



AHCS
Academy for Healthcare Science

HCS Registration Council

Keeping patients safe

Annual Report

2018-2019





Foreword by the Healthcare Science (HCS) Registration Council Chair

This Report is a concise but informative review of the past year's regulation activities, successes and ongoing challenges for the Academy for Healthcare Science and the HCS Registration Council. It is to inform registrants, service users and carers, employers, commissioners of care and education, and other healthcare science organisations about our efforts to protect service users and public alike. I hope it will also stimulate debate and encourage you to learn more about us at www.ahcs.ac.uk.

2018-2019 has been an interesting and successful year. The Academy took a timely opportunity to review its Regulation Governance Framework as new and different professional groupings joined the accredited Registers and directories. So, we now have a new Regulation Board which oversees the Registration Councils. This may not sound riveting, but it means the Councils concentrate on the registrants, their standards and their CPD in order to meet our overall aim of protecting those who use our registrants' services. The Regulation Board receives and manages:

- all appeals to Fitness to Practise decisions and agrees the membership and protocols of the appeals panels; and
- complaints where these are relevant to and unresolved by the Registration Councils.

and means that “judge, jury and appeals” are all kept separate.

The registrant numbers have increased but it still requires more healthcare scientists of all types and specialisms to act upon their professional commitment to service users, carers and colleagues. For the many who are not regulated by statute (that is not legally required to be registered and regulated), applying to become registered on our Professional Standards Authority (PSA) Accredited Register is a visible and positive “badge”. This public record of registration (see our website for details) tells everyone that the registrants meet and continue to meet our explicit UK-wide standards.

The Registration Council and wider Academy have been busy working to get this message across as this Annual Report explains. The Council members and Academy staff have given their time and expertise to meet these objectives, my sincere thanks go to them.

However, we would welcome more involvement and interaction with employers. Employers have huge and varied challenges, but everyone recognises that the workforce is key to good healthcare and we contribute to a skilled and talented workforce. So, calling all employers, please give us feedback and help us to help you!



Patricia Le Rolland
HCS Registration Council Chair



1. Introduction

Reducing risk and keeping patients safe

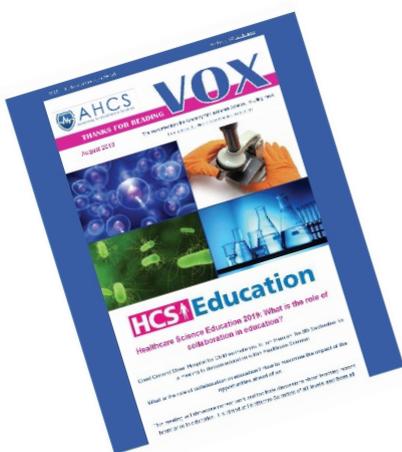
The healthcare science workforce is an essential part of the clinical team with the potential to do real harm to patients should things go wrong. The Academy for Healthcare Science (AHCS) Registration Council’s core purpose is to reduce this risk and aim to keep patients safe. This is achieved through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

Members of the healthcare science workforce perform a range of different roles depending on their qualifications, experience, and level of specialisation. Although this 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.



The AHCS register for Healthcare Science (HCS) Practitioners was accredited by the Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care (PSA)¹ in December 2014. 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 provided about the register.

This report summarises the HCS Registration Council programme of work from 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019 and shows progress against the five objectives of the Council’s strategic vision and Statement of Regulatory Intent. Performance against this plan was reported regularly to and monitored by the Regulation Board, and communicated to registrants, key stakeholders and the public.



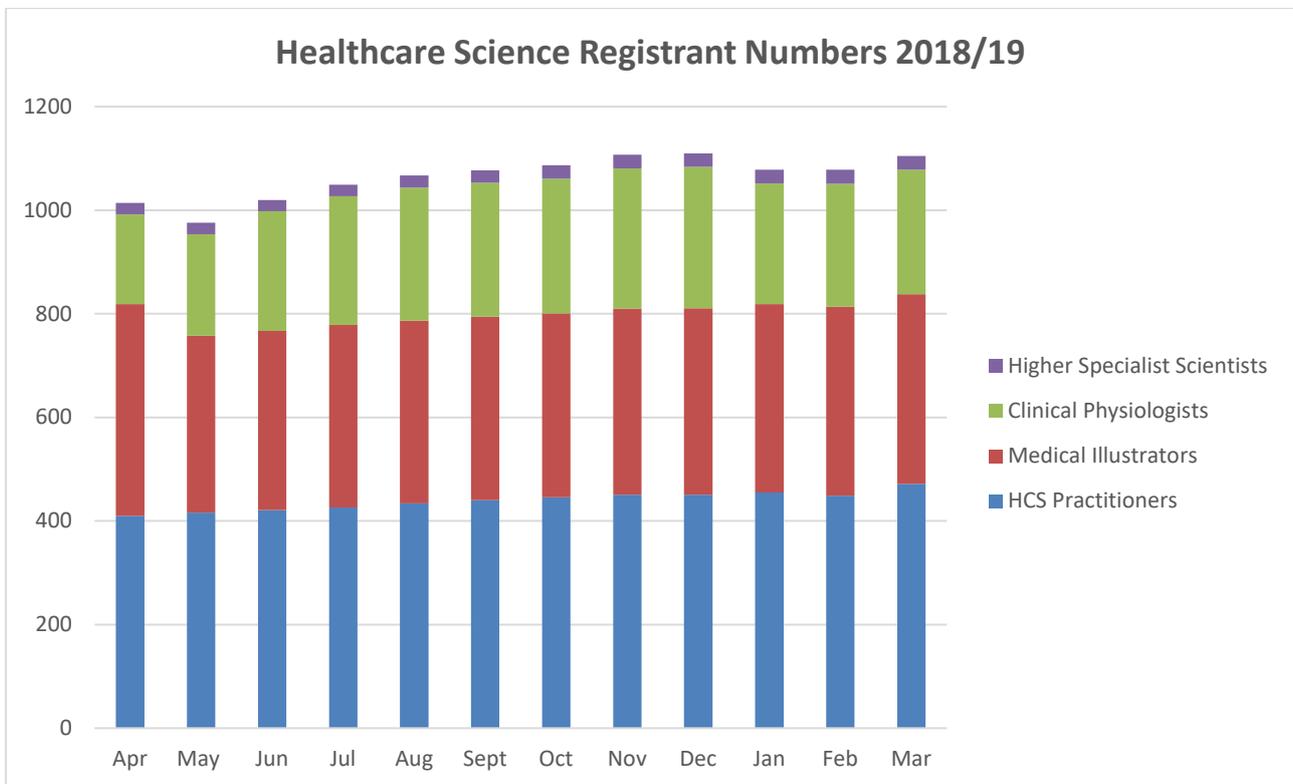
¹Professional Standards Authority: www.professionalstandards.org.uk



2. The Healthcare Science Workforce: HCS Registration & Equivalence

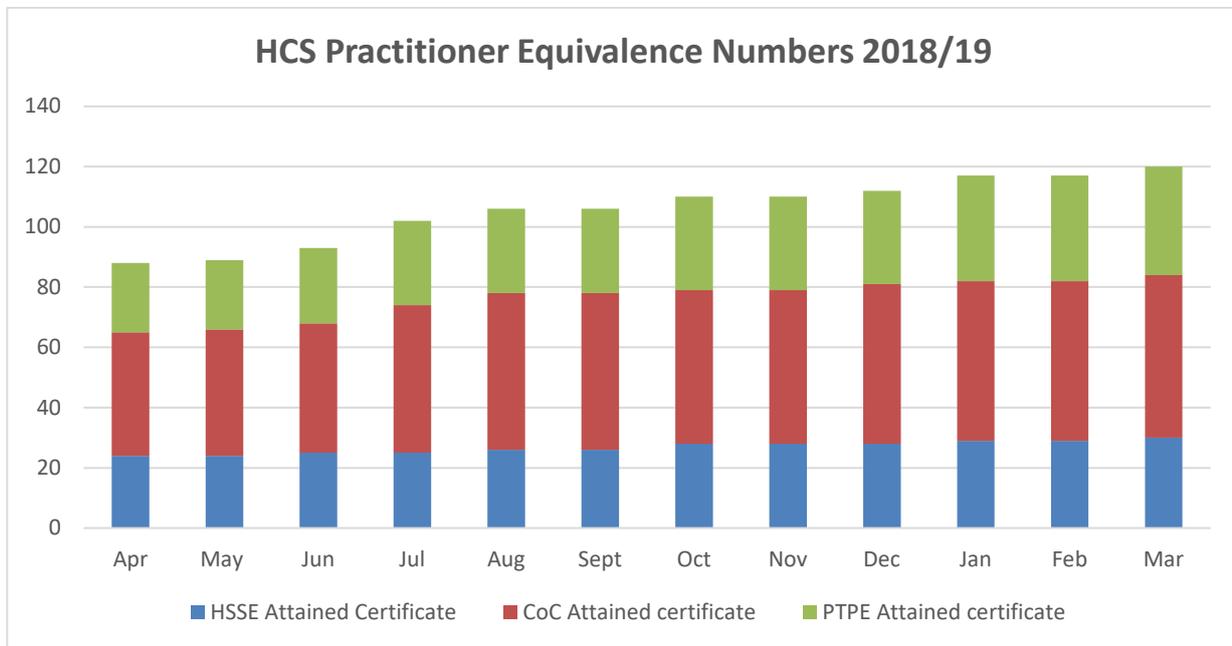
The HCS Accredited Register was first established in 2014 for Healthcare Scientists who had undertaken an approved Practitioner Training Programme (PTP) or equivalent. It was extended to include Higher Specialist Scientists (HSS) in October 2015, Medical Illustrators in March 2017 and Clinical Physiologists in September 2017, with the latter including members of the Society for Cardiological Science & Technology (SCST).

The profile of successful applicants for registration in 2018/19 is shown below. At 31 March 2019, the four parts of the HCS Accredited Register contained a total of 1105 registrants, an increase of over 8% during the previous 12 months.



HCS Practitioner Equivalence

Individuals who have not undertaken an approved PTP programme may be awarded Equivalence or the Certificate of Competence, which enables them to apply for HCS registration. The profile of awards for 2018/19 is shown below.



Scientist Training Programme Equivalence

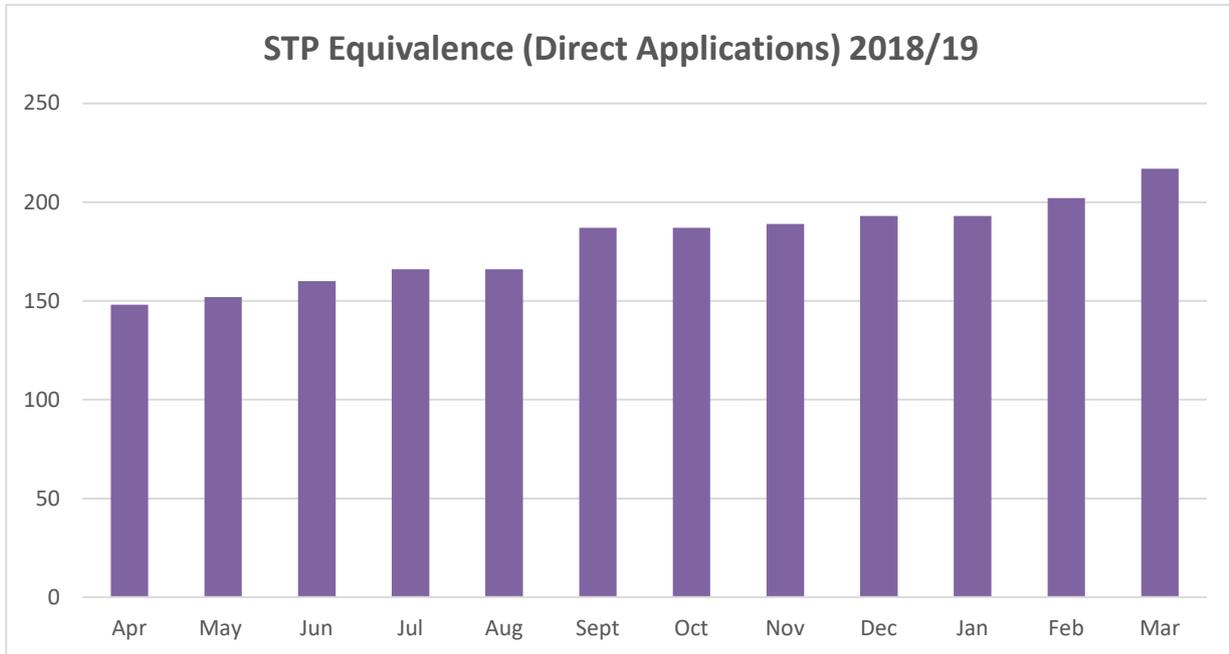


Individuals can make a direct application to the Academy for Healthcare Science for a Certificate of Equivalence in knowledge, skills and competence commensurate with that achieved on the Scientist Training Programme (STP) which then allows them to apply to join the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) statutory register as a Clinical Scientist.

The Equivalence process provides access to registration for individuals who have not followed a formal Scientist Training Programme accredited by the National School of Healthcare Science.

Applicants for STP Equivalence are assessed against the standards set out in Good Scientific Practice (GSP) and whether the applicant has the breadth of knowledge, skills, understanding comparable to someone who has completed the relevant accredited STP curriculum.

The numbers of individuals awarded STP Equivalence and the profile throughout 2018/19 is shown below.



3. Keeping Patients Safe

The core purpose of the Academy for Healthcare Science is to reduce the risk and potential to do real harm by a registered healthcare scientist and thereby keep patients and service users safe. 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 public register or face other sanctions.

As the holder of an Accredited Register, the AHCS is required to meet the standards established by the Professional Standards Authority; for example, PSA 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 to, kept on or removed from their register’

The intention of this standard is to protect 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 taken 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 address both the behaviour of the registrants and their competence and cover both positive and negative outcomes. Accredited registers accept and act upon 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, 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.

In July 2017, the Academy for Healthcare Science signed up to the Accredited Registers Information Sharing Protocol, developed jointly by the Accredited Registers Collaborative and PSA to guide information sharing among Accredited Registers.

The specific purpose of the protocol is to set out a framework for holders of Accredited Registers to participate in an alerts system by which they will share information to support mutual recognition of the outcomes of disciplinary proceedings that lead to removal from an AR.

The protocol applies to all the signatory organisations being Accredited Registers within the United Kingdom.



4. A New Governance Structure & Regulatory Framework

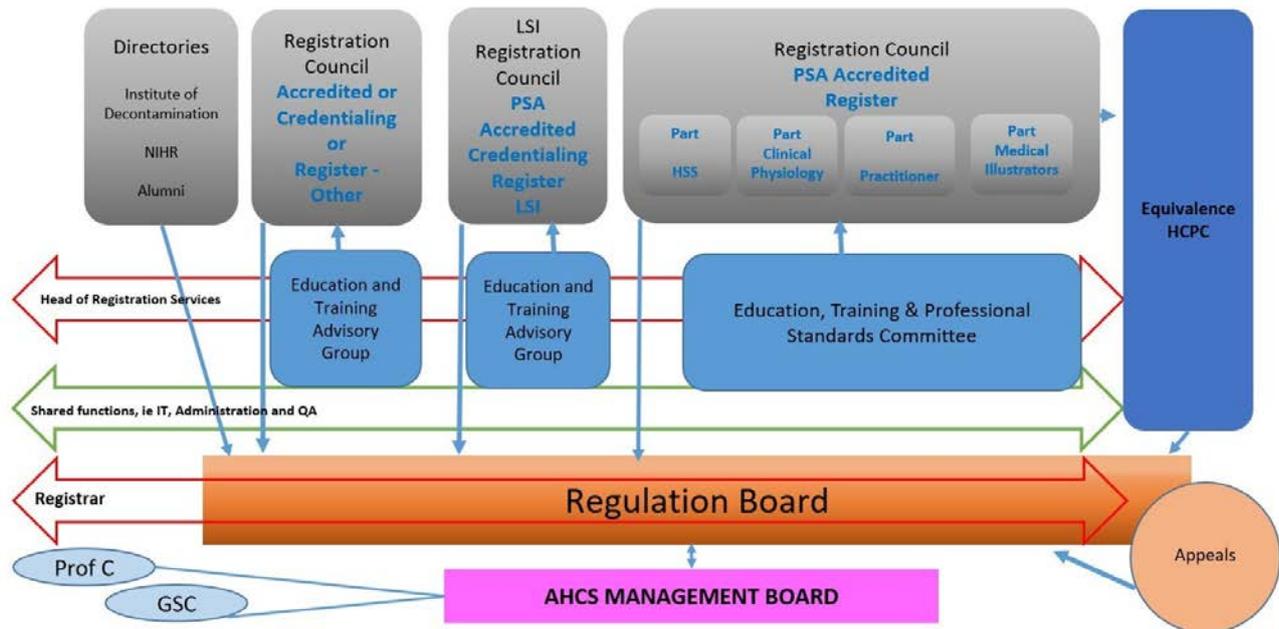
In 2018/19, the AHCS Regulation Council was replaced by the AHCS Regulation Board as the overarching body with responsibility to mitigate the risks posed to service users and the public by the healthcare science workforce not regulated by statute.

Separate Registration Councils reporting to the Regulation Board now take specific responsibility for the Healthcare Science Accredited Register and each Accredited Credentialing Register. The Councils' responsibilities include investigation of Fitness to Practise concerns and allegations, while the Regulation Board itself oversees the Directories, Equivalence assessment, assessment appeals and any appeals against any sanctions imposed on a registrant following Fitness to Practise procedures.

Following approval by the Professional Standards Authority, the revised governance structure came into force from April 2018/19. The new structure is shown below.



Governance Structure for the Regulatory Framework



In March 2018, the PSA approved the establishment of an Accredited Credentialing Register for the Life Science Industry, the first of its kind, which sets national standards for healthcare professionals working with commercial life science industry organisations.

Working in collaboration with Medical Industry Ltd, the new register provides assurance for NHS Trusts that individuals working on their premises have been vetted, their credentials checked and that they are working to a standard which is NHS-approved.

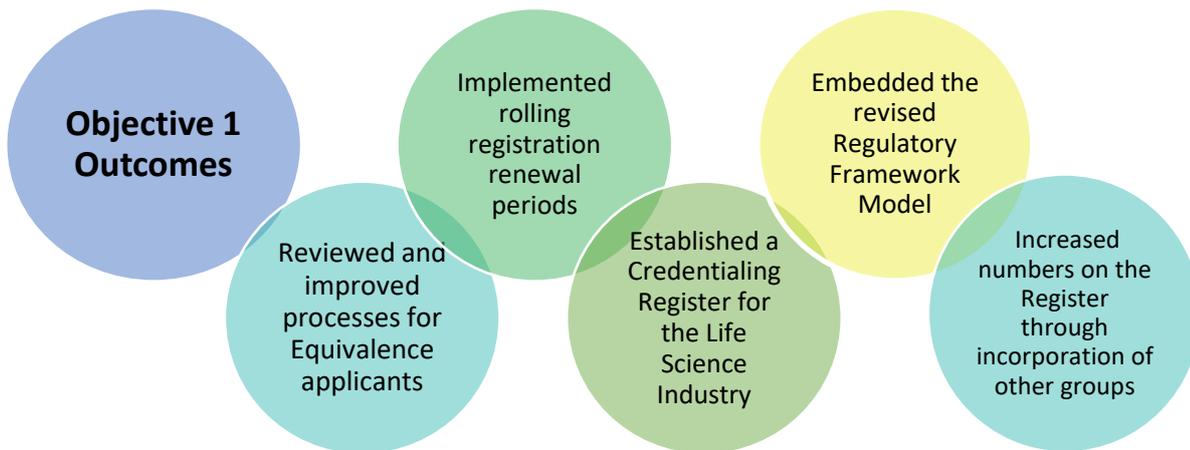
The scheme has patient and public safety at its heart and is a potential solution to the issue of multiple providers of credentialing systems, which creates confusion and duplication and is costly to the healthcare industry and ultimately, therefore, the NHS.

An additional Directory, created in collaboration with the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), has also been established to support the Clinical Research Practitioner (CRP) community. During this year, over 400 CRPs signed up to the Directory and it is planned to establish an accredited register for this part of the workforce in 2019/20.



5. 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.

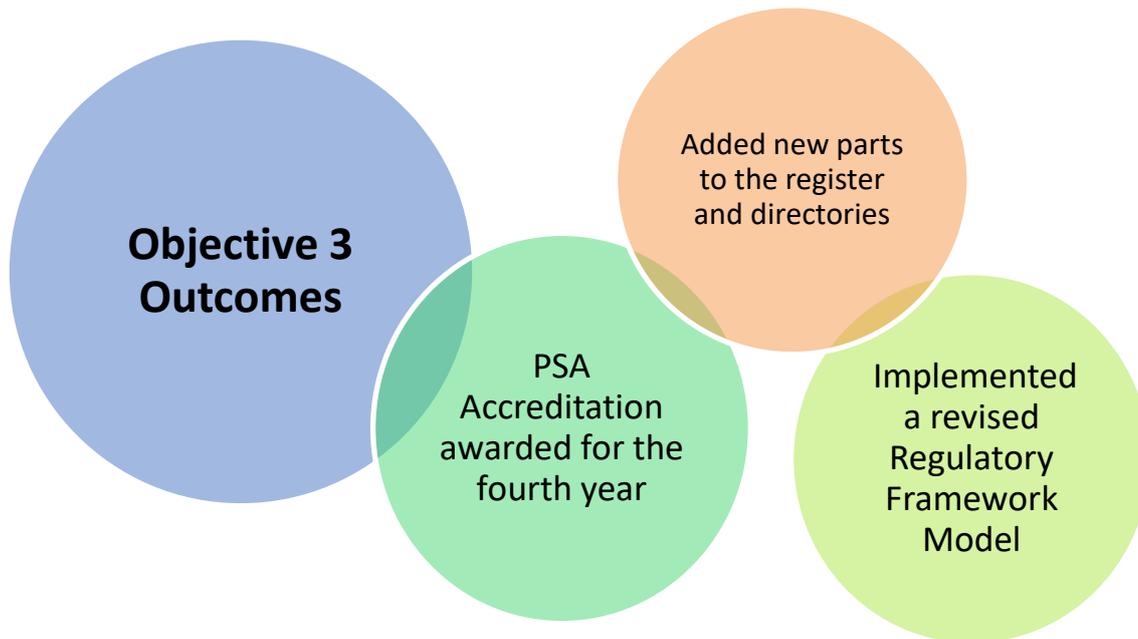


Strategic Objective 2: Set, maintain and review standards of ethics, competence, conduct and performance and continuing professional development for members of the healthcare science workforce.





Strategic Objective 3: Meet and maintain the Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care (PSA) standards for accreditation.

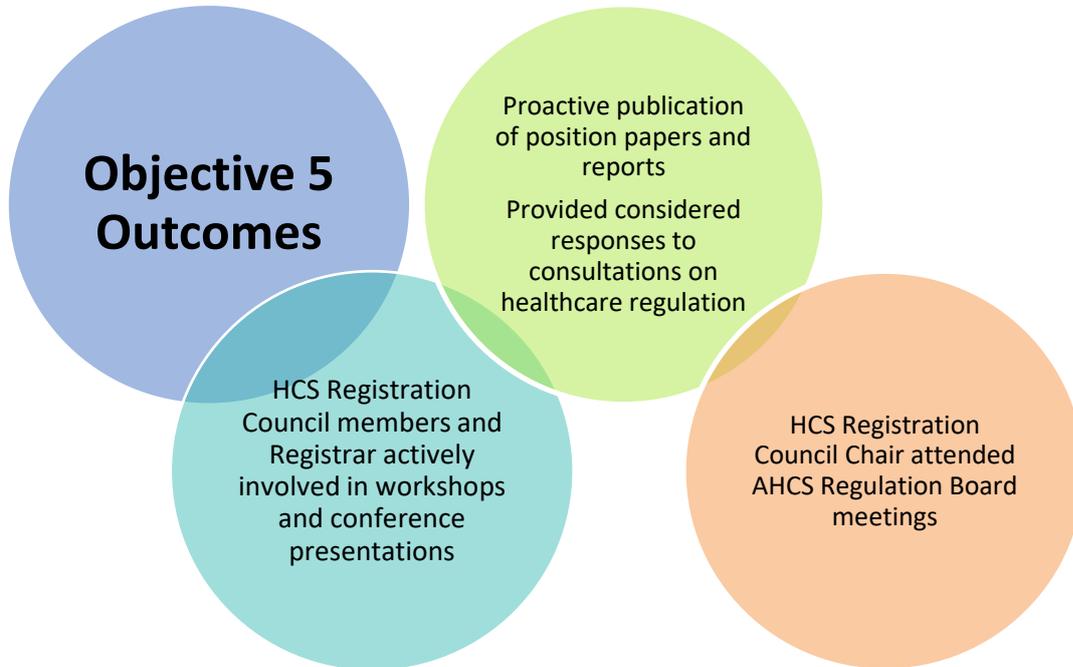


Strategic Objective 4: Maintain the confidence of the public in the system of registration for healthcare science.





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





6. Looking Forward

It will be another exciting and challenging year in 2019/20:

- We will be focused on building upon the strong foundation we have established, in terms of growing the numbers of registrants in all parts of the Accredited Register
- We will engage with our registrants through a range of face-to-face as well as technology-based opportunities, including the increased use of social media. Our registrants' views and opinions will help us to continue to grow and evolve the Accredited Registers.
- We are looking forward to new Registers and Directories becoming part of our Regulatory Framework.
- We will continue to work closely with professional groups and bodies, to draw upon their expertise whilst continuing to develop independent Registers.

It is anticipated that in June 2019 the Academy will merge the current Genetic Counsellor Registration Board's (GCRB) PSA-accredited register into its own Accredited Register, when approved by the PSA. The current GCRB Chair will have a seat on the AHCS Regulation Board and will nominate a representative to attend the HCS Registration Council.

We are delighted to have such an engaging group of registrants and ambassadors to work with and look forward to working with them and using their influence to help shape the way the Regulatory function for Healthcare Science develops.

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.

Thank you all for your continuing support.



Janet Monkman
Academy for Healthcare Science CEO / Registrar

For general enquiries, please contact the Academy for Healthcare Science as follows:

Tel: 01455 244640

Email: information@ahcs.ac.uk

Website: www.ahcs.ac.uk