

# Fellowship, Honorary Fellowship and Professional Fellowship of the Academy for Healthcare Science (AHCS) Guidance

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3.0	Final Document for publication	Kirsty Clark	August 2021
4.0	Revised details for the 2025 nominations	Will Smith	May 2025
5.0	Revised details for new guidance for AHCS Fellowship, Honorary Fellowship and Professional Fellowship	Professor Chris Hopkins/Professor Stephen O'Connor/Will Smith	March 2026

## Fellowship, Honorary Fellowship and Professional Fellowship of the Academy for Healthcare Science (AHCS)

### Guidance Document

- **Effective date:** 4<sup>th</sup> March 2026
- **Version:** 1.0
- **Review cycle:** Annual

### Purpose

This guidance sets out the criteria, processes, timelines and expectations for the award of Fellowship (FAHCS) and Honorary Fellowship (Hon FAHCS), the Academy's prestigious grades of recognition, celebrating distinction, excellence and sustained influence across healthcare science.

It also outlines the requirements for Professional Fellowship (PFAHCS), a professional registration status awarded to senior healthcare scientists who have demonstrated advanced specialist expertise and leadership through nationally assured training or equivalence routes.

### Overview

#### Fellowship (FAHCS)

- **Purpose:** This is reserved for scientists working within the field of healthcare science and recognises individuals who have achieved distinction in healthcare science, through research, education, leadership or impactful application of science in healthcare.
- **Benefits:** Public honour, professional recognition; use of post-nominals FAHCS; opportunities to influence AHCS strategy, contribute to panels and support the profession.

#### Honorary Fellowship (Hon FAHCS)

- **Purpose:** This is reserved for individuals who are **not** healthcare scientists themselves but have demonstrated exceptional service, influence, or leadership that has significantly advanced healthcare science across the UK or internationally.
- **Benefits:** Public honour; use of post-nominals Hon FAHCS; engagement opportunities with AHCS.

## Professional Fellowship (PFAHCS)

- A Professional Fellow is a senior healthcare scientist who has demonstrated advanced specialist expertise, clinical leadership and professional practice at consultant or equivalent level, having successfully completed either:
  - Higher Specialist Scientist Training (HSST), or
  - Higher Specialist Scientist Equivalence (HSSE)
- Competence is formally recognised through a nationally assured, standards-based assessment process.

Professional Fellowship is distinct from Fellowship and Honorary Fellowship. While it recognises attainment at the highest level of specialist professional practice, it does not require completion of an additional independent process of scrutiny demonstrating significant national or international impact. Such impact-based recognition is reserved for Fellowship and Honorary Fellowship, which acknowledge exceptional contribution, influence, and leadership beyond the scope of professional practice alone.

- Healthcare Scientists who were awarded Honorary Fellowship under the previous process will have their status updated to Fellowship (FAHCS), ensuring that the prestige and intent of their original recognition is fully preserved.
- Individuals who currently hold Fellowship through HSST or HSSE will retain their Fellowship status without change.
- From 4<sup>th</sup> March 2026, those who have been awarded Professional Fellowship (PFAHCS) may apply for Fellowship (FAHCS) in accordance with the process set out in section 4.1.

### **1. Eligibility**

#### **1.1 Fellowship (FAHCS)**

Applicants/nominees must:

1. Demonstrate distinctive and notable contributions to the advancement of healthcare science through impact on patients, services, policy, education, workforce, or innovation.
2. Have a minimum of 10 years of influential, post-qualification experience.
3. Uphold AHCS values, including professional integrity, equality, diversity, and inclusion.
4. Maintain an active and appropriate grade of membership (ideally Fellowship) within a recognised professional body.

5. AHCS does not operate its own complaints procedure. However, because holding an active and appropriate grade of membership with a recognised Professional Body (PB) is an eligibility requirement for Fellowship, PBs will be asked to notify AHCS of any loss or removal of PB membership. Where such notification is received, Fellowship of the AHCS will be withdrawn.

Self-nomination is permitted for Fellowship

### **1.2 Honorary Fellowship (Hon FAHCS)**

Typical nominees include:

- High-profile individuals, not healthcare science practitioners, but in positions of influence who have demonstrated exceptional service, or leadership that has significantly advanced healthcare science across the UK or internationally.
- Individuals renowned for sustained research or educational achievement of national/international significance.
- Distinguished contributors through government, policy, education or industry leadership.
- Prominent figures in healthcare-related industries.
- Recognised leaders in education and public engagement relevant to healthcare science.

Self-nomination is not permitted for Honorary Fellowship.

### **1.3 Professional Fellowship (PFAHCS)**

- Professional Fellowship of AHCS is by examination only. Professional Fellows must have successfully completed either:
  - Higher Specialist Scientist Training (HSST), or
  - Higher Specialist Scientist Equivalence (HSSE)

## 2. How to Apply / Nominate

### 2.1 Fellowship (FAHCS)

Members of the public, healthcare organisations, employers, professional bodies, public bodies, AHCS officers and Council members may nominate for Fellowship.

Self-nomination is permitted for Fellowship.

Deadlines: All materials, including references, must be received, by 23:59 GMT on 15th September.

Incomplete submissions, including missing supporter statements, will be deferred to the next cycle.

Independent checks will be conducted on all prospective Fellowship nominees.

Submission contents:

1. Personal statement of maximum 2 pages Font 12: Describe why you should be accepted as a Fellow of AHCS detailing your influential experience, leadership, and demonstrable impact e.g., outcomes, adoption, policy change.
2. Curriculum Vitae of maximum 2 pages, font size 12: Focus on roles, responsibilities, achievements, and impact.
3. Six confidential supporter statements:
  - Process: The applicant/nominee supplies names, roles, and emails for 6 supporters. AHCS will then request confidential statements directly from supporters via a secure link.
  - Supporters must be senior in their field and must be able to vouch for the bona fides, career, standing, influence and impact of the candidate. Maximum of 2 pages, font size 12
  - Deadlines: Supporter statements must be received by the application deadline. The applicant/nominee is responsible for ensuring supporters submit on time. AHCS will not chase supporters for statements.
4. Publications (optional): Up to five publications with full citations.
  - Impact note: Maximum of 1 page, font size 12 explaining significance e.g., impact on practice/policy, citations, translation, adoption.

Submit by email: [communications@ahcs.ac.uk](mailto:communications@ahcs.ac.uk) for attention of William Smith. AHCS will acknowledge receipt.

## 2.2 Honorary Fellowship (Hon FAHCS)

Members of the public, healthcare organisations, employers, professional bodies, public bodies, AHCS officers and Council members may nominate for Honorary Fellowship. Self-nomination is not permitted for Honorary Fellowship.

Nominees must not be aware of the nomination.

Deadlines: All materials, including references, must be received, by 23:59 GMT on 15th September.

Two-Stage Process:

- Stage 1 – Outline nomination:
  - Statement maximum 2 pages, Font size 12 How the nominee meets criteria and why they merit the award.
  - CV maximum 2 pages, font size 12
  - Outcome: Shortlisting decision within 8 weeks.
- Stage 2 – Full nomination by invitation only:
  - Additional corroborating evidence (e.g., letters of support, impact indicators) for further 5 senior members in their field.
  - Discreet verification undertaken by the panel.
  - Nominee remains unaware

Submit by email: [communications@ahcs.ac.uk](mailto:communications@ahcs.ac.uk) for attention of William Smith. AHCS will acknowledge receipt.

Rationale for 2-stage approach: Minimises burden on nominators, preserves confidentiality and avoids unnecessary disappointment.

### 3. Assessment and Decision-Making

Fellowship Nominations Committee assesses all submissions using transparent criteria aligned to the domains below.

- Domains of impact
  1. Patient/service impact
  2. Innovation & translation
  3. Education & workforce development
  4. Leadership & governance
  5. Policy & system influence
  6. Equality, diversity, and inclusion
  7. National/international profile.
- Evidence sought: Clear attribution, scale and impact, sustainability and peer recognition.
- Verification: The Committee may request additional information or conduct light-touch verification.
- Decision
- There is no appeal process. Feedback can be provided on request to support possible re-submission.

#### Timelines:

- Fellowship (FAHCS)
  - Outcome communicated to the applicant/nominee within 3 months of the deadline.
- Honorary Fellowship (Hon FAHCS)
  - Outcome communicated to the nominator within 3 months of the deadline.
- Professional Fellowship PFAHCS
  - Communicated following successful completion of HSST or HSSE and admission to the AHCS Higher Specialist Scientist Register.
- Re-submission windows:
  - Applications/nominations may be made in two successive years. After two consecutive unsuccessful attempts, a 12-month cooling-off period applies before a further submission will be accepted.

#### **4. Professional Expectations of Fellows and Honorary Fellows**

All Fellows, Honorary Fellows and Professional Fellows are expected to:

- Act as advocates and influencers for AHCS, using their post-nominals and appropriately promote AHCS's vision and work.
- Promote healthcare science, through personal activity and by aligning with AHCS's strategic aims (e.g., speaking, mentoring, policy engagement, public outreach).
- Engage actively with AHCS by attending or contributing to key events, panels, consultations, or task groups where requested.
- Consent to public listing as a Fellow/Honorary/ Professional Fellow on the AHCS website.
- Uphold the highest standards of professional conduct and support equality, diversity, and inclusion across the profession.

#### **Removal of Fellowship**

The AHCS Board reserves the right to remove any of the AHCS Fellowships on the basis of verified information of serious misconduct received from a Professional Body upon which they have acted to remove membership or Fellowship. Any complaints received by the Academy of serious misconduct by a Fellow of the Academy will be referred to the appropriate Professional Body.

#### **5. Administrative Policies**

The Academy for Healthcare Science (AHCS) appears on the HMRC approved list of professional bodies; hence, all related fees are eligible for tax deduction

Fees:

- Fellowship: An application and administration fee of £80 will be charged. If the application is successful, a subscription fee of £50 will apply for the first year, followed by an annual recurring fee of £100 in subsequent years.
- Honorary Fellowship: There is no fee, as this is an honorary fellowship; however, we do expect a meaningful non-financial contribution that supports the work of the Academy.
- Professional Fellow: Incorporated into the HSST / HSSE registration costs with the AHCS.

### **Conflicts of Interest:**

- Committee members must declare and manage conflicts. Conflicted Members must not assess cases where they are conflicted.

### **Data Protection & Confidentiality:**

- AHCS will handle all data in accordance with applicable data protection laws. Supporter statements for Fellowship and Honorary Fellowship nominations are treated as confidential.
- For Honorary Fellowship, nominees must not be informed of nominations until Honorary Fellowship has been confirmed.

### **Word and page limits:**

- Submissions exceeding stated limits may be returned or deferred.

## **6. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)**

The AHCS welcomes applications and nominations from all areas of healthcare science and actively encourages candidates from diverse backgrounds and career pathways. Portfolio and non-traditional routes, as well as impactful contributions made outside conventional roles, are fully supported where the individual's impact is clear. Reasonable adjustments will be provided upon request.

## **7. Forward Look: Potential Royal Charter / "Royal Academy" Considerations**

Fellowship criteria and processes may require greater rigour if progression to Royal Academy status is achieved. This may include:

- Enhanced verification and independent checks
- Clearer thresholds for national/international impact
- If and when Royal Academy status is achieved,
  - Current Fellows of AHCS would become FRAHCS
  - Honorary Fellows of AHCS would become Hon RAHCS
  - Professional Fellows would become PFRAHCS

Any such changes would be consulted upon and published with adequate notice.

## 8. Contact

William Smith

Email: [communications@ahcs.ac.uk](mailto:communications@ahcs.ac.uk)

(Please include: Candidate name, Fellowship type, and target deadline in the subject line.)

## 9. Suggested limits

Fellowship (FAHCS) – Applicant/Nominator:

- 750-word statement (impact-focused).
- 2-page CV ( $\geq 12$ pt).
- 3 supporter names/emails (briefed and available).
- Optional: up to 5 publications + 200-word impact note.

Honorary Fellowship (Hon FAHCS) – Nominator:

- Stage 1:
  - 750-word case for award.
  - 2-page CV/bio.
- Stage 2 (if invited):
  - Additional evidence/letters; discreet verification enabled.

## 10. FAQs

Q: Is 10 years' experience sufficient?

A: Yes, minimum 10 years of influential, post-qualification experience.

Q: Why a two-stage process for Honorary Fellowship?

A: To maintain confidentiality, minimise burden on nominators, and avoid potential embarrassment to nominees if not selected.

Q: Can a member of the AHCS Professional Bodies Council be nominated for Fellowship?

A: Yes, they can; however, they would still need to proceed through the formal nomination process.

Q: What is the composition of the Fellowship Nominations Committee?

A: The Nominations Committee is chaired by the President and appointed jointly by the President and Chief Executive Officer to ensure representation from the spectrum of Professional Bodies. The CEO of AHCS sits on the Nominations Committee ex officio.