

AHCS

Terms of Reference

Education, Training and Standards Committee

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Education, Training and Standards Committee ('the Committee') provides operational and policy oversight of the Academy for Healthcare Science's standards, equivalence routes to registration and accreditation of education and training.
- 1.2 The Committee reports to the Regulation Board.
- 1.3 The overall purpose of AHCS' regulatory activity is to protect the public by mitigating the risks posed to service users and the public by the healthcare workforce that is registered by the AHCS.

2. Key responsibilities

- 2.1 The Committee's key responsibilities are outlined below. The Committee will:

Standards and policy

- Keep the standards which underpin AHCS' regulatory functions under review, making recommendations for approval by the Regulation Board where new standards or amendments to standards are proposed. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - Good Scientific Practice
 - Standards of Continuing, Professional Development (CPD)
 - Standards of Education and Training
 - Standards of Proficiency
 - Guidance in support of the above.

Programme accreditation

- Receive regular reports about programme accreditation including about programmes accredited by the National School for Healthcare Science (NSHCS) and directly by the AHCS.
- Oversee the development and review of the AHCS' policies and processes for programme accreditation, making recommendations for approval by the Regulation Board where required.
- Make decisions about the accreditation of programmes which are directly accredited by the AHCS as outlined in Schedule 1 to these Terms of Reference.

Equivalence

- Oversee the establishment and maintenance of equivalence routes to AHCS registration.

- Oversee the establishment and maintenance of an approved route (the 'Certificate of Equivalence') to HCPC registration as a clinical scientist.

The Chair of the Committee has delegated power to review and ratify equivalence outcomes in line with the Equivalence Ratification Policy.

- Receive reports on equivalence activities.
- Approve all reports sent to the HCPC.
- Oversee all complaints and appeals against equivalence decisions and confirm outcomes of equivalence appeals.

Governance

- Approve the Terms of Reference of any Task and Finish Groups it establishes under the applicable policy.
- Keep the Committee's Terms of Reference under periodic review, recommending any proposed changes to the Regulation Board for consideration.

Other

- Provide advice to the Chief Executive and Registrar and the Regulation Board on any matters related to its remit.
- Consider and respond to any requests which may be made by the Regulation Board from time-to-time.

3. Membership

3.1 The Board will consist of up to seven members, including the following:

- Two lay members, including the Chair who will be a member of the Regulation Board.
- Five professional members drawn from a range of different specialties and including one registrant.

3.2 The Committee may, at the discretion of the Chair, co-opt additional members with appropriate expertise where this is required to support the consideration of specific items of business.

3.3 Registrant members are members who hold registration with the AHCS and/or with the HCPC as a biomedical scientist or clinical scientist.

3.4 Lay members are members who do not hold, and have not previously held, registration with the AHCS or with the HCPC as a biomedical scientist or clinical scientist.

Appointment of members

- 3.5 The members of the Committee will be appointed by the AHCS Management Board for terms of not more than four years in duration.
- 3.6 Members of the Committee may be reappointed for a further term. No member may normally serve more than eight years in total, unless otherwise agreed by the AHCS Management Board.
- 3.7 For the avoidance of any doubt, on the date on which these Terms of Reference come into force, any previous service on the Regulation Board, Registration Council or other predecessor Committees may be disregarded for the purposes of determining the term limits outlined in paragraph 3.6.
- 3.8 To ensure succession planning, there is an expectation that members' terms will be staggered.
- 3.9 Appointments to the Committee will be made giving due consideration to maximising diversity of Board composition and promoting a culture of mutual respect and inclusiveness.

4. Conduct of meetings

- 4.1 The Committee will normally meet quarterly or as required.
- 4.2 Meetings will normally take place virtually by video conferencing.
- 4.3 In the event Chair's absence, another member may, by a simple majority of the members present, be appointed by the Board to act as Chair for that meeting.
- 4.4 Members of AHCS staff may attend meetings to provide support and advice to the Committee.

Conflicts of interest

- 4.5 On appointment, members are asked to make a declaration as to their personal interests in accordance with the requirements of the AHCS. Members are required to ensure that they notify the AHCS with any changes to ensure their interests are accurate and up to date.
- 4.6 Members are required to declare any potential conflicts of interest in relation to items on the agenda at each meeting. The Chair will determine whether that declaration should preclude the member from involvement in discussion or decisions in relation to an agenda item.

Quorum

- 4.7 The Committee is quorate where the following members are present for the duration of the meeting:
- The Chair (or their delegate);
 - A lay member;
 - At least one other member.
- 4.8 If a quorum is not present within 15 minutes of the time appointed for a meeting to commence, all business which should have been transacted at that meeting shall be held over until the next meeting of the Committee.
- 4.9 If, during a meeting of the Committee it appears to the Chair that a quorum has ceased to exist, business will be suspended and the number of Members present counted and, if: (a) a quorum exists, the business will proceed; or (b) a quorum does not exist, the meeting will be dissolved and all remaining business will be adjourned to the next meeting of the Committee.

Schedule 1 – Accreditation of programmes directly accredited by the AHCS

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Academy for Healthcare Science's (AHCS) 'Quality Assurance Framework' sets out the arrangements the AHCS has put in place to quality assure education and training.
- 1.2 A programme which holds accreditation has demonstrated that it meets the required standards. Someone who successfully completes an accredited programme is eligible to apply for registration with the AHCS in their chosen discipline.
- 1.3 The AHCS:
- oversees the National School for Healthcare Science's (NSHCS) accreditation of healthcare science programmes – including the Practitioner Training Programme (PTP) and the Higher Specialist Scientist Training (HSST) Programme; and
 - directly accredits pre-registration programmes which do not fall within the NSHCS's remit.
- 1.4 A programme seeking direct accreditation by the AHCS will be evaluated by visitors with appropriate expertise. The visitors will make recommendations about whether the programme should be accredited, accredited with conditions, or refused accreditation.
- 1.5 Programmes are accredited on an open-ended basis, subject to ongoing quality monitoring.

A programme which does not participate in quality monitoring, or for which quality concerns are identified, may have its accreditation withdrawn.

2. Role of the Committee

- 2.1 The Committee will make decisions about the accreditation of programmes which are directly accredited by the AHCS.
- 2.2 The overall purpose is to ensure that the AHCS' standards and processes for programme accreditation are fairly, consistently and rigorously applied.
- 2.3 The Committee will:
- receive and scrutinise visit and quality monitoring reports, together with any observations from education providers;
 - moderate reports and outcomes where required, ensuring that clear reasons are given for outcomes; and
 - make final decisions or recommendations about the accreditation of programmes.
- 2.4 The Committee can make the following decisions in relation to programmes, in line with applicable policy:
- The programme is accredited;
 - The programme is accredited with conditions;
 - The programme's accreditation is refused or withdrawn.
- 2.5 The Committee may also recommend that the AHCS take such reasonable further steps to allow it to reach a decision. For example, seeking further information from an education provider or arranging for further review.
- 2.6 Where a programme's accreditation has been made subject to conditions and those conditions have subsequently been assessed as being met, the Chair of the Committee may, at their discretion, agree the fulfilment of the conditions by Chair's action. In all other circumstances, the conditions report should be considered at a meeting of the Committee.
- 2.7 Any appeal against an accreditation decision under the applicable policy will be heard by the Regulation Board which will make the final determination.

Appendix 1 Membership 2022-23

Lay Chair

2 x lay members with experience of the equivalence processes
1 x service user/carer
5 x professional members to include:

- a registered clinical scientist
- a registrant on AHCS PSA accredited register
- representation across the four countries of the UK
- an academic with experience of the STP training programme
- an equivalence assessor

In attendance

AHCS Head of Standards

AHCS Head of Accreditation

AHCS Equivalence Programme Lead

AHCS Equivalence Administrator (officer)

Proposed co-opted members

- Member of Apprenticeship Healthcare Science Trail Blazer Group
- Representative from National School of Healthcare Science

