



## ASSOCIATION OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS IN OPHTHALMOLOGY

### Vision Statement

The Association of Health Professions in Ophthalmology (AHPO) is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee whose key objects are to promote the practice, education, training and research in the field of ophthalmology and vision science throughout the United Kingdom. Professionals who deliver eye care – ophthalmologists, orthoptists, ophthalmic nurses, optometrists and vision scientists – must attain the qualifications required for their professional registration and clinical practice, but there has been no standardised and accredited education and training for the staff who perform the diagnostic tests that are essential for clinical decision making. AHPO has worked with the UK Government’s Modernising Scientific Careers, Apprenticeship Trailblazer Groups, and the National School of Healthcare Science to develop apprenticeship standards and course curricula and specifications. Apprenticeship reforms in England made it possible for AHPO to become a registered Apprenticeship Training Provider and Pearson-recognised Training Centre and we deliver apprenticeships and BTEC qualifications nationally. At the present time there are apprenticeships and BTEC Diplomas for ophthalmic healthcare science staff at level 2 for ophthalmic assistants and level 4 for ophthalmic associates, but AHPO is seeking to partnership with a university to deliver a Level 5 diploma and apprenticeship for ophthalmic assistant practitioners. AHPO has contributed to work undertaken by Skills for Health for a Level 3 apprenticeship standard for healthcare science. This would complete the education and training pathway for ophthalmic staff from assistant to associate practitioner levels.

The AHPO organisation chart can be found in APPENDIX A

### Courses provided by AHPO

Courses currently offered by AHPO are listed below.

Level 2 Apprenticeships in Healthcare Science / Ophthalmic and Vision Science*
Level 2 BTEC Diploma in Healthcare Science / Ophthalmic and Vision Science*
Level 4 Apprenticeships in Healthcare Science / Ophthalmic and Vision Science
Level 4 BTEC Diploma in Healthcare Science / Ophthalmic and Vision Science
Level 3 Certificate in Assessing Vocational Achievement
Level 5 Ophthalmic and Vision Science Diploma (awarded by AHPO)
Optometry Continuing Professional Development courses

\*Delivery of a Level 2 BTEC Diploma and apprentice will commence in 2022, and, if a proposed Level 3 apprenticeship standard for Healthcare Science is approved, this will become part of a Level 3 apprenticeship.

# Programme Delivery Policy and Strategy

In order to deliver programmes of quality and high standards, AHPO seeks to:

- Ensure that our learners are at the centre of all our activities.
- Ensure we offer an effective and high quality education and training.
- Develop the principles and practice of lifelong learning and independent study.
- Ensure that there are audits and quality assurance procedures in place to maintain and continuously improve the of quality of programme delivery.

In order to do this, AHPO will:

- Deliver apprenticeships and externally accredited qualifications that:
  - enhance the quality of treatment and care for ophthalmic patients
  - meet employers' requirements for a skilled, competent workforce
  - provide staff with opportunities for career development and progression.
- Ensure there is an internal process in place to monitor the delivery of taught programmes, in order to confirm that there is consistency and that the quality meets the expected standard.
- Provide and implement an Assessment Policy, which describes the centre procedures to ensure that:
  - assessment methodology is valid, reliable and does not advantage or disadvantage any group of learners or individuals
  - there is accurate and detailed recording of assessment decisions
  - the assessment procedure is open, fair and free from bias, and meets the Edexcel standard.
- Provide and implement an Internal Verification Policy, which describes the procedures to ensure that:
  - there is an accredited Lead Internal Verifier for each programme subject area
  - internal verification is valid, reliable and covers all assessors and programme activities
  - there is accurate and detailed recording of internal verification decisions
  - the internal verification procedure is open, fair and free from bias.
- Provide and implement an Appeals Policy, which describes the procedures that:
  - enables learners to enquire, question or appeal against an assessment decision.
  - attempts to reach agreement between the learner and the assessor at the earliest opportunity
  - standardises and records any appeal
  - facilitates a learner's ultimate right of appeal to the awarding body, where appropriate
  - protects the interests of all learners and the integrity of the qualification
  - is open, fair and free from bias.
- Provide and implement an Assessment Malpractice Policy, which describes the procedures that:
  - identifies and minimises the risk of malpractice by staff or learners
  - responds to any incident of alleged malpractice promptly and objectively
  - standardises and records any investigation of malpractice
  - ensures that malpractice procedure is open, fair and free from bias

- imposes appropriate penalties and/or sanctions on learners or staff where incidents (or attempted incidents) of malpractice are prove.
- protects the integrity of AHPO's qualifications.

## Quality Assurance of Programme Delivery

### **Quality assurance of teaching and learning**

#### ***What AHPO does:***

The AHPO Education Committee is responsible the development of the educational content and learning resources of AHPO programmes. Learners are provided with a series of eBooks prepared by AHPO and also published eBooks, such that learners have their own electronic library of textbooks that encompass the knowledge requirements for their course. AHPO also provides learning materials in a range of other formats including PowerPoint presentations, recorded webinars and training videos, and there is a programme for developing these resources and providing more interactive learning through the Learning Management System (LMS). Relevant sections of eBooks and other learning resources are signposted in the course Assessment Plans. Books can be accessed from the AHPO LMS and the learner's Ecordia portfolio. They can also be accessed by assessors and mentors.

Learning resources are reviewed and updated a minimum of every 3 years but more frequently if errors and deficiencies are identified, if there are changes in course specifications, or if there are developments in equipment used and procedures undertaken in the workplace. Feedback is sought from learners, assessors, mentors and independent experts on the contents of eBooks and other learning resources.

#### ***Audit and quality assurance:***

- Three year review of eBooks and other learning resources.
- Feedback from learners, assessors, mentors and independent experts on eBook and other learning resource content.
- Continuing development and review of a range of learning resources.
- Further developments of interactive resources delivered through the LMS.

### **Quality assurance of workplace assessment of competence**

#### ***What AHPO does:***

Learners / apprentices on AHPO programmes perform a range of ophthalmic diagnostic tests and procedures in the workplace. There are no nationally or professionally agreed standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the performance of diagnostic tests. There is considerable variation in standards of performance across different workplaces and no requirements for audit and quality assurance of test outcomes. The AHPO Education Committee has prepared benchmark SOPs, along with guides for the performance and the assessment of diagnostic tests. AHPO is preparing a series of videos that demonstrate best practice for the assessment of diagnostic test performance.

#### ***Audit and quality assurance:***

- Yearly review of benchmark SOPs and guidance for the performance and assessment

- of performance of ophthalmic diagnostic tests.
- Continuing development of videos and other resources to augment training and assessment in diagnostic test performance.
- Training of assessors to ensure standardisation of workplace assessment of competence.

## **Quality assurance of AHPO assessments and internal quality assurance**

### ***What AHPO does:***

BTEC Diplomas are part of Level 2 and Level 4 apprenticeships, and AHPO delivers the BTEC Diplomas both with and without apprenticeships. As these qualifications are awarded by Pearson, AHPO follows the Pearson EdExcel requirements for assessment and internal and external quality assurance. The same internal assessor and verification procedures are used for the Level 5 AHPO Diploma. AHPO Assessment and Internal Verification Policies can be found in APPENDIX B. AHPO holds Assessors and IQA meetings held every two months, and agenda items include standardisation exercises for samples of assessments by different assessors, review of assessment plans timetabled over the year, reports from the AHPO Education Committee, Pearson Standards Verifier reports, and documentation and discussion of any issues that have arisen regarding equal opportunities, safeguarding and prevent.

### ***Audit and quality assurance:***

- Audit all quality assurance procedures for assessment and internal verification listed in the AHPO Assessor and IQA policies, identifying areas for improvement and providing feedback of audit outcomes.

## **Quality assurance of employer and learner / apprentice feedback**

### ***What AHPO does:***

AHPO sends questionnaires to obtain feedback for the following:

- To BTEC learners and apprentices about their experience of enrolment and induction
- To apprentices about AHPO course delivery
- To BTEC learners about AHPO course delivery
- To employers about AHPO course delivery
- When apprentices have completed the apprenticeship they are asked to complete a case study form about their career progression.

We also review employer feedback on *Find an Apprenticeship*

### ***Audit and quality assurance:***

- Apprentice / learner feedback and satisfaction
- Employer feedback and satisfaction (obtained by AHPO and feedback on *Find an Apprenticeship*)
- Apprentice / learner complaints and compliments
- Employer complaints and compliments
- Apprentice feedback on career enhancement and progression.

## **Quality assurance of learner / apprentice progress\***

### ***What AHPO does:***

AHPO's procedures and process for supporting and monitoring learner / apprentice progress can be found in *AHPO Supporting Learner Progress* in Appendix C. The commencement of AHPO programmes is flexible, and each learner has an Individual learning Plan (ILP) incorporated into their ePortfolio. Learner start dates, dates of breaks in Learning (BIL), early termination dates and completion dates are collated and presented in an Excel file, collated separately for apprentices and non-apprentice learners. Data of ethnicity, any health issues or learning difficulties is also collated so that any trends indicating discriminatory practices or insufficient support can be identified and addressed.

Learner progress is RAG rated and additional support is provided for learners whose progress falls into the amber or red categories. Off the job training (OTJT) for apprentices is also documented in the portfolio and tracked in a progress bar. Data is reviewed every two months and discussed at the Assessor and IQA meetings.

In addition to regular support and feedback for submitted coursework, assessors undertake structured reviews with action plans every one to three months with the learner and line manager. These can be exported from the Ecordia portfolio and collated.

### ***Audit and quality assurance:***

- Tracking of learner start dates, dates of breaks in learning (BIL), early termination dates and completion dates.
- Audit of outcomes for learner ethnicity, and learners with health issues or learning difficulties and comparison with the remaining cohort.
- RAG rating of progress, with amber and red presented as a proportion of the total cohort.
- Audit of learners / apprentices who leave the programme, identifying reasons for leaving the programme and lessons learned.

\*Also see Quality Assurance of Apprenticeships

## **Quality assurance of apprenticeship training**

### ***What AHPO does:***

The Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) below are benchmarks for the quality assurance of apprenticeship delivery. KPIs 1 to 7 are used for quality assurance of the training of all BTEC learners with or without an apprenticeship. KPIs 8 to 13 (in purple text) are mostly specific for apprenticeships.

### ***Quality assurance Key Performance Indicators:***

1. Apprentices progress rated amber or red, and these presented as a proportion of the apprentice cohort.
2. Apprentice retention and reasons for withdrawal.
3. Absence, Break in Learning
4. Apprentice feedback and satisfaction
5. Employer feedback and satisfaction

6. Apprentice complaints and compliments.
7. Employer complaints and compliments.
8. Achievements versus planned outcome including QARs (Qualification Achievement Rates).
9. Compliance requirements are met and are of the quality required (including tripartite reviews, OTJT, action plan achievement).
10. Employer engagement pipeline and conversions.
11. Employer repeat business.
12. ILR error rate / lost and late funding.
13. Apprentice destination and outcomes - including outcomes occurring on programme (promotions, awards etc).

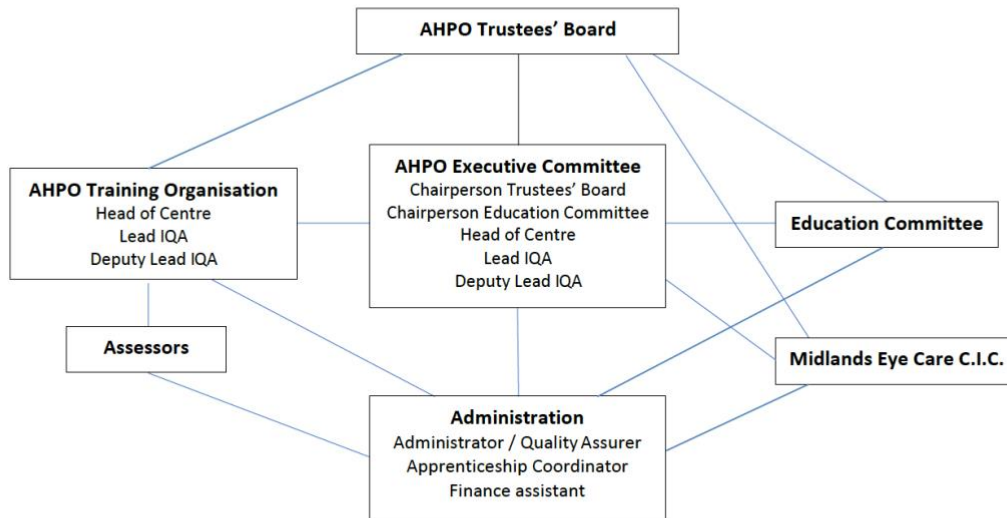
Outcomes for the KPIs will be collated and summarised annually, and weaknesses and poor performance will be identified and measures will be implemented to improve performance in the coming year.

**Signed by Head of Centre**



# APPENDIX A

## ASSOCIATION OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS IN OPHTHALMOLOGY ORGANISATION CHART



**Role of the Trustees' Board:** To set the goals of the organisation and ensure they are being followed

**Role of the Education Committee:** To recommend, develop and review curricula and resources for AHPO education and training programmes

**Role of the Executive Committee:** To decide what needs to be done to achieve the goals

**Role of Administration:** To carry out the administrative work to achieve the goals

## APPENDIX B

# Assessment Policy

Aim:

- To ensure that assessment methodology is valid, reliable and does not disadvantage or advantage any group of learners or individuals
- To ensure that the assessment procedure is open, fair and free from bias and to national standards
- To ensure that there is accurate and detailed recording of assessment decisions.

In order to do this, the centre will:

- Ensure that learners are provided with assignments that are fit for purpose, to enable them to produce appropriate evidence for assessment
- Produce a clear and accurate assessment plan at the start of the programme/academic year
- Provide clear, published dates for handout of assignments and deadlines for assessment
- Assess learner's evidence using only the published assessment and grading criteria
- Ensure that assessment decisions are impartial, valid and reliable
- Not limit or 'cap' learner achievement if work is submitted late
- Develop assessment procedures that will minimise the opportunity for malpractice
- Maintain accurate and detailed records of assessment decisions
- Maintain a robust and rigorous internal verification procedure
- Provide samples for standards verification/external examination as required by the awarding organisation
- Monitor standards verification/external examination reports and undertake any remedial action required
- Share good assessment practice between all programme teams
- Ensure that assessment methodology and the role of the assessor are understood by all staff
- Provide resources to ensure that assessment can be performed accurately and appropriately.

This policy will be reviewed every 36 months by Head of Centre.



# Internal Verification Policy

Aim:

- To ensure that Internal Verification is valid, reliable and covers all Assessors and programme activity.
- To ensure that the Internal Verification procedure is open, fair and free from bias
- To ensure that there is accurate and detailed recording of Internal Verification decisions.

In order to do this, the centre will:

- Where required by the qualification, a Lead Internal Verifier is appropriately appointed for each subject area, is registered with Pearson and has undergone the necessary standardisation processes
- Each Lead Internal Verifier oversees effective Internal Verification systems in their subject area
- Staff are briefed and trained in the requirements for current Internal Verification procedures
- Effective Internal Verification roles are defined, maintained and supported
- Internal Verification is promoted as a developmental process between staff
- Standardised Internal Verification documentation is provided and used
- All centre assessment instruments are verified as fit for purpose
- An annual Internal Verification schedule, linked to assessment plans, is in place
- An appropriately structured sample of assessment from all programmes, units, sites and Assessors is Internally Verified, to ensure centre programmes conform to national standards
- Secure records of all Internal Verification activity are maintained
- The outcome of Internal Verification is used to enhance future assessment practice.

This policy will be reviewed every 36 months by Head of Centre.

## APPENDIX C

# SUPPORTING LEARNER PROGRESS

### **INTRODUCTION:**

AHPO wishes to help all learners to follow the schedule in their Individual Learning Plan (ILP) as closely as possible. When a learner starts their course the assessor undertakes a pre-induction and then an induction meeting, followed by review meetings (monthly for 3 months then 3-monthly thereafter). These meetings provide an opportunity for the learner to raise any problems and for the assessor to provide guidance as appropriate; learners are, of course, welcome to contact their assessor in between these meetings for further assistance. This support is in addition to the constructive feedback provided by assessors when they review the work which learners submit via Ecordia. Learners should, of course, also be supported in the workplace by their mentor and line manager.

### **MONITORING OF LEARNER PROGRESS:**

It is inevitable that, for a variety of reasons (often beyond their control), learners will sometimes fall behind. The front page of a learner's portfolio includes an indicator of the learner's progress, on a "traffic-light" basis. Assessors should keep a regular watch on the progress of the learners for whom they are responsible and do their best to support them.

Progress is classified as follows:

**Green:** The learner is on schedule or less than 10% behind

**Amber:** The learner is more than 10% but less than 20% behind

**Red:** The learner is more than 20% (and up to 30% or even more) behind

### **TRIGGER POINTS:**

**A learner moving from Green to Amber** is a trigger for a review, and if any issues cannot be resolved by discussion between the assessor and learner within a month, subsequent reviews must take place on at least a monthly basis. At the first monthly review the assessor will assess with the learner the reasons for their difficulties and provide advice and support as appropriate, along with the setting of very specific targets to help the learner to catch up. If adequate progress has not been made by the second monthly review the issue must be raised with the learner's Line Manager: this will be done via email by the AHPO Administrator, and the AHPO Head of Centre will be informed. Efforts will be made to work with the Line Manager to identify any service-related reasons for the learner's slow progress (e.g. temporary suspension of Off-The-Job-Training for which plans may have been made to make this up in the coming weeks), and also to identify ways in which the learner can receive more support with their course in the workplace.

If, by the third monthly review, progress is still inadequate the AHPO Head of Centre will raise the matter with:

- (For Apprentices) The Apprenticeship Lead at the workplace
- (For BTEC Learners) The Line Manager at the workplace

Note: If a break in learning is agreed the AHPO Apprenticeship Coordinator will document this in the Ecordia portfolio and change the target completion date. The Centre will then change the dates in the ILP in the Excel file and load this onto the front page of the portfolio. The Centre will also change the Plan Target Dates on the Yellow Plans page. The assessor will need to change the Evidence Presentation Targets on the green Evidence pages (as they should do as needed after every Learner Review meeting.)

**If at any point a learner goes into the Red** this requires direct escalation to the Apprenticeship Lead (Line Manager if not an Apprentice) at the workplace by the AHPO Head of Centre.

### **LEARNERS WHO ARE UNCONTACTABLE**

It is essential for learners to remain in regular contact with AHPO, usually via their assessor at their regular reviews.

If a learner review is not conducted after 2 reschedules this is a trigger for a formal email to be sent by the AHPO Administrator to the learner emphasising the need to have a review and including an appointment for a 3<sup>rd</sup> review. If the learner remains uncontactable and/or fails to attend this review the issue is escalated to the Line Manager by the AHPO Head of Centre.

If this happens a further time then direct escalation is required to the Apprenticeship Lead (Line Manager if not an Apprentice) at the workplace by the AHPO Head of Centre.

Ultimately, if the learner fails to progress adequately after all avenues of assistance have been explored, we will have to inform the learner and employer that we can no longer continue to offer the programme to that learner.