
Information for stakeholders

An introduction to our education processes

Contents

About us (the Health and Care Professions Council) 3

About this document 4

About our standards 5

Protected titles 6

Our Register 7

The role of our standards in education 8

Our approval and monitoring processes 11

Getting a programme approved by the HCPC 13

Education and training outside of the UK 14

Continuing professional development (CPD) 15

The approval and monitoring processes explained 16

How to raise a concern about an education provider 22

More information 24

Glossary 25

About us (the Health and Care Professions Council)

We are the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). We are a regulator and our main aim is 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.

Professionals on our Register are called registrants. 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

We may regulate other professions in the future. For an up-to-date list of the professions we regulate, please see our website at www.hcpc-uk.org

Our main functions

To protect the public, we:

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

The Health and Social Work Professions Order 2001 says we must set our standards to protect the public. We must also set standards which are needed for safe and effective practice. This is why our standards are set at a 'threshold' level, a minimum level of safe and effective practice.

About this document

This document gives you an overview of our approach to education and training and focuses on pre-registration programme approval and monitoring. It shows how our standards and processes focus on protecting the public to make sure that prospective registrants are fit to practise when they join the Register for the first time. It also explains how our role in approving and monitoring programmes sits alongside other interests in terms of quality assurance and improving practice. The document also clarifies our education and training role outside of the UK and in terms of what happens after someone is registered.

This publication provides a useful starting point to understanding our approach to education and training. We have written it as an introductory guide and you should read it alongside other more detailed publications on our standards, guidance and processes.

We try to make our standards, guidance and processes as open and clear as possible. For more information, please see the education section of our website at www.hcpc-uk.org/education

Throughout this document:

- ‘us’, ‘we’ and ‘our’ refers to the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC);
- ‘student’ refers to anyone studying on a programme which leads to eligibility to apply to our Register; and
- ‘registrant’ refers to a professional on our Register.

About our standards

We set standards for registrants' education and training, professional skills, conduct, performance, ethics and continuing professional development.

Our standards of proficiency

The standards of proficiency (SOPs) are our threshold standards for safe and effective practice that all registrants must meet. They include general elements, which all our registrants must meet, and elements specific to their particular profession. They outline what an individual must know, understand and be able to do when they join the Register and begin practising their profession. These standards play a central role in how to join and stay on the Register and so gain the right to use the protected title or titles.

Our standards of education and training

The standards of education and training (SETs) are the standards that an education and training programme must meet before it can be approved. These general standards make sure that anybody who completes an approved programme meets the standards of proficiency for their profession and so is eligible to apply to register with us.

The standards cover:

- the level of qualification for entry to the Register;
- programme admissions;
- programme management and resources;
- the curriculum;
- practice placements; and
- assessment.

Our standards of conduct, performance and ethics

The standards of conduct, performance and ethics (SCPEs) are our expectations for the continuing attitudes and behaviour of someone who is on our Register. They cover areas such as acting in the best interests of service users, protecting confidentiality and honest behaviour. We also take account of these standards when deciding whether someone applying to join the Register is of good character.

Protected titles

All of the professions we regulate have at least one professional title that is protected by law. This means, for example, that anyone using the titles 'paramedic' or 'dietitian' must be registered with us. You can find a full list of protected titles on our website.

It is a criminal offence for someone to claim that they are registered with us when they are not, or to use a protected title that they are not entitled to use. For example, someone should not state that they are a 'physiotherapist' or that they 'provide physiotherapy' when they are not registered with us.

What title should students use?

A student cannot use a protected title until they are on our Register. A student can use a protected title with an appropriate prefix which makes their status clear, such as 'trainee' or 'student'. By using one of these prefixes the student is obviously not trying to deceive the public that they are fully qualified and registered.

What title should approved programmes use?

There is no requirement for approved programmes to use a particular title. Many education providers decide to include the broader related profession in the title of their approved programme, such as 'BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy'. While other education providers decide to reflect the broader content of the programme in their title, such as 'Masters of Nutrition' (providing eligibility to register as a Dietitian) or 'Educational, Child and Community Psychology D.Ed.Psy' (providing eligibility to register as an educational psychologist). Differences in programme titles do not present a problem for us. The important point is that a programme meets our standards and appears on our list of approved programmes.

Our Register

Being on our Register shows that an individual meets our standards for their profession. We have a Register to show the public that professionals are fit to practise, and that they are entitled to use the protected title for their profession. It shows that registrants are part of a profession with nationally recognised standards set by law. When we say that someone is 'fit to practise', we mean that they have the skills, knowledge, character and health to do their job safely and effectively.

Does completing an approved programme guarantee registration?

Completing an approved programme does not guarantee that an individual will be able to register with us. It shows us that someone meets our professional standards and so they are eligible to apply for registration. They will need to provide further information to become registered with us. This information helps us make sure that:

- they are who they say they are;
- they meet all of our standards; and
- we can contact them if we need to.

Sometimes a student who has completed an approved programme declares very serious information which may mean that we reject their application for registration. It is important to stress that this only happens very rarely.

The role of our standards in education

How important are our standards in approving programmes?

Our standards are at the heart of our approval and monitoring processes. The legislation which governs us (the Health and Social Work Professions Order 2001) allows us to set standards for safe and effective practice, for education and training and to approve programmes against those standards. It does not give us specific powers to set the type of academic award needed for eligibility to join the Register. This means that programme approval is based on whether a programme can show that it meets our standards, rather than whether it leads to a particular type or level of award.

What is the relationship between the standards?

Our standards have related but different roles. The standards of proficiency and standards of conduct, performance and ethics apply to individuals. The standards of education and training apply to education providers.

The standards of proficiency apply to students and those who want to join the Register, as well as registrants. However, only registrants have to keep to the standards of conduct, performance and ethics. This means there is a degree of overlap between the standards of proficiency and the standards of conduct, performance and ethics. For example, both include confidentiality.

The standards of education and training are designed to guarantee students achieve the standards of proficiency. The standards of education and training mean that students must develop an understanding of the standards of conduct, performance and ethics for when they become registered.

How important is the language used in the standards?

All of our standards are written in a flexible way. We have written them in a way that means they are relevant to all registrants, whatever their profession or sector. It means there is normally more than one way in which our standards can be met.

The language used in the standards of proficiency plays an important role in making sure that prospective registrants as well as registrants can meet them. We deliberately use verbs such as 'be able to' rather than 'must'. We express the standards of proficiency in terms of expectations so that someone who is not yet on the Register can meet them.

We have written the standards of conduct, performance and ethics in a way which means that only registrants can meet them. We deliberately use the verb 'must' rather than 'be able to' to recognise that individuals must be practising in their profession to meet these standards.

The language used in the standards of education and training allows education providers to meet them in a number of ways, relevant to the particular profession or model of education and training. Our standards are outcome-based, rather than input-based. By focusing on the outcome of safe and effective practice, we do not prevent registrants, employers and education providers from developing new ways of working if it is safe and appropriate. We have deliberately written the standards of education and training to reflect the fact that they are used by a number of professions in a range of settings. Our standards are general principles on which we will make judgements about the education and training provided. We deliberately use adjectives and adverbs such as 'appropriate' and 'effectively' to make sure that those making the judgements assess, in an effective way, the systems, policies and scenarios proposed by education providers.

What is the relationship of the standards of proficiency to the threshold level of qualification for joining the Register?

Our first standard of education and training (known as 'SET 1') sets out the normal threshold level of qualification to join the Register for each of the professions we regulate. SET 1 is expressed as an academic award. Every time we open a new part of the Register, we need to decide on the normal threshold entry level for the new profession, after carrying out consultation, and add this to SET 1. In setting the normal threshold level of entry, we are setting the minimum level of qualification which we would normally accept for the purposes of an approved programme which leads to registration. The threshold level might change over time to reflect changes in how education and training are delivered.

We have included the term 'normally' in SET 1 as protection against unlawfully restricting our discretion. The legislation which governs us (the Health and Social Work Professions Order 2001) says that we can set standards for safe and effective practice, for education and training and to approve qualifications against those standards. However, we do not have specific powers to set the academic award needed for eligibility to join the Register. Under the terms of our legislation, we would be using our powers improperly if we refused to approve a programme which delivered the standards of proficiency and the rest of the standards of education and training just because it did not lead to the award of a qualification shown in SET 1. As a result, we will approve programmes which are at a different academic level, or which result in a different academic award to those shown in SET 1, so the list of approved programmes contains a range of academic levels and awards.

What is the relationship between curriculum guidance and our standards?

We do not produce curriculum guidance or frameworks. We believe that this is best owned by the profession itself. Most curriculum guidance or frameworks go beyond the threshold standards and include new areas of practice, as well as examples and expectations of best practice. So, for areas such as practice placements, we do not request a set number of hours or a range of settings. The profession will outline this using their curriculum guidance or frameworks. Our standards are mainly designed to provide eligibility to join and stay on the Register. The standards of proficiency are not a career development framework. They are focused on fitness for practise, rather than fitness for employment in a particular role, sector or service. We have not designed our standards to offer detailed guidance on best practice as we write the standards at a threshold level. We have designed them to be flexible so that they can be met in a variety of ways.

Professional bodies have an important role in promoting and representing their professions. Agencies such as the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), QAA Scotland and Skills for Health have an important role in developing the philosophy, values, skills and knowledge of professions and educational practice. From our experience of approving programmes, education providers are, mainly, designing and delivering programmes which go beyond our threshold standards. Our standards of education and training tie in with each profession's curriculum guidance or frameworks. Our standards expect each programme to reflect the philosophy, core values, skills and knowledge base of the curriculum guidance. If programmes do not reflect the curriculum guidance, we expect them to show how students can still practise safely and effectively when they have finished the programme.

Are there standards of conduct and ethics for students?

We have produced guidance for students on issues about conduct and ethics. This guidance is based on the standards of conduct, performance and ethics and is designed to introduce and familiarise them with our standards. The language used in the guidance deliberately reads 'should' rather than 'must' as we cannot make students keep to the guidance. This is because we do not set standards for them as they are not registered with us. However, we believe the guidance sets useful principles for prospective registrants around the expectations of a professional on our Register who takes responsibility for their own actions and works independently.

Our approval and monitoring processes

Our approval and monitoring processes make sure that programmes and education providers meet our standards of education and training. This means that students who successfully complete the programme meet our standards of proficiency. The approval process involves an approval visit and an initial decision as to whether a programme meets our standards. We normally approve a programme on an open-ended basis, depending on satisfactory monitoring. This means that we do not have a cyclical or periodic schedule of approval visits. Our approval is not time limited or linked to a number of cohorts. There are two monitoring processes, annual monitoring and major change. Both of these processes are documentary and may trigger a new approval visit. The annual monitoring process is a retrospective process where we look back at the programme and decide whether it continues to meet all the standards against which we originally assessed it. The major change process considers significant changes to a programme and the effect of these changes in relation to our standards.

What is the purpose of our approval and monitoring processes?

We have designed our approval and monitoring processes to protect the public from those who are not fit to practise. In approving a programme, we are confirming that the programme and its associated regulations, systems and processes will make sure that only those individuals who meet our standards will successfully complete the programme and be eligible to apply for registration with us. We have not designed our approval and monitoring processes to deal with individual decisions about student performance or related conduct.

What does completing an approved programme mean?

For us, completing an approved programme means being able to practise safely and effectively. An individual who successfully completes an approved programme is eligible to apply for registration with us. There is no extra period of education and training needed before registration. And, there is no extra requirement, as part of the application process, to test a person's ability to practise safely and effectively.

Does completing an approved programme mean that an individual can take up any employment?

There is a major difference between being registered as a health and care professional and being employed as one. Our approval and monitoring processes are associated with registration, not employment. In particular, it is important that registration is never seen as a guarantee of employment. We guarantee fitness to practise. This does not mean we guarantee the person will have the opportunity to practise. It is also not the same as fitness to work, which is decided at a local level between the person registering (the registrant) and their employer. Registrants must only practise within what we call their 'scope of practice'. A registrant's scope of practice is the area or areas of their profession in which they have the knowledge, skills and experience to practise safely and effectively. We recognise that registrants' practice changes over time and that the practice of experienced registrants frequently becomes more focused and specialised than that of newly qualified registrants. This is because it relates to a particular client group, environment, employment sector or occupational role. We support induction, preceptorship and other arrangements that support newly qualified and registered practitioners in their first professional role.

What are the main differences between our approach to quality assurance and that of other bodies?

Regulators are one of many bodies with an interest in quality assurance. Education providers are reviewed by other regulators, funders, commissioners and professional bodies as well as their own processes. We are aware of the effect that different quality assurance processes can have and we regularly review our standards and processes to make sure they are proportionate and focused on protecting the public. To avoid unnecessary duplication for education providers, we encourage joint approval visits and use existing internal documents where possible.

Our role in quality assuring education and training programmes is focused on protecting the public, while other parties' roles are more focused on developing or promoting the profession or academic credentials of the education provider. Our approach is laid down in legislation and we act in the public interest. We do not promote or support professionals or services and so we do not offer membership services.

Our approach to quality assurance follows the general pattern of approval and monitoring. However, unlike many other bodies, we do not re-approve after a specific time. We grant our approval on an open-ended basis and we use documentary monitoring processes to assess risk and trigger approval visits when these are needed. We will not automatically visit a programme as a result of reviews or revalidation.

Our approach to quality assurance is evidence-based. It also involves peer review and takes into account the views of students of the profession. Our approach also focuses on judgements against a set of standards. However, unlike other bodies, our standards are focused on output. They describe the desired outcomes rather than setting down a process for achieving them.

Unlike many other quality assurance approaches, the way we approve programmes is based on whether a programme can show that it meets our standards, rather than whether it leads to a particular type or level of academic award. This means that we are not commenting on or confirming whether a student is fit for an academic award. It also means that we are active at both undergraduate and postgraduate level, as well as outside of the formal higher education setting.

Getting a programme approved by the HCPC

What programmes can be approved?

Any education provider (for example, a university, college, private training institution or professional body) can ask us to approve their programme. Approved programmes do not have to be delivered or awarded by a university or college with degree-awarding powers.

As well as approving and monitoring education and training for people who want to join our Register, we also approve a small number of programmes for those already on the Register. The post-registration programmes which we currently approve are limited to supplementary prescribing programmes, programmes for chiropodists / podiatrists in local anaesthetics and prescription-only medicine and programmes for approved mental health professionals. For the prescribing programmes, this is in line with the Medicines Act 1968 and Prescription Only Medicines (Human Use) Order 1997.

How long is a programme approved for?

A programme is normally approved on an open-ended basis, subject to satisfactory monitoring. We refer to this as 'open-ended approval'. There are two monitoring processes – annual monitoring and major change. Both of these processes are documentary and may trigger a new approval visit. This means that we do not have a regular schedule of approval visits. Our approval is not time limited or linked to the number of cohorts.

Who makes the decisions on approving a programme?

The Education and Training Committee (ETC) is legally responsible for approving and monitoring programmes which lead to eligibility to apply to our Register. The decision to approve or not approve a programme rests with the ETC. The ETC considers recommendations from our visitors and observations from education providers before making their final decision.

The Committee meets in public and copies of agendas and minutes are on our website. We publish visitors' reports from approval visits on our website.

Who visits the education providers?

We appoint 'visitors' to visit education providers and assess the documents the education providers submit for the monitoring processes. Visitors come from a range of backgrounds including registered members of the professions we regulate and members of the public. Visitors work on our behalf and provide the expertise across each of the professions that we regulate to help the ETC in making a decision. Visitors normally operate in panels, rather than alone. Each panel includes at least one visitor from the relevant part of the Register for the programme we are considering. We choose all visitors by taking account of their education and training experience. Visitors represent us and no other body when they carry out an approval and monitoring exercise. This means that the outcome is totally independent.

Can programme approval be withdrawn?

The decision to withdraw approval from a programme rests with the ETC. The ETC does not take this decision lightly. In the first instance, concerns about an approved programme would normally trigger an approval visit. If the approved programme could not show that they continued to meet our standards through this process, then the Committee would consider withdrawing approval. When the Committee does withdraw approval, we remove the programme from the approved programme list.

Education and training outside of the UK

The powers we have by law do not allow us to approve programmes (including franchised and collaborative programmes) which are delivered outside of the UK by non-UK education providers.

Programmes delivered by UK education providers outside of the UK may be eligible for approval if the UK education provider is directly responsible for delivering that programme outside of the UK. We can approve programmes where parts of the programme are delivered outside of the UK. For example, this might happen when a practice placement is provided outside of the UK, or when a student takes part in an exchange programme for a term or semester.

Individuals who have trained outside of the UK can apply for registration with us, through the international route. The international route uses the same standards as the UK approved programme route to decide whether an individual can be registered. However, in the case of international applicants, we make a decision on a case-by-case basis, taking both their qualifications and experience into account.

Continuing professional development (CPD)

We expect both students and registrants to understand the need to keep their skills and knowledge up-to-date and the importance of career-long learning. We have set standards for continuing professional development (CPD) and all registrants must keep their CPD activities up to date to stay on the Register.

We have defined CPD as: 'a range of learning activities through which registrants maintain and develop throughout their career to ensure that they retain their capacity to practise safely, effectively and legally within their evolving scope of practice'.

Put simply, CPD is the way registrants continue to learn and develop throughout their careers so they keep their skills and knowledge up to date and can work safely, legally and effectively while they are registered to make sure that they continue to meet our standards of proficiency.

We believe that CPD takes many forms and that we should not advise exactly how registrants should learn. Because of this, we do not approve education programmes which registrants must take after they have registered with us. Education providers can offer programmes for the purpose of CPD, but the programmes do not have to be approved or monitored by us.

The approval and monitoring processes explained

The approval process

Since 2004, we have been carrying out approval visits to education providers and programmes throughout the UK.

The visit

The approval visit is normally carried out by two of our visitors along with a member of the Education Department. We will take each visitor through the conflict of interest process to make sure that they provide an objective recommendation. This group is what we would refer to as the HCPC panel, and, throughout the visit, the panel will ask the education provider staff, students, senior managers and placement providers questions.

Following the visit, our panel will decide whether, or the degree to which, the programme meets our standards. They will then make the appropriate recommendation to our Education and Training Committee (ETC) who will make the final approval decision.

We have highlighted the stages of the approval process in figure 1 – the approval process flow chart – pre-visit and figure 2 – the approval process flow chart – post visit.

Figure 1 – the approval process flow chart – pre-visit

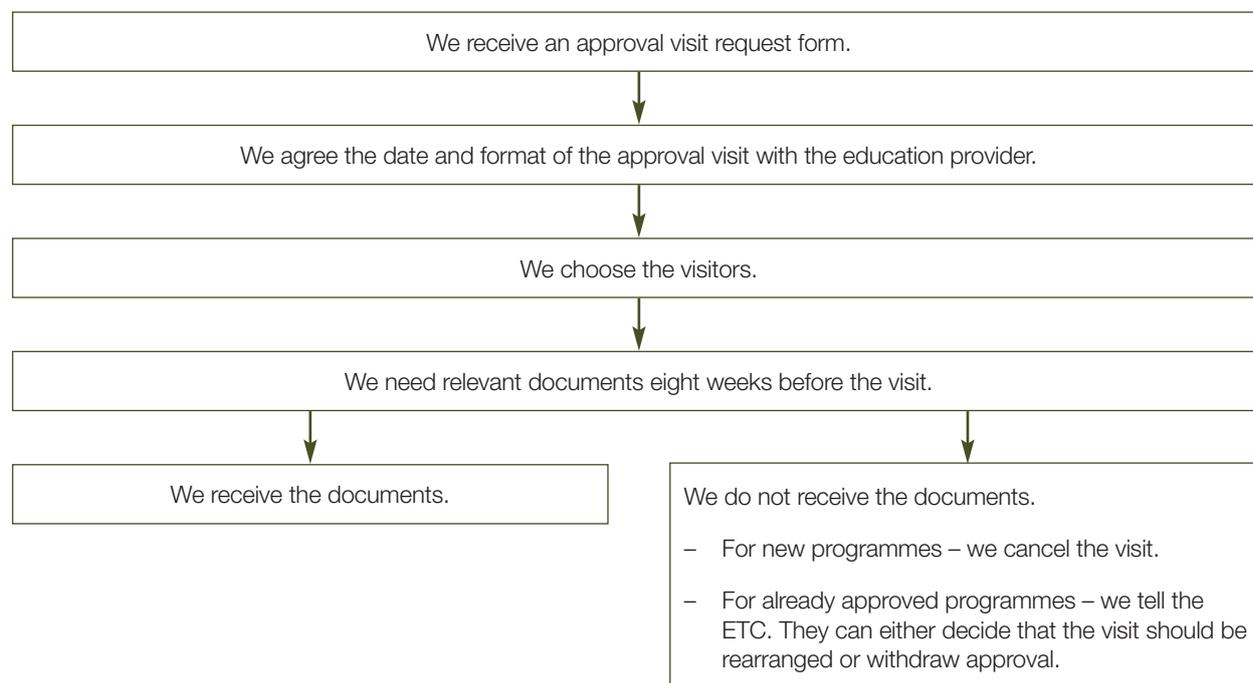
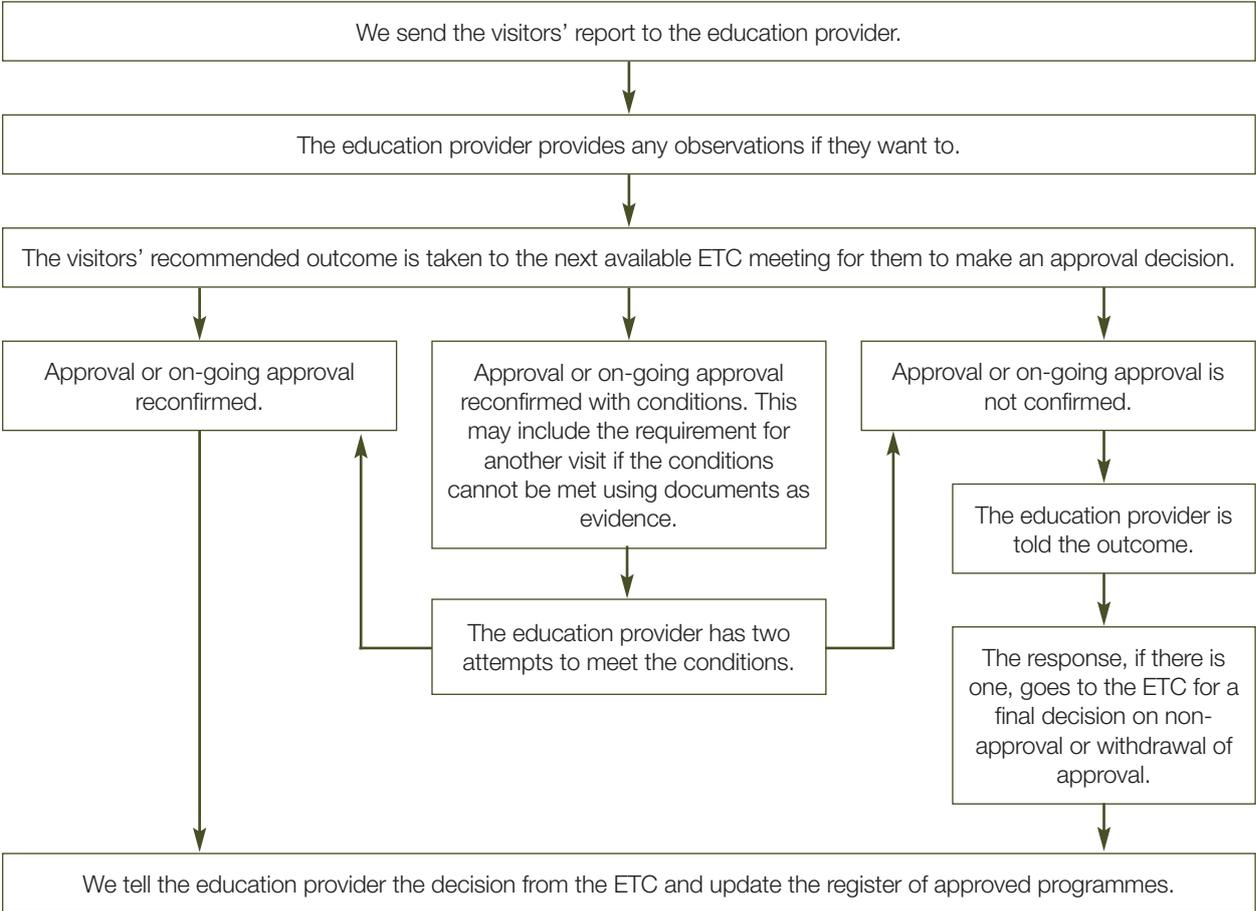


Figure 2 – the approval process flow chart – post-visit



The annual monitoring process

Annual monitoring is where we consider whether a programme continues to meet our standards by looking back at how the programme has been delivered over the previous academic years.

We try to build on an education provider's own processes for monitoring. We draw heavily on internal documents to make the process as efficient as possible for both sides and to remove the need for regular visits.

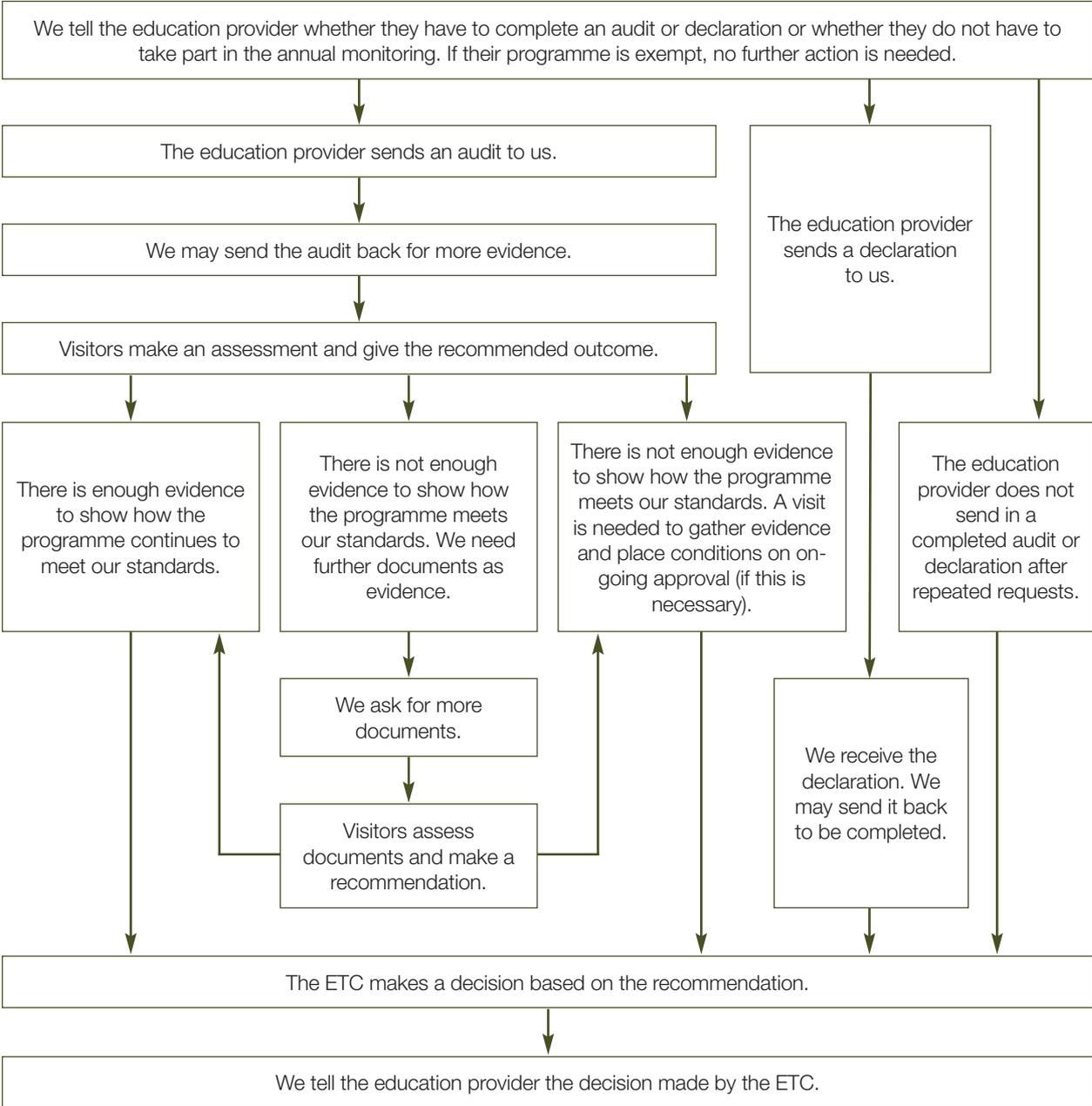
The annual monitoring process involves two types of monitoring submissions – an audit or a declaration. We divide education providers into group A and group B and each year they have to send us either an audit or a declaration depending on their group. Every autumn, we contact each education provider with information on the annual monitoring process for their particular programme over the forthcoming academic year. They must then fill in the relevant audit or declaration forms for their group and send them to us by the deadline given in our initial correspondence. This date will always be after the education provider's own internal annual monitoring process so that the information we need is available to them. Any programmes which have had an approval visit in the previous year or have an upcoming visit in the current year will usually not have to be monitored at this time.

Once we receive the declaration form, we send it to the ETC for approval. Once we receive the audit form, two of our visitors will review the documents. At least one visitor will be a registered member of the relevant profession and, as with the approval process, we will take each visitor through the conflict of interest process to make sure that they provide an objective recommendation.

The visitors will then make a recommendation to the ETC. The Committee can either decide that there is enough evidence to show the programme continues to meet our standards or that there is not enough evidence to show how the programme continues to meet our standards and that a visit is needed. The approval process is then triggered and used to confirm on-going approval.

We have highlighted the stages of the process in figure 3 – the annual monitoring process flow chart.

Figure 3 – the annual monitoring process flow chart



The major change process

A major change is a change to a programme of study that significantly changes the way in which our standards are met.

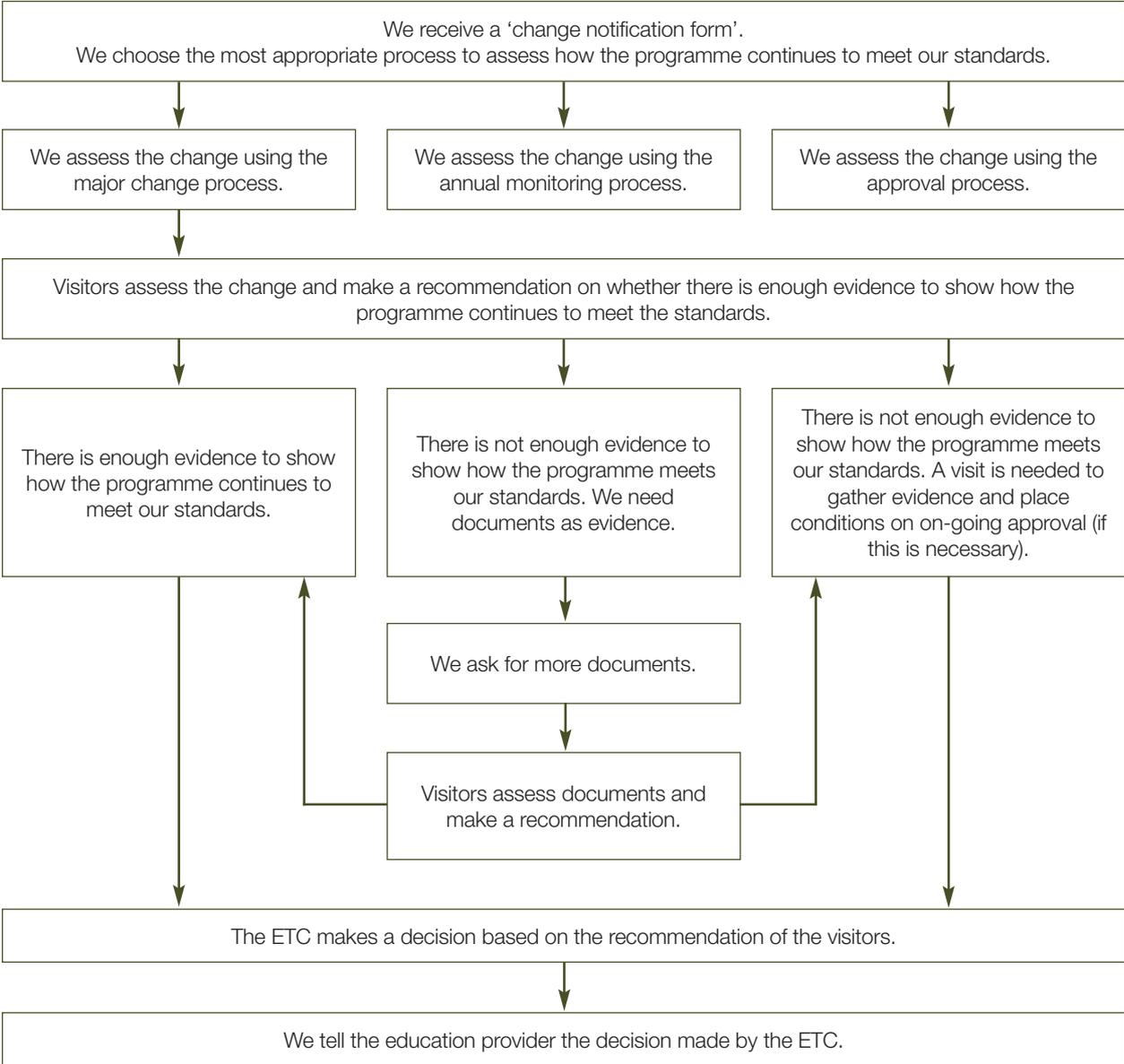
Using the major change process, we consider whether a programme continues to meet our standards given a significant change. We will accept major change submissions either before or after the change has been made. We do not need notice that a change is due to be made. Unlike annual monitoring, the education provider is responsible for starting the major change process. It is their responsibility to tell us if they have made considerable changes to an approved programme. Each change is considered on a case-by-case basis which means we do not need specific documents each time a change is submitted. The documents we need depend on the type of major change. We try to build on an education provider's own processes by drawing on their own internal documents to consider the change.

When we are told about a change to a programme of study, we initially assess the change to decide whether the major change process is the most appropriate way of us considering the change. We have the option to filter out the change and consider it through our approval or annual monitoring process. We will take into account the nature, extent and timeliness of the changes.

Once we have confirmed that we will use the major change process, two of our visitors will consider each submission. At least one of these visitors will be a registered member of the relevant profession and we will take each visitor through the conflict of interest process to make sure that they provide an objective recommendation. Like the annual monitoring process, the visitors will then make a recommendation to the ETC as to whether or not the programme continues to meet our standards.

We have highlighted the stages of the process in figure 4 – the major change process flow chart.

Figure 4 – the major change process flow chart



How to raise a concern about an education provider

As well as routinely approving and monitoring our approved programmes, we also listen to concerns that anyone might have about them.

Anyone can raise concerns about an approved programme with us. However, we would usually expect an individual to have gone through the education provider's complaint process before we consider the concern. This gives the education provider the opportunity to provide local resolution.

When we investigate a concern about a particular programme, the outcome will only affect whether we continue to approve that particular programme. The process does not consider concerns about academic judgement or concerns about whether someone is fit to receive an award. The process will not lead to any financial compensation for individuals, or a change in an individual's grade or award classification.

We will pass any concerns about a registrant's fitness to practise to our Fitness to Practise Department. These concerns are known as 'allegations'. Concerns about an approved programme and allegations about a registrant's fitness to practise will be dealt with using two different processes.

When we investigate concerns, we mainly use documents as evidence. To make sure that we have the information we need, we recommend that the person making the allegation fills in the relevant documents on our website and sends us supporting documentary evidence. We ask that they confirm that they are happy for us to share the details of their concerns with the education provider.

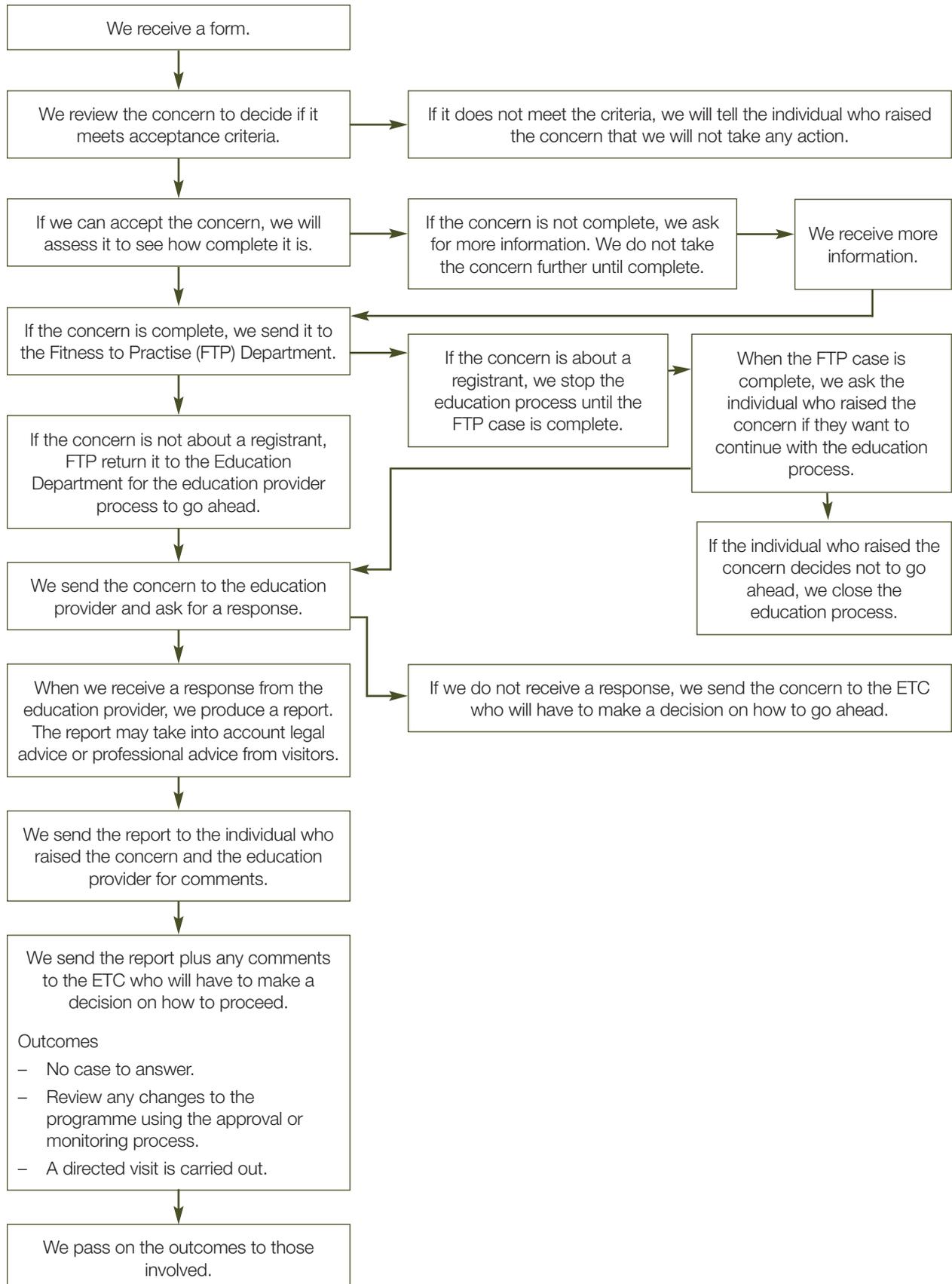
Once we have received the concern, we will review the information to see whether it is something that we can consider. A member of the Education Department will be responsible for leading the investigation. If the concern deals with knowledge, skills or expertise that is specific to a profession, we will ask one or more of our visitors to review the information.

At least one of these visitors will be a registered member of the relevant profession and we will take each visitor through the conflict of interest process to make sure that they provide an objective recommendation.

Once the investigation is complete, we will produce a report and send it to the individual who raised the concern and the associated education provider for their comments. The report will give details of the investigation along with recommendations. The ETC will then consider the report and any comments. The ETC will then make the final decision on what action, if any, should be taken.

We have highlighted the stages of the process in figure 5 – the education provider complaint process flow chart.

Figure 5 – the education provider complaint process flow chart



More information

Other useful publications

You can find all of the documents mentioned in this publication on our website (www.hcpc-uk.org). The following documents may be particularly useful.

Standards of proficiency (by profession)
Standards of education and training
Standards of education and training guidance
Standards of conduct, performance and ethics
Continuing professional development and your registration

Guidance on conduct and ethics for students
Guidance on health and character

Supplementary information for education providers – approval process
Supplementary information for education providers – annual monitoring
Supplementary information for education providers – major change
Making a complaint about an education or training programme

Contact details

You can send any questions and comments about our approval and monitoring processes to the Education Department direct.

Education Department
The Health and Care Professions Council
Park House
184 Kennington Park Road
London
SE11 4BU

Phone: +44 (0)20 7840 9812
Fax: +44 (0)20 7820 9684
Email: education@hcpc-uk.org

Glossary

Annual monitoring

Our yearly process to make sure approved programmes continue to meet our standards of education and training and standards of proficiency.

Approval

The process that leads to decisions about whether a programme meets the requirements of the regulatory body's standards of education and training.

Cohort

A group of students on the same course.

Conflict of interest

When a visitor has a significant connection with an education provider or programme which means they cannot assess that programme or education provider.

Conflict of interest process

The process where we decide whether a visitor has a significant connection with an education provider or programme.

Education and Training Committee

Our committee responsible for education and training matters.

Education provider

The institution (for example, a school, college or university) where a programme is delivered or which awards a qualification.

Fit to practise

When someone has the skills, knowledge, character and health to do their job safely and effectively.

Institution

See 'education provider'.

International route

The registration process for individuals who have gained a qualification outside of the United Kingdom (UK) or those who do not hold an approved UK qualification but have gained some or all of their professional experience outside the UK.

Major change

A change to a programme which has a significant effect on teaching and learning, resources, our standards of education and training and our standards of proficiency.

Major change process

Our process for assessing whether we can class a change to a programme as a major change.

Open-ended approval

When programmes are approved for an unlimited period. Continuing approval depends on satisfactory monitoring.

Partner

See 'visitor'.

Preceptorship

A transition period during which newly qualified registrants familiarise or adjust to professional practice in a particular setting with the support and supervision of professionals.

Programme

The academic teaching, practice placements, assessment, qualification and other services provided by the education or training provider, which together form the programme for approval purposes.

Professional body

An organisation which carries out work which may include promoting a profession, representing members, producing curriculum frameworks, overseeing post-registration education and training and running continuing professional development programmes.

Quality assurance

The way we monitor and evaluate the various aspects of an educational setting such as policies, procedures, systems and practices to make sure, as far as possible, that threshold standards of quality are being achieved.

Register

A published list of professionals who meet our standards. The Register is available on our website at www.hcpc-uk.org

Registrant

A professional who appears on our Register.

Scope of practice

The area or areas of a registrant's profession where they have the knowledge, skills and experience needed to practise safely and effectively.

Service user

Anyone who uses or is affected by the way a registrant or student practises. This includes patients or clients, their carers or relatives and others who may be affected by their practice, such as colleagues.

Standards of conduct, performance and ethics

Standards of behaviour that we expect from professionals who are registered with us. Registrants must read and follow these standards to stay on the Register.

Standards of education and training

Standards which education providers must meet to make sure that all those students who complete an approved programme meet the standards of proficiency.

Standards of proficiency

Standards which make sure each profession practises safely and effectively. Professionals must meet these standards to become registered.

Student

Anyone studying on a programme which leads to them being eligible to join our Register. The term includes trainees or people taking part in training.

UK-approved programme route

The registration process for individuals who have trained in the United Kingdom (UK) and gained an approved UK qualification.

Visitor

A partner we have appointed to visit, approve and monitor education and training programmes for the professions we regulate.

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