

## Chief Academic Officer (CAO)- Role Overview

The Chief Academic Officer (CAO) is a strategic leader who plays a pivotal role in bridging the realms of healthcare, education, research, and innovation within the Regional Health Authority (HSE Health Region). The CAO's primary responsibility is to establish and nurture collaborative partnerships between healthcare institutions and academic entities, ensuring a seamless integration of clinical practice, education, and research initiatives.

As a visionary leader, the CAO will drive the alignment of the HSE Health Region's strategic objectives with the academic vision, fostering a dynamic environment where healthcare excellence is advanced through knowledge, innovation, and continuous learning. This role involves engaging with diverse stakeholders, including clinicians, educators, researchers, and policymakers, to create synergistic relationships that promote not only quality patient care but also economic growth and societal well-being.

The CAO will provide clinical academic leadership, advocating for the integration of education and research into clinical practice. By working closely with relevant governance boards and leadership teams, the CAO will champion the expansion of academic partnerships, forging connections that promote collaboration, innovation, and the sharing of best practices.

Key responsibilities include overseeing clinical education, training, research, and innovation across various healthcare professions. The CAO will collaborate with academic institutions to design and implement structured programs that elevate the educational experience for students, healthcare professionals, and researchers alike. Additionally, the CAO will be instrumental in developing strategies to enhance postgraduate training, ensuring that health and social care professionals receive high-quality education that aligns with evolving industry needs.

A critical aspect of the CAO's role is to facilitate the establishment of the Academic Health Science Board (AHSB), a central oversight body responsible for coordinating educational, training, research, and innovation efforts. This involves fostering communication between different health service sections and educational entities, driving the adoption of best practices, and promoting interdisciplinary collaboration.

The CAO's impact will extend beyond institutional boundaries, as they collaborate with both public and private partners to identify innovative opportunities for growth and entrepreneurship. By driving innovation and research excellence, the CAO will contribute to advancing healthcare practices and addressing societal challenges.

Leveraging collaboration between the health service and the universities  
The role of the Chief Academic Officer (CAO) will leverage collaboration between the health service and universities across several critical areas, fostering an integrated ecosystem that benefits healthcare, education, research, and innovation. These areas include:

**Education Enhancement:** The CAO will collaborate with universities to create excellent educational opportunities for healthcare students. This involves designing curricula that align with real-world clinical experiences, ensuring that students receive comprehensive and up-to-date training that meets the demands of the healthcare field.

**Training Excellence:** Collaborating with universities, the CAO will promote high standards of clinical care through proper education of health professionals. By integrating academic expertise into training programs, the CAO will ensure that healthcare practitioners are well-prepared to provide quality patient care.

**Research Advancement:** The CAO will work with universities to support world-class research initiatives. By facilitating collaboration between academic researchers and healthcare professionals, the CAO will ensure that research findings translate efficiently into clinical practice, contributing to improved patient outcomes.

**Talent Attraction and Retention:** The CAO will collaborate with universities to attract and retain top-tier staff across both the healthcare and academic sectors. By offering opportunities for multidisciplinary work, research engagement, and career development, the CAO will create an environment that appeals to healthcare and academic professionals.

**Infrastructure Development:** Partnering with universities, the CAO will contribute to the development and improvement of physical estate infrastructure. This includes creating state-of-the-art facilities that support clinical, academic, and research excellence, thereby enhancing the overall ecosystem for healthcare education and innovation.

**Clinical Placements and Training:** The CAO will work with universities to ensure the quality of student clinical placements and postgraduate training. This involves facilitating seamless transitions between academic learning and practical clinical experiences, enhancing the educational journey for healthcare students.

**Innovation and Economic Growth:** Collaborating with universities, the CAO will foster partnerships that drive innovation in healthcare. By connecting healthcare professionals with academic researchers, the CAO will create an environment that encourages the development of new technologies, treatments, and solutions, leading to economic growth within the region.

**Research Funding Opportunities:** The CAO will proactively identify and respond to education and research funding opportunities that align with the strategic direction. By collaborating with universities, the CAO will secure resources to support impactful research and educational initiatives.

**Quality Assurance and Alignment:** The CAO will ensure that the balance between service provision and academic excellence is maintained. Collaborating with universities, the CAO will establish mechanisms for quality assurance, ensuring that educational and research endeavors align with the highest standards of patient care.

**Interdisciplinary Partnerships:** The CAO will promote interdisciplinary partnerships between healthcare and academic disciplines. By fostering collaboration among diverse professionals, the CAO through inter professional education and learning will encourage the exchange of knowledge, ideas, and best practices for comprehensive patient care and research.

In summary, the CAO will strategically leverage collaboration between the health service and universities across education, training, research, infrastructure, innovation, and more. By fostering integration and synergies in these areas, the CAO will contribute to a unified ecosystem that promotes excellence in healthcare, education, and research for the benefit of the community and region.

#### Engagement with Stakeholders

The Chief Academic Officer (CAO) will engage with a wide range of stakeholders across various sectors to fulfil their role of integrating healthcare, education, research, and innovation within the Regional Health Authority (HSE Health Region). These stakeholders include:

**Clinical Professionals:** Collaborating with physicians, nurses, allied health professionals, and specialists to ensure that clinical practices align with educational and research objectives. The CAO will work to incorporate the latest advancements in healthcare into educational programs and research initiatives.

**Academic Institutions:** Partnering with universities, medical schools, technical institutes, and other educational bodies to design and deliver comprehensive healthcare education and training programs. This includes fostering collaborations between healthcare practitioners and academic faculty to enhance the quality of education and research.

**Government and Policy Makers:** Engaging with government officials, policymakers, and regulatory bodies to ensure that the CAO's initiatives align with national healthcare and education policies. Collaborating on policy changes that support the integration of academic and clinical endeavors is crucial.

**Research Organizations:** Collaborating with research institutions, research funding agencies, and industry partners to drive impactful research projects. The CAO will play a key role in promoting research that addresses healthcare challenges and contributes to scientific advancements.

**Healthcare Administration:** Working closely with healthcare administrators and leaders within the HSE Health Region to ensure that the CAO's strategies align with the organization's broader goals. This includes coordinating efforts to enhance patient care, improve outcomes, and support the professional development of healthcare staff.

**Healthcare Educators:** Collaborating with educators at various levels, from undergraduate to postgraduate, to design curriculum, training modules, and educational initiatives that integrate real-world clinical experiences with academic knowledge.

**Community Representatives:** Engaging with community representatives, patient advocacy groups, and community health organizations to ensure that healthcare education and practices reflect the needs and concerns of the local population.

**Industry Partners:** Partnering with pharmaceutical companies, medical device manufacturers, and other industry players to drive innovation, secure funding for research, and implement cutting-edge technologies in healthcare education and practice.

**Professional Associations:** Collaborating with healthcare professional associations and organizations to ensure that educational programs align with industry standards and best practices.

**Students and Trainees:** Engaging with students, trainees, and early-career healthcare professionals to understand their educational needs and aspirations, and to provide them with opportunities for hands-on training and research.

**Public and Media:** Communicating with the public and media to raise awareness about the CAO's initiatives, the value of academic integration in healthcare, and the positive impact on patient care and community well-being.

In summary, the CAO's role involves working with a diverse array of stakeholders to create a cohesive ecosystem that aligns healthcare, education, research, and innovation. By fostering collaborations and partnerships across these different groups, the CAO will drive advancements in healthcare practices, education, and research that benefit both professionals and the community at large.

Delivering the Sláintecare strategy

The role of the Chief Academic Officer (CAO) in delivering the Sláintecare strategy is pivotal, as the CAO serves as a key facilitator in aligning the strategic objectives of the Regional Health Authority (RHA) with the core principles and goals of the Sláintecare strategy. The CAO's responsibilities encompass several crucial aspects:

**Integration of Care and Education:** The CAO will work to seamlessly integrate healthcare delivery with education and research initiatives. This alignment ensures that healthcare professionals are equipped with up-to-date knowledge and skills, translating into improved patient care and outcomes.

**Enhancing Population Health and Well-being:** Collaborating with academic institutions, the CAO will develop educational and research programs that focus on preventive care and overall population health. By promoting health and well-being, the CAO contributes to the Sláintecare goal of achieving equitable access to services based on need.

**Addressing Health Inequalities:** The CAO will play a role in designing and implementing initiatives that address health inequalities. By working with universities and healthcare partners, the CAO can develop targeted programs that aim to reduce disparities in healthcare access and outcomes.



**Supporting Primary and Community Care:** Collaborating with academic entities, the CAO will emphasize training and education in primary and community care settings. This aligns with Sláintecare's focus on enhancing community-based integrated care and reducing the burden on acute hospital services.

**Promoting Innovation and Research:** The CAO's collaboration with universities will foster innovation and research that supports the Sláintecare strategy. By facilitating partnerships between healthcare providers and academic researchers, the CAO contributes to evidence-based improvements in healthcare practices.

**Education for Health Professionals:** Collaborating with educational institutions, the CAO will ensure that healthcare professionals receive high-quality education and training that align with Sláintecare's vision of a universal single-tier health and social care system.

**Engagement with Stakeholders:** The CAO will engage with government bodies, policymakers, professional associations, and the public to advocate for initiatives that align with Sláintecare's principles. This includes promoting a culture of continuous learning, innovation, and collaboration.

**Monitoring and Evaluation:** The CAO will collaborate with stakeholders to establish mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of educational, training, and research programs. This data-driven approach ensures that initiatives are aligned with Sláintecare's goals and making a positive impact.

**Interdisciplinary Collaboration:** The CAO's role in fostering interdisciplinary partnerships aligns with Sláintecare's emphasis on integrated care delivery. By facilitating collaboration among healthcare professionals, researchers, educators, and policymakers, the CAO contributes to a comprehensive healthcare ecosystem.

**Incorporating Public Health Expertise:** Collaborating with academic partners, the CAO will promote the integration of public health expertise into healthcare practices. This supports Sláintecare's aim of improving access to care and promoting health and well-being across the population.

In summary, the CAO's role in delivering the Sláintecare strategy involves strategic collaboration with healthcare institutions and academic entities to create an integrated, evidence-based healthcare ecosystem. By aligning education, research, and clinical practices, the CAO contributes to the realization of Sláintecare's vision for equitable, high-quality healthcare services that benefit the entire population.

#### Support

The CAO will be supported by a team including Directors of Training and Education and Directors of Research, each director will lead teams whose focus is on the teaching/training or research agendas respectively. The CAO will engage with Health Innovation Hub Ireland in relation to matters of Innovation where relevant.

In conclusion, the Chief Academic Officer is a visionary leader who bridges the worlds of healthcare and academia, creating a cohesive ecosystem where education, research, and clinical practice flourish together. Their leadership will shape the future of healthcare by fostering collaboration, innovation, and educational excellence, ultimately benefiting patients, professionals, and the community as a whole.

## Job Description- Chief Academic Officer (CAO)

### Role Overview:

The Chief Academic Officer (CAO) holds a pivotal position within the Regional Health Authority (HSE Health Region) structure, tasked with fostering a seamless integration of healthcare, education, research, and innovation efforts. The CAO will drive alignment between the HSE Health Region's strategic objectives and academic vision, while forging collaborations that promote health, economic growth, and societal well-being. Reporting to relevant governance boards, the CAO will facilitate partnerships among healthcare institutions, universities, and various stakeholders to optimize educational opportunities, enhance clinical practice, and advance research initiatives.

### Key Responsibilities:

The CAO's role encompasses diverse responsibilities, including but not limited to:

#### Academic Health Science Leadership:

Lead and coordinate the integration of clinical education, training, research, and innovation within the HSE Health Region.

Provide clinical academic leadership, ensuring alignment of HSE Health Region strategy with academic vision.

Establish and nurture collaborations with stakeholders to realize economic and societal benefits of academic health sciences.

Identify and promote innovative opportunities and partnerships to drive regional growth.

#### Partnership Development:

Serve as the central channel for collaboration between the HSE Health Region, academic partners, and relevant institutions.

Foster cohesive and integrated structures within the HSE Health Region by working closely with academic partners.

Champion synergy across healthcare professions and disciplines, driving collaboration between academic entities.

#### Clinical Education Enhancement:

Drive the creation of a structured approach to healthcare education, research, and innovation.

Develop strategies to ensure high-quality and up-to-date education and research facilities.

Facilitate a formalized approach to healthcare education, research, and innovation across professions within the HSE Health Region.

Enhance nurse education, both undergraduate and postgraduate, through collaboration with clinical, educational, and academic entities.

Postgraduate Training Leadership:

Provide leadership for training and education across all health professions within the HSE Health Region.

Promote structured and integrated education and training for healthcare professionals.

Collaborate with postgraduate training bodies to ensure cohesive and effective educational programs.

Develop structures for lifelong learning and professional development for health and social care professionals.

Strategic Collaboration:

Collaborate with senior management across the HSE Health Region and academic partners to achieve educational and research excellence.

Identify and engage with local, national, and international partners to foster innovation and entrepreneurship.

Represent the interests of both the HSE Health Region and academic institutions on relevant leadership teams.

Governance Oversight:

Chair the Academic Health Science Board (AHSB) responsible for overseeing clinical education, training, research, and innovation.

Ensure communication between different health service sections and educational bodies, both undergraduate and postgraduate.

Collaborate with diverse stakeholders, including health service leadership and clinicians, university leadership and academic staff across the relevant disciplines, directors of education, and research leaders.

Reporting relationships

When in post, the Directors of Education and Training and Research and the Simulation Lead will report to the CAO who in turn will report to the HSE Regional Executive Officer and with a dotted line to the President of the primary academic partner.

Qualifications and Experience:

A distinguished record of academic and clinical accomplishment.

Extensive leadership experience in healthcare, education, research, or related fields.

Advanced degree in a relevant discipline (e.g., healthcare, medicine, life sciences, education).

Proven ability to forge collaborations, drive innovation, and align diverse stakeholders.

Strong communication, interpersonal, and negotiation skills.

Familiarity with healthcare policies, educational systems, and research funding mechanisms.

The CAO's role will be critical in advancing the HSE Health Region's commitment to quality care, education, and research, and in contributing to the successful implementation of the

Sláintecare strategy. The CAO will drive excellence in healthcare practices, promote interdisciplinary collaboration, and facilitate the growth of an integrated academic health science model that benefits both the community and the region at large.