Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB DETAILS	
Job Title	Associate Practitioner
Reports to	Biomedical Support Manager
Band	Band 4
Department/Directorate	Microbiology (Specialist Services/ Diagnostics)

JOB PURPOSE

To work as part of the Microbiology team delivering Microbiology services to users. Post holder will work across all areas of the Microbiology department. Duties will include supervision/ organisation of all support staff working in the department. Post holder will be expected to undertake all testing allocated to support grade staff and additionally undertake processing of MRSA specimens up to and including reporting of results.

KEY RESULT AREAS/PRINCIPAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

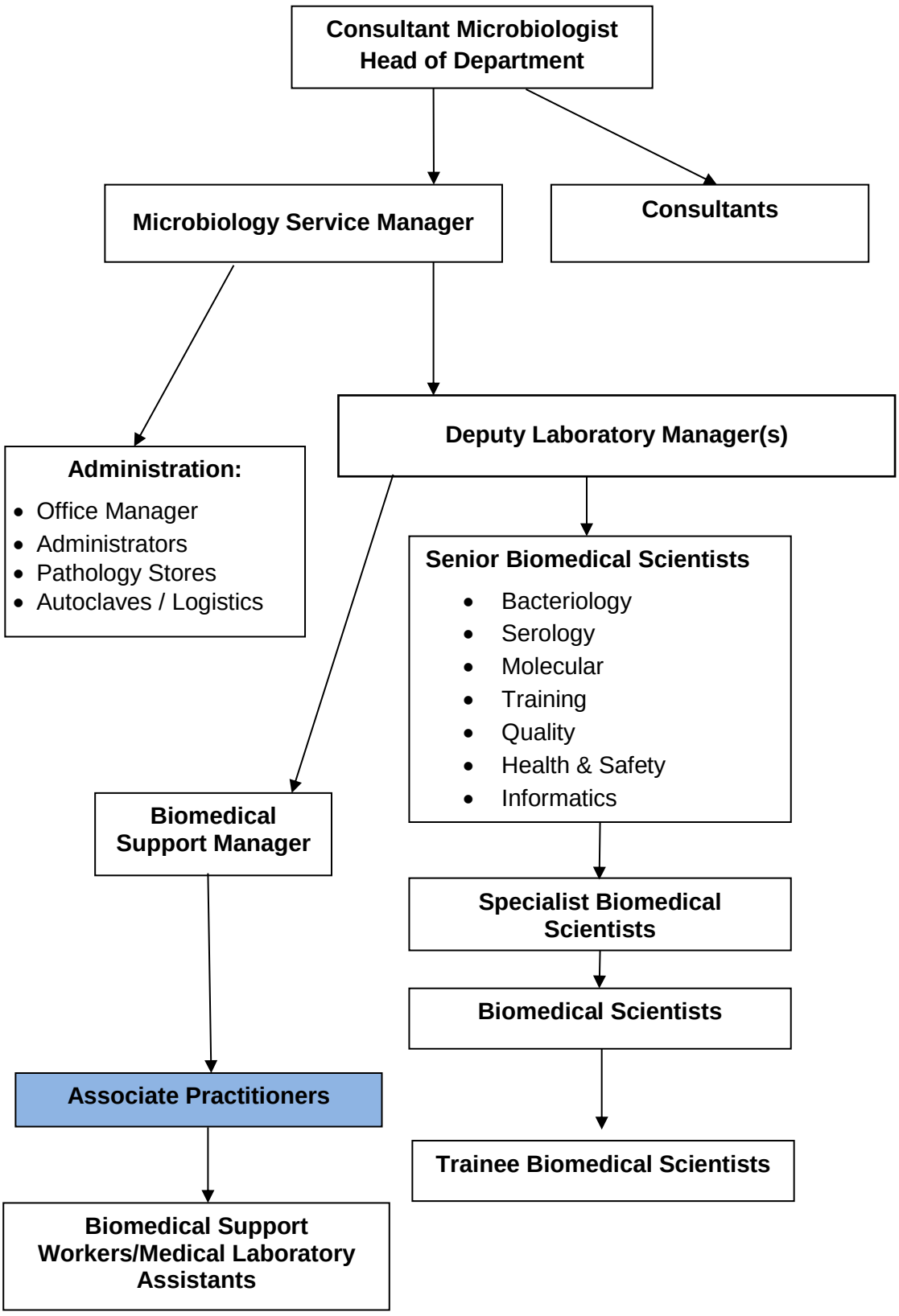
- To assist in the analysis of pathology samples by preparation of instrumentation, reagents and pathological samples, including maintaining appropriate records and documentation
- Take an active role in the coordination and prioritisation of specimens through the pre-analytical and analytical process
- Assist Biomedical support manager in creating rota(s) for the Biomedical support workers. Adjust rotas at short notice if necessary when staff are off sick/absent at short notice
- Undertake quality control procedures; examine quality control results to identify poor performance and report findings to senior staff
- Participate in the operation, routine maintenance and troubleshooting of complex analytical equipment
- Ensure safe and correct use, in compliance with operator manuals and departmental procedures
- Use of pipettes for the accurate volumetric re-constitution, dilution and aliquoting of samples and reagents for laboratory use
- To take an active role in the materials management of the department, receipting, storing and stock controlling laboratory consumables
- Assist in the supervision, training and teaching of biomedical support workers and participate in the department's training plan
- Completion of appropriate training and competency documentation as required
- Maintain and update Personal Development Plans/Reviews, competency assessments and training records of more biomedical support workers.
- Assist with the development of new methods and the implementation of new technology - carry out development, innovation and service improvement work for pre, post and analytical processes
- Assist with the production, maintenance and implementation of Standard Operating Procedures
- Ensure that safe working practices are followed in accordance with departmental Safety Policy
- Conduct annual Personal Development Reviews and Return to Work meetings
- Be aware of and adhere to Trusts policies, including those relating to discipline, grievance, sickness, absence and health and safety
- Ensure compliance with all statutory and legislative requirements including COSHH, patient confidentiality and the Data Protection Act
- Work flexibly and undertake other duties commensurate with the grade as required

KEY WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

Post holder will liaise with colleagues within the Department and with users of the service both within and outside the Trust. Communications will be with the following grades of staff:

Internal to the Trust	External to the Trust
• Medical Staff • Biomedical Scientists • Clerical Staff • Biomedical Support Workers/MLA's • Other Healthcare Professionals	• Other Healthcare Professionals • Supplier Personnel • External Quality Assurance schemes • Commercial partners

ORGANISATIONAL CHART



FREEDOM TO ACT

- Schedule & coordinate their own work and that of the support staff team assigned to area, following procedures relevant to this area of work
- Required to follow established standard policies and procedures and will work autonomously day to day with advice generally available from the line manager or appropriate staff group for atypical scenarios
- Maintain competency (to level 3) in own areas, being able to train and competency assess other staff
- Priorities and progress are discussed with their line manager at the monthly BMSW operational meeting

COMMUNICATION/RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

Provides and receives routine information orally to inform work colleagues, clinicians or external contacts/ exchanges routine information where tact and persuasive skills are required, required to overcome barriers to understanding.

- The post holder will require good written, verbal and electronic communication and will be required to communicate regularly with work colleagues and external contacts on a range of matters including communication of test results
- The post requires communication across staff groups within the department and with external groups including service users, commercial partners, digital partners, medical professional, researchers, patients and the general public on a daily basis
- The post holder is required to tailor their communication and level of complexity to the recipient's level of understanding
- Demonstrate politeness, courtesy and sensitivity in dealing with patients, service users, and colleagues, maintaining good customer relations
- Use of telephone, face to face, written and email communication methods as appropriate with a range of people on day to day matters
- Contribute towards the integrity and reputation of the department by ensuring harmonious relationships between self and managers, colleagues, patients and other staff groups
- Effective communication with support team members to ensure smooth running of support staff functions, including attending (and leading) support staff meetings
- Effective liaison with other laboratory personnel to ensure service provision
- Attend Associate Practitioner meetings to represent support staff groups
- Respond to telephone queries and relay test results to clinicians

ANALYTICAL/JUDGEMENTAL SKILLS

- Judgements involving a range of facts or situations requiring analysis, and comparison of options
- The post holder is required to make frequent judgements and decisions on job-related facts or situations
- The post occasionally requires judgements on a range of facts that require analysis and comparison of range of options e.g. identifying IQC/IQA discrepancies, troubleshooting
- The post holder will be required to make decisions within their own work area, for example identifying the correct application of analytical procedures and sample types, cascaded further analysis
- Receive specimens into the department and prioritise those required for immediate testing or specimens requiring referral.
- Resolves day to day issues in own area e.g. mislabelled or mislaid specimens
- Undertake first line troubleshooting, referring appropriate problems to BMS staff
- Assist support workers to troubleshoot
- Be aware of and be able to act on urgent and / or unusual specimen requests
- Be aware of high-risk specimens and deal with these appropriately

- Document preliminary test results working with a high degree of accuracy at all times

Post holder will be expected to maintain supervisory skills in at least two of the following areas and update skills accordingly when methodology changes occur:

Molecular Virology (RD&E)

Lead support staff team to perform Molecular tests for the determination of microbial infections.

High Risk Serology laboratory (RD&E)

Lead support staff team to prepare and load samples for testing on manual and automated systems in the virology department.

Bacteriology sections

Lead the support staff team to prepare and process all specimen types including culture and sensitivity tests and use of automated systems.

Undertake testing/ reading/ reporting of MRSA screening specimens.

Specimen reception

Lead the support staff team to receive, review and distribute specimens in to the laboratory.

Additionally:

- Processing bacterial isolates on the MaldiTof (RD&E)
- Other duties deemed commensurate with grade
- Managing, reading and reviewing sensitivity IQC

PLANNING/ORGANISATIONAL SKILLS

Planning and organisational skills for ongoing tasks are integral to this role. The post holder will be required to plan their own day to day and long-term activities and the support staff team. As well as planning straightforward day to day tasks for themselves and the team of support staff the role requires planning & organising on-going activities liaising with multiple groups to ensure specialist service activities align with the needs of the clinical service. This will include:

- Day to day allocation of support personnel (under guidance from Senior BMS or Support Staff Manager) to sections of the laboratory as required by workload, staff absence and competency
- Effective staff planning to ensure adequate cover at all times (e.g. timely production of rotas etc)
- Planning training and competency assessment of staff within area managed, under guidance from the Support Staff Manager
- Prioritising urgent and emergency workload

PATIENT/CLIENT CARE

Provides clinical technical services. The post holder will provide clinical technical services for a range of service users including patients, researchers and the general public using complex analytical equipment. Undertakes routine and non-routine clinical/analytical tests in the microbiology laboratory including the use of automated equipment.

- Load samples and reagents onto analysers as required
- Maintain, calibrate and decontaminate automation as required
- Undertake all stages of support work on a variety of tests in relevant sections (bacteriology, virology, molecular)
- Prepares specimens for diagnostic testing

POLICY/SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

Follows laboratory policies, may propose changes to SOPs, and update accordingly where appropriate, offering suggestions for improvement.

- They will work to defined policy, make changes in their own practice and will contribute to service improvement by suggesting changes and highlighting issues for discussion with senior colleagues
- Ensure SOPs are kept up to date and are accessible for the support staff
- Assist in the quality assurance within each section, both internal and external, and to act in accordance with Standard Operating Procedures

FINANCIAL/PHYSICAL RESOURCES

- Use and maintain complex analytical and technical equipment safely and carefully
- Assist in maintaining stock levels and ordering consumables within your current work section and ensure stock is rotated in order to prevent wastage
- Ensure stock checks are performed to prevent stock outage and bring to the attention of (and liaise with) the storeman if there are any issues with stock levels
- Responsible for the safe storage of samples to maintain the integrity of these samples
- Economical and efficient use of departmental/Trust resources
- Appropriate waste-streaming
- Safe and efficient use of laboratory equipment and resources

HUMAN RESOURCES

The post holder has responsibility for day to day supervision of other support staff, including training, competency assessment, operational management. This to include:

- Effective communication with support team members to ensure smooth running of support staff functions
- Induction and training of support staff in functions required by these staff grades
- Ensure staff observations/competency assessments are completed, in date and appropriately recorded and stored
- Conduct PDRs and 1:1 meetings with support staff group
- Ensure support workers in group have completed Mandatory Training
- Participate in recruitment process as required
- Return to work interviews following sickness
- Ensure fridges, freezers and incubators are being regularly cleaned and temperatures and maintenance records completed
- Ensure temperature/maintenance sheets are printed and distributed prior to month end
- Ensure maintenance is performed on all equipment/analysers in own area of the laboratory
- Ensure IQA/IQC/EQAs are being tested as per protocol and all batch details are kept up to date
- Ensure IQC results checked and escalate any discrepant IQC results

INFORMATION RESOURCES

Frequent data entry when booking in requisitions or recording test results onto the Laboratory LIMS. Reading and reporting MRSA cultures and:

- Records personally generated data
- Use of laboratory IT system for data entry and Hospital system for patient information
- The post holder is required to enter and update data, use computer software including inputting, formatting and modifying, storing and providing information to the appropriate level of detail for the service user
- Ability to undertake and train staff in more complex aspects of IT work (e.g. Managing Sendout Bench, troubleshooting issues, dealing with uncollected specimens)

- Ensure all written work is accurate and up to date
- Be responsible for operating QC programmes on MRSA, Molecular automation, urine analysers, high risk laboratory automation and any others as requested
- Use of QPulse to ensure no uncontrolled documents are available and maintenance of SOPs
- Use of QPulse to ensure competency records are kept up to date

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Undertakes audits or assessments on work and may occasionally participate in research or validation/verification projects and equipment testing. May process and store samples for clinical trials or quality assurance.

PHYSICAL SKILLS

- Highly developed physical skills including hand-eye co-ordination and manipulation of fine tools and materials (dexterity - including loops, swabs, pipettes etc) are essential for the accuracy of laboratory tests
- Required to work efficiently and accurately in all aspects of the role including e.g. booking in and labelling samples, inoculating specimens and pipetting
- To use laboratory equipment safely as guided by Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), training and Risk Assessments

PHYSICAL EFFORT

- The role requires frequent light physical effort; frequent sitting and standing, occasional lifting and manoeuvring for benchwork for long periods including use of computers
- Frequent walking around the laboratory building (across multiple floors) and Infrequent walking around the hospital on sample collection runs
- Frequent repetitive movements processing specimens, including inoculating and spreading agar plates, uncapping and pipetting samples
- Lifting trays/racks, waste, regents and consumables and pushing trolleys with loads up to 10kg, on a weekly basis, for short periods
- Receiving and dispatching supplies and/or samples which may involve bending, lifting and pushing

MENTAL EFFORT

- Frequent concentration, occasionally prolonged required for planning, preparing, checking and processing samples for analysis or performing data entry
- Ability to learn and perform a wide range of tasks and specialist investigations and frequently move between these
- Work accurately at all times and especially under pressure at busy times
- Coping with interruptions, e.g. telephone calls

Leading the team effectively and supporting their wellbeing by:

- Championing health and wellbeing
- Encouraging and support staff engagement in delivery of the service
- Encouraging staff to comment on development and delivery of the service
- Ensuring during 1:1's / supervision with employees you always check how they are

EMOTIONAL EFFORT

This role involves rare exposure to distressing or emotional circumstances.

- Dealing with sensitive confidential information regarding patients and communicating clearly with users of the service and colleagues
- Rare exposure to distressing or emotional circumstances

- Post holder could be involved in the processing of foetal remains, post mortem tissue, limb amputations, and other samples of sensitive nature which could cause emotional discomfort
- Limited / occasional contact with patients, clients

WORKING CONDITIONS

- To work on a daily basis with both contained and un-contained, potentially infectious biological hazards including bodily fluids, solids and tissues
- Exposure to potentially hazardous bodily fluids and chemicals particularly when working in Containment Level 3
- DSE use
- Busy, and sometimes noisy environment

OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES

- To contribute to and work within a safe working environment.
- To undertake any training required in order to maintain competency including mandatory training, e.g. Manual Handling.
- Take part in regular performance appraisal.
- The post holder is expected to comply with Trust Infection Control Policies and conduct him/herself at all times in such a manner as to minimise the risk of healthcare associated infection.

As an employee of the Trust, it is a contractual duty that you abide by any relevant code of professional conduct and/or practice applicable to you. A breach of this requirement may result in action being taken against you (in accordance with the Trust's disciplinary policy) up to and including dismissal. Take part in regular performance appraisal.

You must also take responsibility for your workplace health and wellbeing:

- When required, gain support from Occupational Health, Human Resources or other sources.
- Familiarise yourself with the health and wellbeing support available from policies and/or Occupational Health.
- Follow the Trust's health and wellbeing vision of healthy body, healthy mind, healthy you.
- Undertake a Display Screen Equipment assessment (DSE) if appropriate to role.

GENERAL

This is a description of the job as it is now. We periodically examine employees' job descriptions and update them to ensure that they reflect the job as it is then being performed, or to incorporate any changes being proposed. This procedure is conducted by the Manager in consultation with the jobholder. You will, therefore, be expected to participate fully in such discussions. We aim to reach agreement on reasonable changes, but if agreement is not possible, we reserve the right to insist on changes to your job description after consultation with you.

Everyone within the Trust has a responsibility for, and is committed to, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of vulnerable adults, children and young people and for ensuring that they are protected from harm, ensuring that the Trusts Child Protection and Safeguarding Adult policies and procedures are promoted and adhered to by all members of staff.

At the Royal Devon, we are committed to reducing our carbon emissions and minimising the impact of healthcare on the environment, as outlined in our Green Plan available on our website. We actively promote sustainable practices and encourage colleagues to explore and implement greener ways of working within their roles.

The RDUH is a totally smoke-free Trust. Smoking is not permitted anywhere on Trust property, including all buildings, grounds and car parks. For help to quit call: 01392 207462.

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PERSON SPECIFICATION

Job Title	Associate Practitioner

REQUIREMENTS	Essential	Desirable
QUALIFICATION/ SPECIAL TRAINING		
Good level of general education to GCSE level	E	
NVQ level 3 or A level (preferably in Science), or equivalent demonstratable experience in Microbiology	E	
Additional theoretical or applied training in specific discipline to diploma equivalent level, or equivalent demonstratable experience	E	
Qualification or experience with IT packages such as Microsoft Office		D
IBMS Certificate of Competence I or II		D
KNOWLEDGE / SKILLS		
Good knowledge of Microbiology laboratory support staff operating procedures	E	
Good knowledge of required equipment maintenance and trouble- shooting procedures	E	
Aptitude for technical demands of an associate practitioner role e.g. reading culture plates, reporting defined results	E	
Ability to use own initiative for problem solving (within scope of practice)	E	
Ability to work well in a team	E	
Uses initiative in team working	E	
Excellent organisational skills	E	
Excellent verbal and written communication skills	E	
Excellent data entry and relevant IT skills	E	
Ability to work accurately at speed and under pressure	E	
Ability to deal with urgent work and changing priorities during	E	
Good level of hand eye coordination and manual dexterity	E	
High level of attention to detail	E	
Excellent organisational skills	E	
Evidence of training other staff in new procedures	E	
Evidence of ability to implement new procedures		D
EXPERIENCE		
Significant experience in a Microbiology laboratory		D
Previous experience of staff supervision		D
PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES		
Professional and well organised	E	
Flexible approach to working in the laboratory	E	
Enthusiasm for Microbiology laboratory work	E	
Effective working within a team	E	
Reliability and punctuality	E	
Ability to stand by decisions made and admit errors	E	
Honesty and integrity	E	

Ability to accept and learn from feedback	E	
Follows procedures with care and precision	E	
Physically able to fulfil the complete range of duties, which include manual handling	E	
Flexible attitude to working, including willingness to work flexible shift patterns across 24 hours and seven days in a week	E	

WORKING CONDITIONS/HAZARDS		FREQUENCY (Rare/ Occasional/ Moderate/ Frequent) R	O	M	F
Hazards/ Risks requiring Immunisation Screening					
Laboratory specimens	Y				F
Contact with patients	Y	R			
Exposure Prone Procedures	Y	R			
Blood/body fluids	Y				F
Hazard/Risks requiring Respiratory Health Surveillance					
Solvents (e.g. toluene, xylene, white spirit, acetone, formaldehyde and ethyl acetate)	Y		O		
Respiratory sensitisers (e.g. isocyanates)	Y	R			
Chlorine based cleaning solutions (e.g. Chlorclean, Actichlor, Tristel)	Y	R			
Animals	N				
Cytotoxic drugs	Y	R			
Risks requiring Other Health Surveillance					
Radiation (>6mSv)	N				
Laser (Class 3R, 3B, 4)	N				
Dusty environment (>4mg/m3)	Y	R			
Noise (over 80dBA)	Y	R			
Hand held vibration tools (=>2.5 m/s2)	N				
Other General Hazards/ Risks					
VDU use (> 1 hour daily)	Y				F
Heavy manual handling (>10kg)	N				
Driving	N				
Food handling	N				
Night working	Y			M	
Electrical work	N				
Physical Effort	Y		O		
Mental Effort	Y			M	
Emotional Effort	Y	R			
Working in isolation	Y		O		
Challenging behaviour	Y	R			