

Guidance on providing evidence of meeting requirements for Training Officer Role

Introduction

The STP is a demanding three-year postgraduate programme designed to develop clinical scientists who will lead improvement and innovation in diagnostic scientific services. In the workplace, the STP trainee needs a Training Officer who

- Understands the aims and objectives of the programme and is familiar with the curriculum
- Has a level of theoretical scientific knowledge that will allow him/her to provide constant challenge to the trainee in respect of the underpinning science
- Can explain the programme to others in the department and ensure goodwill and support from colleagues
- Can negotiate with colleagues in his/her own department and other departments to ensure the trainee is provided with all the opportunities required
- Plans training, guides and mentors the trainee, reviews the trainee's progress and addresses any areas needing improvement
- Helps the trainee manage time and resources throughout the period

To carry out the role effectively, the Training Officer needs to meet a number of requirements. The STP Training Officer person specification sets these out.

When applying for accreditation as an STP training provider, each department has to identify the Training Officer who will complete an application form for approval. This will be reviewed by the National School of Healthcare Science.

Completing the application

Please read the person specification carefully before completing the application. The following will give you a little more explanation of the information required.

Qualifications

We ask for a postgraduate science qualification because this is the level of the STP and you will have to be able to discuss, explain, challenge or support scientific thinking at that academic level. If you do not have a postgraduate science qualification, do you have the equivalent in terms of experience and knowledge gained through practice and CPD?

Ideally, you should also have a training qualification. Being able to do a job well does not necessarily mean you will be able to train someone else to do it. Training involves a number of skills, such as identifying the learner's preferred learning style, negotiating a training plan, knowing when support is needed, providing pastoral care where necessary, giving constructive and useful feedback, etc. If you do not have a training qualification, experience of successful training outcomes can be a substitute. However, if you do not have a training qualification we would advise you to do an analysis of your own strengths and weaknesses as a trainer and some sort of 360-degree review. The 'training' and 'personal attributes' sections of the form are also relevant to this.

Registration

We would expect any Training Officer to have the relevant statutory or voluntary registration for the specialty concerned. Ideally you should be a registered clinical scientist, because that is the registered status the programme should lead to. Being registered at that level ensures you are familiar with the standards.

Knowledge and understanding

To train an STP trainee you must have a clear and detailed understanding of the STP curriculum for your specialty, especially the workplace modules. You will have to understand the assessment requirements for the STP: it is your responsibility, with the trainee, to ensure that all the necessary assessments of competence have been carried out. You should also be familiar with 'Good Scientific Practice', the Academy for Healthcare Science document on which standards for clinical science are based. It is useful if you are familiar with other scientific specialties closely related to your own, because this can help you in your oversight of the trainee during the rotational phase of training.

Seniority and experience

Training Officer is a responsible role and to undertake it you must be at a more senior level than the trainee you are supervising. We would expect you to have a status in the department at least equal to the normal level for clinical scientists.

Departments sometimes ask newly qualified clinical scientists, immediately after completing the STP, to act as Training Officer for the next trainee. Some recent STP graduates may have considerable work experience in the NHS or elsewhere; but some have come directly from undergraduate study to the STP and will not have held any substantive (non-training) post in the health service.

We welcome the involvement of graduates of the programme, but we do not recommend that the Training Officer role should be undertaken by a relatively inexperienced new graduate. The role is straightforward when everything is going well. But would an individual in this position be confident dealing with a very challenging trainee? Giving difficult feedback to a trainee who is not producing work to the right standard? Confronting professional conduct issues? Giving pastoral care or supporting a trainee in difficulty?

Ideally you should have considerable experience of managing others, at a reasonably senior level, and have received all the mandatory training needed to act as a line manager.

If you do not have this level of seniority and management experience, you could still act as a Training Officer; but we would recommend that you do this under the supervision of a more senior manager, and that the division of responsibilities with that manager are formalised in a document which should be supplied to us as part of your application.

As well as management of the trainee as an individual, you will be to an extent managing his/her workload and directing and planning the training. You will need experience of carrying out postgraduate research, so that you can support the trainee during the research project. If you do not, you will have to provide us with assurances that you have made suitable arrangements in the department to cover this.

You should have experience of assessing and signing off competence. If you do not, you will need to ensure you have identified individuals in the department who can deliver the required assessments. You will have to familiarise yourself with the standard of evidence required to sign off

assessments and competencies, and ensure that this standard is maintained consistently both in your own assessments and in those carried out by colleagues.

Training

We ask you to complete National School of Healthcare Science train the trainer and cascade the learning to colleagues involved in delivering training. Ideally, you should access any in house training available, including your trust's online learning, to support you in delivering training. Typically, most trusts' learning and development teams will run training programmes for educators (often with a focus of nursing of medical trainees, but nevertheless covering all the principles of good training). Some examples are given in the person specification.

Personal attributes

We accept that you will not be able to give us definitive evidence of the personal attributes listed in the application form. However, we would ask you to reflect on your own strengths and weaknesses as a trainer, identify any areas for improvement, and plan to source any support you need.

Support

The person specification gives some best-practice points which will ensure your activity as a Training Officer is fully supported by your department. We ask you to tell us which of these measures are already in place. For any that are missing, we ask for an undertaking that you will work with your department to implement them.

Countersignature

Your application for approval as a Training Officer should be countersigned by the Head of Department. This is to ensure that the department is fully aware of all the requirements and will address any training and support you need to fulfil this function.