

Response to consultation on Modernising Scientific Careers

The Academy welcomes this very important initiative by the Chief Scientific Officer. The part of Healthcare scientists is crucial to the delivery of high quality clinical services through modern team working across every major specialty. There is particular concern that a significant proportion of the workforce is over 55 and current training will not provide sufficient replacements.

The proposed scheme offers clear points of entry at various levels, a training programme and career progression, and will make the NHS a more obvious and attractive science career pathway to bright trainees than it currently is.

The views of the Academy in respect of Life Sciences are closely reflected in the comprehensive and authoritative response of the Royal College of Pathologists which was produced after consultation with all members of the Council of that College, its Specialty Advisory Committees and Training. This highlights the importance of defining the roles and responsibilities of these roles, the training pathways and the importance of qualifications that meet the standards required of health professionals in every discipline. The Royal College of Pathologists response also delineates qualifications for those who want to attain the most senior levels. However although that delineation is recognised for Life Sciences in the diplomas of that College there is no equivalent for the Physical and Physiological Sciences.

We note and welcome the work of the Healthcare Scientists sub-group of MEE that is looking at Education and Training, Workforce planning, Leadership and R&D/Academic issues that will address many of the specific points raised by the RCPATH response, and hope that the further points raised here will also command full attention.

In addition we draw attention to matters raised by lay and medical respondents through the Federation of Specialist Surgical Associations and the Forum of Surgery. They express concern about the degree of independent practice that might be achieved by individual non-clinical healthcare scientists and also the confusion for patients that might arise should the title consultant be used.

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