

Case for Direct Award – Provision and alignment of content for the image interpretation platform within the Learning Hub

Health Education England's (HEE) Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) programme and Cancer and Diagnostics programme have been working with the Royal College of Pathologists since 2019 to develop an online training solution for pathologists.

The Royal College of Pathologists, founded in 1962, is a professional membership organisation operating as a registered charity. The College is committed to promoting excellence in the coherent study, research and practice of pathology and to be responsible for maintaining the highest standards through training, assessments, examinations and professional development, to the benefit of the public.

The College is the main body for the promotion of pathology and its specialities in the UK and works along with HEE and other ALBs to champion initiatives that will support the supply and upskilling of the workforce within this speciality.

The College membership currently numbering some 11,000 is spread throughout the UK and overseas, with a rapidly expanding international component. Promoting excellence, maintaining the highest professional standards and embracing the exciting advances enabled by scientific discovery for the benefit of patients must operate against this backdrop, plus the reality of a constantly shifting landscape of healthcare structures.

It is well placed, both in terms of a deep understanding of the issues generated by this programme of work and in working across organisations to facilitate change best practice throughout the pathology workforce. The College oversees the training of pathologists and scientists working in 17 different specialties, which include cellular pathology, haematology, clinical biochemistry and medical microbiology. It is responsible for management of curriculum and the delivery of training and assessment of post graduate medical education in pathology sub-specialities. It holds significant responsibility for the clinical standards in pathology in the NHS.

Online Training Solution for Pathologists

The development of the online training solution will be incorporated into the Learning Hub, which is the powerful new digital education platform being developed by HEE. The Learning Hub will provide easy access to a wide range of education and training resources for the UK health and care workforce.

Using technology to enhance learning, the platform aims to incorporate the ability to host and view whole slide imaging (WSI) over the world wide web (Virtual Microscopy) to enable pathology tissue samples to be annotated and viewed as part of learning sets, mapped to the relevant curricula of the Royal College of Pathologists, hosted and maintained within the system.

The Learning Hub, which is a learning management system, will develop functionality to provide a unique adaptive learning pathway with content that can be created and curated by the Royal College of Pathologists.

The digital solution would enable hosting of high resolution digital images that are otherwise not available in all training centres and to organise them in a unique graded and curriculum mapped method using an adaptive learning approach that obviates dependence on the physical availability of slides or images and supports formative experiences in learning and assessment. This would create a unique blended learning model that would lend itself to covering any learning gaps or variations in training material that exist across all geographies in England.

The Royal College of Pathologists is uniquely positioned to provide HEE with the subject expertise required to develop the training solution for pathologists and to source and quality assure appropriate and relevant content. Much of the work of the College is achieved through coordinating subject matter experts, on a range of committees.

The College are the owners of a range of curricula and training information for medical, scientific and veterinary pathology trainees, and the curriculum for morphology and framework for independent reporting which will underpin the development of the training solution and they co-ordinate the production of quality-assured guidelines and best practice recommendations to inform and assist pathologists – along with other healthcare providers – on best clinical practice

To ensure the solution remains fit for purpose, we will utilise the Royal College of Pathologists' extensive networks, numerous committees and its members to continuously test the solution and champion and promote its use.