

## Education and Training Committee, 2 March 2017

### Results of the consultation on revised standards of education and training and supporting guidance

#### Executive summary and recommendations

#### **Introduction**

We have been reviewing our standards of education and training and supporting guidance to make sure they continue to be fit for purpose and up-to-date. At the start of the review, we gathered feedback on the existing standards from a range of stakeholders before convening a Professional Liaison Group to put together a revised version for consultation.

At its meeting on 6 July 2016, the Council agreed the revised standards and supporting guidance, which we publicly consulted on between 5 September 2016 and 9 December 2016. The Executive has now updated the draft standards, taking into consideration the responses received.

Overall, the responses were positive about the revised standards as a whole. However, there were a vast number of comments regarding the level of qualification for entry to the Register for paramedics. We would particularly welcome the Committees comments in this area.

The consultation response analysis and draft revised standards of education and training and supporting guidance are attached for the Committee's consideration, approval, and recommendation to Council. For ease of reference, we have also included a marked up version of the draft revised standards which highlights the specific changes we are proposing following the consultation.

#### **Decision**

The Committee is invited to:

- discuss the attached paper;
- agree and recommend to the Council the revised standards and the text of the supporting guidance as set out in appendix one (subject to minor editing amendments and formal legal scrutiny); and
- agree and recommend to the Council the text of the consultation analysis document (subject to review by the Plain English Campaign, minor editing amendments and formal legal scrutiny).

## **Background information**

- Paper for Education and Training Committee, 9 June 2016, (enclosure 4 at <http://www.hcpc-uk.org/aboutus/committees/educationandtraining/index.asp?id=747>)
- Paper agreed by Council, 6 July 2016, (enclosure 9 at <http://www.hcpc-uk.org/aboutus/council/councilmeetings/index.asp?id=7050>)

## **Resource implications**

The resource implications include arranging publication and dissemination of the Standards. These resource implications are accounted for in the Policy and Standards, and Communications departments planning for 2016/17 and 2017/18.

## **Financial implications**

The financial implications include publication of the revised standards once agreed. These financial implications are accounted for in Policy and Standards Department budgeting for 2017/18.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix one: Revised Standards of education and training following the consultation
- Appendix two: Revised Standards of education and training and supporting guidance following the consultation

## **Date of paper**

16 February 2017

**Consultation on revised standards of education and training and supporting guidance**

Analysis of responses to the consultation and our decisions as a result.

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## 1. Introduction

### About the consultation

- 1.1 We consulted between 5 September 2016 and 9 December 2016 on revised standards of education and training and supporting guidance.
- 1.2 We informed a range of stakeholders about the consultation including professional bodies, employers, and education and training providers, advertised the consultation on our website and also issued a press release.
- 1.3 We would like to thank all those who took the time to respond to the consultation document. You can download the consultation document and a copy of this responses document from our website:  
[www.hcpc-uk.org/aboutus/consultations/closed](http://www.hcpc-uk.org/aboutus/consultations/closed).

### About us

- 1.4 We are a regulator and were set up to protect the public. To do this, we keep a Register of health and care professionals who meet our standards for their professional skills and behaviour. Individuals on our register are called 'registrants'.
- 1.5 We currently regulate 16 health and care professions:
  - Arts therapists
  - Biomedical scientists
  - Chiropodists / podiatrists
  - Clinical scientists
  - Dietitians
  - Hearing aid dispensers
  - Occupational therapists
  - Operating department practitioners
  - Orthoptists
  - Paramedics
  - Physiotherapists
  - Practitioner psychologists
  - Prosthetists / orthotists
  - Radiographers
  - Social workers in England
  - Speech and language therapists.

### About this document

- 1.6 This document summarises the responses we received to the consultation.
- 1.7 The document starts by explaining how we handled and analysed the responses we received, providing some overall statistics from the responses:
  - section three provides an executive summary of the responses we received;

- section four is structured around the comments we received to specific questions; and
- section five sets out our responses and decisions as a result of the comments we received.

1.8 In this document, 'you' or 'your' is a reference to respondents to the consultation, 'we, 'us' and 'our' are references to the HCPC.

1.9 References to individual standards of education and training will use the format 'SET' followed by the corresponding number. For example 'SET 1'

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## **2. Analysing your responses**

- 2.1 Now that the consultation has ended, we have analysed all the responses we received.

### **Method of recording and analysis**

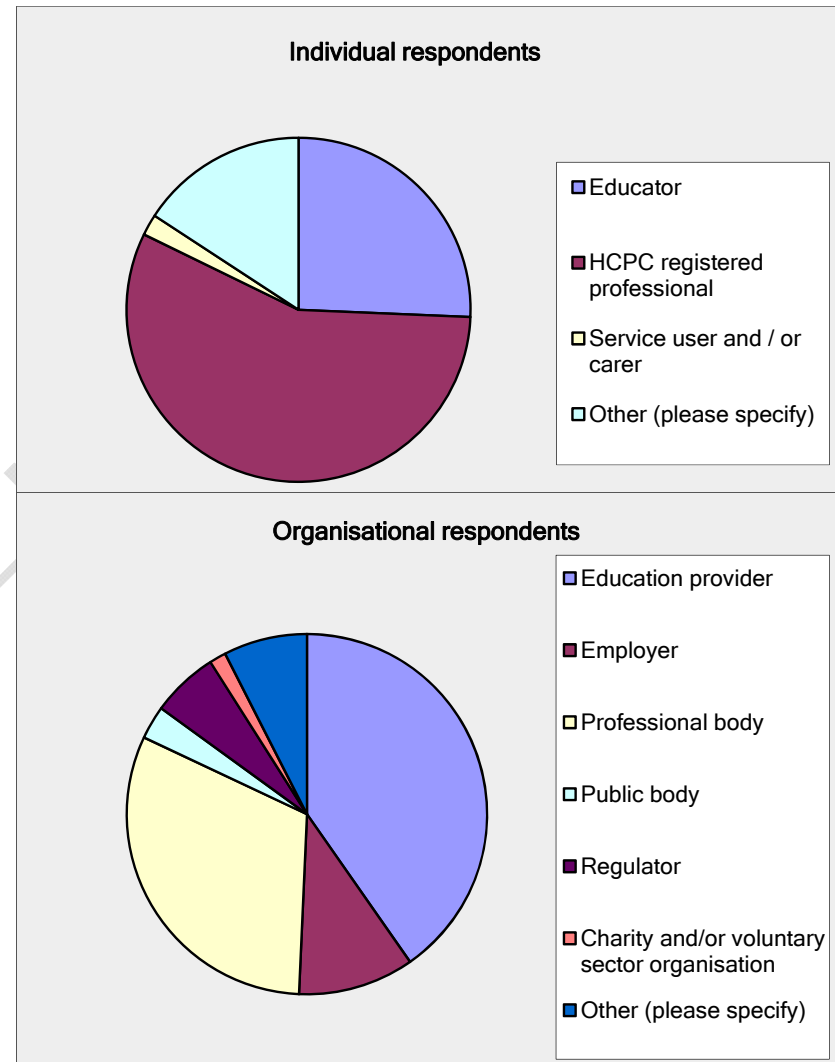
- 2.2 The majority of respondents used our online survey tool to respond to the consultation. This invited them to indicate whether they were responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation. For each question they answered, respondents were able to select from four options: yes; no, partly; and don't know. They were also able to give us their comments on each question in a free text box.
- 2.3 During the consultation period we held five workshops to seek the views of our education visitors about the standards. These are registrants and lay people involved in assessing education programmes against our standards. We recorded the feedback we received and have included it alongside the responses to the consultation.
- 2.4 Where we received responses by email or by letter, we recorded each response in a similar format.
- 2.5 When deciding what information to include in this document, we assessed the frequency of the comments made and identified themes. This document summarises the common themes across all responses, and indicates the frequency of arguments and comments made by respondents.

### **Statistical analysis**

- 2.6 We received 218 responses to the consultation document. 152 responses (70%) were made by individuals, of which 86 (57%) were HCPC registered professionals and 39 (26%) were educators. 66 responses (30%) were made on behalf of organisations. 20 (30%) of these were professional bodies, 27 (41%) were education providers, 7 (11%) were employers.
- 2.7 The breakdown of respondents and responses we received to each question are shown in the graphs and tables that follow.

### Graph 1 – Breakdown of individual respondents

Respondents were asked to select the category that best described them. The respondents who selected 'other' identified themselves as students not yet registered with the HCPC, ambulance technicians or other ambulance staff.



### Graph 2 – Breakdown of organisational respondents

Respondents were asked to select the category that best described their organisation. The majority of organisations who selected 'other' identified themselves as trade unions.

**Table 1 – Breakdown of responses to each question**

Questions	Yes	No	Partly	Don't know	No answer
Question 1: Do you think the draft revised SETs are at the threshold level necessary to ensure that all learners are able to practise their profession safely and effectively by completion of a HCPC-approved programme?	47% (98)	36% (76)	16% (33)	2% (5)	7
Question 2: Do you think the draft revised SETs and supporting guidance are applicable across all HCPC approved pre-registration programmes?	58% (116)	16% (32)	10% (20)	16% (31)	19
Question 3: Do you think there are any additional standards or guidance needed?	28% (54)	55% (108)	10% (20)	7% (14)	22
Question 4: Do you think there are any standards or guidance which should be amended or removed?	41% (74)	42% (77)	7% (13)	10% (18)	36
Question 5: Do you have any comments about the language used in the SETs or supporting guidance?	29% (56)	71% (140)	-	-	22
Question 6: Do you have any other comments on the SETs or supporting guidance?	32% (63)	68% (136)	-	-	19

- Percentages in the tables above have been rounded to the nearest whole number and therefore may not add up to 100 per cent.



### **3. Summary of responses**

#### **Threshold for safe and effective practice**

- 3.1 A slight majority of respondents (47%) considered that the draft revised SETs are at the threshold level necessary to ensure safe and effective practice. They generally considered that the SETs have been strengthened and made clearer.
- 3.2 However a number of respondents (36%) considered that the SETs were not at the threshold level necessary for safe and effective practice. Of this group, a large proportion commented that SET 1 was not articulated at an appropriate level for specific professions. The majority of these responses were about the paramedic profession.

#### **Application across all HCPC programmes**

- 3.3 The majority of respondents (58%) stated that the draft revised SETs and supporting guidance are applicable across all HCPC approved programmes. They generally expressed support for the generic approach of the standards allowing flexibility in meeting them.
- 3.4 However, a few respondents commented that the SETs should be profession specific in order to make them more robust.
- 3.5 A few respondents requested clarity on how these standards will translate across to the standards for specialist post registration programmes such as the approval criteria for approved mental health professional (AMHP) programmes and the standards for podiatric surgery.

#### **Additional standards or guidance**

- 3.6 The majority of respondents (55%) did not think that any additional standards or guidance were needed.
- 3.7 However there were a number of suggestions for additional standards and or guidance from other respondents.

For example, some respondents sought additional standards specific to programme admissions as well as additional, more prescriptive standards for practice based learning.

Other respondents sought additional guidance to provide greater clarity in some standards such learner consent and the new requirement for inter-professional education.

#### **Standards amended or removed**

- 3.8 Overall, respondents were fairly split when asked if there were any standards which should be amended or removed.

- 3.9 A large number of those who answered 'yes' to this question commented that the wording in SET1 should be amended to raise the recommended entry level for paramedics.
- 3.10 Other comments raised more general recommendations such as:
- reorganisation (moving, condensing or separating out);
  - providing more detail and or clarity;
  - outlining more prescriptive or enhanced requirements; and
  - removing or replacing particular words.

### **Language used**

- 3.11 Respondents generally considered that the terminology used was clear and had provided consistency across the standards. A number of respondents also commented that the language had been brought up to date and expressed support for the introduction of terms such as 'learner' and 'practice learning'.
- 3.12 Some respondents were concerned with the use of words such as 'effective' which they considered was difficult to measure. A number of respondents commented that the language might not remain appropriate for emerging apprenticeship programmes.

## 4. Responses to consultation questions

4.1 This section contains comments made in response to the questions within the consultation document.

### **Question 1: Do you think the draft revised SETs are at the threshold level necessary to ensure that all learners are able to practise their profession safely and effectively by completion of a HCPC-approved programme?**

- 4.2 A slight majority of respondents (47%) agreed that the draft revised SETs are at the threshold level necessary to ensure that all learners are able to practise their profession safely and effectively by completion of a HCPC approved programme.
- 4.3 There was a significantly higher level of agreement with this question among organisations compared to individuals. The proportion of respondents who responded 'yes' to this question was higher for education providers and professional bodies compared to employers and HCPC registered professionals.
- 4.4 The vast majority of individual respondents who responded 'no' to this question were registered professionals, along with a number of respondents who identified themselves as paramedic students or ambulance technicians.

### **Level of qualification for entry to the register**

- 4.5 Of the respondents who answered 'no' to this question a significant proportion (82%) commented that the threshold entry route to the Register outlined in SET 1 should be raised for paramedics. A small minority of respondents also argued that the threshold level for practitioner psychologists and operating department practitioners should be changed
- 4.6 Regarding paramedics, most respondents commented that the recommended entry level should be raised to a level 6 qualification (degree with honours or equivalent). Whereas some respondents commented that the recommended level should at least be raised to a level 5 qualification (certificate of higher education or equivalent) with the aim of progressing onto a level 6 qualification.
- 4.7 A number of respondents highlighted that paramedics practice as autonomous professionals. It was generally considered that the role of paramedics has evolved over recent years and now requires a higher level of education to practice safely and effectively.
- 4.8 There were also a number of comments which highlighted the threshold entry route to the Register for paramedics compared to other professions that we regulate. Most of these comments expressed frustration that the entry level for paramedics was lower than all other professions that we regulate and that this did not accurately reflect their role and profession.
- 4.9 A very small number of respondents commented that they welcomed the current threshold level as this meant that paramedic training was more accessible and able to meet the current demand for paramedics.

## **Support**

- 4.10 Aside from comments regarding SET 1, there was widespread general support for the proposed SETs and supporting guidance.

Common areas that respondents welcomed included the greater emphasis on learners and their involvement in the programme as well as the increased reference to our standards of conduct performance and ethics.

Respondents were also supportive of the changes made to condense the standards commenting that these were more concise and eliminate duplication. The changes to and updating of terminology such as 'learner' and 'practice based learning' were also welcomed.

- 4.11 Several respondents also supported the continued requirements for service users and carers to be involved in all education and training programmes. Many reemphasised the importance of this.

### **Standards of conduct, performance and ethics**

- 4.12 A number of respondents welcomed the increased reference to our standards of conduct, performance and ethics throughout the SETs in particular SET 4.2 and SET 6.2. It was generally considered that this should ensure that learners are able to practice safely and effectively.
- 4.13 One respondent commented that this increased reference provided a coherent thread of the importance of professional values, attitudes and ethics in training from inclusion to selection and ongoing monitoring.

### **Learner support**

- 4.14 Overall respondents were supportive of the increased requirements for learners to be both involved in the programme and supported to raise concerns such as those outlined in SET 3.8 and SET 3.17. One respondent made reference to the fact that many programmes already have learner involvement and support, but said that the proposed changes to the SETs nonetheless help reinforce the importance of student involvement.
- 4.15 Some respondents, whilst in support of the increased reference to learner support and involvement, sought greater clarity about the new proposed requirements. See question four for more information.

### **Question 2: Do you think the draft revised SETs and supporting guidance are applicable across all HCPC approved pre-registration programmes?**

- 4.16 The majority of respondents (58%) agreed that the draft revised SETs and supporting guidance are applicable across all HCPC approved programmes.
- 4.17 There was a higher level of agreement with this question amongst organisations compared to individuals.

- 4.18 A significant number of respondents (23%) answered 'don't know' or 'partly' to this question. Many respondents commented that they were unable to make a judgement outside of their own profession and some highlighted concerns with apprenticeship style programmes.
- 4.19 One respondent commented that future consultations should highlight how revised drafts have attempted to ensure that they consider the differences across each of the four UK countries.

### **Apprenticeships**

- 4.20 A few respondents commented on the possibility of emerging apprenticeship programmes for many of the professions we regulate and how the revised SETs and guidance would apply to them.
- 4.21 Most of the comments about apprenticeships related to anticipation of new types of programmes and ensuring that the SETs will be transferable for these types of provision. Specifically it was considered that some of the terminology within the SETS might not directly apply to an apprenticeship style programme.
- 4.22 Respondents also raised concerns about how the SETs would ensure that the management of apprenticeship programmes is appropriately assessed. For example, the relationship between the education provider and the employer.
- 4.23 Some respondents commented that there should be more explicit reference to apprenticeship style programmes within the SETs and guidance to ensure that they are assessed comparatively to programmes which follow a more traditional style of delivery. There were concerns that without this apprenticeship programmes would not result in equivalent outcomes.
- 4.24 One respondent also commented that the SETs and any external apprenticeship standards that are developed should be appropriately aligned.

### **Question 3: Do you think there are any additional standards or guidance needed?**

- 4.25 The majority of respondents (55%) commented that no additional standards or guidance were needed.
- 4.26 There was no significant difference in the responses to this question among organisations and individuals. The proportion of respondents who responded 'no' to this question was higher for education providers and educators compared to employers.

### **Practice based learning**

- 4.27 A number of respondents considered that the standards around practice based learning required additional information or more stringent requirements. Some respondents specifically requested more prescriptive requirements in this area.
- 4.28 Many of these respondents sought clearer or more prescriptive guidance on the required hours for practice based learning. Some suggested that the standards

should state a minimum percentage of 'patient facing time' as simulation is insufficient.

- 4.29 However one respondent commented that there should be more emphasis on the practice competencies as opposed to the number of hours completed as learners can become fixated on hours rather than outcomes.
- 4.30 Some respondents also outlined concerns with the availability of practice based learning hours for learners and how the SETs address this. Some concerns, specifically related to paramedics, included the rise in applications for training against the competing demand for placements and the quality of practice based learning at private providers.
- 4.31 One respondent commented that the SETs should outline particular skills to be covered within practice based learning, specific to each profession.

### **Additional standards**

- 4.32 A number of additional standards were suggested by respondents. Some suggestions included:
- a standard to ensure that education providers' maximum study periods take account of all aspects of a programme and to ensure that learners are supported to demonstrate their skills after any extended breaks in training;
  - a standard which requires evidence that educators are keeping up-to-date with legislation such as safeguarding and data protection law and are able to integrate changes and new knowledge quickly in the curriculum;
  - a specific standard outlining minimum placement hours;
  - a standard which requires maths and English entry exams to be in place; and
  - a section of standards relating specifically to resourcing
- 4.33 A few respondents suggested that an additional standard was needed to address profession specific skills that should be covered within each programme. Respondents stated that some of these skills should be prescribed within the SETs and guidance such as palliative care, intubation and working with patients who have sensory difficulties.
- 4.34 Two respondents suggested an additional standard to address those wishing to practice in specialist or advanced roles such as paramedic practitioners and radiography practitioners.

### **Guidance**

- 4.35 Generally respondents who suggested additional guidance sought some form of clarity. Suggestions included:

- clarity about preparing learners to be safe in the practice setting, such as, ensuring up to date legislation is being taught;
  - guidance on the range of roles (relevant to each profession) that practice based learning should cover; and
  - prescriptive guidance on staff-student ratios.
- 4.36 One respondent sought additional guidance on the skills required of educators. The concern was that many education providers focus recruitment of educators on research and publishing experience as opposed to placing emphasis on clinical expertise.
- 4.37 The feedback from the workshops with our education visitors also supported this comment with many participants stating that there should be a greater emphasis on recruiting educators with relevant clinical expertise alongside those with research and publishing credentials.
- 4.38 One respondent suggested that more guidance was required on ethics when working or researching with human participants. They commented that this should be fully embedded within the guidance.

**Question 4: Do you think there are any additional standards or guidance which should be amended or removed?**

- 4.39 There was no consensus in the responses for this question with 41% of respondents answering 'yes' and 42% of respondents answering 'no'.
- 4.40 The proportion of respondents who responded 'yes' to this question was higher for organisations than individual respondents. A high proportion of education providers who answered this question agreed that there were no additional standards or guidance which should be amended or removed.

**Specific standards**

- 4.41 Some standards received a number of comments from respondents requesting amendments for further clarity. These have been outlined below:

**SET 3.8 Learners must be involved in the design, delivery and review of the programme.**

- 4.42 Many respondents stated that this was ambiguous and were unclear about what level a learner was expected to be involved in the programme. For example, should they be involved in the design, delivery and review of the entire programme or would it be sufficient for them to be involved in one or two distinct areas.
- 4.43 Respondents also sought clarification on the requirements for learners to be involved in the design of the programme. Many expressed that this would be impossible for new programmes therefore further clarification was required.

- 4.44 Attendees at the education visitor workshops requested clarification of what the SET meant by 'delivery'. For example, did this mean that learners should be involved in deciding how the programme is delivered or should they be involved in the delivery itself.
- 4.45 Attendees at the education visitor workshops also commented that there should be more parity with this SET and SET 3.7 'Service users and carers must be involved in the programme'.

**SET 3.11 An effective programme to ensure the continuing professional and academic development of educators must be in place.**

- 4.46 A large number of respondents commented on this standard. There was also a high volume of feedback on this standard from the education partner workshops.
- 4.47 The majority of comments requested more clarity on the requirements for education providers to provide training for practice educators. There was an overarching concern that the wording in the SET and associated guidance suggested that education providers would be responsible for the continuing professional development (CPD) of practice educators. Some highlighted that the standard should make clear that CPD is still the responsibility of the registrant.
- 4.48 A number of respondents commented that the guidance should include greater emphasis on the importance of research and scholarly activity. One respondent commented that research is an important part of staff development and a necessity to ensure that staff are teaching evidence based practice.
- 4.49 Some respondents suggested that the guidance should reference learning outcomes to ensure that any CPD activities benefit the individual as opposed to the education provider

**SET 4.9 The programme must ensure that learners are able to learn with, and from, professionals and learners in other relevant professions.**

- 4.50 The majority of respondents who commented on this standard agreed it should be included. However many had concerns about its implementation.
- 4.51 A number of respondents commented that there is a risk that implementing this standard could become somewhat of a 'tick box exercise' for education providers. One respondent in particular raised a concern that bad inter-professional education could have a negative impact on a programme.
- 4.52 Some respondents commented that inter-professional education would be particularly difficult for some professions to introduce such as those who often work in isolated practice. Respondents also commented that the standard would be difficult for some education providers to meet such as those in remote locations or with a small programme base.
- 4.53 The majority of comments on this SET requested further clarification. Specifically, respondents sought clarity on whether the standard required learners to be able to learn with, and from, both professionals and learners or if



this could be one or the other. Respondents suggested that the wording should be amended to state "...professionals and or learners in other relevant professions" as to state both would be too restrictive.

- 4.54 Some respondents suggested that further clarity and guidance outlining which groups of people might be appropriate to meet this standard would be helpful. For example, who could be included as a 'relevant profession'?

**SET 4.10 The programme must include effective processes for obtaining appropriate consent from service users and learners.**

- 4.55 There were a number of comments on this standard from both the consultation and the education visitor workshops. Whilst most respondents agreed that this SET was necessary, there were a number of comments regarding clarity and disparities between the SET itself and the guidance.
- 4.56 Many respondents commented that there is a disparity between the SET and its related guidance. Specifically, that the SET relates to obtaining consent whereas the guidance relates to ensuring learners' understanding of giving or obtaining consent.
- 4.57 Some respondents suggested that to provide clarity this standard should be separated out into two standards. One to focus on consent for service users and carers and one to focus on consent for learners. Respondents also commented that they should be divided as they are separate issues.
- 4.58 A number of respondents commented that the wording of this SET seemed unfinished. Suggestions were made to include text on the end of the SET such as "...for participation in the programme" or ... in a learning environment."

**Question 5: Do you have any comments about the language used in the SETs or supporting guidance?**

- 4.59 The vast majority of respondents (71%) did not have any comments about the language used in the SETs or supporting guidance.
- 4.60 The proportion of respondents who answered 'no' to this question was significantly higher for individuals than organisations. Of the organisations that responded 52% provided further comments on the language used, a significant proportion of these being education providers and professional bodies.

**Terminology**

- 4.61 There was overarching supporting for the changes in terminology such as 'learner' and 'practice educator'. In particular respondents considered that the new terminology was up to date and reflected a wider range of programmes, including those which may be emerging such as apprenticeships.
- 4.62 A few respondents commented that they preferred the use of 'student' as opposed to 'learner'. They reasoned that an individual continues to learn after

completion of their education and training programme and that the term 'student' is more widely recognised.

- 4.63 A few respondents disagreed with the proposal to replace the term 'practice placement' with 'practice-based learning'. It was argued that learning in practice was a 'placement' regardless of its type, so the previous terminology should stand.
- 4.64 One respondent queried our use of the term 'disabled people', which they considered had more appropriate alternatives such as 'people with a disability'.
- 4.65 A number of respondents commented on the frequent use of the word 'effectively' throughout the SETs. It was considered that it was difficult to measure 'effective' and this was too open to interpretation. Some respondents suggested that stronger language should be used such as 'robust'.
- 4.66 Conversely, some respondents commented that they support use of the word 'effectively' and would like to see this introduced to more standards such as 4.9

**Question 6: Do you have any other comments on the SETs or supporting guidance?**

- 4.67 A number of respondents provided further comments on the SETs. Some of these have already been discussed earlier in this paper. However a number of further comments were made in relation to general support or disagreement of the guidance.

**Support**

- 4.68 The majority of respondents who provided comments in this section supported the changes to the SETs which they said had removed ambiguity and ensured that the standards were comprehensive and remained accessible. They frequently noted the increased emphasis placed on student support; expressed their support for the new requirement for inter-professional education; and said that they continued to support SET 3.7 on service user and carer involvement.
- 4.69 However some respondents made further suggestions for changes to the SETs including a need for:
- stronger emphasis on requirements for education providers to support practice providers;
  - stronger requirements for the programme leader to be on the relevant part of the register;
  - greater consistency with other sources of HCPC guidance; and
  - more emphasis on values-based recruitment.
- 4.70 One respondent commented that they would like to see the examples brought back to the guidance. It was stated that this was a useful tool for education providers in understanding how the meet the SETs

**Open ended approval**

- 4.71 A small number of respondents commented that open ended approval was not appropriate in ensuring education and training programmes continue to meet the standards. It was suggested that a cyclical review process might be more appropriate for example, every five years

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## **5. Our comments and decisions**

- 5.1 We have considered carefully all the comments we received to the consultation and have used them to revise the draft Standards and supporting guidance. We are pleased that, overall, the Standards were very well received by respondents. The following sets out our comments and decisions in some key areas.

### **Level of qualification for entry to the Register for paramedics**

- 5.2 We received a significant number of responses across the different consultation questions which argued that the threshold level of qualification for paramedics set out in SET 1 should be changed. The existing standard says that the level is 'Equivalent to Certificate of Higher Education'.
- 5.3 The profile of pre-registration education and training in the paramedic profession is changing and we know from our data that the vast majority of pre-registration education programmes are now delivered above the threshold level in SET 1. We also know that, in England, we are approving an increasing number of degree programmes. At the time of writing, however, there were no approved degree programmes delivered in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland. We are a UK wide regulator for this profession, so any decision we make in this area has to be cognisant of the UK-wide picture.
- 5.4 We have been actively involved in national discussions about the education and training of paramedics. For example, we have been represented on the Health Education England steering group looking at reforming how paramedics are educated. This topic has also been discussed by our Education and Training Committee on a number of previous occasions.
- 5.5 We did not make any proposal in the consultation to amend SET 1 for paramedics because the issues involved require careful consideration and, once proposals are formulated, a dedicated consultation. We anticipate, subject to the agreement of our Education and Training Committee and Council, consulting on proposals later in 2017. We will of course take account of the responses we received to this consultation as we move forward on this issue.

### **Post qualification programmes and related standards**

- 5.6 We received a number of comments querying how any changes to the standards of education and training would be translated in to our post registration standards, in particular our:
- approval criteria for approved mental health professional (AMHP) programmes;
  - standards for podiatric surgery;
  - standards for prescribing; and
  - standards for the use of orthoptists to sell and supply medicines.

- 5.7 Our post registration standards are all based on the core principles of the standards of education and training. Once the revised SETs and guidance have been agreed, we will review these other standards to consider whether they need to be similarly amended. We do not have any existing plans to do this for the AMHP criteria. Our role in approving AMHP programmes is due to transfer in the future to the new regulator to be established for social workers in England.

### **Apprenticeships**

- 5.8 There were a number of comments and words of advice relating to the likely introduction of apprenticeship style education and training programmes in the near future.
- 5.9 We are aware of the current and potential changes to funding for a number of the professions that we regulate and the consequential changes to the types of education and training programmes that will be delivered, including apprenticeships. In developing the standards we carefully considered the range of education and training programmes that we have already approved as well as those that may be seeking approval in the future.
- 5.10 Changes, particularly to terminology, were made specifically with this in mind. For example moving from 'student' to 'learner'. We focussed on areas of the standards that would be particularly affected by changes in programme delivery, such as the standards under 'section 3: Programme governance, management and leadership'. We are confident that the revised standards will be applicable across different models of delivery including to apprenticeships.

### **Requirements for practice learning**

- 5.11 We received a number of comments around the requirements for practice learning. In particular respondents sought more prescriptive requirements outlining a minimum number of practice hours and specific practical skills that must be covered.
- 5.12 Our standards of education and training are output focussed, ensuring that whichever methods are used to deliver education and training are delivering the appropriate and desired outcomes. It would therefore not be appropriate for us to stipulate more prescriptive requirements such as practice learning hours and specific practical skills.
- 5.13 Maintaining output focussed standards allows education providers to develop programmes that are appropriate to both their profession and their demographic of learners. However, all education and training programmes approved by us must be able to demonstrate why their decisions (such as practice learning hours and skills based knowledge) are appropriate. If a programme is unable to demonstrate, for example, that their allocated practice learning hours are sufficient to support the delivery of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes, they will not gain HCPC approval.

- 5.14 We are pleased that the majority of respondents supported our strengthened requirements around the relevant knowledge, skills, experience and registration status of practice educators.
- 5.15 We received some suggestions that this standard should be further strengthened to require all practice educators to be HCPC registered in the profession relevant to the programme. We have reviewed these comments and have concluded that it would not be appropriate to make such a prescriptive requirement. Whilst the majority of practice educators will be on the relevant part of the register, there are instances where this may not be applicable or appropriate. We do not want to unnecessarily limit the ability of education providers to use practice educators who have relevant skills and experience in specific areas, solely on the basis that they are not registered with us.

### **Inter-professional education**

- 5.16 There were a number of comments relating to the proposed requirements for learners to be able to learn with and from professionals and learners in other relevant professions as outlined in SET 4.9. Specifically, comments related to the difficulties in implementing this standard for those professional groups who typically work in isolated practice or education providers in remote locations.
- 5.17 We are aware that the implementation of this standard will vary greatly from profession to profession and have maintained an output focus for this reason. We do not prescribe which other professions or learners should be involved in a programme, it is up to the education provider to determine which other professions are most relevant to the programme and most useful in preparing learners for practice. Whilst we appreciate that for the majority of the professions we regulate it is likely to be appropriate to involve health and social care professions, we are aware that, for some professions, it may be appropriate to include professions outside of health and social care.
- 5.18 We are also aware of the difficulties faced for those education providers based in more remote locations. However, we do not prescribe that inter-professional education needs to be a face to face activity. Education providers could consider other platforms of delivery that are appropriate to achieving the relevant learning outcomes of their programme.
- 5.19 A number of respondents sought clarity on whether this standard required involvement from both learners and other professionals. Some suggested that this should be one or the other. The wording of the standard states "...professionals and learners in other relevant professional". This means that we expect programmes to demonstrate how learners are able to learn with and from both professionals and learners from other relevant professions. We consider learning from both students and professionals to be a vital aspect of successful and effective inter-professional education and have therefore decided to retain the proposed wording of this standard.

## Language

5.20 The majority of respondents to the consultation said that they thought the guidance was clear and easy to understand. However, we received some common suggestions about how it might be improved further.

5.21 We received other comments suggesting that the term 'effective' was not appropriate language for the standards as this was subjective and difficult to measure. We use the term 'effective' to ensure that the systems and processes that education providers have in place are able to deliver appropriate outcomes. Without this terminology, there is a risk that education providers could have systems in place that fail to deliver outcomes at a safe and appropriate level to ensure public protection. Our education processes seek to ensure consistency in application by having an internal HCPC executive present at all of our approval and monitoring activities. Whilst we understand the concerns raised in this area, we have decided to retain use of this term.

## Other changes

5.22 We have made a number of changes in light of the responses to the consultation. In considering what changes to make we have been mindful of the role of the standards in setting out clear, 'threshold' expectations of our registrants across all 16 professions we regulate.

- We have amended terminology throughout the guidance to ensure accuracy and consistency.
- We have reworded a number of standards to provide clarity on their intention and prospective implementation. This includes amendments to SETs 2.4, 2.7, 3.3, 3.11 and 6.7.
- We have amended the wording in the standard and guidance relating to learner involvement in SET 3.8; we received strong feedback that this was ambiguous and should be more consistent with our requirements around service user and carer involvement.
- We have amended the language and structure of the guidance relating to consent in SET 4.10. We received strong feedback that this was unclear and diluted.
- We have updated the lists of 'Other sources of HCPC guidance' for some of the standards.
- We have made amendments to some minor grammatical errors

## 6. List of respondents

Below is a list of all the organisations that responded to the consultation.

Academy for Healthcare Science  
Association for Clinical Genomic Science  
Association of Ambulance Chief Executives  
British Academy of Audiology  
British Association of Art Therapists  
British Association of Social Workers (BASW England)  
British Dietetic Association  
British Psychological Society (two responses, including Division of Health Psychology)  
British Society for Histocompatibility and Immunogenetics (BSHI)  
British Society for Rheumatology (BSR)  
British Society of Hearing Aid Audiologists  
Canterbury Christ Church University (three responses including Department of Allied Health Professions, Faculty of Health and Wellbeing)  
Cardiff Metropolitan University (two responses, including Speech and Language Therapy Department)  
Cardiff University (Operating Department Practice, School of Healthcare Sciences)  
Care Council for Wales (two responses)  
Centre for the Advancement of Interprofessional Education (CAIPE)  
Chartered Society of Physiotherapy  
City University London  
College of Occupational Therapists  
College of Paramedics  
Council of Deans of Health  
Health Education England  
Institute of Biomedical Science  
Keele University (School of Health and Rehabilitation)  
Kingston University / St George's University of London  
Leeds Beckett University  
London Ambulance Service NHS Trust  
Manchester Metropolitan University (three responses including, Department of Health Professionals, Faculty of Science and Engineering and Social Work Department)  
National Association of Educators in Practice (NAEP)  
National Community Hearing Association  
Newcastle University (Speech and Language Sciences)  
NHS Education for Scotland  
NHS Lothian  
North West Ambulance Service NHS Trust  
Northern Ireland Ambulance Service  
Nursing and Midwifery Council  
Play Therapy UK  
Psychology Directorate of NHS Education for Scotland  
Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists  
Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust  
Scottish Ambulance Service  
Sheffield Hallam University (Department of Allied Health Professions)  
Society and College of Radiographers



Staffordshire University (Faculty of Health Sciences)  
Teesside University  
The National Association of Professional Ambulance Services  
The Open University (Social Work programme team)  
South Western Ambulance Services NHS Foundation Trust  
The Society of Sports Therapists  
University College London  
University of Cumbria  
University of Hertfordshire  
University of Manchester  
University of South Wales  
University of Southampton  
University of Strathclyde (Speech and Language Therapy Programme)  
Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust  
Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust

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## **Standards of education and training**

### **Introduction**

This document sets out the standards of education and training (SETs). These are the standards against which we assess education and training programmes.

A programme which meets the SETs allows a learner who successfully completes that programme to meet the standards of proficiency for their profession. They are then eligible to apply to the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) for registration.

We conduct approval visits to education providers to assess their programmes against the SETs. If a programme meets the SETs we will normally grant open-ended approval, subject to ongoing monitoring.

Annual monitoring is a documentary process used to determine whether a programme continues to meet the SETs. If any changes are made which significantly affect a programme, we consider these through our major change process to make sure that the SETs continue to be met.

We have produced detailed guidance on the SETs, which is intended to give more information about the meaning and intention of the standards and what our expectations will be when we assess and monitor education and training programmes against them. This guidance can be found on our website.

We have also produced supplementary information documents for education providers when preparing for an approval visit, completing annual monitoring submissions, or making significant changes to programmes. These documents, which can also be found on our website, give more information about the processes we use to assess and monitor programmes against the SETs.

## Level of qualification for entry to the Register

1.1 The Council normally expects that the threshold entry routes to the Register will be the following:

Bachelor degree with honours for:

- biomedical scientists (with the Certificate of Competence awarded by the Institute of Biomedical Science, or equivalent);
- chiropodists / podiatrists;
- dietitians;
- occupational therapists;
- orthoptists;
- physiotherapists;
- prosthetists / orthotists;
- radiographers;
- social workers in England; and
- speech and language therapists.

Diploma of Higher Education for operating department practitioners.

Equivalent to Certificate of Higher Education for paramedics.

Foundation degree for hearing aid dispensers.

Masters degree for:

- arts therapists;
- clinical scientists (with the Certificate of Attainment awarded by the Association of Clinical Scientists, or equivalent);
- forensic psychologists (with the award of the British Psychological Society qualification in forensic psychology, or equivalent);
- health psychologists (with the award of the British Psychological Society qualification in health psychology, or equivalent);
- occupational psychologists (with the award of the British Psychological Society qualification in occupational psychology, or equivalent); and

- sport and exercise psychologists (with the award of the British Psychological Society qualification in sport and exercise psychology, or equivalent);

Professional doctorate for clinical psychologists.

Professional doctorate, or equivalent for:

- counselling psychologists; and
- educational psychologists.

**[DN: The order of this standard has changed but the content remains the same]**

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## Programme admissions

- 2.1 The admissions process must give both the applicant and the education provider the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to ~~make or~~ take up **or make** an offer of a place on a programme.
- 2.2 The selection and entry criteria must include appropriate academic and professional entry standards.
- 2.3 The admissions process must ensure that applicants have a good command of English.
- 2.4 The admissions process must ~~include criminal record checks to ensure~~ **assess** the suitability of applicants, **including criminal conviction checks**.
- 2.5 The admissions process must ensure that applicants are aware of and comply with any health requirements.
- 2.6 There must be an appropriate and effective process for assessing applicants' prior learning and experience.
- 2.7 The ~~programme~~ **education provider** must ~~ensure~~ **implement and monitor that there are** equality and diversity policies in relation to applicants **and that they are implemented and monitored**.

## Programme governance, management and leadership

- 3.1 The programme must be sustainable and fit for purpose.
- 3.2 The programme must be effectively managed.
- 3.3 ~~There must be a person with overall professional~~ **The education provider must ensure that the person holding overall professional** responsibility for the programme ~~who~~ is appropriately qualified and experienced and, unless other arrangements are ~~agreed~~ **appropriate**, on the relevant part of the Register.
- 3.4 The programme must have regular and effective monitoring and evaluation systems in place.
- 3.5 There must be regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and practice education providers.
- 3.6 There must be an effective process in place to ensure the availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners.
- 3.7 Service users and carers must be involved in the programme.
- 3.8 Learners must be involved in the ~~design, delivery and review of the~~ programme.
- 3.9 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.
- 3.10 Subject areas must be delivered by educators with relevant specialist knowledge and expertise.
- 3.11 An effective programme must be in place to ensure the continuing professional and academic development of educators, **appropriate to their role in the programme.**
- 3.12 The resources to support learning in all settings must be effective and appropriate to the delivery of the programme, and must be accessible to all learners and educators.
- 3.13 There must be effective and accessible arrangements in place to support the wellbeing and learning needs of learners in all settings.
- 3.14 The programme must implement and monitor equality and diversity policies in relation to learners.
- 3.15 There must be a thorough and effective process in place for receiving and responding to learner complaints.
- 3.16 There must be thorough and effective processes in place for ensuring the ongoing suitability of learners' conduct, character and health.

- 3.17 There must be an effective process in place to support and enable learners to raise concerns about the safety and wellbeing of service users.
- 3.18 The education provider must ensure learners, educators and others are aware that only successful completion of an approved programme leads to eligibility for admission to the Register.

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## **Programme design and delivery**

- 4.1 The learning outcomes must ensure that learners meet the standards of proficiency for the relevant part of the Register.
- 4.2 The learning outcomes must ensure that learners understand and are able to meet the expectations of professional behaviour, including the standards of conduct, performance and ethics.
- 4.3 The programme must reflect the philosophy, core values, skills and knowledge base as articulated in any relevant curriculum guidance.
- 4.4 The curriculum must remain relevant to current practice.
- 4.5 Integration of theory and practice must be central to the programme.
- 4.6 The learning and teaching methods used must be appropriate to the effective delivery of the learning outcomes.
- 4.7 The delivery of the programme must support and develop autonomous and reflective thinking.
- 4.8 The delivery of the programme must support and develop evidence-based practice.
- 4.9 The programme must ensure that learners are able to learn with, and from, professionals and learners in other relevant professions.
- 4.10 The programme must include effective processes for obtaining appropriate consent from service users and learners.
- 4.11 The education provider must identify and communicate to learners the parts of the programme where attendance is mandatory, and must have associated monitoring processes in place.



## Practice-based learning

- 5.1 Practice-based learning must be integral to the programme.
- 5.2 The structure, duration and range of practice-based learning must support the achievement of the learning outcomes and the standards of proficiency.
- 5.3 The education provider must maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and ensuring the quality of practice-based learning.
- 5.4 Practice-based learning must take place in an environment that is safe and supportive for learners and service users.
- 5.5 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff involved in practice-based learning.
- 5.6 Practice educators must have relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning and, unless other arrangements are agreed **appropriate**, must be on the relevant part of the Register.
- 5.7 Practice educators must undertake regular training which is appropriate to their role, learners' needs and the delivery of the learning outcomes of the programme.
- 5.8 Learners and practice educators must have the information they need in a timely manner in order to be prepared for practice-based learning.

## Assessment

- 6.1 The assessment strategy and design must ensure that those who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency for the relevant part of the Register.
- 6.2 Assessment throughout the programme must ensure that learners demonstrate they are able to meet the expectations of professional behaviour, including the standards of conduct, performance and ethics.
- 6.3 Assessments must provide an objective, fair and reliable measure of learners' progression and achievement.
- 6.4 Assessment policies must clearly specify requirements for progression and achievement within the programme.
- 6.5 The assessment methods used must be appropriate and effective at measuring the learning outcomes.
- 6.6 There must be an effective process in place for learners to make academic appeals.
- 6.7 ~~There must be~~ **The education provider must ensure that** at least one external examiner for the programme is appropriately ~~experienced and~~ qualified and **experienced and**, unless other arrangements are ~~agreed~~ **appropriate**, on the relevant part of the Register.

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## Standards of education and training guidance

### Introduction

This document provides guidance on the standards of education and training (SETs) including information about how we assess and monitor education and training programmes against them.

As part of our approval and monitoring processes, we use the SETs to make sure that all learners meet the standards for registration when they gain a qualification; that they are suitable to become health and care professionals; and that they are able to practise their profession safely and effectively.

This document is written for education providers who are or will be engaged in our approval and monitoring processes, but will also be useful for practice education providers and others who work with and alongside education providers.

The guidance for each standard explains the purpose behind it, provides further explanation or definitions, and in some cases suggests how you could show that you meet the standard.

### About us

We are the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) and we were set up to protect the public. To do this, we keep a Register of professionals who meet our standards for their training, professional skills, behaviour and health.

We currently regulate 16 professions.

- Arts therapists
- Biomedical scientists
- Chiropodists / podiatrists
- Clinical scientists
- Dietitians
- Hearing aid dispensers
- Occupational therapists
- Operating department practitioners
- Orthoptists
- Paramedics
- Physiotherapists
- Practitioner psychologists

- Prosthetists / orthotists
- Radiographers
- Social workers in England
- Speech and language therapists

For an up-to-date list of the professions we regulate, please see our website at [www.hcpc-uk.org](http://www.hcpc-uk.org)

Our Register is available on our website for anyone to search, so that they can check the registration of a professional. Professionals on our Register are called 'registrants'.

### **Our main functions**

To protect the public, we:

- set standards for registrants' education and training, professional skills, conduct, performance and ethics;
- keep a register of professionals who meet those standards;
- approve education and training programmes which professionals must complete to register with us; and
- take action when professionals on our Register do not meet our standards.

### **About the SETs**

The SETs are the standards which pre-registration education and training programmes must meet in order to be approved by us.

The SETs ensure that learners are prepared for safe and effective practice. A programme which meets the SETs allows a learner who completes that programme to meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs). These are the required knowledge, skills and understanding for safe and effective practice in each profession. The SETs also ensure that learners are able to meet the HCPC standards of conduct, performance and ethics (SCPE), the ethical principles and expectations of a professional's behaviour. If a learner successfully completes an approved programme they are then eligible to apply to the HCPC for registration.

Our governing legislation (the Health and Social Work Professions Order 2001) says that we must set our standards, including standards for education providers, at the level necessary for safe and effective practice. This is what we call the 'threshold' level. However we recognise that many education and training programmes exceed this.

All of the SETs apply to all of the education and training programmes we approve. However, the way they are implemented may differ among programmes, often depending on the profession or model of delivery.

We want to encourage the development of new education and training programmes and the ability of existing providers to structure or deliver their programmes in different or innovative ways. We have therefore avoided setting detailed requirements for how you should meet the standards. Instead, we approve and monitor how you have achieved the required outcomes; the policies and processes you have in place; and how you implement, review and evaluate them.

### **Guidance from other organisations**

We have written this guidance document to provide more information about the meaning and intention of the SETs. It does not include good practice examples or other specific suggestions for how a programme should meet the SETs. When you are developing your programme, you may also want to refer to documents published by other organisations which take a role in developing good practice – for example, professional bodies and commissioning or funding bodies.

### **Language**

When we use the abbreviation ‘SET’, followed by a number, this refers to a section of the standards (e.g. SET 2) or an individual standard (e.g. SET 2.1).

Throughout the document, ‘we’, ‘us’ and ‘our’ refers to the HCPC, and ‘you’ refers to the education provider, including those involved in leading or managing the programme.

We have used the term ‘learner’ throughout this document. We use this to mean anyone learning, studying or training on a programme which leads to them being eligible to apply to join our Register. The term includes students, trainees, apprentices and practitioners in training or work-based learning.

We have also used the term ‘educator’ throughout the document. We use this to mean an individual who is involved in teaching, assessing or facilitating learning. This can include those who are permanently employed and others who help to deliver the programme such as sessional or visiting lecturers and practice educators.

The term ‘staff’ is used more broadly to refer to anyone involved in the delivery of the programme, which could include educators as well as those involved in other areas such as management or administration of the programme.

Many statements contained in the guidance sections of this document use verbs like ‘should’, ‘may’ or ‘could’. This is because the guidance is not intended to impose additional requirements to those set out in the standards themselves. We use words like ‘should’, ‘may’ or ‘could’ in the guidance to indicate something which is recommended but not an absolute requirement, or areas we would expect education providers to consider in how they meet the SETs.

### **The structure of this document**

We have divided up the main text of this document into six main sections, to reflect the six sections of the SETs:

- SET 1: Level of qualification for entry to the Register
- SET 2: Programme admissions
- SET 3: Programme governance, management and leadership
- SET 4: Programme design and delivery
- SET 5: Practice-based learning
- SET 6: Assessment

Under the title of each main section we have summarised the broad areas that the section is concerned with. Detailed guidance is then provided for each individual standard in the section, in a table like the one below.

Under ‘Other sources of HCPC guidance’ we list other HCPC publications, where available, which may be useful to you to find more information about an individual standard. Certain documents may have relevant information in them which relates to a number of individual standards.

<b>This box contains the full text of the individual standard.</b>
<p><b>Guidance</b></p> <p>This box contains guidance on the individual standard. It includes the intention behind the standard and any key definitions.</p>
<p><b>Other sources of HCPC guidance</b></p> <p>This box appears after some of the SETs and lists other HCPC publications which contain more background information or other related standards or guidance.</p>

## SET 1: Level of qualification for entry to the Register

### Summary

This section is concerned with the qualifications which would normally be expected for someone to be eligible to apply to register with us in each profession.

#### **1.1 The Council normally expects that the threshold entry routes to the Register will be the following:**

Bachelor degree with honours for:

- biomedical scientists (with the Certificate of Competence awarded by the Institute of Biomedical Science, or equivalent);
- chiropodists / podiatrists;
- dietitians;
- occupational therapists;
- orthoptists;
- physiotherapists;
- prosthetists / orthotists;
- radiographers;
- social workers in England; and
- speech and language therapists.

Diploma of Higher Education for operating department practitioners.

Equivalent to Certificate of Higher Education for paramedics.

Foundation degree for hearing aid dispensers.

Masters degree for:

- arts therapists;
- clinical scientists (with the Certificate of Attainment awarded by the Association of Clinical Scientists, or equivalent);
- forensic psychologists (with the award of the British Psychological Society qualification in forensic psychology, or equivalent);
- health psychologists (with the award of the British Psychological Society qualification in health psychology, or equivalent);

- occupational psychologists (with the award of the British Psychological Society qualification in occupational psychology, or equivalent); and
- sport and exercise psychologists (with the award of the British Psychological Society qualification in sport and exercise psychology, or equivalent);

Professional doctorate for clinical psychologists.

Professional doctorate, or equivalent for:

- counselling psychologists; and
- educational psychologists.

### **Guidance**

This standard sets out the level of qualification we would normally expect for approved programmes leading to registration in each of the regulated professions.

We have set the level for each profession, based on what we think is needed for programmes to deliver the standards of proficiency. We expect that most approved programmes will be at, or above, the standard we have outlined, but we realise that there may be some exceptions.

This standard contains the word 'normally' and some of the entry routes include the word 'equivalent'. This is to show that you may be able to design a programme which leads to a different qualification, but which meets the rest of the SETs, and the standards of proficiency, and so can still be approved by us. By law, we could not refuse to approve a programme just based on the form of award.



## SET 2: Programme admissions

### Summary

This section relates to the admissions processes for your programme, including the selection and entry criteria, procedures for assessing applicants and the information provided to the people involved. We expect that, in making decisions during the admissions process, you make sure learners are suitable to undertake the programme, including working with service users and carers in practice, and that they will be able to meet the standards of proficiency for their profession and to practise safely and effectively upon completion of the programme.

However, it is important that your applicants understand that, when you assess applications, you are checking their suitability to undertake the programme, not giving any guarantees about whether they will eventually be registered. This particularly applies to the individual standards in this section which refer to criminal record checks and health requirements.

When someone applies for registration we look at their application individually, and make a decision about whether they can be registered, based on their individual circumstances. We cannot guarantee that they will be registered in the future, or decide that a future application for registration would definitely not be successful.

Where admissions criteria and processes are applied by a separate organisation, you must retain overall responsibility and oversight. We do not normally visit organisations that you partner or collaborate with; instead we approve the policies and processes that you have in place in relation to them.

**2.1 The admissions process must give both the applicant and the education provider the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to take up or make an offer of a place on a programme.**

**Guidance**

This standard is about ensuring that information provided throughout the admissions process is clear and comprehensive, and facilitates informed decision-making.

The purpose of this standard is two-fold; we want to be sure that the information provided by applicants enables you to come to an appropriate decision about their suitability for a particular programme. Similarly, we want to make sure that you provide applicants with information on the programme that enables them to make a fully informed decision about taking up a place on a programme.

This applies to the information you provide to applicants about all aspects of the programme, including practice-based learning.

We do not give you specific guidance on the detailed information you must ask an applicant for, but we need to be satisfied that it is enough for you to be able to make an appropriate decision about whether to offer the applicant a place on a programme.

Among other things, you should tell applicants about the costs of the programme, including accommodation and other associated costs where relevant, and any options for funding. The information you provide applicants should also be clear about the difference between completing an approved programme and registering with the HCPC; about the different roles that regulatory and professional bodies play; and about the use of protected titles as a learner and as a registrant.

**Other sources of HCPC guidance**

HCPC, Guidance on conduct and ethics for students

HCPC, Guidance on health and character

HCPC, Health, disability and becoming a health and care professional

**2.2 The selection and entry criteria must include appropriate academic and professional entry standards.**

**Guidance**

This standard is about making sure that the academic and professional entry criteria are appropriate to the level and content of the programme, which in turn ensures learners are able to meet our standards for registration upon completion.

These should include, for example, requirements for prior knowledge or qualifications where relevant. Or you may choose to include selection and entry criteria which relate to applicants' profession-related values, attitudes or personal attributes. Whatever the criteria, you need to be able to show how they are appropriate to the level and content of the programme.

The information you provide to applicants should clearly set out all of the relevant academic and professional entry standards for the programme.

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### **2.3 The admissions process must ensure that applicants have a good command of English.**

#### **Guidance**

This standard is about ensuring that learners are able to use the English language at the level necessary to communicate effectively with service users and carers, educators and others and to complete the programme successfully.

You must have a thorough process in place for assessing an applicant's command of English. We do not prescribe how this should be done, but it should cover their reading, writing, listening and speaking skills.

We expect that any English language requirements you set at the point of admissions are appropriate to the level and content of the programme. They should take account of the fact that, upon completion of the programme, all learners must have the necessary level of English as set out in Standard 8 of the standards of proficiency for the relevant profession.

Your requirements can apply to all applicants, including those from the European Economic Area (EEA).

We realise that the requirements for applicants who do not have English as their first language may be different from the requirements for those who do. For example, applicants whose first language is English are not likely to be expected to provide evidence of meeting a language testing standard, but may demonstrate their English language skills in another way.

Your process should also make sure that reasonable adjustments are made to allow disabled applicants (e.g. deaf applicants) to demonstrate their English language and communication skills. When considering reasonable adjustments you may find it helpful to refer to our guidance document Health, disability and becoming a health and care professional.

#### **Other sources of HCPC guidance**

HCPC, Health, disability and becoming a health and care professional

HCPC, Standards of proficiency

## **2.4 The admissions process must assess the suitability of applicants, including criminal conviction checks.**

### **Guidance**

This standard is about ensuring that service users, learners and others are not put at risk through their interaction with learners.

By 'suitability' we mean that an applicant is of appropriate character to train to become a health and care professional and to interact safely with service users and carers. When making a decision about character you may find it helpful to refer to our Guidance on health and character.

We expect you to undertake criminal record checks on all applicants. These would normally be through the Disclosure and Barring Service in England and Wales; Disclosure Scotland; Access Northern Ireland; or, where appropriate, an equivalent body in another country. This should normally be at an 'enhanced' level or equivalent, due to the positions of trust and responsibility people on our Register are placed in. It is for you to decide who should pay the cost of carrying out the criminal convictions checks.

In making an admissions decision about someone who has a criminal record, you should consider whether it might affect their suitability to work with service users and carers or affect the public's confidence in their profession.

You should involve partner organisations in assessing the suitability of applicants. For example, you should consult practice education providers to find out whether the fact that an applicant has a criminal record would cause any problems in practice-based learning.

We also expect that your processes will include consideration of our standards, particularly the standards of conduct, performance and ethics, and whether an individual's criminal record may affect their ability to meet them once qualified. Our Guidance on health and character provides information on how we consider criminal records of people who apply for registration with us.

### **Other sources of HCPC guidance**

HCPC, Guidance on conduct and ethics for students

HCPC, Guidance on health and character

HCPC, Standards of conduct, performance and ethics

## **2.5 The admissions process must ensure that applicants are aware of and comply with any health requirements.**

### **Guidance**

This standard is about ensuring that learners will be able to undertake a programme safely and effectively, and to meet our standards for registration upon completion.

The information you make available to applicants must clearly set out any health requirements. Health requirements could relate to the physical and/or mental health of applicants. For some programmes, they may include things that applicants are required to do before commencing a programme (e.g. immunisations); or aspects of the programme which may affect applicants with certain health conditions or disabilities in a different way (e.g. physical participation in some learning activities).

Applicants should be encouraged to disclose information about a health condition which may affect the way they are able to learn on the programme, including the way in which they interact with service users and carers. It is your responsibility to make sure you have made all reasonable adjustments in respect of applicants and learners, in line with equality and diversity law.

We do not view having a disability as a barrier to becoming a health and care professional. Our guidance document, Health, disability and becoming a health and care professional, provides information for disabled people applying to approved programmes, and for admissions staff considering applications from disabled people. You should make applicants aware of this and other relevant guidance during the admissions process.

In making an admissions decision about someone who has told you about a health condition, you should take into account our Guidance on health and character, which provides information on how we consider health information about people who apply for registration with us.

### **Other sources of HCPC guidance**

HCPC, Guidance on health and character

HCPC, Health, disability and becoming a health and care professional

## **2.6 There must be an appropriate and effective process for assessing applicants' prior learning and experience.**

### **Guidance**

This standard is about ensuring that you consider the prior learning and experience of applicants as part of the admissions process in an appropriate and effective way.

This is often known as 'recognition of prior learning' and can relate to an applicant's prior experiential (informal) learning or prior certificated learning (such as relevant qualifications or completed modules). Mechanisms for the recognition of prior certificated or experiential learning may include:

- credit transfer;
- feeder routes; or
- transition arrangements.

This standard relates both to how you assess individual applicants' prior learning and experience on a case-by-case basis, as well as how you assess other programmes or training routes which may give advanced standing to a group of applicants.

Your process for assessing prior learning should take into consideration factors such as the relevance, level and currency of the prior learning. You should also make sure you have sufficient evidence from the applicant of the prior learning.

There is no requirement for you to recognise or accredit prior learning or experience if you do not consider it appropriate; and likewise we do not set limits on the amount of prior learning or experience you can accredit. Your education provider may have a specific policy or guidance in this area. However we expect you to have a clear rationale for the decisions made and a process in place which provides safeguards to ensure the standards of proficiency are met by all learners by the end of the programme.

You should also be able to show how you explain your processes in this area to applicants and learners.

**2.7 The education provider must ensure that there are equality and diversity policies in relation to applicants and that they are implemented and monitored.**

**Guidance**

This standard is about ensuring that the admissions process is open and equitable and does not discriminate unfairly against certain applicants.

There must be equality and diversity policies in place which relate to the admissions process, as well as processes to monitor how these are being implemented. Your programme may have its own equality and diversity policy, or the education provider may have a policy that applies to the programme.

You should be able to show how you make these policies available to applicants, along with information about what an applicant should do if they feel that they have been unfairly discriminated against.

**Other sources of HCPC guidance**

HCPC, Health, disability and becoming a health and care professional

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## **SET 3: Programme governance, management and leadership**

### **Summary**

This part of the SETs covers a range of topics, including how the programme is led, managed and governed; the processes for monitoring and review; collaboration with and involvement of stakeholders; and ensuring that the necessary resources are available to learners and educators.

The education provider must make sure that there is robust and effective oversight of the programme, and that there are effective systems and processes in place to establish, review, monitor and improve the delivery of the programme. This applies to all parts of the programme, including practice-based learning.

Where parts of the programme are provided by a separate organisation, the education provider must retain overall accountability and oversight. We do not normally visit organisations that you partner or collaborate with; instead we approve the policies and processes that you have in place in relation to them. These policies and processes must link into governance of the programme as a whole.

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### 3.1 The programme must be sustainable and fit for purpose.

#### Guidance

This standard is about making sure that there is a future for the programme, that it is currently secure and supported by all stakeholders involved.

By 'sustainable', we mean that:

- the education provider and any partner organisations are committed to providing enough resources to effectively deliver the programme;
- possible risks or threats to delivering the programme are being effectively managed; and
- the programme has sufficient support from senior management within the education provider.

By 'fit for purpose' we mean that the programme meets the needs of learners who will be entering a profession. This includes ensuring that learners are adequately prepared for practice, and that they are able to meet the standards of proficiency and adhere to expectations of professional behaviour.

Factors relating to this standard may include:

- the programme's financial position, including funding arrangements where relevant;
- the programme's place within the education provider's business plan;
- the processes in place for reviewing the way the programme is delivered and the related need for development;
- work undertaken in collaboration with other organisations (such as practice education providers) to make sure the programme is sustainable and fit for purpose; and / or
- feedback from stakeholders about whether the programme is fit for purpose.

### **3.2 The programme must be effectively managed.**

#### **Guidance**

This standard is about ensuring there is effective management and clear accountability for the programme.

We expect there to be a programme management structure in place with clear roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability. You should also make sure that the people involved have the commitment, skills and expertise they need to lead and manage the programme.

Where there is a partnership arrangement in place with another organisation to deliver part of the programme (such as another education provider or a practice education provider), you should make sure that you maintain oversight of the management systems and structures within the other organisation and that all parties have a clear understanding of responsibilities. There should also be clear processes to deal with any issues or problems which arise in the partnership.

### **3.3 The education provider must ensure that the person holding overall professional responsibility for the programme is appropriately qualified and experienced and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, on the relevant part of the Register.**

#### **Guidance**

This standard is about ensuring that there is a suitable person to lead the programme. This person is sometimes called the 'programme leader', but there may be other titles used for the role.

We do not play a role in appointing or approving the individual named person for this role; but rather we need to be assured that there is an effective process in place to identify a suitable person and, if it becomes necessary, a suitable replacement.

By 'appropriately qualified and experienced', we mean that the person is capable of leading the programme and effectively organising how that programme is delivered. It may be appropriate for them to hold a particular professional or education qualification.

In addition, we normally expect this person to be registered with the HCPC in the relevant profession and, where there is more than one protected title, to be eligible to use the title the programme relates to.

However, we recognise that there may be circumstances where it is possible and appropriate for a programme to be led by someone who is not registered on the relevant part of the Register. If this is the case, you must be able to show how you make sure they are appropriate for the role and have access to the necessary information and resources specific to the relevant profession.

### **3.4 The programme must have regular and effective monitoring and evaluation systems in place.**

#### **Guidance**

This standard is about how you ensure the programme's overall quality and effectiveness on an ongoing basis.

You need to be able to show how you monitor and evaluate the programme's quality and effectiveness and the systems that are in place. This includes processes which enable you to proactively gather information on quality and effectiveness; as well as to respond to any identified risks, challenges or changes.

Where relevant, you should also use this information as a way of ensuring the continuous improvement of the programme.

The processes you use should be appropriate to the programme and may include the following:

- internal and external quality audits;
- critical review of current arrangements;
- regular collection and analysis of feedback from learners, educators, service users and/or carers;
- analysis of learner complaints;
- analysis of concerns raised by learners, educators or others, for example about the safety or wellbeing of service users;
- quality audits of practice-based learning; and / or
- monitoring and evaluation through partnership with other organisations, such as practice education providers.

**3.5 There must be regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and practice education providers.**

**Guidance**

This standard is about how you engage and work in partnership with those who provide practice-based learning as a way of ensuring its ongoing quality and effectiveness. We expect this collaboration to also influence the design and delivery of the programme as a whole.

By 'practice education providers' we mean departments, services or organisations which provide a setting or opportunity for learners to participate in practice-based learning, as well as organisations which employ those involved in teaching or assessing learners in practice.

By 'regular' we mean that the arrangements for collaboration must reflect a partnership and ongoing relationship, not collaboration that only happens around the time the programme undergoes approval or annual monitoring, or when specific issues arise with practice-based learning.

We do not set specific requirements but collaboration could take various forms, such as meetings, seeking feedback or other methods of communication with practice education providers. You should make decisions based on what is effective for the continuous improvement of the programme.

**3.6 There must be an effective process in place to ensure the availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners.**

**Guidance**

This standard is about the processes you have in place to ensure that all learners on the programme have access to practice-based learning which meets their learning needs.

Meeting this standard requires not only consideration of the learners currently on the programme, but planning for future cohorts as well.

Where practice-based learning is provided separately from the rest of the programme by one or more third-party organisations, we expect these processes to be incorporated in your regular engagement and collaboration with the practice education providers.

In addition, securing the availability and capacity of practice-based learning for your own programme should be undertaken responsibly and include consideration of how it could impact on other programmes (for example, in the same geographical area).

### 3.7 Service users and carers must be involved in the programme.

#### Guidance

This standard is about how service users and carers contribute to the overall quality and effectiveness of a programme and ensure that learners completing an approved programme are fit to practise.

We use 'service user' as a broad term to refer to the involvement of those who use or are affected by the services of professionals registered with us. We use 'carer' as a broad term to refer to someone who has looked after, or who currently looks after or provides support to, a family member, partner or friend. They may need support because of their age, an illness, or because they have a disability.

Who the service users and carers are will vary between and within the different professions we regulate. In many professions, registrants will work closely with individuals who are the 'end recipients' of their services, including groups such as patients and clients and their carers. In other professions, registrants' contact with individual 'end recipients' of their services and carers is more indirect. In these professions, service users could legitimately include organisations or other clinicians but they could also include groups such as patients who ultimately benefit from their work. We want to be satisfied that you have considered and can justify the service user and carer groups you have chosen as the most appropriate and relevant to your programme.

Involving service users and carers could include involving individuals. It could also include working with existing groups and networks of service users and carers such as working with voluntary organisations.

By 'involved in the programme' we mean that service users and carers must be able to contribute to the programme in some way. We do not specify the exact areas of a programme in which service users and carers must be involved but they could be involved in some or all of the following:

- admissions and selection;
- developing teaching approaches and materials;
- programme planning and development;
- teaching and learning activities;
- feedback and assessment; and / or
- quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation

You should make sure that there is support available for service users and carers, including remuneration where appropriate, so that they are able to be appropriately engaged.

You should have processes in place to plan, monitor and evaluate service user and carer involvement. You should also be able to explain where and how involvement takes place, how this is appropriate to your programme, and how it has contributed to governance and continuous improvement.

### 3.8 Learners must be involved in the programme.

#### Guidance

This standard is about how the experience of learners is central to the quality and effectiveness of the programme.

Involving learners could include involving each individual, or it could include working with groups of learners or representatives. Learner involvement could be focused around modules, programmes, groups of programmes or themes.

By 'involved in the programme' we mean that learners must be able to contribute to the programme in some way. We do not specify the exact areas of a programme in which learners must be involved but they could be involved in some or all of the following;

- design;
- delivery; and / or
- review,

We do not specify exactly how learners must be involved. This could be done through a number of activities, including but not limited to:

- feedback through surveys;
- partnership working between learners and educators;
- staff/learner liaison committees; and / or
- learner representation on committees and working groups.

You should have processes in place to seek, enable and encourage learner participation. You should be able to show how learner involvement has contributed to the quality, effectiveness and continuous improvement of the programme.

You should seek learner input regularly and not only when discrete issues arise. You should also make sure that learner involvement is used in a meaningful way to develop or enhance the programme, and that learners are aware of the actions taken as a result of their involvement.

**3.9 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.**

**Guidance**

This standard is about ensuring that the resource provided for the programme allows for an adequate number of staff who are able and equipped to deliver the programme effectively.

We use the term 'staff' to mean anyone involved in delivering a programme, including educators as well as those involved in other areas such as management or administration of the programme.

By 'adequate number', we mean that you must be able to justify the number of staff you have in place, as well as the proportion of their time spent working on the programme, in relation to the practical requirements of the programme, the number of learners, their needs and the learning outcomes to be achieved. We do not set staff-to-learner ratios; instead, we consider the staffing within the overall context of the education you provide.

You should also have arrangements in place to review the number of staff involved in the programme and to deal with situations such as staff absences.

We need to be sure that their qualifications and experience (whether practical or academic) are appropriate to the programme. This would include, for example, looking at what teaching and learning methods your educators are involved in; how they are involved in other programmes in the same profession; or the expected programme activities.



### **3.10 Subject areas must be delivered by educators with relevant specialist knowledge and expertise.**

#### **Guidance**

This standard is about ensuring that educators have the necessary knowledge and expertise to deliver their parts of the programme effectively. This covers teaching as well as assessment and other aspects of delivery.

By 'educators' we mean individuals who are involved in teaching, assessing or facilitating learning. This includes those who are permanently part of the programme team, as well as sessional or visiting lecturers, practice educators or others.

We do not set specific requirements for the knowledge and expertise that is needed to deliver certain parts of your programme, but you must have a process in place to ensure that educators are suitable and well equipped to take part in teaching and to support learning in the subject areas they are involved in.

In addition, we expect your processes to enable you to review the necessary knowledge and expertise as learners' needs and current practice in the profession change.

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**3.11 An effective programme must be in place to ensure the continuing professional and academic development of educators appropriate to their role in the programme.**

**Guidance**

This standard is about ensuring that educators continue to develop and maintain their professional and academic skills so they are able to deliver the programme effectively.

We are including not only educators who are permanently employed, but also sessional or visiting lecturers and practice educators.

By 'academic development' we mean activities aimed at developing educators' skills related to teaching, learning and/or research, as appropriate to their role in the programme.

We do not have specific requirements for what arrangements you must have in place but this could include staff development strategies, training or mentoring schemes or professional development portfolios. Whatever the specific arrangements, you should ensure that these are available and easy for educators to gain access to.

We recognise that sessional, visiting or temporary educators may not participate in all professional development arrangements you have in place. However we still want to see how you ensure that these educators are keeping their professional and academic skills relevant to their role on the programme up to date. This standard also covers how you support practice educators in keeping up to date their skills related to their role in practice-based learning (e.g. practice educator training).

**3.12 The resources to support learning in all settings must be effective and appropriate to the delivery of the programme, and must be accessible to all learners and educators.**

**Guidance**

This standard is about how you make sure that programme resources are readily available to learners and educators and are used effectively to support the required learning and teaching activities of the programme.

By 'all settings' we mean to include the setting for theory-based learning, as well as for practice-based learning (where it is separate) and any other site where a part of the programme is delivered.

'Resources' in this context may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- handbooks and module guides;
- information technology;
- virtual learning environments;
- rooms and facilities;
- textbooks and journals ;
- equipment; and / or
- any other learning and teaching materials.

You must have systems in place that enable you to assess how resources are used and how effective and accessible they are for learners and educators. This should include whether they are up to date and take into account the cost of replacing resources when needed.

**3.13 There must be effective and accessible arrangements in place to support the wellbeing and learning needs of learners in all settings.**

**Guidance**

This standard is about the education provider's commitment to supporting and enabling learners to achieve and successfully complete the programme.

By 'all settings' we mean to include the setting for theory-based learning, as well as the practice-based learning environment (where it is separate) and any other place where part of the programme is delivered.

Such arrangements should include academic and pastoral support, so that learners have access to feedback and regular reviews on their progress as well as support in particular areas of the programme where needed.

They may also include financial support or services relating to learners' physical or mental wellbeing (for example a counselling service or occupational health service). You must ensure that the support and services you provide are able to respond to specific needs and that learners know how to access them and are able to do so in a timely manner.

The arrangements must be available to all learners, but you may wish to consider how to support in particular:

- mature learners;
- disabled learners;
- those who have to take periods of planned or unplanned leave from the programme;
- those with caring responsibilities; and / or
- those with financial difficulties.

### **3.14 The programme must implement and monitor equality and diversity policies in relation to learners.**

#### **Guidance**

This standard is about ensuring that the programme provides an equitable, fair and supportive environment to enable learning.

The equality and diversity policies, as well as the processes you have in place to monitor how they are implemented, must apply throughout the programme. Where part of the programme is delivered at or by a separate organisation (e.g. practice-based learning), you must have a process to ensure that appropriate equality and diversity policies are in place and implemented which apply to all learners on different parts of the programme.

The programme may have its own equality and diversity policies, or the education provider may have policies that apply.

You should be able to show that learners know how they can gain access to these policies and what to do if they feel that they have been discriminated against.

#### **Other sources of HCPC guidance**

HCPC, Health, disability and becoming a health and care professional

### **3.15 There must be a thorough and effective process in place for receiving and responding to learner complaints.**

#### **Guidance**

This standard is about how you address and resolve complaints from learners, and how these contribute to the overall governance of the programme.

Learner complaints may relate to the quality of teaching and learning opportunities; the appropriateness or fairness of programme policies and procedures or how they have been implemented; or allegations of harassment or discrimination. They are different from 'academic appeals' – which are concerned only with the request for a review of a decision about progression or assessment – although the processes may be similar or linked.

The process for receiving and dealing with learner complaints must apply to all parts of the education provider and the programme, including practice-based learning.

In order to be effective, the process should not only respond to and remedy and issues or failings identified through complaints; but also use this information to review parts of the programme and identify potential areas for improvement.

### **3.16 There must be thorough and effective processes in place for ensuring the ongoing suitability of learners' conduct, character and health.**

#### **Guidance**

This standard is about how you take responsibility for protecting service users and carers who interact with learners; and for ensuring that learners who complete the programme meet our standards for registration and expectations of professional behaviour.

We expect you to have effective processes in place that allow you to both proactively reassess the suitability of learners' conduct, character and health; and also to deal reactively with concerns about learners that come to light.

For example, it may be appropriate to undertake annual or periodic criminal records checks on learners. Or your processes may enable learners to provide information about issues relating to their character or health (i.e. self-declarations).

In assessing this information, you should consider whether the conduct, character or health-related issue could affect the learner's ability to meet our standards or to practise safely and effectively once qualified. Our Guidance on health and character provides information on how we consider character issues and health conditions where they have been declared by people who apply for registration with us.

Concerns about a learner could be raised by anyone involved in the programme, such as practice educators, other learners or service users and carers, for example where a learner has acted in a way contrary to expected professional values and behaviours.

The processes you have in place should be fair and supportive, focused on helping and supporting learners to address concerns raised about their conduct or health or character issues where appropriate. However they should also be robust and allow for an appropriate range of outcomes. For example, concerns about a learner's conduct may indicate that they require additional support, or in serious cases that they are not suitable to continue on the programme. Where such information comes to light near the end of a programme, an appropriate outcome could be to provide for an award which does not provide eligibility to apply to the Register.

#### **Other sources of HCPC guidance**

HCPC, Guidance on conduct and ethics for students

HCPC, Guidance on health and character

HCPC, Standards of conduct, performance and ethics

**3.17 There must be an effective process in place to support and enable learners to raise concerns about the safety and wellbeing of service users.**

**Guidance**

This standard is about enabling learners to recognise situations where service users may be at risk, supporting them in raising any concerns, and ensuring action is taken in response to those concerns.

Learners may encounter situations which cause concern during practice-based learning or in other ways during the programme. There must be a process or processes which cover all parts of the programme.

This is in part about making sure that learners understand their responsibilities with regard to raising concerns when they believe the safety or wellbeing of service users is at risk. We have produced Guidance on conduct and ethics for students to assist learners in understanding our expectations of their behaviour while on an approved programme, and to prepare them to meet the standards of conduct, performance and ethics once registered. This guidance includes an expectation that learners report their concerns about the safety or wellbeing of service users by speaking to an appropriate member of staff, such as an educator.

You must also support learners to raise concerns. You should ensure that learners know how and whom to address their concerns to; and how these will be considered and acted upon.

Your policies must be designed to make sure that learners are not penalised for raising concerns. Other support for learners may include:

- training on raising concerns and the importance of being open when things go wrong;
- dedicated reporting or communication mechanisms for learners to raise concerns; and / or
- advice from members of staff when situations arise which may be cause for concern.

The appropriate way to address a concern is likely to depend on its nature and where the concern originates; for example, it may be best dealt with by the programme leader or other managers at the education provider or practice education provider. Your process should ensure that, where necessary, the concern will be escalated to another appropriate person or organisation, such as a regulator.

**Other sources of HCPC guidance**

HCPC, Guidance on conduct and ethics for students

HCPC, Standards of conduct, performance and ethics

**3.18 The education provider must ensure learners, educators and others are aware that only successful completion of an approved programme leads to eligibility for admission to the Register.**

**Guidance**

This standard is about making sure there is no confusion about which programmes we approve and which we do not. Learners, educators and the public must be clear on which programmes meet our standards for registration and which do not.

Where you provide an aegrotat, 'step off', intermediate or other exit award that we have not approved, it must be clear that these do not lead to eligibility to apply for HCPC registration. (An 'aegrotat award' is an award to a learner who was not able to complete the full programme due to illness. Other exit awards may be available for learners in other circumstances.)

Learners who are not eligible to apply for registration should not be given an award that refers to a protected title. Where appropriate, you should consider giving these awards titles like 'Healthcare studies' which reflect the academic content, but do not give the impression that they confer eligibility to apply for registration. You should ensure that programme and award titles are clear, and that applicants, learners, educators and the public understand who is eligible to apply for registration with us, and who is not.

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## **SET 4: Programme design and delivery**

### **Summary**

This part of the SETs is about how the design and delivery of the programme ensure that learners who complete the programme meet our standards for their professional knowledge and skills, and are fit to practise. The programme must make sure that anyone who completes the programme is able to meet the HCPC standards of proficiency and understands the expectations and responsibilities associated with being a regulated professional.

The standards in this section apply to all parts of the programme, including both theory and practice-based learning.

We do not set prescriptive standards for developing a curriculum or about the detailed content of programmes and how they are delivered. We set broad standards so that you can design a programme that is responsive to changes in current practice and takes account of relevant curriculum frameworks and other profession-specific guidance.

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**4.1 The learning outcomes must ensure that learners meet the standards of proficiency for the relevant part of the Register.**

**Guidance**

This standard is about making sure that learners who complete an approved programme are able to meet the standards of proficiency for their profession. This in turn means that those who apply for HCPC registration are able to practise safely and effectively upon entering the profession.

You must be able to show how all of the standards of proficiency are covered by the learning outcomes in the programme. It is not necessary that each of the standards of proficiency maps to a single learning outcome; it may be that a number of learning outcomes cumulatively ensure that learners are able to meet one or more of the standards of proficiency.

We need to be sure that every learner completing the programme can meet all of the standards of proficiency, no matter what optional modules they choose, or if they have postponed their study.

You should also take account of any reasonable adjustments you have made to the way you deliver the programme to disabled learners, in considering how they can meet the standards of proficiency at the end of their programme.

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**4.2 The learning outcomes must ensure that learners understand and are able to meet the expectations of professional behaviour, including the standards of conduct, performance and ethics.**

**Guidance**

This standard is about ensuring that learners understand and are able to meet the expectations associated with being a regulated professional.

Learners must have the opportunity throughout a programme to learn about professional conduct and to demonstrate an understanding of which types of behaviour are appropriate for a professional and which are not. This should include learning about how context affects professional decision-making.

In particular, learners need to be aware of their obligations to meet the standards of conduct, performance and ethics when they qualify and apply for registration with the HCPC, as well as throughout their future professional practice. These are broad standards that apply to everyone on our Register and those applying for registration. They set out our expectations regarding a professional's behaviour and cover their ethics, decision-making, communication and interaction with service users, carers, colleagues and others. Meeting those standards is an integral part of being fit to practise.

We do not prescribe how the standards of conduct, performance and ethics should be covered during the programme (for example, we do not require a dedicated module on ethics). However the standards should play a prominent and structured role in the design of a programme.

We have produced Guidance on conduct and ethics for students to help learners understand how the standards of conduct, performance and ethics apply to them.

**Other sources of HCPC guidance**

HCPC, Confidentiality – guidance for registrants

HCPC, Guidance on conduct and ethics for students

HCPC, Standards of conduct, performance and ethics

#### **4.3 The programme must reflect the philosophy, core values, skills and knowledge base as articulated in any relevant curriculum guidance.**

##### **Guidance**

This standard is about ensuring that a programme remains current with regard to the philosophy, core values, knowledge and skills of a profession. It also aims to allow for changes within the profession.

We use the word 'reflect' rather than 'adhere to' because there may be more than one relevant curriculum guidance and/or you may need to depart from the curriculum guidance in some cases.

However, if the programme does not adhere to any of the curriculum guidance available, we need to understand how, without doing so, you are sure that learners completing your programme are able to practise safely and effectively.

We do not explicitly define 'core values' as they are likely to differ by profession. They could relate to the overarching philosophy which influences practice (e.g. the centrality of the service user), or to ethics, personal attributes or attitudes, among other things.

Curriculum guidance is often produced by professional bodies, but relevant documents are sometimes produced by other organisations, such as commissioning and funding bodies or employers. You must be able to show how any guidance is reflected in the programme.

#### **4.4 The curriculum must remain relevant to current practice.**

##### **Guidance**

This standard is about how the programme takes account of and reflects current practice, so that it remains relevant and effective in preparing learners for practice.

Practice changes over time. You must be able to show how you make sure the curriculum stays relevant, and how you update it in line with developments or changes in current practice.

For example, you should be able to show how the design of the curriculum predicts or reflects change in practice and/or services; developments in the profession's research base and advances in technology; changes in the law; and changes in service users' needs and expectations. Additionally, you should consider how to reflect feedback on employability, from learners and employers; changes in workforce development and lifelong learning; and developments in professional and regulatory practice, including research and guidance.

#### **4.5 Integration of theory and practice must be central to the programme.**

##### **Guidance**

This standard is about ensuring that learners are able to apply knowledge to practice as a fundamental part of being prepared and competent to practise their profession.

We expect theory and practice to be combined within both the theoretical and practical parts of the programme. By 'practical parts of the programme' we mean to include practice-based learning as well as practical learning in an academic setting.

We expect the programme to not only include both theory and practice elements; you must also ensure that these are integrated, complementary and mutually supportive. Learners must have the opportunity to learn theory and understand why theory is important, but also to reflect on and learn how to apply theoretical frameworks in practice.

This integration needs to be relevant and meaningful to learners and to take place at appropriate times during the programme to ensure it is effective.

#### **4.6 The learning and teaching methods used must be appropriate to the effective delivery of the learning outcomes.**

##### **Guidance**

This standard is about ensuring that the methods you use to deliver the programme support learners to achieve the learning outcomes.

By 'appropriate' we mean relevant to and effective for achieving the learning outcomes needed, both in terms of theoretical knowledge and the practical skills required in professional practice. Learning and teaching methods should also be evidence-based as a way of ensuring their effectiveness.

We do not set specific requirements for the types, number or range of approaches your programme should include. However we expect that where possible these should take into account individual learning styles and needs to support achievement.

This standard refers to all parts of the programme, including both the theory and practice-based elements.

#### **4.7 The delivery of the programme must support and develop autonomous and reflective thinking.**

##### **Guidance**

This standard is about enabling learners to become autonomous and reflective practitioners, as a key part of meeting our standards for registration.

Specifically, the ability to practise as an autonomous professional and to reflect on and review practice are requirements set out in standards 4 and 11 of the standards of proficiency (common across all professions).

The delivery of the programme should encourage learners to consider their own practice, including the limits of their safe and effective practice and their responsibility to make sure that they practise safely when they complete the programme.

We do not set specific requirements for the teaching and assessment methods you should use to achieve this, but you could consider the following:

- self-appraisal with planning and writing action plans;
- discussion groups;
- workshops;
- practice simulation and debriefing;
- reflective diaries or logs; and / or
- personal development plans.

#### **4.8 The delivery of the programme must support and develop evidence-based practice.**

##### **Guidance**

This standard is about enabling learners to use evidence to inform and systematically evaluate their practice, as a key part of meeting our standards for registration.

Specifically, the ability to assure the quality of their practice is a requirement set out in standard 12 of the standards of proficiency (across all professions).

By 'evidence-based practice' we mean the ability to gather, use, analyse and appraise evidence to inform and quality assure their practice. Evidence may come from research, audit and evaluation or feedback from service users and carers, for example.

Development of evidence-based practice could be achieved through learner-centred and independent learning, teaching and assessment strategies, as well as learner-led research where appropriate. You should ensure that the programme encourages the development of analytical skills and research appreciation relevant to the profession.

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**4.9 The programme must ensure that learners are able to learn with, and from, professionals and learners in other relevant professions.**

**Guidance**

This standard is about how learners are prepared to work collaboratively with other professionals and across disciplines for the benefit of service users and carers.

The process of learning with and from other relevant professionals is often referred to as 'interprofessional education' (IPE).

This learning experience can develop learners' ability to communicate and work with those outside of their own profession, ultimately improving the environment and quality of care for service users.

By 'other relevant professions' we mean to include other health and social care professions, as well as professions outside of health and social care. It is up to you to determine which other professions are most relevant to the programme and most useful in preparing learners for practice. Improving the quality of care for service users should be the key factor in determining which other professions or occupational groups are relevant to learners on a programme.

We do not prescribe how a programme should include interprofessional education, nor the type(s) of learning activity, number of professions involved or length of time. However we want to know how you have made decisions regarding the design and delivery of IPE to maximise the relevance to learners, and the benefit for their future professional practice and for service users and carers.

**Other sources of HCPC guidance**

HCPC, Guidance on conduct and ethics for students

HCPC, Standards of conduct, performance and ethics

HCPC, Standards of proficiency



#### **4.10 The programme must include effective processes for obtaining appropriate consent from service users and learners.**

##### **Guidance**

This standard is about respecting individuals' rights and minimising the risk of harm, and also making sure that learners understand what will be expected of them as health and care professionals. The principle of obtaining appropriate consent is central to practising in a regulated profession and is included in the standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

The standard has two parts. The first part is about obtaining appropriate consent from service users who interact with learners.

You must be sure that learning and teaching methods do not infringe in any way on the rights of service users. Where learners are directly involved in providing care, treatment or services (for example in practice-based learning), we expect there to be a system in place to ensure that service users and carers are aware that they are learners and that appropriate consent is obtained.

The second part is about obtaining appropriate consent from learners where they participate as service users themselves in practical and clinical teaching. The degree of involvement of learners in practical and clinical teaching will vary by programme and among professions.

You should not assume that broad consent given by a learner at the beginning of the programme will cover all situations. In some cases it will be necessary to obtain explicit consent from learners in relation to their participation in a specific activity. Such activities may include:

- role play;
- biomechanical assessments;
- patient positioning activities;
- practising clinical techniques; and
- experiential groups.

In telling learners about what clinical and practical teaching is included in the programme and obtaining their consent, you should take into account factors such as cultural differences and a learner's physical or mental health.

##### **Other sources of HCPC guidance**

HCPC, Confidentiality – guidance for registrants

HCPC, Guidance on conduct and ethics for students

HCPC, Standards of conduct, performance and ethics

**4.11 The education provider must identify and communicate to learners the parts of the programme where attendance is mandatory, and must have associated monitoring processes in place.**

**Guidance**

This standard is about ensuring that all learners who complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency, through full participation in those parts of the programme which are essential to achieving them.

We recognise that in some cases, a learner may not always need to be physically present but may engage in other ways, such as online. We use the word 'attendance' in a broad way to cover these situations.

In some cases it may be appropriate to require compulsory attendance of specific days or modules; while in other cases an expectation of average attendance over the course of the programme may be more appropriate. We do not set a minimum level of attendance, and leave this up to the programme (or the wider education provider) to set and be able to justify.

Learners need to be aware of your requirements and any consequences of missing mandatory parts of the programme.

You must have systems in place to monitor attendance and to take appropriate action if learners fail to attend the compulsory parts of the programme. For example, if you find that a learner has poor attendance, you could take follow-up action to make sure that they gain this knowledge before they are able to complete the programme. Other actions may be appropriate if learners fail to attend during assessments or practice-based learning.

## SET 5: Practice-based learning

### Summary

This section is about the practice-based learning which must be an integral part of your programme. We define 'practice-based learning' as the clinical or practical experience that forms part of an approved programme. It may take place throughout a programme or in discrete periods of time. In some programmes, it is provided in a different setting or by a different organisation than other parts of the programme.

You must have oversight and accountability for all practice-based learning, even where it is provided in a different setting or by a different organisation than other parts of the programme.

While we recognise that you work closely with practice educators and practice education providers, the standards in this section aim to make sure that you maintain responsibility for the governance and quality assurance of practice-based learning, and that you have effective systems and processes in place to support it.

This section covers how you:

- approve and monitor practice-based learning to make sure that it is effective and enables learners to meet the standards of proficiency;
- ensure the safety of service users, learners and others in practice-based learning;
- provide for adequate resource and support; and
- provide the necessary information to learners and practice educators.

We do not approve individual practice-based learning settings, practice educators or practice education providers. However your systems and processes must make sure that these meet our standards.

## 5.1 Practice-based learning must be integral to the programme.

### Guidance

This standard is about how practice-based learning is used effectively, as a key component of the programme, to prepare learners for future practice.

Practice-based learning may take place throughout a programme or in discrete periods of time. In some programmes, it is provided in a different setting or by a different organisation than other parts of the programme.

You must be able to show how practice-based learning is an integral part of the programme, for example:

- how practice-based learning outcomes and progression are in line with learning outcomes for the programme as a whole;
- your ongoing partnership arrangements with practice education providers; and / or
- your reasons for the design of practice-based learning on the programme.

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**5.2 The structure, duration and range of practice-based learning must support the achievement of the learning outcomes and the standards of proficiency.**

**Guidance**

This standard is about ensuring that the way practice-based learning is designed enables learners to achieve the learning outcomes of the programme and the standards of proficiency.

We do not set requirements for the structure, duration or range of practice-based learning that you must include in your programme to meet our SETs. However we expect you to have clear reasons for your decisions in this regard and that these are appropriate to the design and content of the programme and the learning outcomes.

Some other organisations, such as professional bodies, do set guidelines on practice-based learning. These should be reflected where relevant to your programme.

You must be able to explain how learners progress during practice-based learning, in relation to the standards of proficiency and the learning outcomes of the programme.

You should ensure that learners have access to an appropriate range of practice-based learning experiences which reflect the nature of modern practice and the range of practice settings of the profession they are preparing to enter.

**Other sources of HCPC guidance**

HCPC, Standards of proficiency

### **5.3 The education provider must maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and ensuring the quality of practice-based learning.**

#### **Guidance**

This standard is about ensuring the continuing quality of practice-based learning.

You must have a system for approving practice-based learning and for regularly monitoring it. This may include collecting, analysing and acting on feedback from learners, service users, practice placement educators and others.

In addition we expect you to have processes in place to respond when any concerns, difficulties or adverse incidents arise in the provision of practice-based learning; or where there is evidence which may call into question the suitability of the practice-based learning environment. This might include, for example, information or reports from regulators as well as internal investigations. Responding appropriately may involve making changes to practice-based learning, addressing issues or removing approval if it becomes necessary.

You should view the quality assurance of practice-based learning as a method of continuous improvement of the learning environment and service users' experience. This means that your processes should support both the learner's and the service user's needs within practice-based learning.

Where practice-based learning is provided by a separate organisation, the programme must retain overall accountability and oversight. We do not visit individual practice-based learning environments or settings, but we approve the policies and processes that you have in place in relation to them. These policies and processes must link into governance of the programme as a whole.

#### **5.4 Practice-based learning must take place in an environment that is safe and supportive for learners and service users.**

##### **Guidance**

This standard is about making sure that practice-based learning settings are suitable and that they support safe and effective learning.

You must be sure that practice-based learning does not cause a risk to service users. This is in part about ensuring that learners work within a scope of practice that is appropriate to their level of skills and experience. This is likely to develop for an individual learner as they progress during the course of the programme, and the practice-based learning they participate in should reflect this. You should also consider other factors in providing a safe environment for service users, such as the level of supervision and autonomy that learners have.

We also expect you to have safety policies and procedures in place that enable you to identify and address risks to the health and wellbeing of learners, such as (where relevant):

- infection control;
- manual handling;
- aggression from service users, colleagues or others; and
- mental health and stress.

Where the practice-based learning is provided by an external organisation, you must be able to demonstrate how you assess and monitor the practice environment to ensure it is safe and supportive. This includes collaboration with practice educators and practice education providers.

**5.5 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff involved in practice-based learning.**

**Guidance**

This standard is about ensuring there is sufficient support for learners to enable safe and effective practice-based learning.

By 'staff' we mean to include practice educators, as well as others working in the practice-based learning environment or setting.

We recognise that there are different models of practice-based learning and the level of day-to-day supervision or involvement of practice educators and other staff can vary among programmes. As a result, we do not say how many staff must be present at practice-based learning, how exactly they must be involved or what their qualification and experience levels must be.

However, you must be able to justify what you consider to be an adequate number of staff with reference to the number of learners and the level of support specific learners need. For example, a one-to-one relationship may be required for some professions or programmes, while there may be four or five learners to one member of staff in others.

We also expect that the qualifications and experience of staff are appropriate to the specific aspects of practice-based learning they are involved in, and that they are able to effectively support learning and assessment.

Some professional bodies play an active role in providing advice on staff-to-learner ratios. You should contact these professional bodies for further guidance in this area, where relevant.



**5.6 Practice educators must have relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, must be on the relevant part of the Register.**

**Guidance**

This standard is about how you make sure that practice educators are suitable and able to support and develop learners in a safe and effective way.

A 'practice educator' is defined as a person who is responsible for a learner's education during their practice-based learning.

We do not set specific requirements about the knowledge, skills and experience that all practice educators must have, as this is likely to vary between programmes and among the professions we regulate. However, you must determine what the necessary knowledge, skills and experience are to be able to support safe and effective practice-based learning, in relation to the learning outcomes of the programme.

In addition, we normally expect practice educators to be registered with the HCPC in the relevant profession and, where there is more than one protected title, to be eligible to use the title the programme relates to.

However, we recognise that in some circumstances there may be other appropriate practice educators whose professional backgrounds do not match the specific profession or protected title which the programme relates to; but whose knowledge, skills and experience mean they are well suited to support and develop learners in a particular area. This could include, for example, professionals registered with a different regulator.

If you choose to use practice educators who are not registered with us, you must be able to explain your decision and how you ensure that they are appropriate to undertake this role, including how their experience, qualifications and training are relevant to the practice-based learning they are involved in.

Where practice-based learning is provided by a separate organisation, you must have processes in place to check that practice educators have the necessary knowledge, skills and experience and are appropriately registered.

**5.7 Practice educators must undertake regular training which is appropriate to their role, learners' needs and the delivery of the learning outcomes of the programme.**

**Guidance**

This standard is about how practice educators are appropriately prepared so they can support and facilitate learning and assess learners effectively.

We expect that all new practice educators are trained, and that this is followed up with regular refresher training and support. Some of this training is likely to be generic, but must also include aspects that are specific to the programme, delivery of the learning outcomes and the individual needs of learners (who potentially will have varying levels of skill and experience).

Where practice educators are involved in assessment of learners, they should be prepared to do so through training in a way that is consistent across all practice-based learning on the programme.

We do not set specific requirements for the length, content or frequency of training for practice educators, as we feel that this level of detail is best decided by individual education providers with reference to the specific programme.

Training may take a variety of forms, including but not limited to:

- attendance at your site for training;
- training in the workplace;
- online support;
- written support; and / or
- peer support through workshops and meetings.

You should consider putting in place accreditation schemes offered by some professional bodies, where relevant.

**5.8 Learners and practice educators must have the information they need in a timely manner in order to be prepared for practice-based learning.**

**Guidance**

This standard is about setting and communicating clear expectations to all parties regarding practice-based learning. This is necessary so that they understand their roles and what is expected and required for the practice-based learning to be safe and effective.

Information provided to learners and practice educators should include the following (where relevant):

- names and details of learners or practice educators;
- the timings and duration of practice-based learning;
- practical details such as location;
- induction materials;
- the learning outcomes to be achieved;
- any relevant risks or safety issues;
- what records need to be kept;
- the assessment methods and criteria, including the implications of, and any action to be taken in the case of, failure to progress; and
- lines of communication and responsibility.

You should also make sure that learners are aware of what to do if something goes wrong or they have a concern about their practice-based learning experience or the provision of services to service users.

It is important that this information is provided in a timely manner, to allow for any clarification or explanation before practice-based learning begins. You should also ensure that not only is this information provided to learners and practice educators, but that it is easily available and in an appropriate format for them. You should also ensure that everyone involved has understood the information. This could be through follow-up training or opportunities for discussion, for example.

## SET 6 - Assessment

### Summary

This part of the SETs is about how you assess learners throughout the programme. In particular you must ensure through assessment that learners achieve the following:

- meet the requirements of the programme;
- achieve the learning outcomes;
- meet our standards of proficiency; and
- demonstrate that they understand the expectations of being a regulated professional.

Assessments must be effective and fair and must enable learners to demonstrate their progression and achievement. This relates to the way you design the assessment strategy and methods; how you communicate with learners and educators about requirements for progression and achievement; and how you ensure robust review of the assessment processes with the appropriate professional input.

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**6.1 The assessment strategy and design must ensure that those who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency for the relevant part of the Register.**

**Guidance**

This standard is about ensuring that learners who complete the programme have demonstrated the threshold level of knowledge, skills and understanding to practise their profession safely and effectively.

Your assessment strategy and design must make sure that learners can meet all of the standards of proficiency in a safe and effective way, before completion. Equally, you need to make sure that learners who do not meet the standards of proficiency are not allowed to complete the programme.

We do not set rules on things like pass marks, resits/retakes or the amount of compensation allowed, but your assessment strategy and design should strike a suitable balance between the need to support learners to succeed, and the need to make sure that those who complete the programme achieve the standards of proficiency.

It is not necessary that each of the standards of proficiency maps to a particular assessment; it may be that a number of assessments cumulatively ensure that learners are able to meet one or more of the standards of proficiency.

Your assessment strategy and design should include the following, where applicable:

- pre-requisites and co-requisites for the programme;
- compulsory and optional module assessments;
- individual module pass marks;
- the number of resits learners are allowed (and within what period of time);
- the maximum number of resits allowed in a year for specific modules;
- compensation and condonement regulations; and
- the maximum time a learner can take to complete the programme.

**6.2 Assessment throughout the programme must ensure that learners demonstrate they are able to meet the expectations of professional behaviour, including the standards of conduct, performance and ethics.**

**Guidance**

This standard is about how learners are able to demonstrate that they understand the expectations associated with being a regulated professional, by the time they complete the programme.

This covers assessment in both the theory and practice-based parts of the programme.

The 'expectations of professional behaviour' include the nature of professional regulation and the responsibilities involved in being a regulated professional. In particular, we expect assessment to enable learners to demonstrate how they understand and are able to meet the HCPC standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

**Other sources of HCPC guidance**

HCPC, Guidance on conduct and ethics for students

HCPC, Standards of conduct, performance and ethics

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### **6.3 Assessments must provide an objective, fair and reliable measure of learners' progression and achievement.**

#### **Guidance**

This standard is about ensuring that assessments are effective at determining whether a learner is fit to practise by the end of the programme.

By 'objective' we mean that assessment requirements are clear and realistic; and that they are able to deliver a valid and accurate picture of progression and achievement. The processes you have in place to moderate marks may be relevant here.

By 'fair' we mean that assessments provide all learners with an equal opportunity to demonstrate their progression and achievement; and that they take into consideration a specific learner's needs, e.g. the needs of disabled learners or those in extenuating circumstances.

By 'reliable' we mean that assessments are consistent and sufficiently rigorous to enable learners to clearly demonstrate the extent to which they have progressed during the course of the programme and achieved the learning outcomes.

You must have appropriate processes in place to gain assurance that assessments in the programme are objective, fair and reliable. This should include processes for addressing issues or implementing improvement where necessary. We do not prescribe how you must do this, but it should involve consideration of external examiners' reports, among other sources.

### **6.4 Assessment policies must clearly specify requirements for progression and achievement within the programme.**

#### **Guidance**

This standard is about how you ensure that learners understand what is expected of them at each stage of the programme, and that educators can apply assessment criteria consistently.

In addition to what might prevent a learner from progressing, you should also be clear about the options available to a learner who is failing or at risk of not progressing or completing the programme.

You should be able to show how these policies are clearly communicated to both learners and educators.

**6.5 The assessment methods used must be appropriate to and effective at measuring the learning outcomes.**

**Guidance**

This standard is about making sure that the methods used to assess learners enable you to determine whether the learning outcomes of the programme have been met. This in turn ensures that the standards of proficiency are met.

Assessment methods may include things like coursework, exams and presentations, and may be used to assess individuals or groups. We do not specify the methods of assessment that should be included in the programme. However you must be able to show how your chosen methods are in line with the learning outcomes of each module or part of the programme. We need to be sure that, whatever assessment methods you use, they confirm that those learners who successfully complete the programme can practise safely and effectively in their profession.

Assessments must also be appropriately placed during the course of the programme to match a learner's expected progression.

**6.6 There must be an effective process in place for learners to make academic appeals.**

**Guidance**

This standard is about ensuring that assessment processes are applied fairly.

An 'academic appeal' means a request by a learner for a review of a decision made by the education provider or another academic body about their progression, assessment or award. You must have a process in place which enables learners to make an appeal where they feel that the process which led to such a decision has been followed incorrectly or unfairly; or when information has come to light affecting the assessment outcome which was previously unknown.

By 'effective' we mean that the process must enable the education provider to deal with an appeal in a fair and timely manner, and that it must include appropriate action by the education provider where necessary.

You should ensure that learners are not disadvantaged in any way because they have made an academic appeal. In addition, your process should enable enhancement and improvement of the assessment process or other parts of the programme through consideration of the issues raised through appeals.

Learners should have clear information about the appeals process, including how to make an appeal and how and by whom it will be determined, as well as where they can go for advice.



**6.7 The education provider must ensure that at least one external examiner for the programme is appropriately qualified and experienced and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, on the relevant part of the Register.**

### **Guidance**

This standard is about ensuring that there is relevant professional input in the external review of the assessment process.

We do not play any part in appointing or approving external examiners, but need to be sure that the policies and processes are in place to ensure that a suitable external examiner is appointed and, when necessary, replaced.

You must ensure that at least one of your external examiners has professional experience and qualifications relevant to the programme.

We would also normally expect at least one external examiner to be registered with the HCPC in the relevant part of the Register. However, we recognise that in some circumstances there may be other appropriate external examiners who are not on the relevant part of the Register. If this is the case, you need to provide information about this decision and how you ensure that external examiners from a different professional background are suitable.

We do not set detailed requirements for how you use the advice and feedback from the external examiner. However the expectation is that the external examiner contributes to processes which ensure compliance with the SETs and achievement of the standards of proficiency.

There is guidance available on the role of external examiners from other organisations in the education sector and professional bodies. Where relevant, you should take this into account when appointing and using external examiners.

## Glossary

You may not be familiar with some of the terms we use throughout this document, so we have explained them below.

<b>Aegrotat</b>	An award to a learner who was not able to complete the qualification due to illness.
<b>Academic appeal</b>	A request by a learner for review of a decision of an academic body about their progression, assessment or award. An academic appeal should not be confused with a complaint.
<b>Annual monitoring</b>	Our yearly process to make sure approved programmes continue to meet the standards of education and training and to deliver the standards of proficiency.
<b>Applicant</b>	Anyone applying to a programme you provide.
<b>Approval</b>	The process that leads to decisions about whether a programme meets the requirements of HCPC standards of education and training. Continuing approval depends on satisfactory monitoring.
<b>Carer</b>	Anyone who looks after, or provides support to, a family member, partner or friend.
<b>Complaint</b>	The expression of a specific concern by a learner about the quality of the programme and learning opportunities, or more generally about issues such as unequal treatment or bullying. A complaint should not be confused with an academic appeal.
<b>Curriculum</b>	A structured plan to provide specific learning to support learners' knowledge, skills, behaviour and associated learning experiences. The learning plan is generally organised as a sequence of modules so that a learner receives specific education and training. The curriculum includes the syllabus, teaching guides, an

	assessment guide and necessary learning resources.
<b>Education provider</b>	The institution (for example, a college, university, company, or private higher education provider) which maintains overall responsibility for the delivery of the programme.
<b>Educator</b>	Someone involved in teaching, assessing or facilitating learning on a programme. This term can include those who are permanently employed by the education provider and others who help to deliver the programme, such as sessional or visiting lecturers and practice educators.
<b>'Enhanced' level disclosure</b>	A type of criminal record check that is more detailed than the 'basic' or 'standard' check.
<b>External examiner</b>	A person you appoint to monitor the assessment process of a programme and to make sure that it meets professional and academic standards.
<b>Fit to practise</b>	When someone has the skills, knowledge, character and health to do their job safely and effectively.
<b>Governance</b>	The policies, processes and monitoring arrangements that make sure that a programme is well run.
<b>Leadership</b>	Providing a strategy, vision or direction for the programme
<b>Learner</b>	Anyone studying or training on a programme which leads to them being eligible to join our Register. The term includes students, trainees, apprentices and practitioners in training or work-based learning.
<b>Management</b>	Overseeing the day-to-day delivery of a programme, including setting roles and responsibilities and the allocation of resources.
<b>Practice-based learning</b>	The clinical or practical experience that forms an integral part of an approved

	programme. It may take place in discrete period of time or throughout a programme.
<b>Practice educator</b>	A person who is responsible for a learner's education during their practice-based learning and has received appropriate training for this role.
<b>Practice education provider</b>	The organisation that provides practice-based learning for a programme. In many cases this is a separate organisation from the education provider. This includes, for example, health and care providers, local authorities, schools, community organisations and charities across the public, private and voluntary sectors.
<b>Programme</b>	The academic teaching, practice-based learning, assessment, qualification and other services provided by the education provider, which together form the programme for approval and annual monitoring purposes.
<b>Programme leader</b>	The person who has the overall professional responsibility for a programme.
<b>Recognition of prior learning</b>	The process for assessing an applicant's previous learning from experience and/or formal learning. This can lead to credit transfer or other transition arrangements into a programme, where appropriate.
<b>Register</b>	The list (or any part of it) that we keep of the professionals who meet our standards for their training, professional skills, behaviour and health.
<b>Registrant</b>	A person who is currently on the HCPC Register.
<b>Service user</b>	Anyone who uses or is affected by the services of registrants or learners.
<b>Staff</b>	Anyone involved in the delivery of the programme. The term applies to all roles including educators, management, administrative and support staff, as well as people in both paid and unpaid positions.

In practice-based learning, this term may also refer to others working in the practice-based learning setting who interact with learners.

**Standards of conduct, performance and ethics (SCPEs)**

Standards that apply to everyone on our Register and those applying for registration. They set out our expectations regarding a professional's behaviour and cover their ethics, decision-making, communication and interaction with service users, carers, colleagues and others.

**Standards of proficiency (SOPs)**

Standards which set out the knowledge, skills and understanding necessary to practise a profession safely and effectively. Professionals must meet these standards when they complete an approved programme in order to become registered.

**Suitability**

Where an applicant or learner has the appropriate health, character and conduct to train to become a health and care professional and to interact safely with service users and carers.

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