Introducing the Healthcare Scientists Career Framework

The Healthcare Scientists Career Framework has been developed in partnership with key stakeholders including professional representatives, the Foundation for Healthcare Science, employers, staff and trainees. The Project Team of healthcare scientists, healthcare scientists from the professional representative organisations, staff and trainees, and National Health Service (NHS) organisations have played a full role in its development. The framework represents a comprehensive tool for addressing the needs of all healthcare science professionals and organisations and professionals from the 3 divisions of the HCS workforce. The framework includes a guide to the career framework.

Planning the Framework

The Healthcare Scientists Career Framework was developed as a tool taking as its starting point the national priorities of the NHS. To do this, the NHS Plan was used as the template for the framework. The NHS Plan is a document that sets out the priorities of the NHS for the future. It sets out the key goals of the NHS and provides a framework for the development of NHS policy and strategy. The framework was developed to support the implementation of the NHS Plan and to help health and social care providers achieve their objectives.

Background to the National Framework

The framework consists of 9 career stages which are designed to reflect the range of roles and responsibilities of healthcare scientists. Each stage is described in detail, including the knowledge, skills, and competences required for progression through the framework.

The framework includes a guide to the career framework and provides an overview of the framework's purpose, scope, and method of development. It also includes a list of key stakeholders and a summary of the framework's structure and content.

The framework is intended to be used by a variety of stakeholders, including healthcare scientists, managers, and HR professionals. It is designed to support the development of career progression and to help healthcare scientists understand the requirements for progression through the framework.

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A Career Framework for Healthcare Scientists in the NHS

Introduction

The Healthcare Science workforce in the NHS consists of approximately 50 distinct disciplines or sub-disciplines (see over page 8). The Healthcare Scientist workforce number approximately 50,000 in England and are employed on a variety of different employment grades and within a range of different job roles. The Healthcare Science National Occupational Standards (NOS) Project which completed in April 2005 (see www.noshcs.com for more details).

The Healthcare Science workforce is comprised of a diverse range of professionals who work in a variety of settings including hospitals, community services, research, education, and industry.

The Healthcare Science workforce is governed by the Healthcare Professional Council (HPC) and the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) which are responsible for setting and maintaining professional standards and codes of practice for the profession.

The Council has already recommended the regulation of some groups of healthcare scientists as set out below.

Definitions

A healthcare scientist is defined as a person who has been engaged in the provision of healthcare science services and has met the professional standards set by the Healthcare Science National Occupational Standards Project.

Specifically, if a person has been engaged in the provision of healthcare science services as defined above and has met the professional standards set by the Healthcare Science National Occupational Standards Project, then they are considered to be a healthcare scientist.

The Healthcare Science workforce in the NHS consists of approximately 50 distinct disciplines or sub-disciplines (see over page 8). The Healthcare Scientist workforce number approximately 50,000 in England and are employed on a variety of different employment grades and within a range of different job roles.

The development of the framework was based on the following working assumptions:

- A career framework for healthcare scientists, which identifies and describes the roles and functions that must be performed by individuals in the healthcare science workforce.
- A career framework that is flexible and adaptable to meet the needs of the workforce and the healthcare environment.
- A career framework that is consistent with national policies and initiatives, including Agenda for Change and Modernising Healthcare Science Careers.

The framework is designed to provide a clear and unambiguous description of the roles and functions that must be performed by individuals in the healthcare science workforce. It includes a clear definition of the roles and functions, a description of the key skills and competences required, and a description of the education, training, and development required to perform the roles and functions.

The framework is designed to be flexible and adaptable to meet the needs of the workforce and the healthcare environment. It can be used to support recruitment and retention, career planning, and professional development.

The framework is consistent with national policies and initiatives, including Agenda for Change and Modernising Healthcare Science Careers. It is designed to support the implementation of these policies and initiatives by providing a clear and unambiguous description of the roles and functions that must be performed by individuals in the healthcare science workforce.

The framework is intended to be used by healthcare science managers, healthcare science professionals, and healthcare science trade unions to support recruitment, retention, and professional development.

Overall Aim

The overall aim of the Career Framework for Healthcare Scientists is to:

- provide a clear and unambiguous description of the roles and functions that must be performed by individuals in the healthcare science workforce.
- support recruitment and retention of healthcare science professionals.
- support professional development and career planning.
- support the implementation of national policies and initiatives, including Agenda for Change and Modernising Healthcare Science Careers.
- support the development of a sustainable and efficient healthcare science workforce.

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Specifically, if a person has been engaged in the provision of healthcare science services as defined above and has met the professional standards set by the Healthcare Science National Occupational Standards Project, then they are considered to be a healthcare scientist.
The development of the Healthcare Scientists Career Framework will assist managers and HR professionals to deliver the key posts and hence inform the development of healthcare scientists. These are detailed in the accompanying Agenda for Change.

Consistency with reward systems

Purposes with ownership of the standards now residing with Skills for Health.

Science National Occupational Standards (NOS) Project which completed in April 2005 (see www.noshcs.com for more details).

Attracting those on career breaks and those who have left the NHS to come back to work in the NHS and in the interim.

Professional representatives, the Federation for Healthcare Science, employers, staff side organisations, the Royal College of Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF) and Development Review system and pay band. Where a job does not match a national profile, local evaluation will take place using the NHS job development and includes the following details available on the DH CSO website at www.dh.gov.uk/cso).

• Challenging established practice,

Possible that for some job roles some functions may be delivered from a higher or lower career framework stage.

The functions at each career framework stage are generally based on work activity that reflects the knowledge, training and expertise.

The focus on skills and competences related to the service function to be delivered is absolutely fundamental to the success of the framework. Educational and professional requirements will continue to be important in the design, implementation and development of the framework.

A CAREER FRAMEWORK FOR HEALTHCARE SCIENTISTS IN THE NHS

A strategy for professionals in healthcare science (5) introduced the generic term for the workforce of Healthcare Scientists number approximately 50,000 in England and are employed on a variety of different employment grades to medical consultants.

Healthcare Scientists number approximately 50,000 in England and are employed on a variety of different employment grades and responsibilities throughout the NHS. They are usually employed in hospital departments but can function in community settings or in research and development divisions.

It is suggested that NHS organisations assess themselves against the action plan detailed below in order to identify the key areas of improvement. The HCS CPG seeks to ensure that the UK healthcare science workforce is equipped to deliver the wide range of roles and functions that it is engaged in.

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The HCS CPG seeks to ensure that the UK healthcare science workforce is equipped to deliver the wide range of roles and functions that it is engaged in.

The development of the framework was based on the following existing developments:

1. The National Competency Framework, which provides a national standard of practice for all HCAs.


3. The understanding that healthcare science is an integral part of patient care and that healthcare science professionals must work in collaboration with other professionals to provide high-quality care.

4. The need to develop a career framework that reflects the diverse roles and functions of healthcare scientists.

5. The importance of identifying key competences and skills required for different roles and levels within the framework.

6. The requirement for a framework that is flexible and adaptable to meet the changing needs of the healthcare science workforce.

The HCS CPG decided that the first step was to conduct a needs analysis. The framework would include four elements:

1. Education and training

2. Consistency

3. Career development

4. Governance

Specifically, Enhancing Pathways for Healthcare Scientists (7) elaborated the need for the workforce to be in line with, with a focus on professional standards. It highlighted the importance of an effective career framework that would support the professional development and career progression of healthcare scientists.

The NHS improvement in Patient Experience (8) indicated that there is a need for healthcare science professionals to have the skills and knowledge to deliver high-quality care.

The framework is designed to support the development of healthcare scientists by providing a clear career path and opportunities for professional development.

At a national level the work programme will focus on:

1. Modernising pre-registration education and training programmes to ensure they are fit for practice and the needs of the NHS.

2. Supporting recruitment and retention strategies, NHS Careers and raising the healthcare scientists profile.

3. Influencing workforce planning, commissioning and development.

4. Assessing the impact of the framework and its role in improving the quality of healthcare science services.

5. The focus on skills and competences related to the service function to be delivered is absolutely fundamental to the success of the framework.

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The framework is designed to support the development of healthcare scientists by providing a clear career path and opportunities for professional development.

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A total of 64 sets of NOS have been developed comprising of nearly 1000 individual standards in 51 healthcare science recruitment resource centre toolkit. Further details available on the CSO website at: www.dh.gov.uk/cso

These include:

- Financial, Physical and Human Resources;
- Recruitment;
- Entry to the register;
- Disqualification of a healthcare scientist;
- Continuing with the work programme to extend regulation to relevant healthcare science professional groups;
- Identifying education and training pathways to inform learning design and course development that can be tailored for local needs;
- B) Undertaking a review of the healthcare science workforce – identifying both current staffing and future demands related to what the changing workforce needs will be;
- C) Developing a range of flexible education and training programmes to meet the changing needs of the healthcare science workforce;
- D) Support implementation of the NOS HCS project outputs across the 9 stages of the career framework;
- E) Establishing a career framework for healthcare scientists to support a reformed and modernised NHS.

The Healthcare Scientist generic profiles reflect a range of ‘expected’ jobs across the 9 stages of the career framework and include profiles to support the introduction of new healthcare scientist roles particularly at stages 4, 7, 8 and 9. There are also details of the mapping between the HFCS profiles and the NOS HCS project.

A CAREER FRAMEWORK FOR HEALTHCARE SCIENTISTS IN THE NHS

A PDF version of this document and ongoing developments related to this career framework will be posted on the Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety website at: www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidanceArticle/fs/en

In order to direct future education and training programmes in the healthcare science workforce the NOS HCS Project has developed a number of roles and functions to support local and national developments in healthcare science careers. These roles and functions will support implementation of the NOS HCS project outputs across the 9 stages of the career framework and include profiles to support the introduction of new healthcare scientist roles particularly at stages 4, 7, 8 and 9.

The Healthcare Science workforce in the NHS consists of approximately 50 distinct disciplines or sub disciplines (see over page 3). These different employment groups are distinct and differentiated in general by entry qualifications, pre registration education and training, function, the professional grouping of which they belong and the nature of the work they do.

The aim of the Career Framework for Healthcare Scientists is to:

- Develop a framework for healthcare scientists that succinctly identifies the range of roles and functions undertaken by healthcare scientists;
- Create a career framework for healthcare scientists that can be used at a local level to inform the planning and development of education and training programmes for healthcare scientists;
- Ensure that the framework is linked to and supports the implementation of Agenda for Change and encompass the development of Healthcare Science workforce in the NHS.

The Healthcare Science workforce in the NHS consists of approximately 50 distinct disciplines or sub disciplines (see over page 3). These different employment groups are distinct and differentiated in general by entry qualifications, pre registration education and training, function, the professional grouping of which they belong and the nature of the work they do.

Rather than a rigid hierarchy, the framework reflects a range of employment groups who share certain skills and functions.

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The Healthcare Scientists Career Framework has been developed in full partnership with inputs from key stakeholders (including members of the four UK healthcare science professional bodies, leading charities and organisations providing healthcare science related services, academic and professional bodies, patient and public organisations and researchers). The framework is intended to support: • Framework users to identify and articulate career pathways and approaches to learning and development. • Healthcare scientists, their employers and organisations to support effective strategies and approaches to learning and development, workforce flexibility and transferability of skills and competences.

Academic and Professional Foundation

The Healthcare Scientists Career Framework 2007 is based on the National Occupational Standards project which completed in April 2005 (see www.noshcs.com for more details).

The complete NOS framework has been mapped against this 9 stage career framework for each of the constituent disciplines and skills and competences identified. As part of this initiative, we need to overcome historical difficulties and make qualifications and educational credit more accessible and transferable. Work on recognising different forms of achievement e.g. gaining credit for work based learning is currently being progressed in the UK and internationally.

The scheme will support individuals to chart their career path and develop their skills to progress up to the Senior Healthcare Scientist level.

The work of the review group was also informed by the findings of a rapid review of the healthcare science workforce undertaken by the National Audit Office (NAO) in 2004 (see also www.nao.org.uk for more details). The findings of the NAO review highlighted the need for an integrated approach to the roles and functions provided by scientific services.

III. practitioners who provide a range of specialist services will usually have been awarded a post graduate qualification and have management responsibilities for a discipline/service/team and/or initiates or leads formal research activities. Leadership across a number of areas/disciplines, bringing strategic direction, innovation and influence through practice, is a key feature of the higher level of leadership.

The science base within the NHS will be preserved such that career progression will not only be on the basis of increased specialist knowledge and skills but also on the basis of improved competence and experience. Access routes into NHS scientific careers will be provided at all levels in the career framework.

A Healthcare Scientist and highlighted the need to improve the supply of healthcare scientists, strengthen and modernise education and training, extend their scope of practice to include such a role. A model for the future is under consideration by the Review of Non Medical Practitioners Working in the NHS (the ‘D Sicher Review’) which is led by Professor Gillian Sharp of the University of Wales College of Medicine. The Review of Non Medical Practitioners Working in the NHS (the ‘D Sicher Review’) which is led by Professor Gillian Sharp of the University of Wales College of Medicine. The Review’s terms of reference are: to consider if individuals moved into the scope of practice of another regulated practitioner.

This is a key long and complex process of work. However, the document gives a much simplified overview of the programme that has been taken to date. There are many other issues that are not dealt with in this document and the programme is ongoing.

Introduction to the Healthcare Scientists Framework

The Healthcare Scientists Framework 2007 has been produced in the context of national and international agendas driving forward career development and training futures for healthcare scientists. This is a critical moment in time, with the Department of Health wanting to ensure a ‘joined up’ approach to all aspects of healthcare science workforce planning and development. There are many changes and challenges facing the health service workforce and these must be addressed now.

The structure of the NOS project was to utilise information from the existing healthcare science discipline NOS and map this against a national model. The healthcare science discipline NOS was assembled from local, national and international sources. The NOS was initially produced in 1997 and updated in 2002 and 2004. The Healthcare Scientists Career Framework has been published in paper format and electronically on the Skills for Health website at: www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/careerframework

The whole framework is based on the premise of the four stages of career development that was developed by Derks and colleagues (1983) and extended by Breaugh (1992). This model provides a consistent underpinning for the development of career frameworks. The model for the Healthcare Scientists Career Framework has been extended to incorporate a new stage (Stage 0) to provide a more comprehensive description of healthcare scientist roles.

At a national level the work programme will focus on:

1. A Framework for Healthcare Scientists in the NHS

2. Agenda for Change: Final Agreement [2004]

3. Safe and Effective Care for the Public

4. The Future Shape of Health Services

5. Making the Change

6. The Science Base in the NHS

7. The New NHS: Modern, Dependable

8. Creating a Patient-led NHS

9. Getting Results: A Strategy for Diagnostic Services in Wales

B A C K G R O U N D

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The scheme will support individuals to chart their career path and develop their skills to progress up to the Senior Healthcare Scientist level.
Introducing the Healthcare Scientists Career Framework

The Healthcare Scientists (HCS) Career Framework has been developed following a period of lively debate including professional representation, the Federation for Healthcare Science, non-NHS staff organisations, the Project Dobson for Social excluded education and employment and HPC. This has now resulted in the publication of a UK wide framework for healthcare scientists. The framework includes an introduction to the context of work in healthcare science, the importance of understanding the current role opportunities for nurses, the professional standards and postgraduate qualifications and finalising all current roles. This framework builds on the existing practice of professionals working in healthcare science and highlights the need for a new career framework to support the introduction of the Career Framework for the NHS as a whole.

Clinical and Research Practice

The Healthcare Scientists (HCS) Career Framework continues to develop and evolve as it moves forward.

A Career Framework for Healthcare Scientists in the NHS

The Healthcare Scientists (HCS) Career Framework aims to provide a guide for NHS and partner organisations in introducing a new career framework that will support the introduction of the Career Framework for the NHS as a whole.

One strand of the new pay system is the NHS job evaluation scheme. This is a structured method of fairly rewarding people by comparing their job role against a set of job evaluation factors.

Recruitment, Retention and Workforce Utilisation

Recruitment, Retention and Workforce Utilisation

A consultation exercise highlighted the need for a new career framework to support the introduction of the NHS job evaluation scheme. This was particularly important for the healthcare science recruitment resource centre toolkit. Further details are available on the CSO website at: www.dh.gov.uk/cso

A Healthcare Scientists Career Framework Follow-up Group (1997) was established in January 1997 by the Department of Health in response to the Healthcare Scientists Career Framework. In other words, the strategy document recognised that barriers to progression existed and there was a need to introduce a new career framework. For a Career Framework to make sense there has to be a commonly understood set of definitions for different job roles, currently introduction of the Career Framework for the NHS as a whole. A UK wide framework has been established, and the framework includes an introduction to the context of work in healthcare science, the importance of understanding the current role opportunities for nurses, the professional standards and postgraduate qualifications and finalising all current roles. This framework builds on the existing practice of professionals working in healthcare science and highlights the need for a new career framework to support the introduction of the Career Framework for the NHS as a whole.

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Career Framework is built on the principle of offering career development that is fair and open to all and where everyone has the impact on the healthcare science workforce.

The Healthcare Scientists Career Framework has been developed in full partnership with inputs from key stakeholders (including professional representatives, the Federation for Healthcare Science, employers, staff side organisations, the Royal College of Medical Regulation. However it is unlikely that there will be a need for dual registration. Extend their scope of practice to include such a role. A model for the future is under consideration by the Review of Non-Technical Procedures and a shift towards provision of services into the community. Healthcare scientists have a key role to play in achieving this and with an equivalent to Masters level, in order to direct future education and training programmes in the healthcare science workforce the NOS HCS Project has been underway in a number of different sectors. Further work on this is being undertaken by Skills for Health and the Modernising Pathology Services.

NEXT STEPS AND ACTION

i) Bringing a UK wide perspective to the healthcare science workforce and policy development

ii) Establishing an understanding of the numbers and types of healthcare scientists working in the NHS

iii) Developing a recruitment and training strategy to meet future needs of the workforce

iv) Establishing if and how the National Occupational Standards (NOS) currently meet the needs of the workforce

v) Developing a strategy to promote progression within the workforce

vi) Developing a model for career development in the context of the modernising pay Agenda for Change

vii) Identifying any gaps in the career structure and making recommendations

viii) Developing an understanding of the numbers of healthcare scientists required in the NHS

ix) Developing an understanding of the financial incentives and career development opportunities that are available

x) Developing strategies to encourage retention in the workforce

xi) Developing a strategy for career development in technical roles

A CAREER FRAMEWORK FOR HEALTHCARE SCIENTISTS IN THE NHS

Kevin Wyke, Greater Manchester Strategic Health Authority
Karen Fisher, Nottingham City NHS Trust
David Baxter, Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridge, Workforce Development
Sarah Carpenter, AMICUS
Jo Wilton, NHS Employers
Karen Fisher, European Federation for Medical Education
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Leadership across a number of areas/disciplines, bringing strategic direction, innovation and influence through practice, leadership and clinical practice.

At local and regional level, new healthcare science roles are beginning to emerge. The change required overall is ensuring that we have a traditional environment that we can meet the challenges of the future. Healthcare scientists have a key role to play in achieving this and with an equivalent to Masters level, in order to direct future education and training programmes in the healthcare science workforce the NOS HCS Project has been underway in a number of different sectors. Further work on this is being undertaken by Skills for Health and the Modernising Pathology Services. It is anticipated that the HCS Career Framework will be adopted across all UK Health Departments, which will support UK wide workforce expansions of the healthcare science workforce across the career framework are known and funded.
The development of the Healthcare Scientists Career Framework will assist managers and HR professionals to deliver the key impact on the healthcare science workforce. The complete NOS framework has been mapped against this 9 stage career framework for each of the constituent disciplines and A total of 64 sets of NOS have been developed comprising of nearly 1000 individual standards in 51 healthcare science disciplines. In order to sustain the growth required to meet national priorities and local health economy requirements, the recruitment and Workforce planning should be developed at a local level taking account the range of national initiatives and priorities that will inform national strategic decisions and assist in planning the learning and development requirements of the healthcare science workforce. Introducing the Healthcare Scientists Career Framework locally Further groups aiming to achieve statutory regulation at a later date may include: anatomical pathology technicians, cervical cytology technicians, clinical microbiologists, diagnostic medical sonographers, medical secretaries, medical typists, histopathology technicians, and clinical education and training. The Healthcare Science workforce in the NHS consists of approximately 50 distinct disciplines or sub disciplines (see over page for details) that can be grouped into 3 divisions based on primary work function: 

1. Laboratory services (anatomical pathology, medical biochemistry, clinical microbiology, virology, medical laboratory science, clinical medical physics, clinical engineering, nuclear medicine, and haematology). 
2. Clinical services (clinical physiologists, clinical perfusion scientists, clinical technologists, clinical photographers and maxillofacial prosthetic technologists. 
3. Population health sciences (public health nutrition, clinical pharmacists, mental health science, medical social workers, dietitians, and speech and language therapists). 

There is a wide range of standards of practice within each of these principal roles and these will vary depending on the setting and nature of work. It is critical that these standards are written with sufficient breadth to allow for variations in practice and to reflect the ever changing nature of healthcare. The Healthcare Scientists Career Framework is grounded in research and education and having ultimate responsibility similar to consultant medical staff. Healthcare Scientists Career Framework. Educational and professional requirements will continue to be important in the design, delivery and assessment of programmes. These contributions will be enhanced by added flexibilities so that the skills required to positively improve patient safety and quality and enhance patient care experience are captured.

For a Career Framework to make sense there has to be a commonly understood set of definitions for different job roles, currently there are many different titles and this requires a standardisation of titles and definitions. A consultant/principal HCS provides clinical and scientific expertise and advice to medical consultants. These are HCSs with a higher degree of autonomy and responsibility in areas of clinical and professional expertise and in some cases also with management and financial responsibilities but also on specialised scientific service provision and Research and Development roles.

A CAREER FRAMEWORK FOR HEALTHCARE SCIENTISTS IN THE NHS

A Career Framework for Healthcare Scientists: A comprehensive guide to the development of a career framework & how to use it.

Eduardo Ponce

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Kevin Wyke, Chief Scientific Officer, Chair

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