The Role of Healthcare Scientists

Jenny Scott, Clinical Scientist

Background

University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust

What is the Scientist Training Programme - Clinical Pharmaceutical Sciences?

- A 3-year training programme of work-based learning supported by study for a Master's in Clinical Pharmaceutical Science at the University of Manchester.
- Run alongside the MSc Pharmaceutical Technology and Quality Assurance (PTQA).
- Run by the National School of Healthcare Science funded by Health Education England/Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW).

- In-service or external trainees
- **4 Rotations:**
  - Aseptics
  - QA/QC
  - Production
  - Radiopharmacy
- **Competencies:** OLAT/OneFile
- **Assessments:** OCEs, DOPs, CBDs, MSF
- **Research project/MSc:** Investigating the Stability of Bleomycin in Infusion Pump Devices
- **Elective**
- **Final assessment:** OSFA now replaced by IACC

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Timeline

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2008-2011 BSc Biomedical Science, University of Southampton

2012-2013 MSc Pharmacology, Kings College London

2013 – 2016 STP based at North Bristol Trust MSc Clinical Pharmaceutical Sciences, University of Manchester

2016 Registered with the HCPC as a Clinical Scientist

2016 Quality Assurance Specialist, Salford Royal Foundation Trust

2018 Deputy Quality Controller, University Hospitals Bristol Foundation Trust

2021 Quality Assurance Practitioner, St Marys Pharmaceutical Unit

2022 Senior Quality Assurance Officer, Vectura

2023 Quality Systems Manager, University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust

Other roles held by Healthcare Scientists

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- Quality Assurance Lead
- Principle Radiopharmaceutical Scientist
- Associate Director of Pharmacy, Radiopharmacy
- Deputy Quality Controller
- Quality Assurance Manager
- Trainee Qualified Person
- GMP/GDP Inspector
- Responsible Person WDA
- Quality Controller (MGPS)

My experience working in QA as a Healthcare Scientist

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- Releasing non-sterile and aseptic batches under the unit's Specials Licence.
- Leading and supporting validation projects for new equipment and software.
- Critically assessing deviations, change controls and non-conformances, performing risk assessments and managing corrective and preventative actions within the PQS
- Ensuring the unit keeps up-to-date with the latest standards and guidance in relation to GMP and performing gap analysis
- Reviewing and approving microbiological and chemical OOS investigations.
- Facilitating quality meetings including metric generation
- Approving batch documentation, worksheets and labels
- Leading and supporting validation of new equipment, software and facilities.
- Facilitating the refurbishment of a non-sterile unit.
- Line management and recruitment
- Being named on the Specials Licence for Quality Control.
- Overseeing the trusts temperature monitoring system for drug storage areas.
- Coordinating all validation and internal audit activities within the unit.
- Implementing the Microbiology Reporting System (MRS) including validation and training.
- Collating, analysing, trending and presenting environmental monitoring data.
- Using root cause analysis to investigate out of specification results and exceptions.
- Introducing changes using Change Control and Failure Modes and Effects Analysis (FMEA).
- Staff training and supervision including GMP updates.
- Updating procedures, writing technical agreements and reviewing worksheets.
- Performing documentation and in process checks.
- Performing gas testing
- Performing data integrity assessments

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Positives

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- Good grounding in Pharmacy Technical Services with exposure to a range of different settings and roles.
- Attracts science graduates to Technical Services and provides opportunities
- Working across different areas strengthens knowledge & skill-set
- Networking opportunities
- Band 6 salary and funded MSc Band 6 with educational training support funding
- Project work supports host department
- Supernumerary allowing focus on competencies and other projects
- Workforce planning – can shape trainees for future roles

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Challenges

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- Supernumerary so less responsibility for operational tasks at the beginning
- Some gaps in terms of managerial training – can be filled by trust training or external courses
- Capacity issues within departments can cause issues with training e.g. being used operationally
- Can be difficulties in arranging placements for rotations
- Difficulties in gaining exposure to certain tasks e.g. Introduction of a new product
- No guaranteed job at the end of the programme for external STPs.

Life after the STP

University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust

Career progression

STP graduates are highly skilled individuals filling many senior job roles within Pharmacy Technical Services and are an important part of our workforce

Higher Specialist Scientist Training Programme (HSST) would allow registration as a Consultant Clinical Scientist. Currently not available for Clinical Pharmaceutical Sciences. Lack of career progression can lead to loss of graduates to industry.

Further Training:

- Trust managerial courses
- Product approval – currently not available to Clinical Scientists who are not registered Pharmacists or Technicians
- The Pharmaceutical Medical Gas Testing course facilitated by the University of Leeds.
- QP training

Support for trainees/Healthcare scientists:

South West Healthcare Science Trainee Network

Healthcare Science Week, 11-15 March 2024

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Thank you for listening