



Position Statement for Role Requirements and Banding for Scientists undertaking Histopathological Dissection

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

The Diploma of Expert Practice in Histological Dissection

Provides evidence of the practical competence and the scientific and clinical knowledge that underpins the practice of dissection of specimens from RCPATH categories B and C within the tissue or system specific modules studied. It should be noted that Category A samples only require simple transfer, without dissection, and can therefore be handled by a range of staff, including those who are trained but not HCPC registered.

The award of this Diploma acknowledges **expert professional skills and knowledge** in histological dissection.

The acquisition of this post graduate qualification equips scientists with the knowledge and skills required to dissect a wide range of tissue samples and consequentially liberate a significant proportion of pathologist time.

The Advanced Specialist Diploma in Histological Dissection

Enables scientists to demonstrate the scientific and clinical knowledge underpinning the practice of the dissection of highly complex pathology specimens and the practical competence required to accurately dissect all specimens whether benign or malignant within these sample types.

The DEP must therefore be certificated in the module(s) in which the scientist wishes to undertake the ASD in Histological Dissection.

This qualification recognises the advanced knowledge and skills of highly experienced dissectors who are competent to handle the most complex cases, and who have extensive knowledge of the associated pathologies. The award of this Diploma acknowledges **the highest levels of knowledge and expertise** within the field of practice.

These qualifications provide a recognised framework for the standardisation of training and practice of scientist dissectors. These roles are widely accepted and relied on throughout the UK and demonstrate the value of a flexible scientist workforce as a means of safely managing increasing workload demands on histopathology services.

In seeking to support standardisation of scientist dissector roles and job descriptions the Institute has described the expected qualifications required for each role and the expected Agenda for Change (or equivalent) pay grade.

Summary of Dissection Roles

Specialist Scientist Dissector

Specialist scientist dissectors are Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) registered and work at a specialist level within histopathology laboratories undertaking basic tissue dissection, which includes Category B, and many of Category C specimens. Specialist dissectors would **not** dissect any Category D or E specimens.

The specialist dissector would have been awarded the Institute's Specialist Diploma or equivalent qualification and may be studying for the Institute's Diploma of Expert Practice in Histological Dissection.

The expected Agenda for Change pay band would be Band 6 (or equivalent). Specialist scientist dissectors whose roles also include significant other elements conferring additional responsibilities **may** be banded at a higher level in recognition of their wider role and to reflect local circumstances.

Expert Scientist Dissector

Expert scientist dissectors undertake dissection that would include Category B and C specimens. They **may also** dissect less complex Category D and E specimens. The expert scientist dissector is a highly experienced post graduate role, and such individuals would also be involved in the training and development of the specialist scientist dissectors and also medical trainees for some specimens. They **should have obtained** the Institute's Diploma of Expert Practice in Histological Dissection.

The expected Agenda for Change pay band would be Band 7 (or equivalent).

Advanced Scientist Dissector / Advanced Practitioner

Advanced scientist dissectors undertake dissection of specimens in Category D and E, which includes complex cancer cases, and would also be involved in the training and development of both expert and specialist scientist dissectors and medical trainees. They **must have obtained** the Institute's Diploma in Expert Practice (DEP) in Dissection and **also** hold the Institute's Advanced Specialist Diploma (ASD) in Histological Dissection

The occupational title and code for these individuals should be UD (Specialist Biomedical Scientist) and the expected Agenda for Change pay band would be Band 8A (or equivalent), which would be dictated by the scope of the role and the required experience. Local policy may determine the additional requirement for an ASD.

Advanced Dissection Manager

The role of advanced dissection manager may be appropriate in laboratories where local flexibilities have expanded duties to include key elements of an 8B role; in these circumstances this would be likely to include duties that would be undertaken as part of an integrated scientist/pathologist dissection rota, including clinical audit and clinical governance. Such an individual undertakes the dissection of specimens in Category D and E, including complex cancer specimens, and would also lead and manage the dissection within a laboratory, with responsibility to the clinical head of department for clinical audit and governance of dissection.

They would direct the training and development of all dissectors ensuring the delivery of a high quality dissection service. An advanced dissection manager is a very senior individual with a wide remit within dissection services and as such **must have obtained** the Institute's Diploma of Expert Practice in Histological Dissection **and also hold the** Institute's Advanced Specialist Diploma in Histological Dissection.

The occupational title and code for these individuals should be UD (Specialist Biomedical Scientist) and the expected Agenda for Change pay band would be Band 8B (or equivalent).

Additional expectations around job roles

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

All staff require regular appraisals that covers their whole scope of practice. For advanced practitioners delivering advanced dissection 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 the ASD in Histological Dissection 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 Dissection Roles, Qualifications and Recommended Pay Banding

Dissection Role	Dissection	Dissection Qualification	Banding (AfC)
Specialist Scientist Dissector	Category A, B and many of Category C	None	Band 6
Expert Scientist Dissector	Category B and C, some less complex Category D and E	Diploma of Expert Practice in Histological Dissection	Band 7
Advanced Scientist Dissector / Advanced Practitioner / Advanced Dissection Manager	Category D and E	Advanced Specialist Diploma in Histological Dissection	Band 8A/8B

Note: This guidance statement applies only to histological dissection qualifications and does not cover scientists undertaking histopathological reporting. However, for purposes of career structure and workforce planning it should be noted that scientists undertaking histopathological reporting are undertaking a consultant role and as such would be expected to be matched to Agenda for change Band 8c or above. Such individuals would not be expected to undertake a dissection ASD in addition to or prior to commencing reporting training.

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 3rd May 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 3rd May 2026]



Institute of Biomedical Science
12 Coldbath Square
London
EC1R 5HL
United Kingdom

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