

DEGREE APPRENTICESHIP END-POINT ASSESSMENT PLAN FOR HEALTHCARE
SCIENCE PRACTITIONERS (Level 6)

HCS Trailblazer Group

Summary of Assessment

Introduction

This End-point Assessment Plan (EPA) describes arrangements for the synoptic assessment of Healthcare Science Practitioner apprentices (HCSPs). The EPA can be delivered either by:

- the university¹, as an integral part of the BSc (Hons) degree for this apprenticeship (integrated degree), where the award of the degree marks both the end of the BSc (Hons) and the end of the apprenticeship; **or**
- a registered Apprenticeship Assessment Organisation (AO), subsequent to the award of the degree (non-integrated degree).

Whichever mode of delivery is used, the EPA is identical in both cases in its purpose and format in holistically assessing apprentices and reassuring employers and the public of their competency and suitability for the role.

The Healthcare Science (HCS) BSc Honours degree is an apprenticeship degree programme that typically will take a minimum of 3 years (but may be longer depending on programme arrangements and the progress of the apprentice) to complete. It leads to a BSc Honours degree qualification that is contextualised for workplace occupational competency as a Healthcare Science Practitioner who provides HCS scientific and technical services within one of the following HCS Divisions:

- Life Sciences Division
- Physiological Sciences Division
- Physical Sciences Division

These degrees provide an apprenticeship route to encourage the recruitment of new talent to the Healthcare science workforce, and to complement other undergraduates undertaking the traditional academic route into HCS. The apprenticeship degree will support employers in producing competent HCSPs, by ensuring apprentices develop the professionalism, as well as the knowledge, skills, behaviours and values (KSBVs) necessary to operate safely and effectively in healthcare science.

Degree Structure and Content

Any Honours Degree that has been accredited by the National School of HCS or Biomedical Science (BMS) degree that has been approved by the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS) or Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) are acceptable for this higher degree apprenticeship.

The degree integrates academic and work-based learning through employment. The curricula (including the assessment programme) were developed with the input of employers, professional bodies and patients and are a blend of employer-defined knowledge, skills, behaviours and values that are integrated and assessed (both formatively and summatively) as part of the degree. In integrated degrees, since the end-point assessment is part of the degree assessment programme, the completion of the degree

¹ In the context of this EPA, the *universities* referred to are those delivering integrated degrees.

demonstrates that the apprentice meets the outcomes of the HCSP Apprenticeship Standard, giving assurance that apprentices graduating from these programmes are fit to meet the future needs of employers and patients.

The BSc curricula map to the HCSP Apprenticeship Standard. Delivery of the curricula (including assessment) is via a series of 'modules' according to the university's approach. Early modules in the programme provide a broad scientific, technical and professional basis to HCS within the context of patient-centered, high-quality, safe care, as well as providing work-based employment in relevant areas of HCS practice. The levels of knowledge and skill build as the apprentice gains more experience in the workplace and can use and apply their knowledge, skills and behaviours to demonstrate through their performance their growing competence (a "spiral curriculum" of learning). As the degree progresses the apprentice will focus in the specific area of HCS practice in which they are employed as preparation for substantive employment in the role of HCSP. The curricula modules cover the breadth and depth of the apprenticeship standard using formative and summative assessment methods that integrate the knowledge, skills, behaviour and values components. This will ensure that the apprentice is sufficiently prepared to undertake the final synoptic End Point Assessment (EPA) (either within the integrated degree or as a separate synoptic assessment on successful completion of the degree).

Assessment Overview

Universities offering QAA accredited HCS (Practitioner Training Programmes [PTP]) and BMS degrees currently have quality assured formative and summative assessment programmes that are also approved via the university's own validation process. Apprentices must successfully complete the BSc degree programme either through an integrated degree that includes the EPA within it or, if an employer opts for a non-integrated degree, by undertaking the EPA delivered by an Assessment Organisation that is on the Skills Funding Agency's (SFA) Register of Apprentice Assessment Organisations (RoAAO). The Academy for Healthcare Science will provide external quality assurance for the EPA.

The overall assessment strategy for Level 6 apprenticeship standard promotes a blend of formative and summative assessment events throughout the degree and the apprenticeship that require apprentices to provide evidence of their development over time, and be assessed in relation to their mastery of each element of the standard. The formative assessment strategy requires learners to collate evidence from various workplace-based assessments, using tools such as Observed Clinical Events, Direct Observation of Practical Skills and reflective writing, to showcase their personal and professional development. The summative assessment strategy will be delivered by the university as part of the degree, and consist of standard assessment methods such as essays and end of module examinations. In addition, each apprentice will complete an end-point assessment (EPA) prior to completion of the apprenticeship (see Assessment Gateway section for details of entry requirements for the EPA).

The EPA is a synoptic assessment that requires apprentices to apply all of the learning and skills developed during the apprenticeship. It consists of three elements which are assessed by an Independent Assessor: 1) a Readiness for Practice Test (RPT) which is a type of situational judgment test; 2) a Professional Discussion (PD) based on the apprentice's portfolio or record of evidence, and 3) a Presentation and Review of the apprentice's research project completed as partial fulfilment of the BSc. A high-level

blueprint that maps the three components of the synoptic EPA to each of the Standard for Healthcare Science Practitioners is shown below.

High-Level Assessment Blueprint of EPA demonstrating mapping to the Standard

	Person-centred Care and Professional Practice	Personal Professional Development (PPD)	Health, Safety and Security	Quality	Technical Scientific Services	Clinical Care (including Communication)	Audit/Service Improvement	Research & Innovation	Leadership
Element 1: Readiness for Practice Test (RPT)	√	√	√	√	√	√			
Element 2: Professional discussion	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Element 3: Research Project Presentation and Review	√			√			√	√	

On-programme Assessment

Evidence of on-programme learning and development should be gathered, usually in a record of evidence or portfolio. Workplace supervisors will be required to support regular, on-programme assessment of the apprentice's development of competency and performance in the workplace, and to ensure that there is full and sufficient evidence of the apprentice's readiness to undertake the EPA. A variety of assessment instruments are available for workplace assessment, e.g. Direct Observation of Practical Skills (DOPS), Observed Clinical Events (OCE) and Case based Discussions (CBD). It is also recommended that the apprentice engages in reflective writing to describe in their record of evidence/portfolio what they have learned about their personal and professional behaviours and what improvements they have been able to make during their apprenticeship. These reflective pieces are encouraged to promote life-long learning and as preparation activities for the Professional Discussion element of the EPA. Further information on the work-based formative and summative assessment and the underpinning PTP curricula can be found at <https://www.nshcs.hee.nhs.uk/curricula>.

Assessment Gateway

Apprentices will be eligible to attempt the EPA upon attainment or completion of:

- Level 2 functional skills in English and Mathematics
- a record or portfolio of evidence that documents the assessments and tasks completed to demonstrates that the skills, knowledge and behaviours set out in the Standard have been achieved
- achievement of the BSc (Hons) degree (if a non-integrated degree)

If the apprentice is taking a non-integrated degree the employer, in discussion with the apprentice, will judge when the apprentice has achieved all of the above and is ready to attempt the EPA, using the

processes of the appointed Assessment Organisation. The employer may wish to review reports from any trainers/training providers involved in supporting the apprentice throughout the programme to inform their judgment and ensure they are confident in their assessment of the apprentice's readiness to undertake the EPA. If the apprentice is taking an integrated degree, the employer and university will determine the timing of the EPA and the apprentice's readiness to take the EPA.

End-point - Assessment

The EPA may be delivered through an integrated or non-integrated degree. In an integrated degree the HEI would register as the Assessment Organisation (AO). If a HEI did not wish to offer the EPA as part of the degree, the EPA could be delivered by any other EPA provider listed on the register of Skills Funding Agency's Register of Assessment Organisations (RoAAO). Across both the integrated and non-integrated modes of delivery, the EPA will be comparable in terms of format, and level of challenge, with the content reflecting the particular degree programme delivered. The employer will decide whether the apprentice will undertake an integrated or non-integrated degree, depending on the HEI it chooses to provide the degree.

The EPA consists of three components that are taken on the same day as part of the same assessment event with the same Independent Assessor. Apprentices must achieve a Pass, or better, in each of the three components to successfully complete the EPA. The EPA components are:

- i. a 1 hour written Readiness for Practice Test (RPT) (which is a type of situational judgement test) which is set by the university or the AO;
- ii. a face-to-face Professional Discussion (PD) between the apprentice and a trained Independent Assessor (who has not been involved in the education or training of the apprentice) for the degree model or a trained AO Independent Assessor. The Professional Discussion is based on the apprentice's record of evidence/portfolio (that includes a Competency Log of Skills) and which should take approximately 40 minutes. AOs will provide assessors with guidance on the aims and purpose of the Professional Discussion, how it should be structured, how to prepare a series of questions to assess whether the apprentice has met the Standard, and how to grade the Discussion;
- iii. a research presentation of up to 15 minutes, followed by a 15-minute discussion and review of the presentation content with the Independent Assessor.

The table above shows the aspect of the Standard assessed by each element of the EPA. Each element will be graded as either Fail, Pass or Distinction. The 3 elements of the EPA and the EPA grading criteria are described in detail below:

Element 1: Readiness for Practice Test (RPT) [60 minutes]

This assessment requires apprentices to review and respond to six workplace-based scenarios that represent examples of events or occurrences in the workplace for which the apprentice should be able to describe appropriate actions to be undertaken. The scenarios will be multifaceted, tapping into various aspects of the Standard (as noted above), and will require recall and application of learning from both the academic and workplace training strands of the apprenticeship. The scenarios will be relevant to the apprentice's technical scientific and professional practice. Examples could include, e.g. setting out appropriate and comprehensive action for dealing with biological spillages; cardiac exercise stress testing and the risks associated with it; appropriate actions when observing a colleague transferring patient details

from paper-based records to an electronic database as part of an audit. Apprentices will be asked to respond in a way that is appropriate to their level of attainment e.g. as a day-one Healthcare Science Practitioner. Universities and AOs will submit RPT scenarios to the AHCS as part of their External Quality Assurance (EQA) process in order to create a bank of scenarios from which other universities and AOs will be able to choose six for use in a given EPA. This will help to ensure consistency across the scenarios used in the EPA.

Under test conditions specified by the university or AO, apprentices will be required to read the scenario and spend up to 10 minutes responding to an AO standardised set of questions about the scenarios drawn up by the AO. Each response should be a maximum of 200 words. It is recommended that apprentices' written responses are recorded electronically e.g. a word document on a computer. Paper-based responses can be used where no computer facility is available. Reasonable adjustments will be made for apprentices who request support for their learning disabilities in accordance with either university regulations or the regulations of the AO. A small bank of sample scenarios will be made available to apprentices by the university or AO for illustration and practice.

The scenarios will sample across the following themes in the Standard:

- Person-centred care and Professional Practice
- Personal Professional Development
- Health, Safety and Security
- Quality
- Technical Scientific Skills
- Clinical Care (including communication)

The scenarios will assess competencies, consistent with values that are important across all healthcare sciences and reflect those specified in the NHS Constitution and *Good Scientific Practice*. These may include scientific technical practice, compassion, respect, empathy, probity, patient-centeredness, integrity, professionalism, health and well-being, including coping with stress and anxiety.

A total of 18 marks are available for each scenario, as detailed below. Apprentices will need to achieve an average score of 60% across all six scenarios to pass the Readiness for Practice Test, and an average score of 75% to achieve a Distinction for this assessment. Apprentices must pass the RPT before completing the remaining elements of the EPA. The highest award for a retake is Pass (an award of Distinction is not available for retakes). Guidance on application of the grade descriptor will be provided by AOs to the Independent Assessors in order to contextualize the marking for individual scenarios. Both universities and AOs will need to apply these when using the marking scheme.

Marking criteria	Description	Scoring criteria	Weighting
Risk/s	A description of the risk/s inherent to the scenario	Fails to specify relevant risk/s (0) Partial response (2) Satisfactory description of risk/s (4) Comprehensive explanation of risk/s (6)	X2

Action/s	Specifies any action/s required, and, if more than one action, identifies the priority by which each action should be addressed	Fails to identify action/s (0) Partial response (1) Appropriate actions with inappropriate rank ordering (2) Appropriate action/s and rank ordering (3)	X1	
Learning points	A list or description of how the risk/s identified in the scenario can/should be avoided in the future	Fails to identify learning points (0) Partial response (1) Identifies learning points that are relevant to the scenario (2) Comprehensive list or description of learning points (3)	X1	
Assessor's global judgement appropriate to the relevant aspects of the Standard	An overall judgement about the quality of the response and the insight shown	Fails to meet Standard (0) Partially meets Standard (2) Meets Standard (4) Exceeds Standard (6)	X2	
Total marks available per scenario			18	
Total marks available for the RPT test			108	
Pass mark (average across 6 scenarios)			60%	
Pass mark for award of Distinction (average across 6 scenarios)			75%	

Element 2: Professional Discussion (PD) [40 minutes]

This component of the EPA is designed to assess the apprentice's ability to engage in a professional discussion with the Independent Assessor in relation to the evidence that the apprentice has collected during their training with respect to learning and integrating knowledge and skills and which have been collated in their portfolio or record of evidence.² This record includes the Competency Log (which is described in the on-programme assessment plan³), an on-going assessment of the skills and professional behaviours achieved by the apprentice.

The PD is between the apprentice and Independent Assessor. It offers the apprentice an opportunity to highlight to the Independent Assessor examples of their personal, professional and scientific technical development, key learning activities and events in the workplace that have influenced their development, and examples of challenges they have had to overcome. The PD will assess all areas in the Standard, including

- Person-centred care and Professional Practice: as demonstrated in the portfolio/record of evidence
- Personal Professional Development: including demonstrating critical reflection and professionalism
- Health, Safety and Security
- Quality

² This record of evidence could be, for example the university's Portfolio of Evidence or the Institute of Biomedical Science's (IBMS) Registration Portfolio or modelled on it, as long as there is a critical reflection component included within the portfolio.

³ <https://www.nshcs.hee.nhs.uk/curricula>

- Technical Scientific Services: as demonstrated through the Competency Log
- Clinical Care (including communication)
- Audit/Service improvement
- Research and Innovation
- Leadership

The PD will be structured by the Independent Assessor, using the AO's standardised framework that sets out how to begin the PD, the questions to ask, examples of evidence to request from the apprentice, and descriptors of the PD outcomes, based on the three 'global' criteria identified below.

Global Grading criteria	Grade descriptors
1. Discussion of apprentice's technical skill development	<p>Fail: Unable to identify and explain how examples of learning in the portfolio contributed to skills development as specified in the Standard</p> <p>Pass: Able to show and explain how examples from the portfolio contributed to skills development as specified in the Standard</p> <p>Distinction: In addition to the Pass criteria, is also able to make links between the tasks completed and the professional standards required of a HCSP</p>
2. Discussion of apprentice's personal and professional development	<p>Fail: Unable to identify and explain how examples of learning in the portfolio contributed to personal and professional development</p> <p>Pass: Able to show and explain how examples from the portfolio contributed to personal and professional development</p> <p>Distinction: In addition to the Pass criteria, is also able to make links between the tasks completed and the professional standards required of a HCSP</p>
3. Insight demonstrated to role of HCSP	<p>Fail: Lacks insight to role of HCSP, or role is inappropriately conceived</p> <p>Pass: Demonstrates insight into the specific role of HCSP and its context in providing scientific HCS services</p> <p>Distinction: Demonstrates understanding of the role of HCSP and situates this in wider context of healthcare service provision e.g. as part of multi-professional teams delivering quality scientific services and the particular benefits to patient outcomes</p>
Grading the Professional Discussion	<p>Fail = one or more Fails, or incomplete work-based Competency Log</p> <p>Pass = at least three Passes, plus complete work-based Competency Log</p> <p>Distinction = at least two Passes and one Distinction, plus complete work-based Competency Log</p>

Element 3: Research Project Presentation [30 minutes in total]

Since all apprentices are required to design and conduct a research project in partial fulfilment of the BSc, the parameters and requirements for the research project itself will be set by individual universities and will be undertaken within the context of the degree programme.⁴ For the EPA, the apprentice will prepare and deliver a short presentation (maximum 15 minutes) to the Independent Assessor and their workplace supervisor (who is there to observe the proceedings) on the research project which will:

⁴ Every HCS BSc degree has a 30- credit mandatory research project as part of the degree. The research project may span scientific or clinical research, translational research, operational and policy research, clinical education research, innovation, service development, service improvement, or supporting professional service users. This project will be used for this component of the EPA assessment for both integrated and non-integrated degrees.

- i. describe the research project that was completed as part of the BSc (Hons) degree. This should include a description of the research questions/hypothesis, the selected methods and sample, a brief summary of findings, conclusions, and limitations of the study.
- ii. explain how it contributes to their understanding of their role as a HCSP and to any benefits for services and/or patients.

The Independent Assessor will ask the AO's standardised questions which have been developed by the AO, as well as have the opportunity to ask questions for clarity and further information. The apprentice's presentation will be graded based on its content and delivery and the apprentice's responses to the assessor's questions.

The grading criteria for the research presentation will not focus on reassessing the scientific or academic content of the project (which will have been assessed as part of the degree), but on the communication of the ideas contained within the project and the contribution the project makes to the understanding of healthcare science and services. It will be graded using the following criteria:

Criteria	Fail	Borderline Pass	Clear Pass	Excellent	Weighting
Clarity of content	0	1	2	3	x1
Oral communication	0	2	4	6	X2
Organisation of material	0	1	2	3	x1
Timing	0	1	2	3	x1
Use of visual aids	0	1	2	3	x1
Contribution to knowledge/understanding	0	1	2	3	x1
Response to questions	0	2	4	6	x2
Assessor's global judgement	0	2	4	6	X2
Total marks available					33
Fail					Less than 60% of total available marks ⁹
Pass mark					60%
Pass mark for award of Distinction					75%

Summary of the overall EPA grading

The following table shows the grades available for each component of the EPA, and the overall grading for the EPA.

Component	Grading
Element 1: Readiness for Practice Test	Fail Pass Distinction
Element 2: Professional Discussion	Fail

	Pass Distinction	
Element 3: Research Presentation	Fail Pass Distinction	
Overall grading for the EPA⁵	Fail = one or more Fails Pass = Passes all three elements Merit = at least two Passes and one Distinction Distinction = at least one Pass and two Distinctions	
End-point – final judgment		
<p>The final judgment about whether the apprentice has passed the EPA and its grading will be made by the independent EPA assessor using the guidance provided below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> all three parts of the EPA must be undertaken by the apprentice AO assessors will award the grade for each EPA element based on the assessment grading described above and then determine the overall grade for EPA of Distinction, Pass or Fail based on the criteria shown in the End Point Grading section. 		
Independence		
<p>The Assessment Organisation (which could be the University) must ensure that assessors selected to assess individual apprentices are fully independent of that apprentice. They should not have had any involvement with the recruitment, on-programme training or assessment of the apprentice.</p>		
End-point – Summary of roles and responsibilities		

Summary of Roles and Responsibilities		
	Preparation	Assessment
Apprentice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> completed a record of evidence, e.g. Portfolio of Evidence/Registration Portfolio including the competency log and formative assessments agrees research project title with employer and university plans/executes the research project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> completes and submits the record of evidence completes and submits the research presentation

⁵ Where an apprentice passes their degree programme but fails to achieve the EPA, registration with the relevant authorities will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Employer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supports the apprentice in the preparation and completion of the competency log and record of evidence, demonstrating achievement of the Standard • with the University and apprentice agrees the research project title and commits to any associated resource requests and agrees to provide the apprentice with suitable time to complete those parts of the research project that are not part of their normal job • advises the apprentice on requirements for synoptic assessment if through an AO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appoints the AO where required • participates in the EPA interview (but must not have been involved in the training of the apprentice)
Assessment Organisations (which could include universities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • must be on the SFA's Register of Apprentice Assessment Organisations (RoAAO) • devises/administers the EPA according to the EPA plan • recruits sufficient independent assessors to meet the demand for the EPA in each specialism • ensures assessors have a recognised professional qualification gained through a formal training or equivalence route in the specialist area that they are to assess or registration with the relevant professional body and/or regulatory authority and a minimum of 1 year of practise based experience in a healthcare setting, such as the NHS, as well as the formal demonstration of an understanding of and skills in assessment, either through a minimum of 1 year of experience of work-based assessment or by holding an appropriate assessor qualification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ makes the arrangements for the EPA with the employer/apprentice ▪ ensures that the independent assessors give an overall grading based on the grading of the 3 elements of the EPA
Independent Assessors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • holds a professional qualification for the specialism related to the EPA or registration with the relevant professional body and/or regulatory authority • has received training in the role and responsibilities of the Independent Assessor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ makes a judgment on each element of the EPA ▪ awards an overall grade for the EPA ▪ provides a report on their assessment of the apprentice and rationale for their decision on the final grade ▪

Quality Assurance – internal

Universities offering integrated degrees will be subject to internal arrangements for the quality control of their degree programmes, including external examiner arrangements. They and other Assessment Organisations must be on the Register of Apprentice Assessment Organisations (RoAAO). Assessment Organisations (AO) will implement the QA processes and procedures required for acceptance on the RoAAO. Universities and AOs will:

- appoint independent assessors that are trained and expert in their practice (and will not have been out of practice for 3 years)
- nominate an independent Quality Assurance moderator who will undertake observations of Independent Assessors as they undertake the EPA with apprentices
- record EPA outcomes by assessor
- provide exemplar marking material
- sample their independent assessor decisions based on the following:
1-10 candidates = all; 11-100 = up to 15; 101-200 = 20; More than 200 = 25

Quality Assurance – External

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) has responsibility for overseeing and assuring the quality of the BSc (Hons) degrees and thereby the EPA which is delivered as part of the integrated degree award.

It is proposed that the Academy for Healthcare Science (AHCS) be responsible for the External Quality Assurance (EQA) of the EPA for both integrated and non-integrated degrees of appropriately accredited BSc (Hons) in HCS (Practitioner Training Programmes) and Biomedical Science degrees until we are able to confirm whether QAA can deliver the External Quality Assurance (EQA) for the end-point assessment of integrated degree apprenticeships.

The AHCS sets the Standards for Education and Training (including assessment) for the HCS Practitioner degrees as it holds the HEE approved Professional Standards Authority's (PSA) accredited register for this occupational group.⁶ EQA for the Level 6 EPA will reflect these where it is relevant to do so. The AHCS acts as the representative professional body for the whole of the healthcare science profession. Through its Council of Professional Bodies, it will work co-operatively with relevant representative healthcare science professional bodies that may wish to be involved. Assessment Organisations offering EPAs do not have to be accepted by the AHCS for registration purposes, but the AHCS will require them to demonstrate good practice with respect to their internal quality control processes in accordance with RoAAO requirements. For example, AOs will need to provide evidence of:

- employing Independent Assessors who have the professional expertise/qualifications in healthcare science and teaching, learning and assessment;
- hosting training events for their Independent Assessors;
- monitoring grading decisions to ensure consistency and transparency across Independent Assessors;
- instigating a schedule of regular standard setting meetings between Independent Assessors to ensure that outcome decisions are valid, fair, safe, reliable and equitable.

In addition, there will also be a schedule of regular communications between AOs and the AHCS; an accessible process for dealing fairly and equitably with complaints and appeals; an agreed record keeping procedure; an evaluation and improvement procedure and any other processes, systems and

⁶ The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) also provides statutory registration for Biomedical Scientists

procedures designed to ensure and document the quality of the delivery of the EPA by AOs, including the demonstration that the AO is open to obtaining advice from recognised healthcare science specialists and organisations such as healthcare science professional bodies or the National School of HCS.

The AHCS was established by the UK Health Departments and HCS professional bodies to regulate the HCS workforce and quality assure its education and training. It will provide EQA for the EPA on a non-profit-making basis and meets the Trailblazer requirement for providing EQA as a Professional Body.

End-point - Grading

The end-point grade for the apprentices taking integrated degrees will be reflected in the overall classification of the degree. Where the EPA is delivered by an AO, the overall outcome for the grade of the EPA will be based on the grading of 3 elements of the EPA, according to the criteria shown below.

Award	Grading	
Fail	One or more Fails	
Pass	Passes all 3 elements	
Merit	At least 2 Passes and 1 Distinction	
Distinction	At least 1 Pass and 2 Distinctions	

Implementation

Affordability: In an integrated degree the costs of the EPA will be subsumed within the delivery and assessment of the degree. This is clearly the most affordable and cost effective approach for employers. Where an AO is used for a non-integrated degree apprenticeship, it is estimated that the cost of the EPA will be approximately 10% of the funding allocated for the degree. Employers will have to pay the cost of the EPA if an apprentice undertakes a non-integrated degree.

Professional Body recognition: On graduation, apprentices will be eligible to register with the relevant professional body; e.g. all HCSPs are eligible for registration on the AHCS accredited register (the HCS register that is recognised and supported by Health Education England [HEE]). The completion of the apprenticeship in the Life Sciences also confers eligibility to apply for statutory regulation with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)⁷. Those in the Physical Sciences are also eligible to join the accredited Register of Clinical Technologists (RCT) held by the Institute of Physics and Engineering Medicine (IPEM). There are also other professional registers, e.g. the Science Council (Registered Scientist).

As the apprentice is required to demonstrate the knowledge, skills, understanding, behaviours and

⁷ under the protected title of "Biomedical Scientist".

values described in the Apprenticeship Standard the recommended EPA can be undertaken in any HCS employment setting, large or small, public or private in England. The expected uptake of this apprenticeship programme is approximately 400 new starters per annum.