

HEALTHCARE SCIENCE ASSISTANT

Reference Number: ST0218

Details of standard

Occupational profile

The Healthcare Science Assistant (HCSA) support workforce contributes to safe patient care across all care pathways from conception to end of life in job roles within hospitals, general practice and other settings in the healthcare sector and across all areas of healthcare science (1). HCSAs perform a range of low risk, routine technical and scientific procedures usually within one broad area of HCS, following specific protocols and in accordance with health, safety, governance and ethical requirements. HCSAs work using standard operating procedures, initially under direct supervision but increasingly with experience, under indirect supervision.

Responsibilities and duties of the role

All HCSAs work effectively within a multi-professional team (MPT) within the limits of their competence, but must seek help and support whenever this is required. HCSAs must be aware of the requirements of Good Scientific Practice (GSP), which articulates the standards for the HCS profession and upon which this apprenticeship standard is based(2). Using these professional standards, the HCSA must adhere to employers' policies and protocols to ensure safe and consistent practice within the working environments of HCS. Although not exhaustive, activities undertaken by the HCSA may include: basic life support; preparation of the environment for HCS procedures; production of reliable data, keeping accurate records; stock control of equipment and consumables; inputting and retrieving patient/test specific technical data within required governance processes; performing designated HCS role-specific skills following specified protocols.

Professional Recognition

On completion of the HCSA Apprenticeship individuals will be eligible to apply to join the Academy for HCS (AHCS) accredited register.

Qualifications

The AHCS will require the Level 2 Diploma in Healthcare Science as an underpinning qualification for the HCSA apprenticeship. Apprentices must achieve Level 1 English and mathematics and take the test for Level 2 prior to taking the end-point assessment.

Level

Level 2

Duration

Minimum of 12 months, average 18 months

Review Date

After 3 years from the implementation date of the this standard

Behaviours and values:

You will be compassionate; honest; conscientious and committed and will consistently adhere to the standards of *GSP* which sets out for the profession and the public the standards of behaviour and practice that must be achieved and maintained in the delivery of work activities, the provision of care and personal conduct of the healthcare science workforce appropriate to the role undertaken.

SKILLS: Consistently working to the standards of *GSP* you will:

You will KNOW, understand and apply in your scientific, technical and clinical practice

Professional Practice

Person-centred care

- never discriminate against patients, carers or colleagues
- maintain the highest standards of person centred care, treating every person with compassion, dignity and respect
- promote mental health and well being

Communication and Working with Others

- communicate basic information effectively verbally and in writing to patients, carers and colleagues
- work effectively as part of the HCS team and the MPT

Personal and Professional Development

- reflect on your practice; and keep your knowledge and skills up-to-date
- work within the limits of your personal competence
- respond constructively to the outcome of appraisal, feedback and performance review

- the requirements of the NHS Constitution/*GSP* for 'person centred care and support'
- equality and diversity legislation, policies and local ways of working
- the importance of probity and the need to be honest in your professional practice
- why it is important to get people actively involved in making choices about their care
- how to involve patients and the public in HCS
- how to promote mental health and well being
- how to explain technical terms in language a patient or carer or colleague can understand
- how to address barriers to communication and the importance of working well within the multi- professional team (MPT) and the contribution of HCS to it
- where to go for help and support about anything related to your work
- reflective behaviours and the benefits of self-reflection in helping maintain and support the quality of patient care
- the role of appraisal and performance review
- how to prepare for and develop an action plan as part of performance review

Health, Safety and Security

- work safely in the HCS work place following safety, and risk management guidelines, taking appropriate action in response to incidents or emergencies
- move/position individuals, equipment etc. safely
- apply a range of techniques for infection prevention and control
- legislation/policies relating to health and safety at work and your responsibilities
- the meaning and implications of 'risk' and 'risk assessment'
- what to do in situations that could cause harm to yourself/others, e.g. critical incident
- the principles of safe lifting and handling of people, equipment etc.
- how to handle hazardous materials and substances

Quality

- follow quality procedures to meet the requirements of quality standards relevant to your HCS practice
- participate in technical audit as appropriate
- the role of quality management/improvement and the regulatory environment to maintain and improve HCS services and the quality standards relevant to your role
- the audit cycle and how audit contributes to the maintenance/improvement of services

Technical Scientific Services

- provide general non-technical/technical advice, information, guidance to users of HCS services
- follow specified HCS protocols and standard operating procedures (SOPs)
- the scope/range of services within HCS used to investigate/diagnose/treat disease
- the evidence base that underpins your technical practice
- current UK Resuscitation Council guidelines as well as all mandatory training
- how to establish/maintain a safe and effective practice environment based on SOPs

Clinical Care

- take responsibility for the care you provide, including safeguarding, if involved in patient care
- obtain verbal consent in line with protocols when you are directly involved in the delivery of a procedure, including explaining the nature and purpose of the procedure
- protect patient/carers confidentiality when required
- the meaning and importance of 'duty of care' and safeguarding
- the support available in difficult situations or when a complaint is made
- the rights of patients with regard to giving informed consent for treatment when required
- confidentiality of consultation/medical records and the limits of the concept of confidentiality, e.g. where self harm or harm to others may be involved
- key factors influencing dignity/rights/privacy/confidentiality of patients/colleagues, e.g. age/gender/beliefs

Audit/Service Improvement

- offer suggestions for improving services, providing reasons for these
- the importance of delivering high quality service outcomes and continuous improvements to benefit patients, staff and health services, especially through audit

Research and Innovation

- contribute to research and innovation within the boundaries of your clinical and scientific practice as required
- the regulatory framework within which research and innovation is conducted, including research ethics and the implications for your role
- how you can contribute to research and innovation

Leadership

- help create the conditions that assist your team in providing a supportive environment for colleagues
- the healthcare NHS Leadership Model and its relevance to you(3)
- why it is important to be aware of your strengths, limitations and behaviours and how that affects your colleagues and any team within which you work.

(1) For list of healthcare science specialisms go to: <http://www.ahcs.ac.uk/about-us/about-healthcare-science/>

(2) The Academy for Healthcare Science's (AHCS) Good Scientific Practice (GSP) is at the core of professional HCS practice across the entirety of the HCS workforce and underpins the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for HCSA apprenticeships.

(3) <http://www.leadershipacademy.nhs.uk/resources/>

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Version log

VERSION	DATE UPDATED	CHANGE	PREVIOUS VERSION
1	04/10/2018	Two minor amendments to the assessment plan - to the timing for element 1 and to the grading table.	Not available
1	11/05/2016	Assessment plan first published - standard now approved for delivery	Previous version
1	22/10/2015	Standard first published.	Not available