

Education and Training Committee – 2 December 2008

Routes to registration for Clinical Science

Executive summary and recommendations

Introduction

As part of the Education Department Workplan 2008-2009, information has been sought to outline the various routes to registration available to Clinical Scientists. This paper provides a summary and analysis of the routes to registration as information for the Committee.

The Committee is asked to review the information and note that at the next meeting of the Education and Training Committee a decision will be made to determine how best to measure the continued ability of the clinical science routes to registration to meet the relevant standards.

Summary of the routes to registration

The information presented in this paper is a summary of the information taken from *My Route to Registration* published by the Association of Clinical Science (ACS).

The ACS awards the Certificate of Attainment which the Health Professions Council has approved as a qualification which leads to eligibility to apply for registration. We therefore regard the ACS as an education provider/validating body. There are a variety of routes available for individuals to obtain the Certificate of Attainment which depend on the modality of clinical science and the experience of the individual.

The two over-arching routes defined by the ACS are called Route One and Route Two.

Route One requires an individual with an appropriate undergraduate degree to undertake a scheme of education and training accredited by the relevant professional body for each modality. Each professional body scheme of education and training is different and may involve the requirement for the attainment of a postgraduate qualification. All schemes are four years in duration but made up of differing durations of practical experience under supervision and academic teaching and learning. The table on page three provides details of each professional body accredited programme

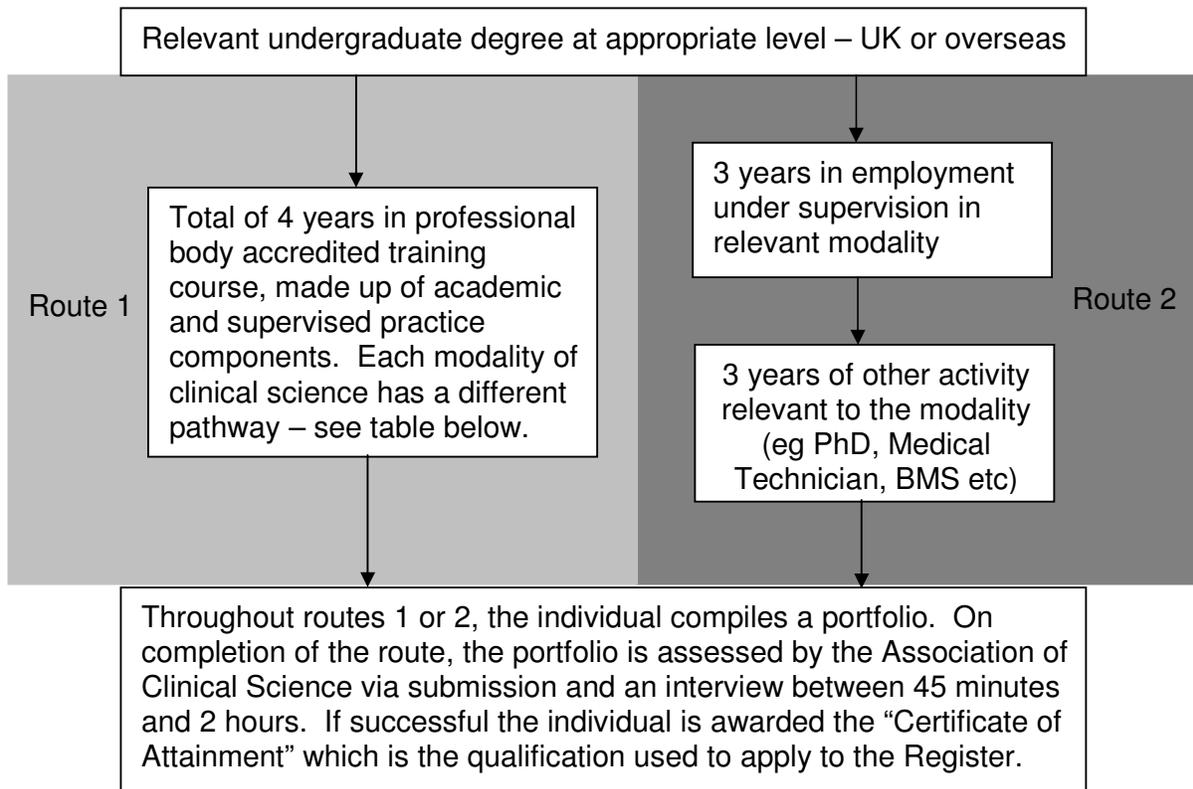
Route Two recognises the experience of individuals who have been in the workplace and in education. Individuals must have an appropriate undergraduate degree and have undertaken three years of appropriate practical experience in the relevant modality under supervision and three years of additional relevant experience and further training such as a PhD, Medical Technician roles or Biomedical Science roles.

During either route, individuals will be compiling a portfolio for assessment by the ACS. At the end of route one or two, the portfolio is submitted for assessment by ACS assessors. An interview lasting between 45 minutes and two hours will take place with the assessors and the individual. Both the portfolio and the interview will form the basis of the decision whether to award the Certificate of Attainment.

The Certificate of Attainment then confers eligibility to apply to the HPC Register as a Clinical Scientist. The relevant modality is recorded as an annotation on the Register. Not all the modalities listed by the ACS which have routes to Registration appear as annotated modalities on the HPC Register.

Overseas applicants to the Register are assessed exclusively by HPC.

The routes to registration can be summarised by the diagram below and table overleaf:



Date	Ver.	Dept/Cmte	Doc Type	Title	Status	Int. Aud.
2008-11-20	a	EDU	PPR	Clinical Science Routes to Registration	Final DD: None	Public RD: None

Summary table of modality specific routes to registration

Modality	Routes to registration	Duration of academic training	Duration of clinical component	Professional Body	Modality Recorded by HPC
Audiological Science	Routes 1 or 2	3 Years	1 Year	British Academy of Audiology (BAA)	Yes
Clinical Biochemistry	Routes 1 or 2	3 Years	1 Year	Association for Clinical Biochemistry (ACB)	Yes
Clinical Embryology	Routes 1 or 2	2 Years	2 Year	Association of Clinical Embryologists (ACE)	Yes
Clinical Cytogenetics	Routes 1 or 2	2 Years	2 Year	Association of Clinical Cytogenetics (ACC)	Yes
Clinical Molecular Genetics	Routes 1 or 2	2 Years	2 Year	Clinical Molecular Genetics Society (CMGS)	Yes
Clinical Haematology	Routes 1 or 2	3 Years	1 Year	N/A	Yes
Clinical Immunology	Routes 1 or 2	3 Years	1 Year	Association of Clinical Scientists in Immunology (ACSI)	Yes
Clinical Microbiology	Routes 1 or 2	3 Years	1 Year	Society for General Microbiology (SGM)	Yes
Histocompatibility and Immunogenetics	Routes 1 or 2	3 Years	1 Year	British Society for Histocompatibility and Immunogenetics (BSHI)	Yes
Medical Physics and Clinical Engineering	Routes 1 or 2	3 Years	1 Year	Institute of Physics and Engineering in Medicine (IPEM)	Yes
Clinical Physiologist	Route 2	N/A	N/A	N/A	No
Cellular Science	Route 2	N/A	N/A	N/A	No
Developing Science	Route 2	N/A	N/A	N/A	No

Analysis of the routes to registration

The ACS is made up of representatives from the professional bodies that accredit the training schemes for each modality. For route one, the professional bodies accredit the pathways leading up to final assessment for the award of the Certificate of Attainment of the ACS. However, ACS as an organisation does not directly approve each programme of study and periods of supervised practice. The route two pathway which is used as a method to recognise experience gained from non-accredited pathways is similarly not directly quality assured by the ACS.

Rather ACS assesses the output from the various pathways using the portfolio and the interview. The standards of professional competence are measured by the ACS based on these assessment methods.

When viewed as an education provider or validating body, it is currently unclear in what ways ACS takes responsibility for the standards in relation to the quality of the provision of education.

All programmes that award approved qualifications have to meet all the standards of education and training and effectively deliver and assess all the standards of proficiency. The ACS may be required to make more explicit the mechanisms enacted by the validating body to quality assure the provision of the academic and supervised practice elements of the programme if continued approval were to be granted. This would be the case for both route one and two pathways.

The ACS Certificate of Attainment was brought over to the HPC as an approved qualification at the Councils inception and has not been subject to an approval visit or the monitoring processes.

Operational Considerations

Given the complexity of the landscape of pre-registration education and training for clinical scientists, it will take time and a period of transition before the HPC approval or monitoring process can be applied. The summary below indicates the currently planned time-line for activity.

Timescales

- December 2008 – paper to note to Education and Training Committee.
- March 2009 – decision paper to Education and Training Committee to determine how best to measure the continued ability of the ACS and the Certificate of Attainment to meet HPC standards.
- October 2009 – if it is decided to conduct an approval visit we will require six months notice and this will be the earliest possible time that we could conduct a visit.
- January 2010 – if a visit is selected and because we estimate the post-visit process to take three months, this is the earliest possible time to conclude the approval process.

The Committee is minded that the approval or monitoring processes are normally applied to schemes of training and education. The ACS methodology may require adaptations to the approach taken in applying the approval or monitoring processes.

At these early stages it is apparent that the members of the Education Department will require briefing on the differences between this model of approved qualification and the more traditional qualifications that are approved. The same will also be true for visitor partners; many of whom have not yet conducted a visit for HPC as our clinical science visitors have not yet had the opportunity.

There may also be changes required to elements of the process. Most predictable of these changes are to the required documents requested before the visit and to the agenda as some new meetings may need to be added and others removed to collect all the relevant evidence from the education provider.

There may be other impacts on the process of approval or monitoring and it may be prudent to conduct a preliminary meeting with representatives of the ACS to determine how best to conduct the processes.

Decision

The Committee is requested to note the document. No decision is required.

Background information

Education Department Workplan 2008-2009

Resource implications

None

Financial implications

None

Appendices

None

Date of paper

14 November 2008

Date	Ver.	Dept/Cmte	Doc Type	Title	Status	Int. Aud.
2008-11-20	a	EDU	PPR	Clinical Science Routes to Registration	Final DD: None	Public RD: None