



Institute of Biomedical Science

Position Statement on Role Requirements and Banding for Scientists undertaking Reporting within Cellular Pathology departments

In response to service need, and with the support from all UK health departments, the Institute of Biomedical Science and the Royal College of Pathologists have jointly developed and introduced a UK wide recognised training and examination framework to enable the scientist workforce to take on certain functions that have previously been the sole responsibility of medically qualified staff.

These recognised scientist roles are increasingly accepted and relied on throughout the UK and demonstrate the value of a flexible and competent scientist workforce as a means of meeting increasing workload demands on histopathology and cytopathology services.

The IBMS/RCPATH professional qualifications in histopathology and cytopathology support the standardisation of training and practice of scientist reporters. As an aid to departments wishing to utilise the opportunities offered by scientist reporter roles the Institute has described, in outline, the expected job content, the qualifications required for each role and the appropriate Agenda for Change (or equivalent) pay grade.

In recognition of the expansion of the biomedical scientist scope of practice there is now a specific occupational code level (UC) for the role of consultant biomedical scientist which aligns with the coding value of clinical scientists rather than the healthcare science practitioner values which was where this group of staff were previously included. As such, the clinical scientist reporting Agenda for Change job profile is appropriate and can be used for individuals on either Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) register.

This guidance does not differentiate between registered biomedical scientists and registered clinical scientists as either registrant may qualify and undertake these reporting roles. For this reason, the term 'scientist' is used throughout the document to cover those on either HCPC register.

The Advanced Specialist Diploma in Dermatopathology, Gastrointestinal Histopathology, and Gynaecological Histopathology Reporting

This qualification enables scientists to demonstrate the scientific and clinical knowledge underpinning the practice of the reporting of simple to complex cases of either dermatopathology, gastrointestinal tract or gynaecological tract specimens, and the practical competence required to accurately report specimens whether benign or malignant within these sample types. It also enables the scientist to represent the department at multidisciplinary team meetings in the relevant specialty as a core member of the histopathology reporting team.

This qualification recognises the advanced knowledge and skills of highly experienced reporting scientists who are competent to handle a range of cases, from simple to complex, and who have extensive knowledge of the associated pathologies. The award of this Diploma evidences knowledge and expertise within the defined the scope of practice equivalent to that of a medical consultant.

The Advanced Specialist Diplomas in Bowel Screening and Cervical Screening Histopathology Reporting

These qualifications reflect a more limited scope of practice than the full gastrointestinal and gynaecological pathways. They provide evidence of the attainment of both the necessary scientific and clinical knowledge underpinning the reporting of specimens taken as a consequence of the respective bowel and cervical screening programmes, and bowel polyps, and a limited range of cervical specimens taken for diagnostic purposes independent of any screening programme.

It also enables the scientist to represent the department at multidisciplinary team meetings in the relevant specialty in the relevant specialty as a core member of the histopathology reporting team.

The award of this Diploma evidences knowledge and expertise within the defined the scope of practice equivalent to that of a medical consultant. The respective qualifications are supported by the NHS Bowel Cancer Screening Programme (NHSBCSP) Laboratory Clinical Professional Group and the NHS Cervical Screening Programme (NHSCSP) Laboratory Clinical Professional Group.

The Advanced Specialist Diplomas in Ophthalmic Pathology and Placental Reporting

These qualifications also reflect a more limited, but nevertheless highly specialised, scope of practice. They enable scientists to demonstrate the scientific and clinical knowledge underpinning the practice of dissecting and reporting selected ophthalmology pathology samples and placental and cord samples respectively.

It also enables the scientist to represent the department at multidisciplinary team meetings in the relevant specialty in the relevant specialty as a core member of the histopathology reporting team.

These qualifications recognise the advanced knowledge and skills of highly experienced scientists who have extensive knowledge of ophthalmic or placental pathology. The award of either of these Diplomas acknowledges **the highest levels of knowledge and expertise** within the defined scope of practice equivalent to that of a medical consultant.

The Advanced Specialist Diploma in Cervical Cytology

Enables scientists to demonstrate the scientific and clinical knowledge underpinning the practice of cervical cytology and the practical competence required to screen, interpret and report normal and abnormal cervical cytology results and recommend patient management. It also enables the scientist to represent the department at multidisciplinary team meetings and participate in cervical cancer case reviews in the relevant specialty as a core member of the histopathology reporting team.

This qualification recognises the advanced knowledge and skills of highly experienced scientists who have extensive knowledge of cervical cytology. The award of this diploma acknowledges **the highest levels of knowledge and expertise** within the defined scope of practice equivalent to that of a medical consultant.

The Advanced Specialist Diploma in Diagnostic Cytopathology

Enables scientists to demonstrate the scientific and clinical knowledge that underpins the assessment and reporting of negative and malignant exfoliative diagnostic (non-gynaecological) cytology specimens; namely, respiratory samples, urinary tract samples and serous effusions. It also enables the scientist to represent the department at multidisciplinary team meetings in the relevant specialty as a core member of the histopathology reporting team.

This qualification recognises the advanced knowledge and skills of highly experienced scientists who have extensive knowledge of diagnostic cytopathology. The award of this diploma acknowledges **the highest levels of knowledge and expertise** within the defined scope of practice equivalent to that of a medical consultant.

The Diploma of Expert Practice in Diagnostic Cytopathology

Provides evidence of the scientific and clinical knowledge that underpins the practice of diagnostic cytopathology and the practical competence required to prepare and report a defined range of negative (benign) diagnostic cytology specimens. The award of this diploma acknowledges **expert professional skills and knowledge** in diagnostic cytology.

The acquisition of this qualification equips scientists with the knowledge and skills required to report a range of benign diagnostic cytology samples, namely respiratory samples, urinary tract samples and serous effusions and consequentially liberate a significant proportion of pathologist time.

Summary of Reporting Roles

Consultant Scientists in Histopathology

Consultant scientists in histopathology reporting are Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) registered and work at the most senior level within histopathology laboratories, as part of the reporting team alongside consultant medical histopathologists. Consultant scientists are able to independently report the entire range of specimens included within their specialty curriculum, including screening samples. The number and range of samples reported is agreed locally according to service need and job planning. They can provide teaching to scientists and trainee pathologists and represent the department at multidisciplinary team meetings in the relevant specialty.

They **must have obtained** the Institute's Advanced Specialist Diploma (ASD) in Dermatopathology Reporting, Gastrointestinal Histopathology Reporting or Gynaecological Histopathology Reporting and been awarded their Certificate of Completion (CoC) from the Royal College of Pathologists.

The occupational title and code for these individuals should be Consultant Biomedical Scientist (UC) and the expected Agenda for Change pay band would be a minimum Band 8c (or equivalent).

There may be a local provision for a step-by-step progression within pay banding to correlate with success in the A to D stages of training for the consultant scientist reporting role.

Scientists in training for any of the Institute's ASD qualifications in Histopathology or Cytopathology reporting may also report cases under consultant supervision as part of quality assurance measures. Grade and pay bands for those in training are not covered in this statement and are a matter for local determination, taking into account other duties and responsibilities. The exact grade will be determined by the size of department and complexity of the role in respect of management responsibilities, potentially across more than one site and also the qualification and associated level of autonomous practice.

If working in advanced practice relating to specimen dissection, scientists **must have obtained** the Institute's Diploma of Expert Practice (DEP) in Histological Dissection as expert dissectors, they may hold or be studying for the Institute's ASD in Histological Dissection. Further information on dissector roles can be found in the IBMS position statement '*Role requirements and banding for scientists undertaking Histopathological Dissection*'.

Consultant Scientists in Cervical Cytopathology

Consultants in cervical cytopathology reporting are Health and Care Professions (HCPC) registered and work at the most senior level within cytopathology laboratories, alongside consultant medical cytopathologists. They can represent the department at multidisciplinary team meetings, participate in cervical cancer audits and provide teaching to scientists and trainee pathologists.

They **must have obtained** the Institute's Advanced Specialist Diploma (ASD) in Cervical Cytology. The occupational title and code for these individuals should be Consultant Biomedical Scientist (UC) and the expected Agenda for Change pay band would be a minimum Band 8c (or equivalent).

Consultant Scientist in Diagnostic Cytopathology

Consultant scientists in diagnostic cytopathology reporting are Health and Care Professions (HCPC) registered and work at the most senior level within cytopathology laboratories, alongside consultant medical cytopathologists. They will be independently reporting diagnostic cytopathology samples and can represent the department at multidisciplinary team meetings, provide Rapid On Site Evaluation (ROSE) adequacy assessment at a range of fine needle aspiration clinics and deliver teaching to scientists and trainee pathologists.

They **must have obtained** the Institute's Advanced Specialist Diploma (ASD) in Diagnostic Cytopathology. The occupational title and code for these individuals should be Consultant Biomedical Scientist (UC) and the expected Agenda for Change pay band would be a minimum Band 8c (or equivalent).

Consultant Scientist in Ophthalmic Pathology, Bowel Screening Histopathology Reporting, Cervical Screening Histopathology Reporting or Placental Pathology Reporting

Advanced Practitioners in one of the above specialisms are Health and Care Professions (HCPC) registered and work at a highly specialised expert limited scope level within their field, alongside consultant medical histopathologists.

They **must have obtained** the Institute's Advanced Specialist Diplomas (ASD) in Ophthalmic Pathology, Bowel Screening Histopathology Reporting, Cervical Screening Histopathology Reporting or Placental Reporting (launch pending). The occupational title and code for these individuals should be Consultant Biomedical Scientist (UC) and the expected Agenda for Change pay band would be a minimum Band 8a (or equivalent).

Additional expectations around job roles

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

All staff require regular appraisals that covers their whole scope of practice. For consultant scientists delivering histopathology or cytopathology reporting this should be parallel to the approach used for medical pathologists appraisals. This will ensure their development, education and monitoring is the same, in this capacity, as a pathologist.

It should, in line with the Share Update on the Regulation of Advanced Levels of Practice from the General Osteopathic Council (GOsC) and Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), include the opportunity to participate in relevant CPD so that registrants can meet their registration renewal and CPD requirements while working at an advanced level of practice. This should be evidenced through the appraisal process. They should also be supported in their role with access to suitable training and education, as is appropriate to the departmental quality assurance process, departmental needs and individual roles.

Quality Assurance

The expectation is that an individual who have been awarded one of these qualifications will work alongside medically qualified pathologists and will play an integral part in internal and

external quality assurance (IQA/EQA) processes including national EQA schemes as part of an overall service improvement strategy.

Summary of Reporting Roles, Qualifications and Recommended Pay Banding

Reporting Role	Reporting	Reporting Qualification	Banding (AfC)
Consultant Scientist in Histopathology	Gastrointestinal histopathology Gynaecological histopathology Dermatopathology	Advanced Specialist Diploma in Dermatopathology, Gastrointestinal Histopathology or Gynaecological Histopathology Reporting	Band 8c-8d
Consultant Scientist in Histopathology	Cervical biopsies Colorectal biopsies Ophthalmic histopathology Placental histopathology (launch pending)	Advanced Specialist Diploma in Bowel Screening or Cervical Screening Histopathology Reporting Advanced Specialist Diploma in Ophthalmic Pathology Advanced Specialist Diploma in Placental Histopathology Reporting (launch pending)	Band 8a-8b
Consultant Scientist in Cervical Cytopathology	Cervical cytopathology	Advanced Specialist Diploma in Cervical Cytology	Band 8c-8d
Consultant in Diagnostic Cytopathology	Diagnostic cytopathology	Advanced Specialist Diploma in Diagnostic Cytopathology	Band 8c-8d

Note: Roles that incorporate both histopathology and cytopathology reporting may be graded above Band 8C.

References

General Osteopathic Council (GOsC) and Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) (2026) *Share Update on the Regulation of Advanced Levels of Practice (2026)*. Available from: <https://www.hcpc-uk.org/standards/meeting-our-standards/advanced-levels-of-practice/regulating-advanced-levels-of-practice/> [Accessed 27th March 2026]

National Health Service (2025) *National Health Service Occupational Code Manual. Version 22.1*. Available from: <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/areas-of-interest/workforce/nhs-occupation-codes> [Accessed 24th February 2026]