

INTRODUCTION TO STANDARDS OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Overview and Purpose

Part IV, 15 (1) (a) of the Health Professions Order (the Order) requires the Council to, "... establish ... the standards of education and training necessary to achieve the standards of proficiency...".

The Council must consult widely before establishing the Standards of Education and Training (SET), but is solely responsible for them in the Order.

They are guidance to education institutions and other partner bodies on the preparation of students for the award of a qualification leading to eligibility for inclusion on the Register.

Their core purpose is to ensure those successfully completing approved education and training provision can meet the requirements of the Order, and specifically the Standards of Proficiency for safe and effective practice. The Standards of Proficiency are embedded in curricula. Those successfully completing an approved programme must be able to enjoy full scope of autonomous practice.

To achieve this the scope of the SETs must include :

- the suitability of the institution(s) (including any sites for placement education) to deliver the programme and make the award,
- the adequate number of appropriately qualified staff and the institution's staff development procedures,
- the adequacy of learning and teaching support and of support to students more generally, and
- the appropriateness of the content of the curriculum.

This latter category is not just the topics taught but includes :

- integration of academic and clinical components,
- teaching and learning ethos and strategy,
- the teaching of core and transferable skills and knowledge,
- interprofessionalism, and
- the context of practice.

Consultation and Publication

In our consultation exercise we undertook to work with the other stakeholders in education and training, and with their processes and documentation, wherever that allowed HPC to meet its statutory obligations. We received an overwhelming mandate for this approach. This has discharged HPC's duty to consult on the standards and attendant processes in the terms of Part II of the Order.

The SETs are published by HPC and are available on our web-site.

Context and Ethos for the Standards of Education and Training

The SETs operate in the wider educational and professional environment. They interact with other organisations' own legal powers and duties. They cannot, however, seek to include matters outside the scope of the Order. This limits them to being focused on "safe and effective practice".

Three examples here may help to contextualise the SETs. The government when commissioning education and training will want those successfully completing it to be able to work immediately in the public sector. Degree awarding institutions have a duty to ensure that competent graduates are capable of progressing to academic research. Professional bodies have a role in promoting professional excellence.

None of these fall within the scope of the Order. HPC, however, is committed to working in parallel with the bodies which are responsible for them. The SETs are one part of a wider picture from the perspective of an institution seeking the range of approvals and funding to run a programme in one of HPC's professions. In the next section some parts of this wider environment are explained.

The data sets are about processes and outcomes rather than prescription and in-puts to approved education and training. The data sets are more likely, for example, to talk in terms of learning outcomes and intellectual capacities from the clinical part of programmes than to set numbers of hours to be spent in specific locations. HPC's preferred ethos is to give guidance on processes and outcomes, but the Order does require the publication of some explicit guidance and yardsticks for education and training providers which will appear in the SETs.

Other HPC Standards

Applicants for entry on the Register, and registrants in due course, also have to meet HPC's "Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics" and "Requirements Relating to Good Character and Health". They must also comply with Continuing Professional Development when approved. The SETs and Standards of Proficiency are only parts of HPC's own regulation of the professions.

Data-Sets in the wider Educational and Professional Environment

The information and publications set out below are part of the wider context education institutions will need to know about. HPC and its predecessor bodies were involved with the preparation of many of them.

How these data-sets interact is shown in the diagram at the end of this introduction.

Curriculum Development and Outcome Documents

The most complete set of these documents are the eight " first phase " Subject Benchmarks for :

Dietetics,
Occupational Therapy,
Orthoptics,
Physiotherapy,
Podiatry / Chiropody,
Prosthetics and Orthotics,
Radiography, and
Speech & Language Therapy

A " Phase two " Subject Benchmark has been developed for Biomedical Science and another will be developed shortly for the Arts Therapies.

Clinical Science is not susceptible to Subject Benchmarking, and the need for this part of the data set is being addressed through National Occupational Standards.

There is currently no approved education and training for Paramedics in higher education. Their equivalent part of the data set for Subject Benchmarks and curriculum development is provided by the Institute for Health Care Development.

The Subject Benchmarks' shared framework together with the Academic Reviewers Handbook (see below) is HPC's major tool for promoting the processes of a multi-professional approach to its duties.

Most Parts of the Register are also supported by a curriculum development / framework document prepared normally by the professional body in its capacity as a Learned Society in dialogue with HPC. This part of the data set aligns to the professional body's definition of the ethics, knowledge base and scope of practice of the profession, to which HPC in turn subscribes.

QAA Code of Practice and Academic Reviewers Handbook

QAA is the UK-wide standards setting body for higher education.

This Code is the compendium of good practice in higher education ranging from access for disabled students, to placement learning, to degree classification, to the review of DH funded programmes amongst other topics.

QAA's Code was drafted in consultation with HPC and its predecessors, designed to meet the needs of regulatory bodies, and wholly (and deliberately) consistent with the HPO.

The Academic Reviewers handbook in its turn is aligned with the DH initiatives for collaborative working, which HPC is now participating in.

Handbooks for Joint Working with Professional Bodies

These publications may overlap with curriculum development / framework documents. They serve as the part of the data set ensuring that the professional and statutory bodies work together, and not in duplication or opposition. They also set out what is properly profession-specific in activities such as learning resources or the conduct of visits.

Allied Health Professions (AHP) Values Statement and Department of Health (DH) " Partnership Working Arrangements "

The Education and Training Committee has endorsed these parts of the data sets as the underpinning ethos for its work in collaborating with other stakeholders.

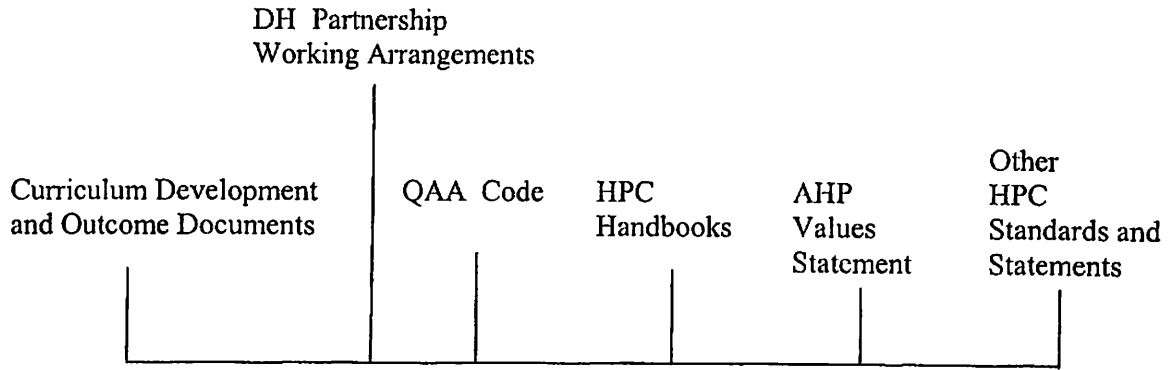
The DH arrangements will be leading into a range of frameworks for pre- and post-registration qualifications and clinical education in due course.

UK Health Departments' Guidance on Commissioning Education and Training

This guidance, which also includes the regulations for student bursaries, tells institutions how to obtain public funding for programmes for most of the professions HPC regulates. It is deliberately aligned with QAA requirements and with the Order. It is prepared in discussion with all the stakeholders concerned.

UK Countries

All of these data-sets operate UK-wide except the DH English Partnership working arrangements. Equivalent (devolved) working arrangements operate or are being developed in the other three countries.

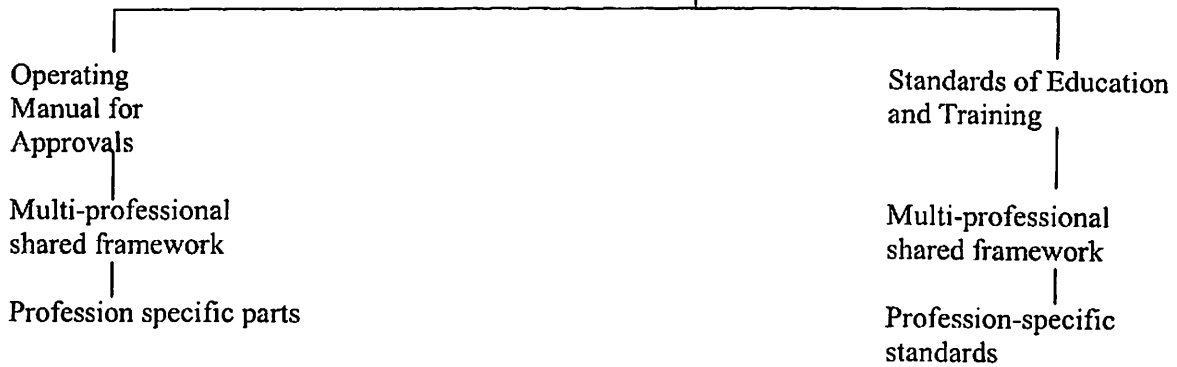



together form a coherent and mutually supportive data set informing Part IV
of the HPO, expressed in . . .

The Standards of Education and Training to meet the Standards of
Proficiency

and

The Procedures for approval of education and training provision and
" Visiting "





Executive Summary

An introduction to the Standards is appended, designed to address the issues of concern raised at the last meeting.

The full standards are to follow.