants through the development of new parts to the register</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achieve sustainability of the Regulation work</td>
<td>PSA accreditation was awarded for another year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Objective 3 Outcome

PSA continued accreditation, this has been maintained and added to with the Medical Illustrators
Strategic Objective 4: Maintain the confidence of the public in the system of registration for healthcare science

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What we said we would do</th>
<th>What we did</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regulation Council to increase involvement of patients and the public through its lay group hosted by the Academy</td>
<td>Regulation Chair and Registrar/CEO have had involvement with key individuals. Organisations have been identified and will be the focus for 2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Objective 4 Outcome

- Zero unresolved complaints regarding accessibility and understanding of the register and the Regulation Council work
- Annual Report published to include progress with patient and lay involvement; commitment to publishing outcomes of all Fitness to Practice cases.
- Positive feedback from users of the website, including positive feedback from patients and/or patient groups

Page 9 of 11
Strategic Objective 5: Support and inform the Academy for Healthcare Science on statutory regulation of healthcare scientists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What we said we would do</th>
<th>What we did</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gather evidence on the effectiveness of the Accredited Register</td>
<td>Continued to evolve thinking around mitigating risks posed by registrants who do not meet the appropriate standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Chair of the Regulation Council presented at the 2016 Conference and in addition also attends Board meetings and workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explore the regulatory landscape including the ‘theory of regulation – based on right touch thinking’ and any new legislation following the PSA ‘Regulation Rethought’ publication</td>
<td>The Regulation Council will continue to formulate its own opinions and articulate its views directly. This includes, but is not restricted to responding to consultations, continued dialogue with the PSA and producing Council reports and position papers as appropriate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Objective 5 Outcome**

- Regulation Council and Registrar actively involved in AHCS Congress presentations
- Proactive publication of position papers and reports
- Provided considered responses to consultations on healthcare regulation
- Regulation Chair attendance at AHCS Board meetings
5. Looking Forward

It is going to be an exciting and challenging year in 2017/18:

- There are so many opportunities planned where it will be possible to engage with our registrants.
- Registrants’ views and opinions will help us to continue to grow and evolve the accredited Registers.
- Creativity and innovation is always stimulating and enjoyable; we are looking forward to the new developments, new parts of the Register and new Registers and Directories coming on board.
- We plan to work closely with professional groups and bodies, to draw upon their expertise whilst continuing to develop independent Registers.

More recently, working with colleagues from Committee for the Accreditation of Medical Illustration Practitioners (UK) – CAMIP - has proved to be both an enjoyable and helpful experience. We are delighted to have such an engaging group of registrants and ambassadors to work with, and look forward to working with them and seeing how their influence helps to shape the way the Regulatory function develops.

Most importantly we look forward to holding a series of events across the country which will help to inform thinking and enable registrants to meet other contributors to the Academy and the Regulation Council.

Our registrants have access through the Academy to the Royal Society of Biology (RSB). If you are on our Register, as an individual you can access a 50% reduced rate on RSB membership for the first two years, enabling you to take advantage of a range of additional benefits, including their Continuing Professional Development Programme and professional awards. RSB run a variety of courses and workshops which are offered at a discounted rate of up to 50% for AHCS registrants, while RSB also offer free course approval for CPD purposes.

So, thank you all for your continuing support.

Janet Monkman
CEO/Registrar