



ARTP

Association for
Respiratory Technology
& Physiology

POSITION STATEMENT

PROFESSIONAL REGISTRATION

December 2025

Scope

This position statement applies to all respiratory and sleep physiologists practicing in the United Kingdom, irrespective of banding, grade, or employment sector.

Position Statement

The Association for Respiratory Technology and Physiology (ARTP) advocates that all practicing respiratory and sleep physiologists should hold, or be actively working towards, professional registration with the Academy for Healthcare Science (AHCS) or the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), as appropriate to their scope of practice and qualifications.

Although professional registration for respiratory and sleep physiologists is not currently a legal (statutory) requirement, it is a professional expectation. ARTP believes that registration represents a vital safeguard for patients, a mark of competence for practitioners, and a key mechanism for promoting high and consistent standards of practice across all respiratory and sleep services.

Background and Context

Professional registration provides formal recognition that an individual has demonstrated the knowledge, skills, and professional behaviours required for safe and effective practice. It confirms adherence to nationally agreed standards, a professional code of conduct, and commitment to continuous professional development (CPD).

In the United Kingdom, two systems of registration exist:

1. Statutory registration, which is a legal requirement overseen by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). This applies to certain healthcare professions such as biomedical scientists, paramedics, and clinical scientists.
2. Voluntary registration, which is professionally recognised but not legally mandated. The Academy for Healthcare Science (AHCS) maintains a voluntary register accredited by the Professional Standards Authority (PSA) for healthcare scientists, including physiologists.

Respiratory and sleep physiologists currently fall within the voluntary registration framework. Healthcare scientists in respiratory and sleep science, typically those who have completed the Scientist Training Programme (STP) or achieved equivalence, are eligible for statutory registration with the HCPC and use of the protected title, Clinical Scientist.

The Case for Professional Registration

1. Safeguarding Patients

Accurate measurement and interpretation of respiratory and sleep tests are fundamental to diagnosis, disease monitoring, and treatment decisions. Registration assures patients, employers, and regulators that practitioners have demonstrated competence, understand their professional responsibilities, and are accountable to an external body. Recent investigations in other

physiological sciences, such as the Kingdon review into paediatric audiology services, highlight the serious risks that can arise from unregulated practice⁽¹⁾.

2. Promoting Consistency and Quality

Without universal registration, standards for recruitment, training, and assessment vary widely between departments. A unified registration framework helps ensure that all physiologists meet consistent minimum standards, supporting equitable, high-quality care across all NHS and independent sector providers.

3. Enhancing Professional Recognition

Registration confers professional identity and parity with other healthcare scientists and allied health professionals. It affirms that respiratory and sleep physiologists are skilled, autonomous practitioners whose work directly impacts patient outcomes. Embedding registration within workforce policy will strengthen the profession's visibility and influence across healthcare systems.

4. Supporting Career Progression and Workforce Development

Registration provides a structured pathway for professional growth:

1. AHCS registration recognises competence at the practitioner level (typically Bands 5–6).
2. HCPC registration recognises advanced clinical scientist practice (Band 7 and above). By supporting staff to achieve registration appropriate to their level, employers reinforce career progression, workforce stability, and professional accountability.

Professional Registration Routes

Voluntary Registration (AHCS): The AHCS register provides an accessible entry route for physiologists, aligned with the PSA's accredited register framework. Applicants must hold an appropriate qualification (e.g., an accredited Practitioner Training Programme degree, a level 4–6 apprenticeship, or recognised equivalence) and demonstrate good character, professional competence, and CPD engagement.

Statutory Registration (HCPC): Practitioners who have completed the Scientist Training Programme (STP) or gained equivalence may register as Clinical Scientists with the HCPC. This is a legal register that confers statutory protection of title and represents the highest level of professional accountability within healthcare science.

ARTP Expectations

The Chief Medical Officer for Wales has documented in the 2024-2025 annual report, a national move towards mandatory professional registration for the entire NHS Wales clinical workforce⁽²⁾. This will include the requirement for all healthcare scientists to hold statutory registration with HCPC or equivalent registration accredited by the PSA. ARTP supports this approach as an important step toward promoting consistent professional standards, accountability, and quality of care across the Welsh healthcare system, and believes that similar alignment should be adopted across the wider UK.

ARTP strongly recommend that:

- All physiologists, regardless of banding, work towards professional registration appropriate to their role.
- Employers include registration (or active pursuit of registration) as a condition in job descriptions for Band 6 and above.
- Education providers support trainees to complete qualifications that lead to eligibility for AHCS or HCPC registration.
- Service managers create supportive structures for portfolio development, equivalence applications, and CPD.

Implementation Roadmap

Timeline	Milestone
By end of 2026	Job descriptions for Band 6 and above explicitly require registration or active pursuit of registration.
From 2027	All new appointments to respiratory and sleep physiology posts to include professional registration as a contractual requirement.
By 2029	All staff at Band 7 and above registered with AHCS or HCPC.
By 2030	100% of staff at Band 5 and above to hold or be working towards registration.

Summary

Professional registration represents the foundation of safe, consistent, and accountable practice. Although registration for respiratory and sleep physiologists is currently voluntary, ARTP believes it should be considered an essential professional standard and a requirement within recruitment and appraisal processes.

By embedding registration across the workforce, ARTP aims to:

- Safeguard patients and maintain public confidence.
- Ensure consistent, evidence-based practice across all services.
- Support professional identity and parity with other healthcare scientists.
- Enable structured career progression that strengthens the future of the respiratory and sleep physiology profession.

ARTP's position is that every respiratory and sleep physiologist should hold, or be actively working towards, professional registration with either the AHCS or HCPC. Registration is the cornerstone of professional accountability, patient safety, and service excellence and a crucial step in ensuring our profession's continued development and recognition within the wider healthcare community.

Authors

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Addressing frequently asked questions

We have a significant workforce shortage; requiring staff to be professionally registered will lessen the pool of available staff.

ARTP are proposing that the requirement for professional registration is implemented in a stepped approach, with the first step being actively pursuing professional registration. ARTP have worked closely with the National School of Healthcare Science and the AHCS to produce alternative training routes to support the workforce gaps. Individuals with appropriate science degrees can register for the Graduate Diploma in Respiratory Science which confers PTP equivalence on completion.

What are the prerequisites for equivalence applications?

To be eligible to apply for PTP equivalence, you need to be currently employed in the UK at the level of a Practitioner (normally Band 5 and above) and have 3 years service. For STP equivalence, individuals need to demonstrate knowledge and skills comparable to those gained through the formal scientist training programme (STP).

I am already on the AHCS register, should I apply for STPE?

If you are working at Band 6 and above, you may wish to review the STP curriculum to see if your knowledge and experience is equivalent. Completion of STPE would enable you to join the HCPC register as a Clinical Scientist. Whether you chose to join the HCPC register or remain on the AHCS is often personal choice and may be determined by funding or the time available to complete the equivalence process. The HCPC register is however a statutory register and Clinical Scientist is a protected title.

What about in Scotland where there is no access to PTP or STP programmes but excellent work based competency assessment?

All individuals with appropriate knowledge, skills and experience are able to apply for equivalence. ARTP are aware that some individuals have found it difficult to successfully demonstrate equivalence in Scotland despite undertaking work-based competencies and professional body examinations. ARTP, and in particular ARTP Scotland, are working hard with members of the AHCS team to map the processes in an attempt to make the demonstration of equivalence easier in the future.

I used to be on the RCCP register but left as it was still voluntary. Why should I join the AHCS register?

The AHCS Healthcare science practitioner register absorbed the RCCP register in 2023. The register has now gained professional standards authority (PSA) accreditation. Being a PSA accredited register means that it will be audited to demonstrate that the register demonstrates high standards of governance, education and training and that these are adhered to.

How can I encourage my staff to become registered?

Encouraging staff to pursue professional registration begins with clearly communicating its value. Professional registration provides formal recognition that an individual has achieved and maintains the knowledge, skills, and behaviours required for safe, high-quality practice. It offers reassurance to patients, colleagues, and the wider healthcare system that competence is not only achieved at one point in time, but is continually upheld throughout a career.

Evidence from the Kingdon report highlights that Healthcare Scientists have the potential to cause patient harm if standards are inconsistent or poorly regulated. Registration acts as a safeguard, ensuring accountability and supporting a culture of continuous improvement and reflective practice.

Within the healthcare workforce, our nursing and allied health professional colleagues are required to be registered to practice. The absence of equivalent expectations for Healthcare Scientists can create an unintended perception that these professions hold greater responsibility or expertise. By promoting professional registration, we advocate for parity, recognition, and a strengthened professional identity across our discipline.

Ultimately, fostering a culture where registration is encouraged and viewed as a marker of pride and professionalism, supports both individual development and the advancement of the profession as a whole.

Applying for equivalence is expensive, are there any opportunities for funding?

ARTP has recently provided bursaries for members to apply for PTP or STP equivalence. In 2024 we supported seven individuals to apply for PTP and nine individuals to apply for STP equivalence. We hope to be able to offer ten of each bursary type per year as a membership benefit. In addition, many physiological science networks are offering bursaries to support more healthcare scientists to achieve registration. In light of the findings of the Kingdon report, ICB's and Trusts should be encouraged to identify and support staff within their areas to achieve registration.

References

1. Independent report. Kingdon review of children's hearing services: final report. Department of Health and Social Care. 10th November 2025 [Kingdon review of children's hearing services: final report - GOV.UK](#)
2. Reflecting on our health. Chief Medical Officer for Wales Annual Report 2024-2025. Welsh Government. 4th December 2025. [Chief Medical Officer annual report 2024 to 2025 | GOV.WALES](#)



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