




ASSOCIATION OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS IN OPHTHALMOLOGY

Professional Development Policy

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Introduction

The Association of Health Professions in Ophthalmology (AHPO) is committed to supporting the professional development all its employees and self-employed contractors (hereafter referred to as staff) to enable them to achieve their full potential. Professional development includes any activity which contributes to the enhancement of staff member's knowledge, skills, competence, and working practices. We consider professional development to be a key contributor to the success of individuals and to our organisation's provision of high quality apprenticeships and education and training programmes.

AHPO's Professional Development Policy has been developed in line with the policies and guidance provided by the National School of Healthcare Science (NSHCS), that is part of Health Education England. The NSHCS facilitates and supports the education, training and development of all healthcare scientists from apprentices to consultant grade, and provides programmes to allow scientists to adapt to new technologies and work flexibly across patient pathways providing high quality services.

The NSHCS is responsible for approving and reviewing the specification for Healthcare Science apprenticeships and the BTEC Healthcare Science Diplomas that are part of the apprenticeships. AHPO delivers the Level 4 Apprenticeship in Healthcare Science, that includes a Level 4 BTEC Diploma. The specification for the BTEC Diploma has units that are mandatory for all Healthcare Science specialisms, and a range of optional units relevant for the various Healthcare Science specialisms. AHPO, in conjunction with employers, selects the optional units relevant for the training of Ophthalmic Associates. We deliver the BTEC Diploma with apprenticeships, and as a standalone programme for learners who are not apprentices.

Scope

Professional development encompasses all activities that enhance the knowledge and skills of AHPO staff in relation to their employment by AHPO, and includes the following:

1. Mandatory training, defined as training that an organisation determines to be essential for safe and efficient practice and in order to reduce organisational risks and comply with policies and regulatory requirements. It covers statutory training required by law, and training required by regulatory bodies, and includes initial induction training and updates.
2. Qualifications required by Awarding Bodies. This includes level 3 and 4 awards and certificates in Training, Assessment and Quality Assurance (TAQA)
3. Learning and training that contributes to the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of AHPO staff, and the vision and goals of AHPO.

In general terms CPD

- needs to be a documented process (CPD record);
- is self-directed by the employee;
- is focussed on learning from experience, reflective learning, and reviews;
- includes both formal and informal learning.

We encourage staff to set their CPD learning objectives in professional development plans (PDPs) based on their own learning needs, whilst taking into consideration how these can be supported by AHPO to meet customer and organisational needs.

The Equality Act 2010 places a responsibility on all employers to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and promote equal opportunities amongst all their employees. AHPO considers those protected under the Act when designing, delivering and approving courses for statutory and mandatory training, and continuing professional development.

How we ensure the professional development of AHPO staff

We provide, support and encourage the professional development of our staff with the following:

1. AHPO allocates a training budget for each staff member.
2. All new members of staff have an induction with a senior member of the management team which includes:
 - Mandatory training and any qualifications required for the role and how AHPO provides opportunities and support to meet these requirements, including any requirements for regular updating of initial training;
 - Provision and explanation of AHPO's policies and procedures for CPD regarding the maintenance of a CPD log; agreement of an annual personal development plan (PDP); and procedures for reviewing these at annual appraisals;
 - Discussion about AHPO and the staff member's ambitions and requirements for CPD, and agreement about how these will be achieved in the following twelve months and at annual appraisals thereafter.
3. All current members of staff have an annual appraisal with a senior member of the management team which includes:
 - Review of mandatory training and any qualifications required for the role;
 - Review of the CPD log and PDP for the previous year, and discussion and agreement of goals for the next twelve months, and the support AHPO will provide for the achievement of these goals.

Professional development activities that AHPO provides, supports or encourages:

These can be classified as structured, unstructured and combined activities:

- Structured activities may include individual study, web-based learning, attending standardisation / quality assurance meetings or formal training courses and seminars.
- Unstructured activities include reading, visiting web sites, discussions with colleagues, reflection on practice and experience of assessment and verification.

Examples of professional development activities can include the following:

Continuing Education

- Enrolment in formal degree programs, courses, or workshops
- Pursuing certificates, accreditations or other credentials through educational programmes

Participation in professional organisations

- Attending local, regional, national, and international meetings, conferences and workshops sponsored by professional organisations
- Presenting papers at conferences and workshops
- Serving as an officer, board member, or committee member
- Coordinating events sponsored by the organisation

Research

- Conducting research
- Presenting findings of research to others

Improving job performance

- Keeping up with technology, systems, processes
- Learning about new developments in the field
- Improving existing skills

Increased duties and responsibilities

- Taking on new challenges in current position, projects, long or short-term assignments

Reflective accounts

- Reflection on assessment and verification practice
- Reflection on annual appraisals, feedback from learners / employers etc.

How AHPO actively supports staff professional development

1. **Mandatory training.** This covers areas such as health and safety, fire safety, moving and handling, equality and diversity, safeguarding and prevent, infection prevention and control, data security, resuscitation and freedom to speak up.
2. **Sector knowledge, skills and performance.**
 - All AHPO assessors are experienced in ophthalmic practice but may not be experienced in every procedure and diagnostic test included in the apprenticeship nor the necessary underpinning knowledge. Studying the comprehensive learning materials we provide that include links to other resources can be the first step in addressing any deficiencies.
 - We have a rolling programme of review of our learning materials included in our regular assessor and IQA standardisation meetings and ask staff to check the currency of the contents and recommend improvements. This contributes to the standardisation of our assessments but also to the staff member's professional development.
 - At present there are no nationally agreed guidance and standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the performance of ophthalmic diagnostic tests. We have set up and are developing a database of equipment and SOPs from all sites where we deliver apprenticeships and work with our assessors and IQAs, experts in the field and equipment company representatives to agree best practice SOPs for all diagnostic tests and procedures. These are discussed at standardisation meetings, presented at our training events, and finalised documents will be published on our website.
 - Our offsite training sessions with apprentices and their assessors focus on best practice in the performance of diagnostic tests. This provides a benchmark for assessment of skills in the workplace and is a useful means of standardising knowledge and practice across the assessor team.
 - We encourage and support staff to attend external meetings and conferences and read journals and other publications relevant for their practice.
3. **Teaching and training knowledge, skills and performance**
 - All assessors must have or be working towards TAQA qualifications.
 - We recommend staff undertake courses to enhance their knowledge and skills in apprenticeship teaching and training, such as courses offered by the Education and Training Foundation.
 - We support staff to undertake courses in adult learning, mental and physical skills, training the trainers, coaching and mentorship including feedback, and facilitation skills.
 - We continuously seek to augment our e-learning materials with interactive assessments, webinars, videos, microlearning, and, resources permitting, virtual and augmented reality and gamification. Staff are encouraged to develop knowledge and skills and contribute to developments in these areas.
 - We encourage a culture of reflection and discussion, particularly around issues when learners are failing to progress, taking into consideration our delivery, learner difficulties, and problems in the workplace.
 - We provide a sample e-portfolio with examples of good, satisfactory and unsatisfactory in learner presentations and feedback given, to provide a benchmark for standards of assessment.



CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD) LOG

Name Position.....

Start Date (month and year)

Date	CPD activity e.g. Activity / training / seminar / conference / workshop; structured / unstructured, location, organisation	Evidence e.g. certificates of attendance, minutes of meetings, emails, reflective diary entries, course evaluation sheets, audits, learner/employer feedback	No. of hours	Relevance of activity	
				YES	NO

IQAs signature..... Date.....

Assessors signature..... Date.....



PERSONAL / PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN - Template

Name:

Role:

Year (January to December)

Development needs for forthcoming year (Include as many learning needs as required to achieve agreed objectives)

Learning and Development Need Provide a specific description of the desired changes (e.g. skills gained, knowledge acquired, topics/themes/content covered)	Type of development E.g. Course, Workshop, Conference, Self-development (researcher, reading, etc.), Coaching, Mentoring, Job Shadowing, Project work, Committee Membership, etc.	Timescales E.g. End of April, To be completed in the next 6 months, Over next 1-2 years.	Who is responsible? E.g. Staff member, Manager to arrange, Staff member to work with team and Manager, etc.	Further comments E.g. Resource requirements, Additional notes