**Joint Statement on HSST Eligibility**

Significant scientific workforce shortages at senior levels have been identified in several Life Science specialties, which have been further highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Higher Specialist Scientific Training (HSST) Programme trains Healthcare Scientists to consultant level, however HSST is currently not open to all individual scientists with the potential to develop and take on the role of a consultant scientist.

The National School of Healthcare Science in Health Education England, Academy for Healthcare Science, Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS), Royal College of Pathologists (RCPPath) and Manchester Academy of Healthcare Scientist Education are pleased to announce a widening of the eligibility criteria for HSST. The new criteria will allow appropriately qualified senior Biomedical Scientists, who can demonstrate ability to work at Level 7 via academic and professional qualifications, to apply to join the programme. Both Biomedical Scientists and Clinical Scientists will be subject to the same HSST interview process to determine suitability and readiness. The qualifications to confer eligibility will include:

1) HCPC Registration as a Biomedical Scientist, IBMS Specialist Diploma and relevant MSc
2) HCPC Registration as a Biomedical Scientist, IBMS Specialist Diploma and IBMS Higher Specialist Diploma or IBMS 2-part Fellowship Special Exam
3) HCPC Registration as a Biomedical Scientist, IBMS Specialist Diploma and IBMS Diploma of Expert Practice

Eligible individuals will also need to meet the requirements of the Universities to commence a doctoral level programme, including a First or 2:1 Bachelor’s degree and a Master’s degree in a relevant subject area or evidence of having written at that standard, and a minimum of four years working in a professional role. In addition, training departments will need to achieve HSST training accreditation through the NSHCS to be successful in the commissioning rounds. This includes demonstration of suitable workplace and research supervision at doctoral level, access to training to meet the specialism curriculum and HSS Standards of Proficiency, and senior level trust support.

All Life Science HSSTs must obtain Fellowship of the Royal College of Pathologists during the programme in order to complete HSST, in addition to the academic qualification and evidence of their workplace training. These requirements of the programme are identical for Clinical Scientists and Biomedical Scientists on HSST.
This revised admission criteria to HSST is endorsed by NHS Education for Scotland - Healthcare Science. We look forward to working with all agencies concerned with the development of the next generation of consultant-level healthcare scientists.

All scientists who successfully complete the HSST programme or equivalence are eligible to join the Academy for Healthcare Science HSS Register and become a Fellow.

This change to the HSST eligibility criteria will apply from 2021 entry to the HSST programme.