AHCS Guide for Applicants:

Certificate of Equivalence Scientist Training Programme (Clinical Scientist)

(Post February 2025)

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Introduction

This document provides guidance on the process of applying to the Academy for Healthcare Science (AHCS) for a Certificate of Equivalence in the knowledge, skills and behaviours that are commensurate with those achieved on the Scientist Training Programme (STP).

Good Scientific Practice (GSP) underpins the STP Training programme and the STP Equivalence route and sets out the professional standards on which safe and good working practice is founded for all those in the healthcare science workforce. GSP confirms to employers the standards of behaviour and practice that the healthcare science workforce must achieve and maintain, both in the NHS and all other sectors and settings. The standards in GSP fully meet the Health and Care Professions Council Standards of Proficiency for Clinical Scientists (see also appendix 6).

Before submitting your application for STP Equivalence, you need to familiarise yourself with all relevant information sources. These include the following:

- STP Equivalence guidance on the AHCS website: **https://www.ahcs.ac.uk/equivalence/equivalence-guidance/**
- AHCS *Good Scientific Practice (2025)*: **https://www.ahcs.ac.uk/equivalence/equivalence-guidance/**
- NSHCS STP Training curricula: **https://curriculum.nshcs.org.uk/programmes/stp**

Please note STP Equivalence can only be considered if there is a relevant accredited STP curriculum.

You must discuss your intention to apply for STP Equivalence with your line manager (who will be required to sign off your portfolio when you are ready to submit), mentors and colleagues, including to identify appropriate referees for your application (see **Appendix 4**). You may also wish to seek advice and information from your professional body.

You should also consider that there are other routes to achieving equivalence that allow you to apply to the HCPC for registration as a Clinical Scientist (see below).

Which version of Good Scientific Practice should you use?

If you have not started creating your portfolio, please refer to the latest version of Good Scientific Practice i.e. 2025 (**GSP**). You must map your evidence to the standards in Good Scientific Practice (2025). This is incorporated on the new 2025 application template from February 2025 or a word version can be downloaded on the Academy's website https://www.ahcs.ac.uk/equivalence/equivalence-guidance/

An outline of the process

The STP Equivalence process has five stages as follows:

1. **You submit your initial application** to demonstrate your eligibility to go through the process
2. **You upload your portfolio of evidence**.
3. **Your portfolio is assessed**.
4. **You are interviewed.**
5. **The outcome of your interview is ratified**, with a successful outcome meaning that you receive certification, giving you eligibility to apply for registration with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) as a Clinical Scientist.

Your progression from one stage to the next depends on your achieving a successful outcome at each stage.

This guidance and the online application portal support you in engaging with the requirements of the assessment process, including preparing and uploading your portfolio for assessment.

Should you want advice, please contact equivalence@ahcs.ac.uk and you will be put in contact with the STP Equivalence Lead. There are also dates for drop-in Q&A sessions, for all equivalence applicants Drop-in sessions - Equivalence and Clinical Research Practitioners - The Academy For Healthcare Science (ahcs.ac.uk)

Your portfolio must comprise the following elements:

- A summary of your training and experience (note from February 2025, this summary will be incorporated into a new application template).
- Submissions Pre February 2025 - A completed *Good Scientific Practice (GSP)* mapping template. Submissions Post February 2025 - The template has GSP incorporated into its format and therefore nothing additional is required.
- Your clearly labelled, supporting documents/evidence in a separate Appendix (this may be in an additional file)

The STP Equivalence process normally takes around six to twelve months to complete, depending on the demand for assessments. The AHCS endeavours to progress your application as quickly as possible.

Equality and diversity

The AHCS believes that excellence is achieved through recognising the positive value and contribution of every individual. It is committed to providing an inclusive development culture in which all individuals are:

- Enabled and encouraged to participate fully.
- Treated on the basis of merit, ability, and potential, with dignity and respect.
- Valued for their positive contributions.

Please note, we use any monitoring data we collect (including gender, marital status, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion/belief, disability) to analyse the Equivalence outcomes and review out processes and procedures. Further information on the equality and diversity policies of the AHCS can be found at https://documents.ahcs.ac.uk/storage/7/-001-AHCS-Equality-and-Diversity-Policy-v1.2-November-2022.pdf

If you have a disability, as defined under the Equality Act (2010) that you feel may affect your engagement in the application and assessment process, please contact the AHCS Administrators before submitting your application; equivalence@ahcs.ac.uk . The Academy can then advise you on reasonable adjustments.

Fee payment

Fee information for the entire equivalence assessment process can be found on the Academy's fees webpage: https://www.ahcs.ac.uk/equivalence/what-is-the-cost/

If your application is rejected as a result of the initial administrative check, you still incur a £50 administration fee.

The full fee is non-refundable once your application has been approved for portfolio submission.

Your fee includes one assessment at the portfolio stage and one at the interview stage. Further assessments require an additional fee.

Remember:

- ***You should read and seek to ensure that you have understood this guidance before you apply for STP Equivalence.***
- ***More guidance is available on the AHCS website*** Equivalence Guidance - The Academy For Healthcare Science (ahcs.ac.uk)
- ***You will find dates for the drop in Q&A sessions for all equivalence applicants at:*** Drop-in sessions - Equivalence and Clinical Research Practitioners - The Academy For Healthcare Science (ahcs.ac.uk)

If you have any queries about the application process, please contact the AHCS Administrators at equivalence@ahcs.ac.uk

What is 'Equivalence'?

The STP Equivalence process enables you to demonstrate that the knowledge, skills and behaviours that you have developed through your experience and professional development are comparable with those of someone who successfully completes the formal Scientific Training Programme.

In the context of education, training, qualifications and experience, 'equivalence' is when the outcomes of two processes are directly comparable even though the paths to achieving the outcomes are different. Enacting an equivalence process enables appropriate recognition to be given to individuals' evidenced learning. When equivalence is shown to exist between a prospective new qualification and the qualification or experiential learning a person already holds, repeating this education or training is unnecessary, and recognition of equivalence can be given to their evidenced knowledge, skills and behaviours.

In line with this, the Academy's equivalence process provides access to registration for individuals who have not followed a formal Scientist Training Programme (STP) accredited by the National School of Healthcare Science.

Your application for STP Equivalence is assessed against the following:

- **The standards set out in AHCS *Good Scientific Practice 2025(GSP)***

and importantly

- **The relevant accredited STP curriculum for the year you are applying.**

Your application is considered against *GSP* and the relevant curriculum to establish the following:

- Whether you demonstrate fulfilment of the GSP at the level expected of a clinical scientist;
- Whether you demonstrate that you have the breadth of professional knowledge, skills and behaviours comparable to those held by someone who has completed the relevant accredited STP curriculum for your application year.In selecting evidence to include in your portfolio, you must consider the learning outcomes for the core (generic), rotation (theme) and specialist modules, as set out in the relevant STP curriculum. However, you are not required to map your evidence to the outcomes of the STP curriculum.

The Equivalence process is a form of accreditation of prior experiential and certificated learning. It has no mechanisms for seeking or gaining exemption from **any** elements of the process.

As an applicant for STP Equivalence, you must present an analysis of how your learning and experience demonstrates how they map against the standards required by *GSP*.

Remember:

A copy of Good Scientific Practice is available at Equivalence Guidance - The Academy For Healthcare Science (ahcs.ac.uk)

The NSHCS accredited STP curricula can be found at: https://curriculumlibrary.nshcs.org.uk/stp/

Eligibility

As an applicant for STP equivalence, you may hold a variety of relevant qualifications and experience. To apply, you do not need to possess a Master's level qualification. However, the evidence that you present must demonstrate that you have a comparable level of professional knowledge, skills and behaviours to a trainee who successfully completes the STP.

You should consider that graduates of the STP have completed three years of Master's level (Level 7[1]) education which includes clinical workplace training. It is unlikely that periods of experience that are less than three years could provide the opportunity to develop the required knowledge, skills and behaviours to demonstrate equivalence to the STP graduate.

Holding a specific qualification or job title, or being paid within a particular Agenda for Change band, do not of themselves provide evidence of STP Equivalence.

The AHCS cannot consider applications for Equivalence from former STP students who have failed to graduate with a Certificate of Completion from the National School of Healthcare Science without evidence of further action. If you are in this position, you need to be able to demonstrate that you have taken appropriate remedial action relating to your reasons for failure as an STP student and pursue an application through the STP Equivalence process.

As a guide, you are expected to have completed at least a one-year period of further training/experience to address shortfalls in your learning and development. However, applications are considered on a case-by-case basis.

[1] For further details about the nature of a level 7 qualification, please see the document Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications, published by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/news-events/news/updated-edition-of-the-frameworks-for-higher-education-qualifications-of-uk-degree-awarding-bodies-published

Alternative routes to HCPC registration

The AHCS equivalence route assesses against the standards set out in Good Scientific Practice and determines whether you have a breadth of knowledge, skills and behaviours comparable to someone who has completed the relevant accredited STP curriculum approved by the National School of Healthcare Science (https://curriculumlibrary.nshcs.org.uk/stp/).

There are two other routes to achieving equivalence that allow you to apply to the HCPC for registration, as a Clinical Scientist in a variety of specialties.

These routes are offered by the following:

- The Association of Clinical Scientists (ACS) – route to 'Clinical Scientist'
- The Institute of Biomedical Sciences (IBMS) – 'Experiential route to HCPC Registration'. https://www.ibms.org/education/certificate-of-attainment-clinical-scientist/

If you are fully trained, qualified and working overseas and wish to obtain HCPC registration in the UK as a Clinical Scientist, you should seek information directly from the HCPC on the regulator's international route to registration; https://www.hcpc-uk.org/registration/getting-on-the-register/international-applications/ .

Overview of the STP Equivalence process

Your application for the STP Certificate of Equivalence goes through five stages. Progression from one stage to the next depends on the successful completion of each stage. The process normally takes around six to twelve months depending on demand.

Stage 1: Your initial application

You set up your applicant profile by doing the following:

- **You submit your initial application** to demonstrate your eligibility to go through the process by uploading your initial documentation in line with AHCS requirements (see **Stage 1a, detailed guidance**).
- **You make the payment**.

Following an administrative check

- **You upload your portfolio.**

If you have a disability, as defined under the Equality Act (2010) that you feel may affect your engagement in the application and assessment process, please contact the AHCS Administrators before submitting your application; equivalence@ahcs.ac.uk. Advice on reasonable adjustments can then be given.

Stage 2: Assessment of your portfolio

Your portfolio is reviewed by a specialist assessor. This process is quality assured and all potential outcome 2 are reviewed by a second assessor. The specialist assessor will be from the relevant specialty and will be a registered Clinical Scientist working in the same division as you; for example, Bioinformatics, Physical, Physiological or Life Sciences.

Assessors are asked to declare any conflicts of interest they may have in assessing your portfolio. Alternative arrangements are made for assessment, as appropriate, to manage any potential conflicts of interest.

You are notified of the outcome of the assessment of your portfolio.

Stage 3: Your interview

You are interviewed by a panel of three assessors, with the panel comprising of a specialist assessor, a professional assessor/moderator and one lay assessor. Your interview is normally conducted via video-conferencing[2]. Normally, at least one of your professional assessors will be from the relevant specialty and at least one will be a registered Clinical Scientist who works in the same division. Assessors are asked to declare any conflicts of interest they may have in conducting your interview. Where possible, you are interviewed by the same specialist assessor who reviewed your portfolio.

If you have a disability, as defined under the Equality Act (2010) that you feel may affect your engagement in the application and assessment process, please contact the AHCS Administrators ***before*** submitting your application; equivalence@ahcs.ac.uk. Advice on reasonable adjustments can then be given.

Stage 4: Ratification and certification

This stage includes the following:

- The outcome of your interview is ratified.
- You are notified of the outcome.
- The HCPC is notified of the outcome.
- You receive Certification from The Academy if the outcome is one of successful completion.

As a successful applicant, you are eligible to apply to join HCPC's Register as a Clinical Scientist once Stage 4 Ratification has taken place. You do not need to have received a copy of your certificate to apply (see section 5 stage 4).

[2] Currently using Teams: Profession assessors may dial into the Teams session. The lay assessor and applicant must be visible during the interview.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined as '*The practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own*" (English Oxford Dictionary). It can take the form of submitting someone else's work, word- for-word, as your own; taking significant portions of text from a single source without alterations and without due acknowledgement; and changing key words and phrases, but retaining the essential content of the source, again, without due acknowledgement of the source (Turnitin 2018[4]). The AHCS views plagiarism as both unethical and unprofessional.

The Academy recognises that applicants may follow a similar structure for their portfolio and draw upon a range of material in compiling your evidence. However, any part of your application that requires your original comment or thought must be your own work, with appropriate acknowledgment of sources on which you draw to produce your application. These requirements apply to your personal statement, summary report and supporting evidence.

Please also see AHCS https://documents.ahcs.ac.uk/docs/263/-133-Use-of-Generative-AI-in-AHCS-Equivalence-v1.1-September-2024.pdf

If instances of plagiarism are suspected or identified in your application, they will be investigated formally by the AHCS and may lead to your application being rejected.

Maintaining confidentiality

Your application for STP equivalence must only include information that it is appropriate for you to share. You must not include any information that compromises patient confidentiality or the confidentiality of another third party (e.g. a colleague).

Just as in other areas of your professional activity, you need to ensure that you do the following:

- Comply with the requirements of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- Uphold the trust that patients, colleagues, your employer and the public place in you.
- Demonstrate your fulfilment of *GSP in relation to confidentiality*.

If you draw on material as evidence sources that include others' personal data (e.g. a witness statement) or information that is potentially business-sensitive (e.g. a business case relating to a service development initiative), you must redact all details that could make individuals (patients or colleagues) or a service or organisation identifiable. Please then save your document in PDF format so that track changes cannot inadvertently be used to reveal the deleted information.

If you include any colleague email addresses or other contact details, you must first secure the individuals' permission for this information to be provided and confirm in your portfolio that you have secured their permission.

For information on confidentiality issues, see the HCPC's guidance on confidentiality[5].

For assurance on how the AHCS uses and manages your personal data, please see the Academy's GDPR statement[6].

[4] Turnitin 'Spectrum of Plagiarism' (2018), available at: https://www.turnitin.com/static/plagiarism-spectrum/

[5] https://www.hcpc-uk.org/registration/meeting-our-standards/guidance-on-confidentiality/

[6] https://www.ahcs.ac.uk/about/about-the-academy/gdpr/

Detailed guidance on each stage of the process

You must make your application online via the AHCS website: **https://app.ahcs.ac.uk/** .

You will receive system-generated emails at various points as you progress through the application process. You are advised to check your 'junk mail" and to set your email rules to seek to ensure that you receive these emails and in a timely manner.

Deadlines are set for each stage of the Equivalence assessment process. You receive notifications of these by email. You must meet these deadlines except in exceptional circumstances; e.g. due to illness. If you wish to seek an extension to a deadline, you must contact equivalence@ahcs.ac.uk at the earliest opportunity and declare the extenuating circumstances. Extensions are at the discretion of AHCS and based on the extenuating circumstances.

You can save and return to your application at any point before you make your final submission. You should save your work regularly. Once you click on 'Submit application', you cannot amend any part of your application and it will be processed for assessment.

Stage 1a: Application and payment

Setting up your applicant profile

You need to set up a personal profile on the AHCS online system. Further information on this can be found in **Appendix 2**.

Uploading information and documentation

Once you have selected 'STP Equivalence', you can begin to input the required information and upload the required documentation. The table below provides details about each section that you need to complete.

Personal details Please complete all fields. This includes providing an email address for future contact on your application. You can change the email address that you use for this purpose at any time.
Guidance Please read and confirm that you have read the information in this section about making an application.
Professional Identity Please indicate if you have had or continue to have any previous periods of registration with the AHCS or another health or social care regulatory body, or voluntary registration body or professional body in the UK and/or overseas.

Education and Training

Please complete all fields for all elements of your education and training that you plan to present in your evidence.

If you list education and training elements in this section, please upload a relevant certificate as evidence of completion.

If your most recent or highest academic qualification is not from a UK higher education provider with degree awarding powers, please provide a ENIC (formerly NARIC) Statement of Comparability.

Career Details

Please complete all fields.
Please note: Applicants who have worked abroad must have at least 12 months experience working in a UK healthcare setting.

Proof of Identity

Please upload documentary evidence as set out below.

- A certified copy of proof of identity (i.e. government-issued photo ID, such as a passport or driving licence).
- You are required to show the original copy of your ID at interview.

A certified copy of your proof of identity must be certified as a true copy of the original by a person of professional standing in the community. This means that the person you ask to certify your document(s) must write on it ***'I certify that this is a true copy of the original document'*** and must sign it and print their name and professional title.

The person certifying your documentation needs to be a professional person (e.g. this can be a statutory-registered healthcare professional, such as an HCPC- or GMC-registered practitioner, or a legal practitioner, such as a solicitor or barrister, or an accountant) or a person of standing in the community.

Examples of the latter include your bank manager; a Justice of the Peace, or other judicial official; a Minister of the Church, Rabbi, Imam or other recognised religious official; a Member of Parliament, Member of Scottish Parliament, Member of the Northern Ireland Assembly, Member of the Welsh Assembly; or an Officer in HM Armed Forces.

Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) Certificate

Please provide a 'Basic' (or enhanced) level DBS check by:

- Uploading a scanned copy of your DBS check; or
- Evidence that your employer has checked your DBS status and confirmed no change has occurred since a certificate was issued.

If you do not have a valid DBS check and your employer cannot provide the necessary confirmation, you can request a basic disclosure from the UK Government (https://www.gov.uk/request-copy-criminal-record).

If you are an International Applicant and unable to provide a DBS check, please contact the AHCS for advice.

Change of Name

Please provide certified evidence of any change in name.

If your change of name is detailed on a certified copy of an AHCS Certificate of Attainment from a UK-approved PTP degree programme or a Certificate of Equivalence from AHCS PTP Equivalence Programme, then you do not need to provide further evidence other than a copy of your AHCS Certificate.

English Language proficiency

If you are **not a UK citizen**, please provide one of the following:

- A scanned copy of certification to demonstrate either your achievement within the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) of an overall score of 7.0, with no individual element below 6.5, or your achievement within the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) Internet Based Test of a minimum score of 100/120.
- Evidence of successfully completing an undergraduate or postgraduate degree awarded by UK higher education provider (with degree awarding powers), with confirmation that the admissions criteria for this aware were the same as the English language proficiency requirements set out in the first bullet point above.

Non-UK citizens who have gained their relevant primary qualification in a country on the HCPC list of Qualifying Countries may use this to evidence their English Language proficiency and do not need to provide an IELTS or TOEFL Certificate.

Good character and Health

Please state if you have a physical or mental health condition(s) that could impair your fitness to practise as a clinical scientist.

If you indicate that you have such a condition, your application will be reviewed by a senior member of the AHCS, in line with the Academy's fitness to practise requirements. You may be asked to provide further information in order that full are fair consideration can be given to your application in this area.

Personal Statement

Your personal statement should provide a summary of your professional experience. It must not exceed 1000 words and not be less than 500 words.

Your statement should provide the following:

- A description of your previous experience and the duties that you have undertaken.
- A summary of your past and current research activity (including a list of relevant publications) and/or involvement in audit or service development projects.
- The names, qualifications (including professional registration number) and contact information of two individuals who can verify the veracity and currency of your Personal Statement, at least one of whom should be on a professional register. These individuals will be invited through the system to verify your personal statement. Your personal statement must be verified by both individuals and the administrative checks completed successfully before you can continue with your application.
- Sufficient detail to account for your experience and supervised training in preparation for meeting the duties and responsibilities of a clinical scientist.

Declarations

Please read and tick the box if you understand and are willing to affirm the declarations.

Equality Monitoring Information

This section of the application form **does not** form part of the assessment process.

You do not have to disclose your details, but please ensure that you select the option *'I do not wish to disclose'* if this is the case.

Payment

You need to make payment using the AHCS's secure payment system. This is run by the third- party service provider GoCardless.

You will be asked to set up a Direct Debit. However, this is for a single payment of the application fee.

Payment can also be made by credit/debit card.

The application fee for the STP Equivalence programme can be found at https://www.ahcs.ac.uk/equivalence/

Complete Application

When you have provided all the information/documentation required, click 'Submit application'.

An administrative check is undertaken once you have uploaded your documentation and paid the administration fee. You may be contacted if you have not provided all the information required.

Stage 1b: Uploading your portfolio

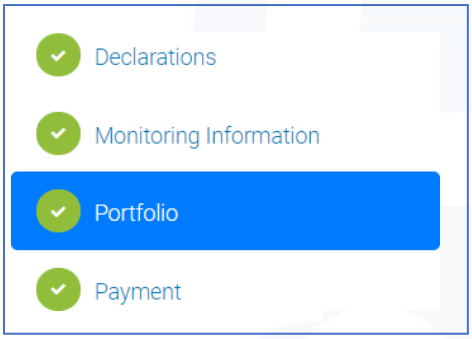
Please note the application process is currently under review. Please check the process updates regularly.
You can upload your portfolio content once you have gone through Stage 1a. From this point, you currently have six months to complete and submit your portfolio. Please check the process updates regularly.

This section explains the information that you need to supply in your portfolio. Further information on evidence types is provided in Appendix 3.

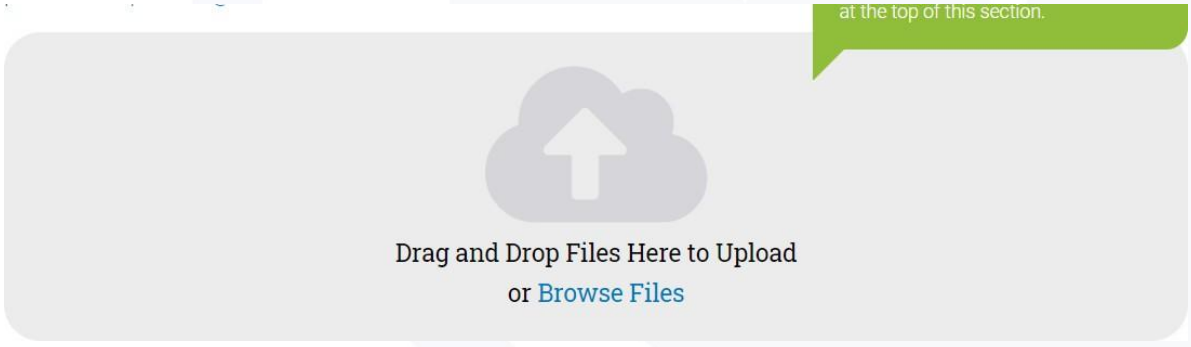
Professional References

Please provide two professional references, one of which must be from your current/most recent employer or line manager/supervisor (see Appendix 4 below)

A 'portfolio' button will appear on your application dashboard. You should click on



You can then drag and drop files or browse file to upload them into this section.



The content of your portfolio

The portfolio is your opportunity to demonstrate the following:

- You put patients at the centre of your practice even if your role is not patient facing.

Examples of non-patient facing roles include working in Bioinformatics, Biomedical Sciences or Clinical Engineering, where your role directly impacts on the care and welfare of the patient, but may not involve direct, face-to-face contact with patients. Gaining experience within multi-disciplinary teams, shadowing clinical colleagues and reflecting on how your role improves patient outcomes can all provide strong evidence for the Clinical Domain in

your portfolio submission.

- You have undertaken an adequate period of supervised training in the duties and responsibilities commensurate with those of a clinical scientist.
- Your knowledge, skills and behaviours that you have achieved through your education and working experience meet the standards of *GSP* and are comparable to those of someone who successfully completes an NSHCS-accredited Scientist Training Programme.
- You have reflected on your training and experience and how your learning and practice have developed through this process.
- You are aware of all relevant legislation, the risks involved in working in healthcare environments, and approaches to risk management and mitigation to uphold the health and safety of all parties.

The evidence in your portfolio must support your summary of your experience and demonstrate how you meet the standards in each GSP domain and the learning outcomes of the relevant curriculum.

The structure of your portfolio – please note the changes to the application post February 2025

Your portfolio template should comprise the following:

- A brief outline of your roles and responsibilities in your current job (max 300 words)
- A brief outline of your education and training for your current role (max 300 words)
- How you meet the standards of GSP, by citing your evidence e.g. (E1) in your descriptive text and by adding the location into the appropriate column on the form. Your evidence should be clearly labelled and added into an Appendix of Evidence (this may be a separate file)
- Your supporting evidence for each standard. You can use a single piece of evidence to support more than one standard. However, you should also ensure that your supporting evidence has a suitable variety and breadth (see ***Appendix 3*** for more guidance on this).
- A reflective account describing; *why becoming a Clinical Scientist is important to you and importantly how you have demonstrated that you made the patient your first concern during the Equivalence process.* This reflective piece should be no longer than 500 words.

Presenting your portfolio

Your portfolio is assessed electronically. It is therefore best if you upload your portfolio as a single pdf document and your Appendix as a separate file document. The AHCS's system allows for a maximum of three documents of no more than 20MB each.

Your portfolio must fulfil the requirements set out below.

- Be your own work, with any input from others duly acknowledged (see the section above on **plagiarism and AI**).
- Be no longer than 150 pages in total.
  Portfolios that are fewer than 60 pages are unlikely to contain sufficient evidence.
  Portfolios over 150 pages will be returned to the applicant.

- Use a font size for text of 12 point.

[7] A blank mapping template (Word version) can be found at: Equivalence Guidance - The Academy For Healthcare Science (ahcs.ac.uk)

- You should cite your evidence in your summary when describing how you meet a standard, add clearly labelled evidence into your Appendix and you must not include any confidential data, such as a patient's name, date of birth, address

  If such information is included, the portfolio will be rejected by the assessment panel and returned to the applicant (see section above on **Maintaining confidentiality**).

- You must not include 'photo-reduced' or resized certificates or other evidence to attempt to fit more than one to a page and please note that embedded files are not supported.
- You should provide certified translations of any evidence that is not in English.

Your completed template must meet the requirements set out below.

- Provide information on your relevant training and experience; past and current research (include a list of relevant publications if applicable), your involvement in audit, quality assurance, service development projects etc.
- Clearly set out how you meet the standards within the GSP domains and signpost assessors to your relevant supporting evidence for how you meet each standard. Note: Assessors should **not** have to do the mapping for you or have to search for the evidence within the portfolio on your behalf. You should cite the evidence throughout the summary report text and add the evidence labels into the Evidence location column. Please note applications from February 2025 do not have a separate mapping template. There is a blank mapping document available on the AHCS website should you want to undertake a knowledge and skills gap analysis. If your portfolio is poorly organised and difficult to follow, the assessor can recommend an outcome 2 (see below) and the portfolio will be returned to you for further work. The assessor will provide feedback to guide you as to what changes are required
- Include reflections on how your activities and training have contributed to your fulfilment of the standards and competences required of a Clinical Scientist.
- Be well structured and straightforward to read and navigate.
- **You should not exceed 5000 words, this excludes the wording of the original template and appendices.**
- It is recommended that the paragraphs in your summary are numbered (not required in the new February 2025 application).
- Remember your completed portfolio is individual to you. Please be very wary of looking at other people's portfolios. So often applicants have their portfolios returned as an Outcome 2 when the content, style, and evidence is inappropriate for AHCS STP Equivalence.

[Please note the Good Scientific Practice mapping template is for Applications pre-February 2025 only

You should list your evidence against each standard in the *GSP* domains to demonstrate that you hold the knowledge, skills and behaviours to meet the *GSP* standards as a Clinical Scientist, you also need to consider the learning outcomes in the relevant STP curriculum. You need to seek to ensure that the evidence you provide helps your assessors to be assured that your learning and development has equivalence with someone successfully completing an accredited STP programme. This is where reflection really adds to the quality of your evidence.

Your supporting evidence

Your evidence must be clearly labelled and show that you have personally carried out activity in key areas or practice, and not just observed activity being done. Statements just indicating your attendance or participation in activity on their own are not sufficient. You must also provide a reflective description of how specific elements of your experience have helped you to learn, develop and achieve a particular standard, and where you have identified that you may have additional learning and development needs.

You should take care to ensure that your evidence is well selected, of high quality, and only includes information that it is appropriate for you to provide. You should bear in mind the following points:

- You must not provide a detailed, day-to-day training diary or logbook.
- You should not provide the full text of any published work, report, thesis, project or essay. Instead, you should provide summaries of your evidence. As examples, an executive summary or an abstract is appropriate if your evidence is a published report or article for which you are an author.
- You should not include certificates of attendance for every meeting in which you have been involved. Well selected evidence of attendance with reflection on the benefits of attending the meeting is good quality evidence of CPD.
- You should only provide information on activity that has directly contributed to providing evidence of how you have met a *GSP* standard(s).

Appendix 3, the 2025 Application template itself and the GSP standards provide more detailed guidance on the types of evidence to include to demonstrate equivalence within the individual *GSP* domains.

A common comment from assessors is that applicants' evidence does not demonstrate a sufficient breadth of experience, knowledge and skills at a Theme level[8], but focuses solely on the specialist content of the STP programme. Looking at the rotation (as well as the specialist) modules is helpful.

You are not required to demonstrate competency in the practical skills expected in the rotation modules. However, you should be able to demonstrate the equivalent knowledge and understanding and that you have had exposure to the area. In this instance, shadowing is an appropriate activity to evidence. You need to describe and reflect on the insights and understanding that shadowing has given you and include your critical reflections on these. Your reflective piece should synthesise your description of your activity and the benefits you have distilled from your activity in terms of your learning and development.

Remember:

- ***Your portfolio needs to evidence how you meet the GSP and directly relate to the learning outcomes of the relevant STP curriculum.***
- ***Your line manager must sign off your portfolio, once completed.***
- ***You should write a reflective statement of no more than 500 words, describing the importance of achieving registration as a Clinical Scientist. You should also provide reflection on key pieces of evidence in each of the domains.***
- ***You need to include high-quality, clearly labelled evidence that includes critical reflection on your experience and professional development, in line with the demands of Master's level learning.***
- ***You can save and return to your application at any point before you finally submit it.***
- ***You should save your work regularly.***
- ***Once you click 'Submit application', you cannot make any further amendments or additions to your application.***
- ***If you need further help, save your work and contact equivalence@ahcs.ac.uk .***
- ***Currently, you are limited to resubmit your portfolio up to a maximum of three times, following which you will receive and Outcome 3 - reject application. You may reapply following a time period recommended at the discretion of the panel of assessors***

[8] Blood Sciences, Cardiac, Critical Care, Vascular, Respiratory and Sleep Sciences, Cellular Sciences, Clinical Bioinformatics, Clinical Engineering, Clinical Pharmaceutical Sciences, Gastrointestinal Physiology and Urodynamic Science, Genomic Sciences, Infection Sciences, Medical Physics, Neurosensory Sciences, Reconstructive Science.

Stage 2: Assessment of your portfolio

Assessors are appointed from the AHCS's pool of professional and lay assessors.

Review of the portfolio is undertaken by a specialist assessor with moderation by another assessor for Quality Assurance purposes and always when an outcome 2 or 3 is being considered. The other assessor will be a professional assessor/moderator with expertise in GSP.

Assessors are asked to declare any conflicts of interest they may have in relation to each assessment, with appropriate action taken to ensure that each application is fairly assessed.

All applications for STP Equivalence are assessed against the standards set out in *Good Scientific Practice 2025(GSP)*[9] no matter the specialty or role. As an applicant, you must satisfy the assessors that you have provided sufficient evidence of the knowledge, skills, and behaviours associated with *GSP* at the clinical scientist level.

Assessors review your portfolio in terms of meeting *GSP* standards in your application template, summary report and supporting evidence. They first assess whether your evidence demonstrates that you have met all the domains of the *GSP*; i.e. professional practice, scientific practice, clinical practice, research and development and innovation, and clinical leadership.

Assessors also consider whether you have the comparable breadth of knowledge, skills and behaviours as someone who has successfully completed the relevant NSHCS accredited STP curriculum[10].

Possible outcomes of Stage 2

After assessors have reviewed your portfolio, they recommend one of the following three possible outcomes:

Outcome 1: You should progress to the interview stage (**Stage 3**).

Outcome 2: You need to supply more evidence (see below).

Outcome 3: Your application is rejected.

You are informed of the outcome. If the outcome is either that you need to provide more evidence or your application is rejected, you receive feedback.

If you need to provide further evidence, you can submit this either as a separate document or as clearly highlighted additions to your portfolio. This enables your new evidence to be reviewed by your assessors to determine whether it meets their information needs.

[9] Good Scientific Practice can be found at Equivalence Guidance - The Academy for Healthcare Science (ahcs.ac.uk)

[10] Available at https://curriculumlibrary.nshcs.org.uk/stp/

Stage 3: Your interview

The purpose of your interview is to use generic and specialist questions and scenarios to do the following:

- Confirm your knowledge, skills and behaviours and how you apply them in the workplace setting.
- Ensure that you meet the standards set out in *GSP*.
- Ensure that your knowledge, skills and behaviours are comparable to someone who has successfully completed the NSHCS-accredited Scientist Training Programme.

The assessment panel comprises of a specialist assessor, a professional assessor/moderator and one lay assessor. The lay assessor Chairs the panel and your interview.

Your interview is normally conducted via video-conferencing[11]Your interview will be recorded and is scheduled for 60 minutes. It usually lasts between 40 and 60 minutes. You may have access to your portfolio should you or the assessors wish to discuss particular area/s during the interview. However, it is not appropriate to have crib sheets, notes or artificial intelligence aid which would give you any unfair advantages. You should also be alone in the room and the Chair of the panel will ask you to confirm this at the start of the interview.

Assessors usually each ask you a number of questions, some of which are scenarios, relating to each of the *GSP* domains. They take notes while you answer. You may also write down the question if you feel this will help you provide a structured answer (please confirm this with the Lay Chair). Your interview is to confirm your specialist knowledge, skills and behaviours as you have described in your portfolio as related to the learning outcomes of the curriculum and to your job description. Use of artificial intelligence or other online material to create your response is strictly prohibited. At the end of your interview, the panel Chair gives you the opportunity to comment. After this, you are asked to leave your virtual interview.

You are advised to conduct a short 'test-call' with the Equivalence Administrator ahead of your interview to ensure you are comfortable with engaging with the technical arrangements and you can resolve any practical difficulties. Please ask for this call after receiving your interview dial-in details.

If you have any queries about using the video-conference system, please contact equivalence@ahcs.ac.uk

There should be no contact between applicant and assessor by social media or any other means for the entirety of the application, it is considered a breach of conduct and a conflict of interest to do so.

[1] We currently use Teams and the interview is recorded. Note, professional assessors may dial into the meeting. The lay assessor and applicant must be visible during the interview.

Possible outcomes of Stage 3

Assessors can recommend one of the outcomes itemised below.

Outcome 1: You have demonstrated equivalence and should be awarded the STP Certificate of Equivalence.

Outcome 2: You may be able to demonstrate equivalence, but further evidence is required.

Outcome 3: You have not demonstrated equivalence.

If **Outcome 2** is awarded, you receive feedback on the areas in which further evidence is required. This can include that you need to secure some additional experience and/or undertake some further training before resubmitting your application. You will be given instructions regarding a timeline to undertake this.

In this scenario, you are usually invited to a second interview. The cost of this is currently covered by your initial fee. Any subsequent interviews may require payment of an additional fee. Applicants can only have a maximum of three interviews per application and the application is then awarded an Outcome 3.

Where **Outcome 3** is awarded, you are advised of the action that you need to take. This may include undertaking a full Scientist Training Programme. If you wish to apply for STP Equivalence again, you must submit a new application and pay the fees again. You will be advised of the timeline as to when you may submit a new application, which is at the discretion of the interview panel, but may be up to three years.

Stage 4: Ratification and certification

All STP Equivalence outcomes require ratification by the AHCS's Education, Training and Standards Committee before they can be released. Once ratification has taken place, you are notified of this by email. Shortly after that, you will be able to access your STP Certificate of Equivalence through the AHCS system.

If you are awarded Outcome 1, the HCPC is advised of this, and you are eligible to apply to register with the HCPC as a Clinical Scientist.

It normally takes the HCPC up to 10 working days to process applications for registration and update its register. You do **not** need to have received a copy of your STP Certificate of Equivalence to apply to join HCPC's register[12].

[12] Further details about how to apply to the HCPC can be found at http://www.hpc-uk.org/apply/

Complaints and appeals

The AHCS has mechanisms to ensure that applicants, assessors, staff and the public have the opportunity to participate fully in the development and improvement of services. It is expected that all parties are able to take full advantage of these to provide the AHCS with feedback.

There may be occasions when applicants feel that they have received or been offered insufficient feedback as they progress through the application process. For this reason, the AHCS has a complaints procedure. This should be used if applicants believe that informal attempts to resolve the matter with the AHCS have not been successful. Information about the complaints procedure can be found at https://documents.ahcs.ac.uk/storage/151/-039-AHCS-Appeals-and-Complaints-Process-for-Equivalence-Applications-v1.0-November-2023.pdf

Applicants can also appeal outcome decisions if they reasonably believe that they have experienced a procedural or administrative irregularity during the STP Equivalence process. Appeals against the judgements of assessors, ratification decisions or other decisions made by the Education, Training and Professional Standards Committee cannot be considered.

Appeals must be made within 28 calendar days of receipt of the outcome decision. Appeals are considered by a dedicated Appeals Panel. The panel may undertake an investigation on the matters raised in the appeal, including by requesting written statements or interviews, as deemed appropriate. The Appeals Panel then summarises their determination in a report. The report is provided to the applicant, assessors, Chair of AHCS Education, Training and Standards Committee, Chair of AHCS Regulation Board and is retained on file by AHCS. The judgements of Appeals Panels are final.

The AHCS appeals policy can be found on the AHCS website: Equivalence Guidance - The Academy For Healthcare Science (ahcs.ac.uk)

Appendix 1: Abbreviations used in this guidance.

AHCS Academy for Healthcare Science

CV Curriculum Vitae

DBS Disclosure and Barring Service

ENIC UK National Information Centre

GDPR General Data Protection Regulation

GSP Good Scientific Practice

HCPC Health and Care Professions Council

HCS Healthcare Science

IELTS International English Language Test System

MDT Multi-disciplinary teams

NSHCS National School of Healthcare Science

PDP Personal development plan

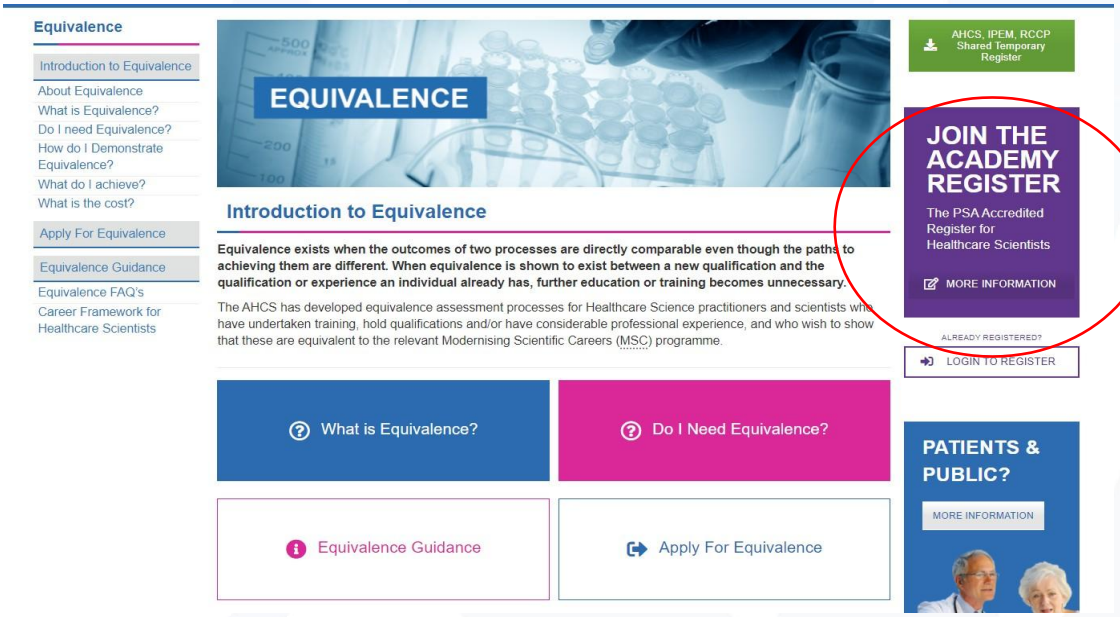
STP Scientist Training Programme

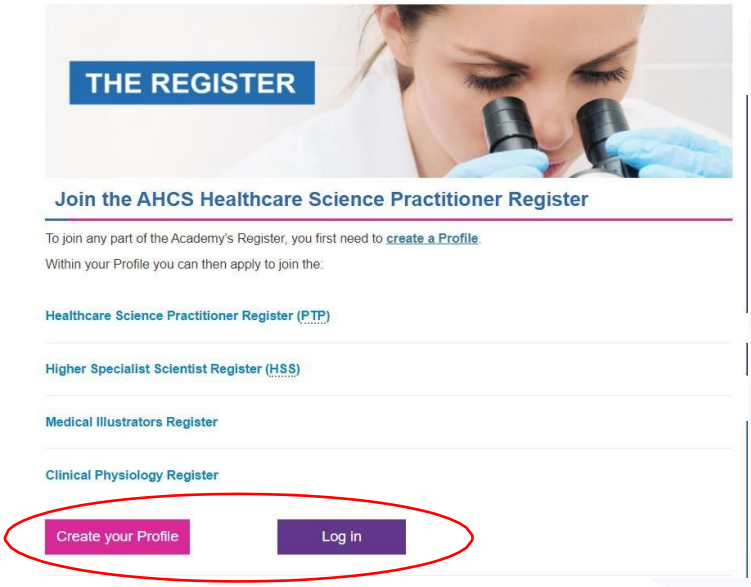
TOEFL Test of English as a Foreign Language

Appendix 2: Setting up your applicant profile

To progress your application, you need to create a personal profile on the AHCS online system. The guidance below explains how to do this.

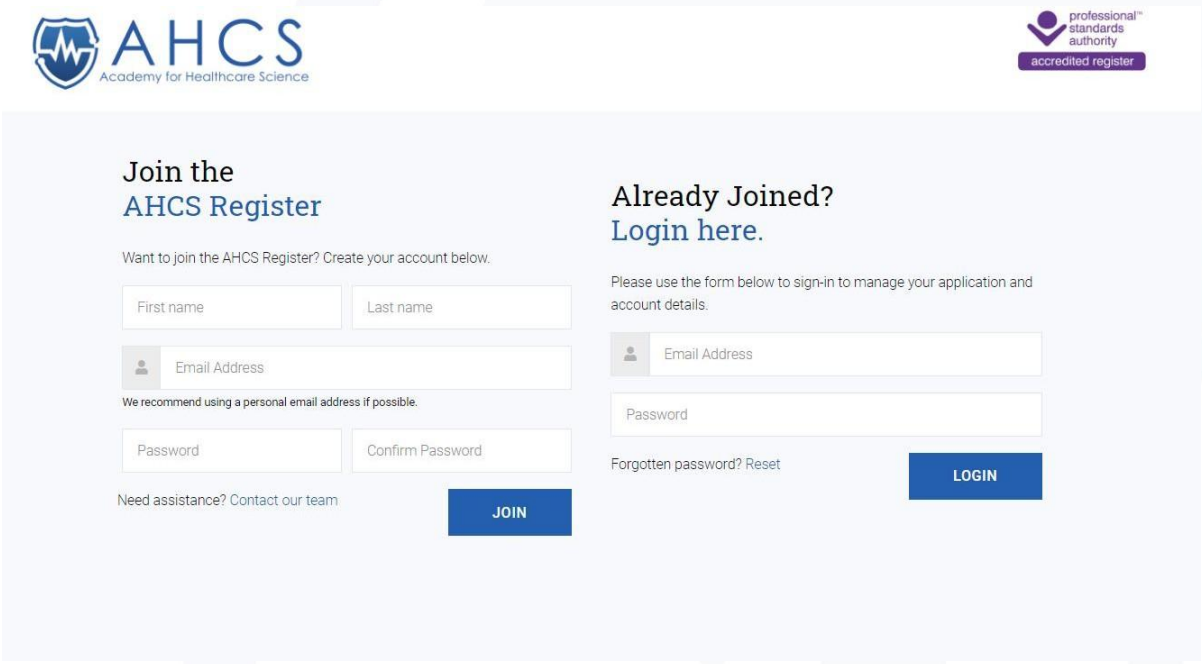
1. Go to the Academy's Equivalence webpage https://www.ahcs.ac.uk/equivalence/ .
2. Click Join the Register.



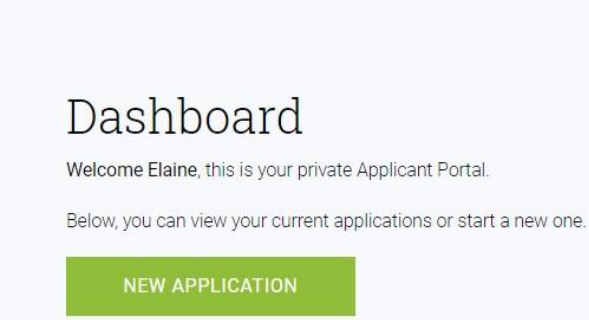


3. Click on 'Create your profile' or 'log in' if you already have an account.

4. Once your details are registered and verified, you can log in and complete your application (see below).



5. Once you have signed in for the first time, you can gain access to your private applicant portal. To do this, you need to click on 'New Application' and select 'STP Equivalence'.



6. You can work through the menu provided in any order to add information and upload your documentation, as directed.

Remember:

- **You can save and return to your application at any point before you finally submit it.**
- **You should save your work regularly.**
- **Once you have clicked 'Submit', you cannot amend or add to your application.**
- **If you need help in uploading your information, save your work and contact equivalence@ahcs.ac.uk.**

Appendix 3: Additional guidance on compiling your evidence

The table below sets out examples of the kinds of evidence that you may submit to support your STP Equivalence application. The list is not exhaustive. It provides examples and is intended purely as guidance. You may submit more, less information or different types of information for each domain of GSP. You can use any one piece of evidence to support your application in relation to more than one domain or standard. However, you are expected to provide more than one piece of evidence for each domain.

Domains of Good Scientific Practice	
Domain	**Examples of evidence**
1. Professional Practice	• Personal references • Health reference • Your CPD records • Your appraisal forms • Your PDP and/or reflective log signed by a senior scientist • Outputs from multi-source feedback relating to your practice and development • Your participation in MDTs • Minutes that demonstrate your participation in team meetings • Your professional body activity • Your engagement with Trust policies • Your understanding of Statutory Regulatory Body standards and processes and the responsibilities that these impart on registrants • Evidence of training that you have delivered • Feedback you have received on delivering training sessions • Information on how you conduct supervisory meetings with trainees • Witness statements • Patient information or training information that you have developed or to which you have made a contribution. • REFLECTIVE ACCOUNT

2. Scientific Practice	• Evidence of your scientific and technical practice against the STP programme outcomes • Clinical experiential learning in the appropriate curriculum and the domains in GSP • Your critical analysis of the evidence that you submit • Shadowing and critical reflection • Reports on your placements or secondments • Annotated diagrams • Project reports, with an indication of your specific involvement and contribution • Attendance at training and your reflections of the impact of that training on your learning and practice Case studies • Your review and development of standard operating procedures • Your participation in audit • Your participation in appropriate quality management systems • Incident forms and reflection on your learning points from incidents • REFLECTIVE PRACTICE
3. Clinical Practice	• Evidence of your clinical practice against the programme outcomes • Your clinical experiential learning in the appropriate curriculum and the domains in GSP • Your critical analysis of your evidence of the above • Case studies relating to your practice • Evidence of your clinical advice/interpretation to clinical staff • Examples of your reports • Examples of witness statements. • REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

4. Research, Development and Innovation	• Evidence of how you have undertaken and disseminated research, QA, service development or innovation • Your participation in service developments • Your published reports • Your critical appraisal of research literature and its application in your practice • Your peer-reviewed publications • Your presentations/posters at conferences and scientific meetings • Undertaking a research degree (MPhil, MRes, PhD or Professional Doctorate) • Your specific research training, such as the NIHR module; Good Clinical Practice REFLECTIVE PRACTICE
5. Scientific and Clinical Leadership	• Personal and employer references • Output from multi-source feedback on your approach and development • CV • Witness statements • Project reports, with an indication of your specific involvement and contribution • Business cases, with clarity on your role and contribution to producing these • REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Appendix 4: Guidance for referees

Note - all new Equivalence applicants should refer to the revised GSP 2025. From February 2025, STP Equivalence applicants must map their evidence to the GSP 2025 standards incorporated in the new application template.

You are expected to share this guidance with your referees before they write a reference for you.

Your STP Equivalence application must be accompanied by two professional references. These should normally be supplied by individuals who have acted as your supervisor or manager. At least one of the references must be from your current or most recent employment. Upload references to the Portfolio section, clearly labelled.

In preparing a reference, referees will find it helpful to review the following:

- The domains of Good Scientific Practice (GSP)
    - Domain 1: Professional practice
    - Domain 2: Scientific practice
    - Domain 3: Clinical practice
    - Domain 4: Research, development and innovation
    - Domain 5: Clinical leadership
- A copy of the relevant, current Scientist Training Programme (STP) curriculum, appropriate to your role.

Applicants are assessed against the standards set out in the GSP domains, in the context of the STP Training curriculum for their specialty. Applicants need to provide evidence of their clinical competence and a level of specialist scientific knowledge that is commensurate with successfully completing a relevant NSHSC accredited Scientist Training Programme.

Line managers (or other appropriate senior colleague) providing a reference are asked to confirm the following:

- The applicant's current duties and responsibilities.
- That the applicant has undergone an appropriate/adequate period of supervised training in the duties and responsibilities of a clinical scientist and/or is working at the appropriate clinical scientist level.

Line managers must sign off the completed portfolio

All referees are asked to confirm the following:

- The capacity in which they are writing the reference for the applicant; for example, as a line manager, supervisor, or colleague.
- How long they have known the applicant.
- Their understanding of the applicant's professional abilities, skills, knowledge and competences.
- Whether they support the application.

Referees should write on headed note paper in letter format and must provide the following information about themselves:

- Their highest educational and professional qualifications, current position and place of work.
- Their position and place of work when the applicant was working with them.
- Their HCPC/GMC registration number (if or as applicable).
- Contact details, including email, in case more information is needed.

References must be hand signed and provided on official headed paper from the referee's employing organisation.

Completed references should be sent to the applicant to upload onto the AHCS system. There is no need for referees to liaise with the AHCS directly.

Appendix 5: Good Scientific Practice (2025)

Please see; AHCS *Good Scientific Practice (2025)*: https://www.ahcs.ac.uk/equivalence/equivalence- guidance/

1. The purpose of Good Scientific Practice

Patients are the number one priority and their safety in all settings where the healthcare science workforce operate is paramount. The purpose of Good Scientific Practice (GSP) is to set out the professional standards on which safe, effective and good working practice is founded for all those in the healthcare science workforce.

GSP also confirms to employers the standards of behaviour and practice that all members of the healthcare science workforce must be supported to achieve and maintain, both in the NHS and all other sectors and settings. The standards are essential for all members of the workforce to perform their job role activities; provide safe, effective patient care; and demonstrate their professionalism.

GSP uses the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) Standards of Proficiency for Clinical Scientists and Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics as its benchmarks. It also draws on other regulatory and professional body standards and expresses them within the context of healthcare science. We are confident that the standards map against HCPC standards and in this respect, they are to Healthcare Scientists as Good Medical Practice is to the medical profession. The standards promote the Healthcare Science Professions 'identity; how we are at the core of NHS diagnostics and therapeutics and the standards of GSP are core to the professional standards that are specific to us. In other words, they "come from us and are for us".

The core principles of the NHS are shared across all parts of the United Kingdom, the devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are responsible for developing their own health policies. All NHS bodies in England, and private and third sector providers that supply NHS-commissioned/-funded services in England, are required by law to take account of the Constitution in their decisions and actions; https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-nhs-constitution-for-england/the-nhs-constitution-for-england.

GSP is structured into five domains, each of which has sub-domains. 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 and therapeutics

Domain 4: Research, development and innovation – Research activity; Service development.

Domain 5: Clinical leadership – Developing self; Leading others.

GSP has specific benefits for different stakeholder groups. These are summarised below.

For patients, carers and the public, it asserts the standards of care and service delivery that they can expect the healthcare science workforce to deliver.

For employers, it supports their healthcare science staff to meet and uphold the highest professional standards in their patient care and service delivery.

For members of the healthcare science workforce, it demonstrates to patients, their families and carers, the public and their colleagues and peers that the care that they provide is underpinned by their adherence to high standards of professional practice, conduct and professionalism, and that upholding patient safety is their first priority in whatever role they undertake.

For educators of the healthcare science workforce, it provides a professional framework to inform the design and delivery of education programmes, including to ensure that future members of the workforce are prepared to engage with and meet high standards of professional practice.

For the National School of Healthcare Science, it provides a professional framework for all education and training curricula and assessment and for accrediting academic and work-based training providers.

For trainees and members of the workforce who undertake further education, training or professional development, it articulates the professional standards that they will need to meet within their new scope of practice.

GSP underpins the Academy's **Equivalence assessment process.** In the case of Scientist Training Programme Equivalence, the Standards provide the benchmark for individuals 'assessment in the process. References and additional guidance on how to evidence the standards in this context are available on the Academy's website.

As a key part of its public protection role, the Academy uses GSP in cases of fitness to practise, where the conduct or actions of a registrant on one of our Professional Standards Authority-approved registers has been questioned.

Engaging with GSP as a registrant

GSP forms the standards and values that you must meet throughout your career in healthcare science, within your scope and level of practice and role at any one time. Further detail on how you need to fulfil the GSP is provided in the standards of proficiency that are relevant to your practice level and role in healthcare science.

GSP highlights the distinction between 'scope of practice 'and 'job role'. This recognises that individuals 'job role at any one time may be more limited than their personal scope of practice (as defined by their current competence). The phrasing is also included in standards for which your scope of practice and job role is significant to their interpretation and application.

Working to GSP confirms to patients and your employer that you are committed to meeting high standards of professional practice and professionalism. Even if you do not have direct contact with patients, your work contributes to patients 'pathways of care in some way. Therefore, the purpose of GSP is to underpin patients ' receipt of a safe and excellent clinical service, to which all members of the healthcare science workforce contribute.

Some of the GSP standards are not applicable to all posts, or levels of practice at all times. It is indicated in the presentation of the standards whether each applies to all parts of the healthcare science workforce, or to particular registrants, as defined by their level of practice and role. This distinction is intended as a guide and not meant to restrict individuals 'activity in particular areas of practice (subject to their personal scope of practice, competence and job role). The standards of proficiency for each part of the healthcare science workforce provide more detail on specific requirements for each group, depending on registration status. Examples of typical roles of different groups within the healthcare science workforce are provided in Appendix 2. As you move through your healthcare science career, some standards will demand more of you and reflect the different dimensions of activity that become more relevant to your role, level of practice and service contribution as these change and you develop. However, the standards are shared by all members of the healthcare science profession, with their overarching and primary focus on upholding patient safety and delivering high standards of care.

Appendix 6: Why we use Good Scientific Practice Standards in the STP Certificate of Equivalence

Background

The purpose of Good Scientific Practice (GSP) is to set out the professional standards on which safe and good working practice is founded for all those in the healthcare science workforce. GSP also confirms to employers the standards of behaviour and practice that all members of the healthcare science workforce must be supported to achieve and maintain, both in the NHS and all other sectors and settings. The standards are essential for all members of the workforce to perform their job role activities; provide safe, effective patient care; and demonstrate their professionalism.

GSP uses the Health and Care Professions Council's (HCPC) Standards of Proficiency for Clinical Scientists and Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics as its benchmarks. It also draws on other regulatory and professional body standards and expresses them within the context of the healthcare science.

Good Scientific Practice and the STP Equivalence process

The STP Equivalence Programme is approved by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) as a route to registration as a Clinical Scientist on their statutory register. Since the initial approval by HCPC in 2014, the Academy has used the standards set out in Good Scientific Practice as the basis of our assessment process. We have successfully demonstrated that the standards published in Good Scientific Practice cover all the HCPC Standards of Proficiency at each of our periodic reviews by HCPC.

Our rationale

We use the standards in GSP rather than the HCPC Standards of Proficiency for Clinical Scientist because:

- The standards within GSP have been designed and reviewed by, and for, healthcare scientists without having to take account of any other professions. The language of GSP is specific to healthcare science. The language used in the HCPC Standards of Proficiency, particularly the generic standards, needs to work across the 15 professions that it regulates, and often it is not entirely applicable to all the specialties within healthcare science. GSP uses the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) Standards of Proficiency for Clinical Scientists and Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics as its benchmarks. It also draws on other regulatory and professional body standards and expresses them within the context of healthcare science. We are confident that the standards map against HCPC standards and in this respect, they are to Healthcare Scientists as Good Medical Practice is to the medical profession. The standards promote the Healthcare Science Professions' identity; how we are at the core of NHS diagnostics and therapeutics and the standards of GSP are core to the professional standards that are specific to us. In other words, they "come from us and are for us".
- The standards within GSP provide a framework across all levels of the healthcare science workforce therefore applicants should be familiar with GSP and its application to their level of practice prior to applying for STP Equivalence

- We can adapt GSP to respond to changes in relation to regulation and good practice more quickly than HCPC, who have to work to the legislation that governs their work. For example, last year we refined the wording in respect of sustainability in response to a recommendation by the Professional Standards Authority, the body which oversees all health and care regulators.

In the STP Equivalence process, applicants must demonstrate that they meet the standards set out in GSP, through the assessment of a portfolio of evidence, and an interview. In addition, applicants have to demonstrate that they have a comparable level of knowledge, skills and behaviours as someone completing the Scientist Training Programme accredited by the National School of Healthcare Science on behalf of Healthcare and Care Professions Council. This is a masters level programme and therefore applicants must demonstrate through their portfolio and the answers given at interview, that they have the required characteristics of masters level learning and working at the level of a clinical scientist such as:

- dealing with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- demonstrating reflection, self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level
- continuing to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level
- having a **systematic understanding** and **critical awareness** of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is informed by the forerunners of their professional practice
- can undertake **independent** critical analysis of current research and knowledge
- have originality in the application of their knowledge
- having a practical understanding of how established techniques of enquiry are **used to create and interpret knowledge** in the discipline
- can **evaluate** methodologies and approaches, critique and where appropriate propose new hypotheses
- engaging with complex scientific and clinical roles. There may be high risk, low volume activities which require highly skilled staff able to exercise clinical judgement about complex facts and clinical situations.

[Drawn from the Quality Assurance Agency (2014) The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies – level 7 (masters level) descriptors; Description of the clinical scientist role, AHCS 2021)]

Our Education, Training and Standards Committee and our External Examiner confirmed that the standards in Good Scientific Practice map to the HCPC's revised Standards of Proficiency for Clinical Scientists and supported the discussion of the Task and Finish Group and agreed the rationale for the continued use of Good Scientific Practice in the STP Certificate of Equivalence Programme.