

HEALTHCARE SCIENCE ASSOCIATE LEVEL 4 PROGRAMME PLAN - DECONTAMINATION PATHWAY

Duration: 24 months + End-Point Assessment (EPA)



CORE SESSIONS (ALL PATHWAYS)

- Being a Successful Student & Scientist
- Effective Communication
- Legal & Ethical context of working in Healthcare Science
- Health, Safety & Security
- Quality, Audit Research & Development
- Working in A Technical Environment
- Teaching, Training & Assessing Others
- Leadership, Supervision, Mentoring & Teamwork

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

The programme is designed to develop Healthcare Science Associates working within Decontamination and Sterile Services departments, supporting the safe preparation, cleaning and reprocessing of medical devices.

Decontamination services are a critical part of the healthcare system, ensuring that equipment used in diagnostic and surgical procedures is safe, sterile and fit for use. Healthcare Science Associates play a vital role in maintaining these standards, directly supporting patient safety and clinical outcomes.

This programme develops the knowledge, skills and behaviours required to work confidently within regulated decontamination environments, with a strong focus on safety, quality and compliance.

The apprenticeship is delivered through:

- Monthly **remote core masterclass sessions** (shared across all pathways)
- **Specialist Decontamination teaching** aligned to workplace role
- **Workplace-based technical practice and competency development**
- **Portfolio-based assessment** via e-portfolio
- **Regular coaching and progress reviews**
- **Gateway and End-Point Assessment** in the final months

Learning is applied directly within the workplace to support safe service delivery, regulatory compliance and operational effectiveness.

ASSESSMENT METHODS

Assessment is portfolio-based and includes a range of workplace evidence demonstrating technical competence and applied knowledge.

Examples include:

- Direct observation of decontamination processes
- Reflective accounts of technical activities
- Professional discussions
- Case studies and problem-solving activities
- Work products (e.g. quality records, process documentation)
- Witness testimonies from colleagues or supervisors
- Competency-based assessments
- Knowledge questions or written assignments

All evidence is uploaded and reviewed through an e-portfolio system.



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Total off the Job Hours: 578 over a 24 months duration

OFF-THE-JOB LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Learners complete off-the-job training in line with apprenticeship requirements. Activities include:

Core Learning

- Attending core sessions
- Completing knowledge-based assignments

Workplace Technical Practice

- Preparing and processing medical devices
- Supporting cleaning and disinfection procedures
- Working within sterilisation and decontamination workflows
- Following strict health and safety requirements

Specialist Development

- Developing knowledge of decontamination science
- Understanding regulatory frameworks (e.g. HTM guidance)
- Supporting quality assurance processes

Quality and Service Improvement

- Analysing quality data
- Supporting audit and compliance activity
- Improving workflow and efficiency

Research and Professional Learning

- Reviewing procedures, policies and guidelines
- Understanding advances in decontamination practices
- Developing underpinning scientific knowledge

Reflective Practice and Portfolio Development

- Writing reflective accounts
- Recording competencies and evidence
- Gathering feedback from colleagues

Coaching and Progress Reviews

- Regular reviews with coaches
- Setting development goals
- Preparing for End-Point Assessment

PROGRAMME OUTCOME

Apprentices will be able to:

- Safely carry out decontamination and sterilisation processes
- Apply scientific knowledge within sterile services environments
- Maintain high standards of infection prevention and control
- Ensure compliance with regulatory and safety requirements
- Support safe and efficient workflow within departments
- Contribute to patient safety and clinical outcomes
- Operate within governance and professional frameworks

SPECIALIST PATHWAY DELIVERY – DECONTAMINATION

Delivered following the core units and aligned to workplace role.

Specialist units include:

- Anatomy and Physiology (linking to infection control and procedural impact)
- Principles and Practice of Decontamination Science
- Preparation of Medical Devices for Cleaning and Disinfection
- Cleaning and Disinfection of Medical Devices

Learners develop the skills required to safely manage the decontamination process, ensuring medical devices are effectively processed in line with Health Technical Memoranda and regulatory requirements.

This includes developing an understanding of workflow, safety procedures and quality assurance within sterile services environments.

Specialist teaching is delivered by industry experts and directly linked to real workplace practice.

END-POINT ASSESSMENT (EPA)

The apprenticeship concludes with an independent End-Point Assessment.

The assessment typically includes:

• Observation of Practice

Assessment of technical competence in decontamination processes

• Professional Discussion

Exploring knowledge, skills and behaviours

• Portfolio Review

Showcasing evidence of competence and development

Achievement:

Level 4 Healthcare Science Associate Apprenticeship

Grades available: Pass or Distinction

FUNCTIONAL SKILLS

Functional Skills in English and maths are optional for apprentices aged 19+.

Support is provided where required.

PROGRESSION OPPORTUNITIES

On successful completion, learners may progress to:

- Band 4 Healthcare Science Associate / Assistant Practitioner roles
- Senior roles within sterile services or decontamination departments
- Service leadership or supervisory roles
- Level 6 Degree Apprenticeships (where applicable)
- Careers within compliance, inspection or specialist decontamination services



 **Dynamic Training**

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