

AHCS

Standards of Proficiency for Healthcare Science Associates

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About the Standards of Proficiency

To secure and retain registration with the Academy for Healthcare Science as a healthcare science associate, you must be able to demonstrate that you are 'fit to practise'. This means that you have the knowledge, skills, character and capacity to practise safely and effectively as a healthcare science associate to secure and maintain registration. To demonstrate this, you need to meet the Standards of Proficiency (SoP) set out in this document. These align with the AHCS *Good Scientific Practice (GSP)*, the Academy standards that relate to all members of the healthcare science workforce, at all levels of practice and job roles. The sub-element of each SoP standard is mapped to *GSP*.

These SoP define the threshold standards for securing and maintaining registration as a healthcare science associate. They are structured according to the five domains of *GSP*. These are as follows:

- **Domain 1: Professional practice** – Patient-centred care; Scope of practice; Communication; Professional responsibilities; Working with others.
- **Domain 2: Scientific practice** – Data and reporting; Technical proficiency; Quality assurance.
- **Domain 3: Clinical practice** – Clinical activity; Clinical investigation.
- **Domain 4: Research, development and innovation** – Research activity; Service development.
- **Domain 5: Clinical leadership** – Developing self; Leading others.

Final Draft

The SoP do not define your scope of practice. We recognise that the scope of practice of each member of the healthcare science workforce is individual and subject to change. 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 or harm to the public. Several of the standards make clear that they should be interpreted and demonstrated in the context of individual competence, scope of practice and job role.

At the point of registration, you need to demonstrate that you meet the SoP and are of good character and in good health. Registrants are then required to self-declare that this is the case when they renew their registration each year.

Domain 1: Professional practice

Patient-centred care

Standard 1 You take into account patient-centred care in how you enact your role.

- 1.1. You consider patient impact first in how you do the following:
 - Perform your role.
 - Fulfil your duty of care, including if you have a concern about a patient's safety.
 - Contribute to service delivery.
 - Engage in appropriate safeguarding processes for individuals' care.
- 1.2. You appreciate the importance of individual patients' rights, autonomy, dignity and privacy as appropriate to your role.
- 1.3. You respect individual patients' values, beliefs and wishes as appropriate to your role.
- 1.4. You understand the importance of patients as individuals and do the following:
 - Treat individual patients with compassion.
 - Are sensitive to and respectful of individual patients' physical, psychological, religious and cultural needs and their preferences for how they engage with their care.
 - Support individuals to manage their own health and well-being.
- 1.5. You uphold and champion equality, diversity and inclusion in service delivery and challenge or report discriminatory behaviour.
- 1.6. You fulfil your duty of candour if something goes wrong.

Scope of practice

Standard 2 You work within your scope of practice.

- 2.1. You understand your personal scope of practice, competence and job role and how they contribute to the delivery of healthcare science services to meet patient or service needs.
- 2.2. You undertake activity that is within your personal competence, scope of practice and job role.
- 2.3. You take appropriate action if a potential activity sits outside your competence, scope of practice and job role, including by seeking advice from or referring a matter to an appropriate colleague.

Standard 3 You engage with arrangements for the direct and indirect supervision of your activity.

- 3.1. You engage with supervision arrangements for your practice, including by seeking and securing clarity on the following:
 - The specific activity that is due to be delegated to you, its purpose and intended outcomes.

- The specific arrangements for your supervision for a particular activity, including whether this is direct or indirect.
- Arrangements for how you should seek guidance or support if you need this while undertaking the activity.
- Arrangements for how you raise a concern, if required, while you undertake the activity.
- Arrangements for how you report on the outcomes of the activity, and any issues relating to it.

Communication

Standard 4 You communicate effectively.

- 4.1 You communicate with others, which may include patients, their carers, service users and colleagues, in ways that are sensitive to their needs and preferences and including through doing the following:
 - Actively listening.
 - Being sensitive to non-verbal cues.
- 4.2 You adapt how you communicate in response to the needs of the individuals who you are addressing, including to take account of individuals' sensory or cognitive impairments.
- 4.3 You communicate information and advice (of both a technical and non-technical nature), to agreed protocols, in effective, accessible ways to patients, carers, service users and colleagues, in line with your competence, scope of practice and job role.

Professional responsibilities

Standard 5 You practise within the legal, professional and ethical boundaries of your role.

- 5.1 You understand and engage with the standards set by the Academy for Healthcare Science and how they relate to you.
- 5.2 You adhere to legal, ethical and governance requirements that are relevant to all aspects of your role.
- 5.3 You fulfil your duty to report on any situations, behaviours or errors that could compromise patient safety or patient outcomes, or the safety of others.

Standard 6 You act with professionalism and maintain your fitness to practise.

- 6.1 You take responsibility for the following:
- The care/service that you provide.
 - Your contribution to the wider activity of your team and service delivery.
 - Your workload and supervision arrangements.
 - Your use of resources.
- 6.2 Your conduct justifies the trust that others place in you and the healthcare science workforce.
- 6.3 You meet expectations of how you engage with and present yourself in your role in a professional manner, including in terms of the following:
- Dressing appropriately.
 - Personal appearance.
 - Hygiene.
 - Time-keeping.
- 6.4 You engage with the importance of maintaining your own health and levels of personal fitness and well-being to perform in your healthcare science role.
- 6.5 You maintain high standards of personal and professional conduct, both in and outside your role and workplace, and including how you use social media .

Standard 7 You understand and apply the knowledge base of healthcare science, relevant to your scope of practice.

- 7.1 You understand the structure and function of the human body.
- 7.2 You have a knowledge of human health, disease, disorder and dysfunction relevant to healthcare science.
- 7.3 You have a knowledge of the basic science underpinning the discipline in which you practise and apply this knowledge in a clinical context.
- 7.4 You have an underpinning knowledge of anatomy, physiology, pharmacology, pathology, biochemistry, immunology, epidemiology, public health medicine, genetics, microbiology and psychosocial dimensions of health to provide the foundations for the study in one of the three divisions of healthcare science; i.e. Physical Sciences and Biomedical Engineering; Life and Pathology Sciences; and Physiological Sciences.
- 7.5 You are aware of the principles and application of scientific enquiry, including the evaluation of the research process.

Standard 8 You maintain and develop your knowledge and skills, including through reflection.

- 8.1 You keep your professional, scientific, technical knowledge and skills up-to-date and actively engage in learning and development opportunities.
- 8.2 You reflect on your performance and situations that arise in your day-to-day practice, including to do the following:
 - Learn from specific events and experiences
 - Identify areas of your practice in which you have learning needs.
 - Raise with your line manager any issues or learning and development needs arising from your reflections.

Working with others

Standard 9 You work effectively with others.

- 9.1 You work with all colleagues, service users and others in ways that best serve the needs of individual patients and optimise effective, efficient service delivery and patient outcomes.
- 9.2 You work effectively as a member of a multi-disciplinary team, including by valuing and recognising your colleagues' knowledge, skills and contribution to patient care and service delivery.
- 9.3 You share information with colleagues to protect the health, safety and well-being of others.
- 9.4 You act as a role model for more junior members of staff.
- 9.5 You support the learning and development of more junior or less experienced healthcare science staff.

Domain 2: Scientific practice Data and reporting

Standard 10 You maintain records appropriately.

- 10.1 You provide clear reports, in line with your job role and area of practice, using appropriate methods to summarise and present information and in ways that are accessible to and understandable by non-scientific professionals.
- 10.2 You present the data that you gather through routine procedures clearly and in line with agreed protocols.
- 10.3 You keep complete, clear, accurate and timely records of your activity, in line with relevant legislation, protocols and guidelines.

Technical proficiency

Standard 11 You practise safely and effectively in your healthcare science role.

- 11.1 You have the numeracy, literacy and digital and technological skills required to perform your role safely and effectively.
- 11.2 You follow standard operating procedures and specific protocols in how you perform in your role.
- 11.3 You conduct routine technical and scientific procedures in line with the following:
- Your competence, scope of practice and job role.
 - Appropriate arrangements for your direct or indirect supervision of specific activities.
 - Your understanding of the principles and practice of instruments, equipment and methodologies used in the discipline in which you practise.
 - Your understanding of theoretical basis of assessment and intervention and the practical application of this.
 - Your accurate and appropriate clinical application and use of the following:
 - Standard operating procedures.
 - Protocols.
 - Equipment.
 - Methods.
 - Other technology
- 11.4 You review the information that you collect through investigations, assessments and procedures, including to do the following:
- Evaluate the performance of equipment and take corrective action, if needed and in line with your competence and scope of practice.
 - Use standard operating procedures and protocols to analyse technical data.
 - Produce technical reports on the data you collect and your analysis of this.
- 11.5 You perform equipment management activities relating to the prevention of problems, including maintenance, calibration and repair.

Quality assurance

Standard 12 You contribute to the quality assurance of service delivery.

- 12.1 You contribute to assuring the quality of healthcare science service delivery.
- 12.2 You contribute to regular and systematic audits.
- 12.3 You respond constructively to the outcomes of audits, appraisals and performance reviews, including when this involves undertaking further training and development to meet identified needs.

Standard 13 You contribute to maintaining a safe environment for service delivery.

- 13.1 You take all reasonable care to maintain a safe environment for yourself, your colleagues and others and comply with health and safety requirements, including those set by your employer.
- 13.2 You work to safety and risk management legislation and guidelines.

- 13.3 You apply correct methods of disinfection, sterilisation, decontamination and personal protective equipment and deal with waste and spillages correctly.
- 13.4 You identify sources of risks in the workplace, including those that relate to manual handling, specimens, raw materials, needlestick injuries, clinical and special waste, equipment, radiation and electricity.
- 13.5 You take appropriate action if a health and safety incident or emergency occurs.

Domain 3: Clinical practice Clinical activity

Standard 14 You understand and where appropriate engage with informed consent and maintaining confidentiality.

- 14.1 You understand and where appropriate engage with informed consent in the following ways:
 - You understand why and when it is needed.
 - You know how to seek, obtain and record it.
 - You know what to do if you do not obtain informed consent.
- 14.2 You maintain the confidentiality of all information and records (including test results, recordings, digital images and illustrations) in line with legal requirements, published guidance and the wishes of patients and service users.

Standard 15 You perform your healthcare science role openly and transparently.

- 15.1 You engage in a culture of openness by doing the following, in line with your scope of practice and job role:
 - Being welcoming and listening.
 - Seeking and responding to feedback.
 - Addressing individuals' concerns in appropriate ways.
 - Acting appropriately when something goes wrong.
- 15.2 You protect patients, service users or others from risk or potential harm, including that presented by another person's conduct, performance or health, including by doing the following:
 - Taking appropriate action if you have a concern.
 - Taking appropriate action if a concern is raised with you.
 - Using your employer's procedures to raise a concern.
- 15.3 You share information with individual patients, their carers, service users, colleagues and other services in ways that contribute to the following:
 - Support the delivery of high-quality care.
 - Comply with all relevant legal requirements and published guidance, including on data protection, confidentiality and equality, diversity and inclusion.
 - Enable individual patients to engage with their carer and make decisions about their care if appropriate to your role.

- 15.4 You recognise and report any factors that may adversely impact on safe and effective service delivery and patient care.
- 15.5 You recognise potential or actual reportable events and act to record and report the following:
- A 'near miss' event.
 - A serious adverse event.
 - A critical incident or a major incident.

Standard 16 You support clinical activity within healthcare science services.

- 16.1 You apply protocols and standard operating procedures relevant to your discipline and scope of practice to ensure safe, effective practice.
- 16.2 You understand the standards of practice and performance expected from the correct use of relevant equipment, methods and other technology and do the following:
- Recognise if a problem arises and seek solutions.
 - Seek advice when needed.
- 16.3 You make reasoned decisions on initiating, continuing, modifying or ceasing the use of techniques and procedures, in line with standard operating procedures and guidance from senior colleagues.

Domain 4: Research, development and innovation

Research activity

Standard 17 You contribute to research, development and innovation activity.

- 17.1 You understand and engage with the importance of research being conducted with adherence to research governance frameworks, including to uphold patient safety, serve the public interest, and maintain high standards of professional conduct and practice.
- 17.2 You contribute to research, development and innovation in ways that do the following:
- Fit with your competence, scope of practice and job role.
 - Reflect your understanding of the principles and applications of scientific enquiry for the research process and for evaluating efficacy.
 - Reflect your understanding of the importance of research activity, research findings and evidence-based practice to the delivery and development of healthcare science services.

Service development

Standard 18 You contribute to quality improvement.

- 18.1 You contribute to improving how services are delivered, in line with your scope of practice and job role, which may include working in partnership with patients and service users, colleagues, local communities and the public.

Domain 5: Leadership

Standard 19 You commit to self-development and contribute to collective leadership models.

- 19.1 You demonstrate self-awareness. This includes awareness of how you develop and exercise your leadership skills, behaviours and qualities in the context of your scope of practice and job role.
- 19.2 You contribute to distributed models of leadership, including in the following ways:
- You are aware of the impact of your behaviour and approach on your colleagues
 - You engage in activities to enhance team performance.
 - You support others' learning and development.

