
Your duties as an education provider

Standards of education and training guidance

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Introduction

About this document

We have written this document to go alongside our approval and monitoring processes. It provides guidance on our standards of education and training (SETs), to give more information about how we will assess and monitor programmes against our standards. It is written for education providers who are preparing for an approval visit, for the major change process, or for our annual monitoring process. This document will also be useful for practice placement providers who education providers work with.

Throughout the document, 'we', 'us' and 'our' refers to the Health and Care Professions Council and 'you' refers to staff working on an approved programme, or a programme that is looking for approval. When we use the abbreviation 'SET', followed by a number, this refers to a specific standard of education and training.

We have used the term 'student' throughout this document. We use this to mean anyone studying on a programme which leads to them being eligible to apply to join our Register. The term includes trainees.

We have used the term 'staff' throughout the document. We use this to mean anyone involved in providing education or training to a student. The term applies to people in unpaid, as well as paid, positions.

As part of our approval and monitoring processes, we assess the programme against the SETs to make sure that all students meet our standards of proficiency (SOPs) when they gain a qualification. This document provides guidance on the SETs. The detail provided against each SET suggests how you could show that you meet the SETs.

Although you do not have to use this document, we recommend that you do so, as we have put it together to give you advice on the evidence you will need to refer to when going through any of the approval and monitoring processes.

About us (the Health and Care Professions Council)

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.

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 Register is available on our website for anyone to search, so that they can check the registration of their professional.

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 ('the Order') says that we must set our standards to protect the public, and that we must set standards which are necessary for safe and effective practice. This is why our standards are set at a 'threshold' level (a minimum level of safe and effective practice).

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, the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) for Higher Education, QAA Scotland and NHS Education for Scotland (NES).

Documents published by other organisations

Throughout this document, we have highlighted where documents published by other organisations may be useful to you for extra information. This does not mean that we have 'approved' these documents, but they may be helpful when you are collecting evidence to show how you meet our SETs.

Working with professional bodies

Professional bodies have an important role in promoting and representing their professions. In

particular, professional bodies may develop the learning and curriculum frameworks for their profession. In this document, we have referred to the curriculum documents professional bodies have published, which provide useful information, background and context.

The structure of this document

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

Under the title of each SET is a summary, which summarises the areas that the SET is concerned with. There is then a heading called 'Overall guidance' which gives guidance for the whole section of the SET, including information about how you can show that you meet the SETs – the types of documents you can provide for the approval and monitoring process, or who we may want to meet on an approval visit.

This is followed by a heading called 'More information'. Here we list other HCPC publications and highlight where documents published by other organisations may be useful to you to find more information about the whole of the SET. Certain documents may have relevant information in them which relates to many SETs. A full up-to-date list of documents, including those published by other organisations, can be found on our website at www.hcpc-uk.org/education/downloads

We have also provided a list of 'Example questions' for the SETs. We will not normally ask all of these questions, and may not use them at all, but we have provided them to give you an idea of the sort of questions that may come up during the approval and monitoring process. The list of questions is not a complete list, and we may focus on other areas to make sure that you are meeting the SETs.

The final section is called 'Detailed guidance'. Here, we have broken down each SET into its individual, numbered parts. Each part is in a table like the one that follows.

This box contains the SET title – for example, ‘Assessment’

This box contains the full text of the relevant SET.

Guidance

This box contains guidance on the SET. This may include the reasoning behind the SET, and examples and suggestions of the type of evidence to provide.

Other sources of guidance

This box appears after some of the SETs and lists other HCPC publications and highlights where documents published by other organisations may contain more background information on ways of meeting the SET.

Here, as with the part headed ‘More information’, you will find that certain documents may have relevant information in them which relates to many SETs. A full up-to-date list of documents, including those published by other organisations, can be found on our website at www.hcpc-uk.org/education/downloads

SET 1: Level of qualification for entry to the Register

Summary

This SET is concerned with the qualifications needed to be eligible to apply to register with us.

Overall guidance

This does not apply.

More information

A full, up-to-date list of documents, including those published by other organisations, can be found on our website at www.hcpc-uk.org/education/downloads

Example questions

- How is the MA different from the PG Dip?
- Is there an exit route other than BSc (Hons) or MA?

Detailed guidance

1 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.

Masters degree for arts therapists.

Masters degree for clinical scientists (with the Certificate of Attainment awarded by the Association of Clinical Scientists, or equivalent).

Foundation degree for hearing aid dispensers.

Diploma of Higher Education for operating department practitioners.

Equivalent to Certificate of Higher Education for paramedics.

Professional doctorate for clinical psychologists.

Professional doctorate for counselling psychologists, or equivalent.

Professional doctorate for educational psychologists, or equivalent.

Masters degree for forensic psychologists (with the award of the British Psychological Society qualification in forensic psychology, or equivalent).

Masters degree for health psychologists (with the award of the British Psychological Society qualification in health psychology, or equivalent).

Masters degree for occupational psychologists (with the award of the British Psychological Society qualification in occupational psychology, or equivalent).

Masters degree for sport and exercise psychologists (with the award of the British Psychological Society qualification in sport and exercise psychology, or equivalent).

Guidance

We expect that most of the programmes on our approved list will be at, or above, the standard we have outlined, but we realise that there may be some exceptions. We have set the level for each profession, based on what we think is needed for people who successfully complete the programme to meet all of the standards of proficiency.

This SET 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. This may include programmes set at levels above those given.

By law, we could not refuse to approve a programme just based on the form of award.

Other sources of guidance

- For guidance on prescribing rights, see our website at www.hcpc-uk.org/aboutregistration/medicinesandprescribing

SET 2: Programme admissions

Summary

This part of the SETs is about the admissions procedures for your programme, including the selection procedure and the information provided to the people involved.

Overall guidance

Examples of the kind of information that you could provide include:

- information you make available to applicants;
- information handed out at open days or interviews;
- any ‘welcome pack’ or ‘information pack’ you provide to successful applicants;
- a copy of your advertising material; and
- a relevant website address.

We will want to be sure that you review your admission procedures to make sure they are effective. So, you may want to provide information about how you analyse application and admission patterns.

It is important that your admissions staff and your applicants understand that, when you assess applications, you are checking whether the person is suitable to do your programme, and that you are not assessing or giving any guarantees about whether they will eventually be registered. This particularly applies to the sections of this SET which refer to criminal conviction checks and health requirements.

You may want to show how you involve service users in your admissions and selections procedures. You could, for example, explain how service users are involved in your short-listing or interviewing processes or how they contribute to the design of interviewing questions or scenarios.

Admissions staff and applicants should be aware that the offer of a place is not a guarantee that they will be able to join our Register at the end of the programme.

When someone applies to join our Register, we will look at their application individually, and make a decision about whether they can join our Register, 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.

More information

- Health and Care Professions Council, Standards of conduct, performance and ethics’
- Health and Care Professions Council, A disabled person’s guide to becoming a health professional
- Health and Care Professions Council, Guidance on health and character
- A full, up-to-date list of documents, including those published by other organisations can be found on our website at www.hcpc-uk.org/education/downloads

Example questions

- What information about the programme do you give to applicants, and in what formats?
- What are your English-language requirements?
- Have you explained your criminal convictions check?
- What arrangements do you have to make initial health checks and provide any immunisations that are needed?
- Do you give credit to applicants with accredited prior (experiential) learning (AP(E)L)?
- What is the process for assessing an applicant's AP(E)L? How often do you do it?
- How do you monitor your equality and diversity policies?
- How do you tell applicants and students about your equality and diversity policies?

Detailed guidance

<p>2 Programme admissions</p>
<p>2.1 The admissions procedures 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.</p>
<p>Guidance</p> <p>All of your entry requirements should be clearly set out in the information you make available to people who are interested in applying to your programme.</p> <p>You will need to provide information to show how you tell applicants about the costs and how they are funded. You will need to provide information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – funding arrangements (such as bursaries and loans); – accommodation costs; and – other costs (such as criminal record checks, health checks, immunisations, or personal therapy for arts therapists). <p>You will also need to provide information to show how you tell applicants about placements. You will need to provide information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the length of practice placements and where they may be based; – whether they will need to stay away from the main site where the programme is delivered; and – their travel, and how this is funded. <p>We will want to know what information you ask applicants for and the reasons why you need that information. We do not give you specific guidance on the detailed information you must ask an applicant for, but we will want 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.</p> <p>You should make sure that your documents clearly tell applicants and students that completing the programme means they are ‘eligible to apply’ for registration with us. Phrases like ‘completing this programme entitles you to be registered with the HCPC’ or ‘once you have completed this programme, you will be registered’ are misleading, as all students need to apply to register after they have completed their programme.</p> <p>You must make sure applicants understand that an offer of a place does not show that they automatically meet our standards, or that they will be registered with us in the future. Please see the guidance under the rest of SET 2 for more guidance on this issue.</p>
<p>Other sources of guidance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – You can find the ‘regulatory status advertising protocol for education providers’ on our website at the following address. www.hcpc-uk.org/education/providers/download

2 Programme admissions

2.2 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including evidence of a good command of reading, writing and spoken English.

Guidance

You should clearly set out your English-language requirements in the information you make available to all applicants. These requirements should be appropriate to the level and content of the programme. 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 will be different to the requirements for people who do. You can ask that applicants whose first language is English must have passed English at GCSE (or an equivalent level), but they will not normally need to provide evidence of meeting an International English Language Testing System (IELTS) standard or equivalent.

So that students can take full advantage of a programme from the start, we will want to see that your selection and entry criteria contain a thorough process to assess a student's understanding of English through their reading, written and oral skills. We do not need you to do this by interviewing everyone who applies to your programme – it is for you to decide in your entry criteria.

Any English-language requirements you set at the beginning of the programme should take account of the fact that, at the end of the programme, all students must have the necessary level of English for the standards of proficiency for their profession. Please refer to the standard of proficiency 1b.3 that outlines English communication requirements for registrants. You do not need to test the students' level of English when they complete the programme, but you should design your programme to show that a student can meet the standards of proficiency.

2 Programme admissions

2.3 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including criminal convictions checks.

Guidance

You should run appropriate and relevant criminal convictions checks on all applicants. These would normally be through the Criminal Records Bureau, Disclosure Scotland, Access Northern Ireland, or, where appropriate, an equivalent international body. We would expect that this would normally be an 'enhanced' level disclosure or equivalent, due to the positions of responsibility people on our Register are placed in.

The comments in the general guidance for this SET refer to the role of your staff in assessing applicants for your programme, and not for registration. It is for you to decide who should pay the cost of carrying out the criminal convictions checks.

We will want to see what you would do if an applicant declares a criminal conviction. If you are considering an application from someone who has a criminal conviction, you may find it helpful to refer to our standards of conduct, performance and ethics, and consider whether any criminal conviction might affect that person's ability to meet those standards.

You may also find it helpful to consult your practice placement providers to find out whether they would be willing to offer a place to an applicant with a criminal conviction. We will want to see what procedures you have in place if practice placement providers are not willing to offer a student a place after you have already accepted them as a student.

Although we do not ask that criminal conviction checks continue through the length of the programme, please see SET 3.16 for more guidance on this issue.

Other sources of guidance

- Health and Care Professions Council, Guidance on health and character

A full, up-to-date list of documents, including those published by other organisations can be found on our website at www.hcpc-uk.org/education/downloads

2 Programme admissions

2.4 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including compliance with any health requirements.

Guidance

You should clearly set out your health requirements in the information you make available to applicants. These requirements should be appropriate to the content of the programme and how you deliver it, including the practice placements. These requirements could include vaccinations and occupational health assessments.

Requirements vary across the professions and we will want to see that you give applicants clear information. For example, some programmes will need students to have immunisations while others will not.

It is your responsibility to make sure you have taken all reasonable steps to keep to any health requirements and made all reasonable adjustments in line with equality and diversity law.

Our guidance document, 'A disabled person's guide to becoming a health professional', provides information for disabled people applying to approved programmes, and for admissions staff considering applications from disabled people.

The comments in the general guidance for this SET refer to the role of your staff in assessing applicants for your programme, and not for registration.

Other sources of guidance

- Health and Care Professions Council, Guidance on health and character

A full, up-to-date list of documents, including those published by other organisations can be found on our website at www.hcpc-uk.org/education/downloads

2 Programme admissions

2.5 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including appropriate academic and / or professional entry standards.

Guidance

We will want to be sure that your academic and professional entry standards, including those relating to literacy and numeracy, are appropriate to the level and content of the programme. We will want to see evidence of how you make applicants aware of these standards and how you apply them.

2 Programme admissions

2.6 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including accreditation of prior (experiential) learning and other inclusion mechanisms.

Guidance

We will want to be sure that you make your AP(E)L scheme and other ‘inclusion mechanisms’ (such as Foundation Degrees, direct entry, feeder routes, advanced standing, Higher National Diplomas and Higher National Certificates) available to applicants and students. We will also want to make sure that students who are eligible for AP(E)L or another inclusion mechanism are able to meet the standards of proficiency for their profession when they successfully complete the programme. We will need to be sure that students’ prior learning is mapped against the learning outcomes for a programme or individual modules.

You may want to show how you explain your AP(E)L and widening-participation policies to applicants and students, the policy and procedure for agreeing and awarding credits, an idea of how much prior experience and learning you will accept, and the associated costs.

Other sources of guidance

A full, up-to-date list of documents, including those published by other organisations can be found on our website at www.hcpc-uk.org/education/downloads

2 Programme admissions

2.7 The admissions procedures must ensure that the education provider has equality and diversity policies in relation to applicants and students, together with an indication of how these will be implemented and monitored.

Guidance

We will need to be sure that you have appropriate equality and diversity policies.

Your department, school or programme may have its own equality and diversity policies, or your education provider may have a policy that applies to you. We will want enough evidence to show that you have policies in place and that they are put into practice and monitored.

We will also want to be sure that you make these policies available to students (for example, in the student handbook or on a website), with information about what an applicant or student should do if they feel that they have been discriminated against.

SET 3: Programme management and resources

Summary

This part of the SETs is about managing the programme, and the resources available to the academic, support and placement staff, and to the students on the programme.

Overall guidance

On an approval visit, we will usually take note of the resources available on-site during the tour of resources. You might want to use the tour to tell us about facilities which you feel meet the SETs particularly effectively. In the annual monitoring and major change processes, you could provide documents such as building plans and lists of resources available.

We will want you to provide evidence about how well the policies and procedures that you outline in your documents are working. Evidence about how practice placement educators manage placements, and the resources available during placements, may be relevant to this SET as well.

We may need information from your senior managers about SET 3.

More information

A full, up-to-date list of documents, including those published by other organisations, can be found on our website at www.hcpc-uk.org/education/downloads

Example questions

- Do you use visiting lecturers? If so, how do you include them in your quality-assurance systems?
- Do you have staff appraisals each year?
- Do you use peer observation as part of staff development? If so, do you use comments in staff appraisals?
- Do students act as service users in teaching? If so, how do you get their consent?
- How do you monitor student attendance?
- If students do not attend, how do you deal with this?
- Can students gain access to information technology and library resources off-site or at weekends?
- Do all those who help the students learn have a teaching qualification? If not, how do you make sure that a student's learning experience is an effective one?
- What staff development do you offer to improve teaching?

Detailed guidance

3 Programme management and resources

3.1 The programme must have a secure place in the education provider's business plan.

Guidance

We would normally want to see a business plan, to make sure that the programme is secure within the education provider, is not under any threat, and has enough support.

By 'secure within the education provider', we mean that:

- the education provider is committed to providing enough resources to deliver the programme;
- the risks or threats to delivering the programme are currently very limited; and
- there is a future for the programme.

You may need to ask the senior managers of your education provider for the information for this SET. There must be clear information about partnerships with other education providers.

As part of your documents, you may want to include the funding or planning information you returned to the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), Scottish Funding Council (SFC), National Leadership and Innovations Agency for Healthcare (NLIAH), Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW), Department for Employment and Learning Northern Ireland (DELNI), Strategic Health Authority Education Commissioning Team (SHAECT) or Department of Health Commissioners, if appropriate.

You could, for example:

- explain the context of your programme, in terms of how it fits with its research profile and strategy;
- show how you manage programmes with providers of practice-based learning, to make sure that they are effectively developed, delivered and reviewed; or
- explain your processes for reviewing the way your programme is delivered and the related need for development.

3 Programme management and resources

3.2 The programme must be effectively managed.

Guidance

We will want to see evidence of the programme management structure. This may include the lines of responsibility and the links to the management of practice placement providers, highlighting the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved.

If the programme proposal is new, we must be convinced that there are effective systems in place to manage the programme and that the people involved have the skills and expertise they need to work within these systems.

If there is a partnership with another person or organisation to deliver the theory part of the programme (for example, another education provider, or where an employer employs the academic staff as well as the practice placement educators), we will ask to see the partnership agreement and find out which regulations and procedures apply to students and staff. We will want to be sure that there are clear procedures to deal with any problems in this area, and these should be clearly written into any partnership agreement.

Evidence might include:

- the programme handbook;
- an outline of the management structure;
- role descriptions; and
- records of staff-student liaison committees or employee liaison groups, or other service-user activities.

3 Programme management and resources

3.3 The programme must have regular monitoring and evaluation systems in place.

Guidance

You must provide evidence of your monitoring and evaluation systems. We will also want to see how you make sure you act on the information you gather through your monitoring and evaluation systems.

Evidence might include:

- annual or routine monitoring requirements and reports;
- external examiners' reports and your response to these reports;
- a critical review of current arrangements;
- an analysis of student feedback through module evaluations, placement evaluations, programme committees and staff-student liaison committees;
- an analysis of service users' feedback through programme committees, employer liaison groups, local or national forums, and questionnaires;
- feedback through placement audits and evaluations, and partnership meetings;
- an analysis of tutors' feedback through module evaluations, programme committees and annual reports;
- quality-assurance audits of practice placements; and
- clear action plans and evidence of the action you have taken.

We will want you to explain how you evaluate the programme's effectiveness. Once we have approved a programme, we will use the documents from your monitoring and evaluation system (including internal evaluations and external examiners' reports) in our annual monitoring of the programme.

You can use the same documents you use for internal processes or give to other bodies. We will want to see that the monitoring and evaluation systems (for example, internal quality audits, external examiners' reports, and student feedback) are appropriate to, and effective for, the programme. You should show how you use the systems you currently have in place, rather than develop new systems.

3 Programme management and resources

3.4 There must be a named person who has overall professional responsibility for the programme who must be appropriately qualified and experienced and, unless other arrangements are agreed, be on the relevant part of the Register.

Guidance

You must show how the person who has overall professional responsibility for the programme is 'appropriately qualified and experienced'.

Along with a copy of that person's CV, you might want to include evidence that they:

- led a previous programme effectively;
- are able to effectively organise how the programme will be delivered;
- hold a professional qualification; or
- hold an educational qualification.

This person will normally be registered with us and, where a part of the Register has one or more protected titles, may need to be eligible to use the title the programme relates to. However, we recognise that it may be possible 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 should include more detail about their qualifications and experience. If they are not registered, you must make sure that their job title does not include a protected title or give the impression that they are registered with us.

If the person with overall professional responsibility for the programme is registered with us, but is not registered in the relevant profession, we will want to see how you provide information specific to the relevant profession, and resources, to support them in their role.

3 Programme management and resources

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

Guidance

We will want to be sure that you have an appropriate number of staff to deliver the programme effectively. We do not set staff-to-student ratios. Instead, we will look at the staffing within the overall context of the education you provide.

When the SET refers to 'adequate', we mean that you should be able to justify the number of staff you have in place in relation to the number of students. We will want to see that their qualifications and experience are 'appropriate' to the programme. This would include, for example, looking at how your staff are involved in other programmes in the same profession, your expected research, or your interprofessional learning and teaching. We will need information on what administrative, pastoral, management or technical staff are in place to support the programme and, if appropriate, information on their experience and qualifications.

We will also consider the number of students on the programme and how often the programme runs.

We will also want to make sure that there are arrangements in place to deal with situations such as staff absences.

You will probably want to take account of the practical requirements of your programme, and the possible need for teaching in small groups, when deciding how many staff you need. You may also want your staff to have practical as well as academic experience.

The information that you give us about staffing at your placements will also be relevant to this SET. Please see SET 5.6 for more guidance on this issue.

3 Programme management and resources

3.6 Subject areas must be taught by staff with relevant specialist expertise and knowledge.

Guidance

The CVs of your staff will probably contain the information you need for this SET.

You will need to show us that the staff on the programme team (including part-time staff), and any other people who help to deliver the programme (such as sessional or guest lecturers), are qualified to deliver the programme. We do not set specific requirements for the expertise and knowledge that is needed to deliver certain parts of your programme, as we feel that this may change as good practice develops.

We will also consider the input from specialist visiting lecturers and the expertise and knowledge that they bring to the programme, balanced against the quality of the programme you deliver. If visiting lecturers teach on your programme, we will want to know how you guarantee the quality of their teaching.

3 Programme management and resources

3.7 A programme for staff development must be in place to ensure continuing professional and research development.

Guidance

It is important that all staff (including part-time staff), practice placement educators and visiting lecturers have the opportunity to develop and maintain their professional skills. It is particularly important that they keep the skills appropriate to the relevant profession up to date, to allow them to continue to deliver the programme effectively.

We will want to be sure that there is a staff development policy and that individuals keep up to date with guidance from relevant bodies. This could be supported by examples of:

- staff-development strategies;
- CVs;
- staff-appraisal systems;
- staff profiles;
- professional-development portfolios; and
- keeping up to date with the professional bodies' guidance.

We will want to see evidence from members of your programme team about how this works, and whether staff development is available and easy to gain access to. This information could be in document form or from meetings with staff on an approval visit. We may want evidence from practice placement educators about how you support them in their development. We will also want to know about any peer-observation or mentoring schemes you run, and what training is available to new staff.

3 Programme management and resources

3.8 The resources to support student learning in all settings must be effectively used.

Guidance

By 'all settings' we assume that this covers the theoretical setting as well as the practice placement setting. 'All settings' could also refer to a second site where parts of the programme are delivered or where programmes are delivered by a franchise arrangement. In cases such as these, we will need to see evidence of the resources that students use and have access to.

'Resources' in this context may include:

- student handbooks and module guides;
- information technology (IT), virtual learning environments and other specialist programmes;
- academic and support staff;
- service users being directly involved in supporting student learning;
- buildings;
- texts and journals;
- equipment; and
- materials.

This SET means that resources must be used effectively. You could provide information about the resources students have access to, including how equipment booking systems are used, or how laboratory resources are used. We will also want to be sure that resources are effectively used on placements, so, as part of your evidence to show that you meet this SET, you could show us how you support student learning in a practice placement setting.

We will want to see evidence of how you use your monitoring and evaluation systems to monitor how resources are used, and how effective they are. (See SET 3.3.)

The evidence supplied here may also be relevant to SET 3.9.

3 Programme management and resources

3.9 The resources to support student learning in all settings must effectively support the required learning and teaching activities of the programme.

Guidance

By 'all settings' we assume that this covers the theoretical setting as well as the practice placement setting. 'All settings' could also refer to a second site where parts of the programme are delivered or where programmes are delivered by a franchise arrangement.

This SET means that resources must be available and appropriate for the delivery of the programme. You should show us evidence of available resources, which may include:

- IT facilities;
- lecture theatres;
- tutorial rooms;
- presentation equipment;
- specialist labs;
- skills labs;
- studio space; and
- equipment.

We will want to see evidence of how you use your monitoring and evaluation systems to monitor how resources are used, and how effective they are. (See SET 3.3.)

The evidence supplied here may also be relevant to SET 3.8.

3 Programme management and resources

3.10 The learning resources, including IT facilities, must be appropriate to the curriculum and must be readily available to students and staff.

Guidance

You should provide information about the learning resources you provide for students and staff. On an approval visit, you may also want to point out learning resources to us during the course of the tour of the library and facilities, including information technology (IT) facilities and any resources specific to a certain profession. For the annual monitoring and major change processes, you can provide evidence in document form, such as photographs of resources or library stock listings.

We will want to check the amount of resources you provide, and how up to date and available these are. We will want to be sure that:

- you keep stocks up to date;
- there is enough money to replace stocks;
- there are enough core texts available (or that you make arrangements such as reserving certain titles for reference only, or short-term loan only); and
- your opening hours mean that the facilities are available to students and staff.

We will also want to know how the students will have access to learning resources wherever their learning is based.

We will also need to make sure that your IT facilities are appropriate and easily available. If you are using a virtual learning environment such as WebCT or Blackboard, it can be helpful to provide evidence of how they are used.

3 Programme management and resources

3.11 There must be adequate and accessible facilities to support the welfare and wellbeing of students in all settings.

Guidance

By 'all settings' we assume that this covers the theoretical setting as well as the practice placement setting. 'All settings' could also refer to a second site where parts of the programme are delivered or where programmes are delivered by a franchise arrangement.

We will want to see how your systems support all students, including mature students, disabled students, those not studying full-time, or those with caring responsibilities. You should provide evidence of the support available for students during periods of sick leave, carers' leave, or any other planned or unplanned leave. You may also like to provide details of financial help available, counselling and specialist teaching or learning facilities.

You will need to provide evidence of:

- the facilities available for student support;
- how you tell students about these facilities; and
- how easy it is to gain access to these facilities.

Appropriate support facilities could include:

- a counselling service;
- a health centre; and
- providing medical advice.

3 Programme management and resources

3.12 There must be a system of academic and pastoral student support in place.

Guidance

We want to see that the system of academic and pastoral support you have in place is available to students in both the theoretical setting and practice placement setting. We will also want to see how students are able to gain access to the support from both settings.

If you use a 'personal tutor' system, you will probably want to provide information about how this works to show how you meet this SET. You could also show how you support students with learning difficulties, including how you support them during their placements. We may ask for evidence from students about how well they feel the support systems are working.

For more information about support for students on practice placements, please see SET 5.

3 Programme management and resources

3.13 There must be a student complaints process in place.

Guidance

We will want to see that there is a formal student complaints process in place and how you tell students about the process. This process would apply to all areas of the education provider. We would expect the complaints process to provide details of how you deal with students' concerns about the programme or a related service, as well as allegations of harassment or discrimination. Complaints would vary from 'appeals' which are concerned only with the request for a review of a decision about progression, assessment or an award.

For more information about appeals, please see SET 6.10.

Other sources of guidance

A full, up-to-date list of documents, including those published by other organisations can be found on our website at www.hcpc-uk.org/education/downloads

3 Programme management and resources

3.14 Where students participate as service users in practical and clinical teaching, appropriate protocols must be used to obtain their consent.

Guidance

This SET is mainly concerned with preventing physical injuries and preventing or managing emotional distress, and helps to make sure that education and placement providers acknowledge risks. The level of involvement of students will vary between programmes, and from profession to profession. Professional bodies may have information about this.

Examples of activities where you will need to have guidelines for gaining students' consent include:

- sharing their personal information;
- role play;
- bio-mechanical assessments;
- patient positioning activities;
- practising techniques specific to a certain profession; and
- experiential groups.

You should tell students how involved they are expected to be in the programme, taking account of, for example, cultural differences or the person's medical health. We will want to know how and where you make this clear to students and applicants.

We will want to check that there are systems in place for gaining students' informed consent. We will normally need to see evidence in document form, such as a copy of a consent form or the relevant guidelines. We will also want to see that you have told students about their right to confidentiality. On an approval visit, we may also ask questions about this during meetings with students or practice placement providers.

Other sources of guidance

- Health and Care Professions Council, Confidentiality – guidance for registrants.

A full, up-to-date list of documents, including those published by other organisations can be found on our website at www.hcpc-uk.org/education/downloads

3 Programme management and resources

3.15 Throughout the course of the programme, the education provider must have identified where attendance is mandatory and must have associated monitoring mechanisms in place.

Guidance

We will want to make sure that all students can meet all of the standards of proficiency, to be able to practise safely and effectively. This means, for example, that parts of the programme which are essential to make sure that students meet the standards of proficiency will need to be compulsory. You must monitor students' attendance and, if you find that a student has poor attendance, take follow-up action to make sure that they gain this knowledge before they complete the programme.

You should provide information on which parts of the programme are compulsory, and the systems you have in place for monitoring attendance at these times. You must also provide information to show us what action you will take if students fail to attend the compulsory parts of the programme. For example, if compulsory attendance is linked to assessments or practice, you must explain the systems you use to monitor attendance during assessments or practice, and show us the consequences and the action students need to take if they fail to attend.

We will want to be sure that you clearly communicate your requirements, and any consequences of missing compulsory teaching, to students. You might, for example, include this in a student handbook or similar material.

Please see SET 5.12 for more guidance on this issue.

3 Programme management and resources

3.16 There must be a process in place throughout the programme for dealing with concerns about students' profession-related conduct.

Guidance

The purpose of this SET is to make sure that education providers play a role in identifying students who may not be fit to practise and help them to address any concerns about their conduct in relation to their profession. The process should focus on identifying and helping to address concerns, but should also allow an appropriate range of outcomes, including providing for an award which does not provide eligibility to apply to the Register (please see SET 6.8 for more guidance on this issue).

We will want to see evidence to support your choice of process, which must be appropriate to the programme and how it is delivered. It is important that you are able to justify, and be responsible for, any decision you make, and that the process is thorough, fair and open.

We will want to see the process of communication between you, practice placement providers and practice placement educators. It will be important that you show the process is fair, that you have made every effort to allow the student to address any issues relating to their conduct, and that you can justify clearly all the decisions you have made.

To show that you meet this SET, you could refer us to where the process is laid out, and how you communicate it to students. You might include this, for example, on your website or in your student handbook. You may want to use our standards of conduct, performance and ethics to inform your process.

Other sources of guidance

- Health and Care Professions Council, Standards of conduct, performance and ethics
- Health and Care Professions Council, Guidance on conduct and ethics for students
- Health and Care Professions Council, Guidance on health and character

A full, up-to-date list of documents, including those published by other organisations can be found on our website at www.hcpc-uk.org/education/downloads

3 Programme management and resources

3.17 Service users and carers must be involved in the programme

Guidance

By 'involved in the programme' we mean that service users and carers must be able to contribute to the programme in some way.

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 might 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 and carers, including groups such as patients and clients. In other professions, registrants' contact with individual 'end recipients' of their services and carers is more indirect. For example, biomedical scientists often do not interact directly with individual patients or their carers. In these professions, service users might legitimately include organisations or other clinicians but they could also include groups such as patients who ultimately benefit from their work. We will 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.

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.

- Selection
- Developing teaching approaches and materials
- Programme planning and development
- Teaching and learning activities
- Feedback and assessment
- Quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation

We will want to see evidence that service users and carers are involved in the programme. You will need to be able to explain and justify where and how involvement takes place, appropriate to your programme.

The evidence you provide could include:

- information about how you plan, monitor and evaluate involvement activity;
- policies about how service users and carers are prepared for their roles and supported when they are involved in the programme;
- an analysis of service users' and carers' feedback through groups, committees and questionnaires; and
- examples of how the involvement of service users and carers has contributed to the programme.

The information you give us to show how you meet this standard may also be relevant to meeting SETs 3.2, 3.3, 3.8, 4.4, 4.8 and 6.3.

SET 4: Curriculum

Summary

This part of the SETs is about the curriculum, making sure that people who complete the programme meet our standards for their professional skills and knowledge, and are fit to practise. We have created a set of curriculum standards which will allow you to design your own programme.

Overall guidance

We set broad standards so that you can design a programme that takes account of relevant curriculum frameworks. The curriculum frameworks you choose to use should take account of changes in the profession and make sure that anyone who takes part in the programme is able to meet the standards of proficiency when they have completed it. We do not set more detailed standards for developing a curriculum or about the content of programmes and how they are delivered.

Relevant curriculum frameworks are often designed by professional bodies. Different professional bodies are at different stages in relation to curriculum frameworks. Some have been involved in this for some time, others are beginning to develop this, and some professional bodies may not get involved in this area.

More information

- Health and Care Professions Council, Standards of proficiency
- Health and Care Professions Council, Standards of conduct, performance and ethics

A full, up-to-date list of documents, including those published by other organisations can be found on our website at www.hcpc-uk.org/education/downloads

Example questions

- What is the main influence behind how you design your curriculum?
- How would you explain the overall programme and how a student progresses from the first day to the day they complete the programme?
- Can you explain how the learning outcomes of the programme meet the standards of proficiency?
- Can you explain how your students will be able to use a range of approaches in their practice after they qualify?
- What learning and teaching approaches do you use, and why?
- What is the reasoning behind the content of the programme, and the balance between the number of hours for different subjects?
- How do you make sure your curriculum stays relevant to current practice?

Detailed guidance

4 Curriculum
4.1 The learning outcomes must ensure that those who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency for their part of the Register.
<p>Guidance</p> <p>This is one of the most crucial areas within the SETs. For an approval visit, we will ask you to show how your learning outcomes meet the individual standards of proficiency by filling in the standards of proficiency mapping document we give you. In this document, please make sure that you refer to the general parts of the standards, as well as the ones that are specific to your profession. Depending on the nature of any changes you make to your programme, we may ask you to fill in an updated version of the mapping document for the annual monitoring or major change processes.</p> <p>You should refer us to the learning outcomes and module assessments which show how all of the standards of proficiency are covered by successfully completing the programme. These could be in module or unit descriptors.</p> <p>We will want to make sure that every student completing the programme can meet all of the standards of proficiency, no matter what option modules they choose, or if they have postponed their study.</p> <p>You should also be aware that, by considering how your students can meet the standards of proficiency at the end of their programme, you can take account of any reasonable adjustments you have made to the way that you deliver the programme to disabled students.</p> <p>We recommend you include the standards of proficiency in your reading lists.</p>
<p>Other sources of guidance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Health and Care Professions Council, Standards of proficiency – Health and Care Professions Council, A disabled person’s guide to becoming a health professional <p>A full, up-to-date list of documents, including those published by other organisations can be found on our website at www.hcpc-uk.org/education/downloads</p>

4 Curriculum

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

Guidance

The SET aims to allow for changes in the philosophy, core values, skills and knowledge of a profession. We use the word 'reflect' rather than 'adhere' because there may be more than one relevant curriculum guidance and you may need to depart from the curriculum guidance.

If the programme does not reflect the curriculum guidance available, we would need to gather evidence about how, without reflecting the curriculum guidance, you feel the students completing your programme are able to practise safely and effectively.

In meeting this SET, you may refer to any relevant documents, such as those produced by professional bodies and the QAA benchmark statements for the profession. We will want to see how any guidance is reflected in the programme.

Other sources of guidance

A full, up-to-date list of documents, including those published by other organisations can be found on our website at www.hcpc-uk.org/education/downloads

4 Curriculum

4.3 Integration of theory and practice must be central to the curriculum.

Guidance

We will be looking for evidence in your curriculum that theory and practice are combined within both the theoretical and practical parts of your programme.

You could show how you meet this SET specifically through how you have designed your programme. Also, your quality-assurance and enhancement systems may provide evidence of how you meet this SET, and you could highlight specific parts of your programme.

Please see SETs 5.1 and 5.12 for more guidance on this issue.

4 Curriculum

4.4 The curriculum must remain relevant to current practice.

Guidance

Practice may change over time. We expect you to provide evidence of how you make sure the curriculum stays relevant. Evidence may include:

- evidence of regular contact with service users;
- staff CVs (which might include information about how you keep the curriculum relevant through the ongoing research experience, or professional activity of members of the programme team);
- evidence that the programme team take part in continuing professional development (CPD);
- evidence of how research and academic activity affect the programme, and its development;
- peer-reviewed journals used in the curriculum;
- Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) reports;
- evidence of the contribution that stakeholders (placement educators, employers, past and present students, service users, and strategic health authorities) make in the programme planning process; and
- evidence of how changes in policy and practice affect your programme's development.

You may want to provide information about how current frameworks influence the profession, and so influence the education and training that you provide. You should show how the design of the programme, and how it is delivered:

- predicts or reflects change in practice and its organisation, changes in the law, and changes in service users' needs;
- reflects developments in a profession's research base and advances in technology;
- develops students' ability to respond to changes in practice;
- allows students to make changes to their practice to make sure they continue to practise safely and effectively; and
- gives students the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to make a positive contribution for their service users.

4 Curriculum

4.5 The curriculum must make sure that students understand the implications of the HCPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

Guidance

The standards of conduct, performance and ethics are broad standards that everyone on our Register must keep to. These standards must be taught and met throughout a programme. For example, they could be covered as part of a module on ethics or could be built into the curriculum as a whole.

We will want to see that the curriculum refers specifically to the standards of conduct, performance and ethics, and that students understand these standards, including how and when they apply.

We recommend that you include the standards of conduct, performance and ethics in your reading lists.

Please see SET 3.16 for more guidance on this issue.

Other sources of guidance

- Health and Care Professions Council, Standards of conduct, performance and ethics
- Health and Care Professions Council, Guidance on conduct and ethics for students

A full, up-to-date list of documents, including those published by other organisations can be found on our website at www.hcpc-uk.org/education/downloads

4 Curriculum

4.6 The delivery of the programme must support and develop autonomous and reflective thinking.

Guidance

You should encourage students to consider:

- their own practice;
- the limits of their safe and effective practice;
- how they will relate to other people practising in their profession; and
- their responsibility to make sure that they practise safely when they complete the programme.

We will look for evidence of independent and reflective thinking through student-centred learning, teaching and assessment strategies. Evidence could include:

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

Other sources of guidance

A full, up-to-date list of documents, including those published by other organisations can be found on our website at www.hcpc-uk.org/education/downloads

4 Curriculum

4.7 The delivery of the programme must encourage evidence based practice.

Guidance

Students do not have to write a dissertation to meet this SET. They could, for example, demonstrate evidence-based practice by a course on research methods, or by producing a research proposal.

We will look for evidence of evidence-based practice through student-centred and independent learning, teaching and assessment strategies. Evidence could include:

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

4 Curriculum

4.8 The range of learning and teaching approaches used must be appropriate to the effective delivery of the curriculum.

Guidance

'Appropriate' means appropriate to the learning outcomes needed, both in terms of theoretical knowledge and the practical skills needed in professional practice.

You will need to show that you use a 'range' of learning and teaching approaches to deliver the programme. We do not give specific requirements for how many approaches you should use, but it is unlikely that a programme which relied on one learning and teaching approach would be able to give evidence to show that it met this SET.

This area of SET 4 refers to both the theoretical and practice placement environments, so the information that you provide here may also be used to show how you meet SET 5 (which is concerned with practice placements).

You may want to show how you involve service users in your teaching and learning activities. You could, for example, explain how service users take part directly in teaching sessions or how they have influenced the development of training materials.

The evidence supplied here may also be relevant to SETs 4.3, 4.4, 4.6 and 4.7.

Other sources of guidance

A full, up-to-date list of documents, including those published by other organisations can be found on our website at www.hcpc-uk.org/education/downloads

4 Curriculum

4.9 When there is interprofessional learning the profession-specific skills and knowledge of each professional group must be adequately addressed.

Guidance

Successful interprofessional learning can develop students' ability to communicate and work with other professionals, potentially improving the environment for service users and professionals. Where you provide interprofessional learning, you must make sure that it does not prevent each professional group from learning skills and knowledge specific to their profession.

We appreciate that you may not be able to offer interprofessional learning because of factors beyond your direct control. As a result, we do not make it a requirement. However, interprofessional working is included in the standards of proficiency (particularly 1b) and the standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

To show how you meet this SET, you might provide information about which parts of the curriculum are shared, and which are not, with the reasons behind this. You may also want to comment on how you see interprofessional education developing, and how it benefits those groups which are involved.

You should be aware that under SET 4.1 and SET 6.1, those students who successfully complete the programme must meet the standards of proficiency for their part of the Register. The standards of proficiency contain interprofessional requirements such as the requirement to work with other professionals. As a result, it is essential to know the importance of working with, and as part of, the wider team.

Other sources of guidance

A full, up-to-date list of documents, including those published by other organisations can be found on our website at www.hcpc-uk.org/education/downloads

SET 5: Practice placements

Summary

This part of the SETs is about your practice placements. We do not normally need to approve individual practice placements, but we may visit practice placements if specific questions have been raised about whether your placements meet our SETs.

You must keep overall responsibility for all placements. While we recognise that you will work with practice placement providers and educators, this SET aims to make sure that you have overall responsibility for placement learning, and that suitable systems are in place to support it. We will want to see what systems you have put in place for approving and monitoring placements. If you share practice placement arrangements with another education provider, you will both need to separately show how you are approving and monitoring placements. You should also have arrangements in place to make sure that students can still achieve the learning outcomes that are specific to your programme. You should also have effective systems relating to the role of practice placement educators.

We need to see evidence of how you:

- manage your placements;
- manage assessments in placements;
- provide support;
- provide information to your students and practice placement providers; and
- monitor the placements to make sure that they continue to meet our SETs.

Overall guidance

To make sure that you meet all of the SETs for practice placements, we will normally want to see:

- a practice placement handbook for students; and
- a practice placement handbook for practice placement educators and co-ordinators.

You may produce documents which have a different title, or publish this information in some other form (for example, with other documents or online). As long as you can show that you meet all of the requirements of this SET, it is not important what format this information is in.

On an approval visit, we would normally meet with practice placement educators, and we may ask about the information in the documents you have provided, or any areas which raised questions.

We do not have specific guidelines for the length, structure, organisation or timing of placements. Other organisations may have set requirements of a certain number of hours of contact, or a number of weeks that a placement must last. While you may want to meet these requirements, they are not compulsory and you do not necessarily have to meet them for us to approve your programme. However, you must show that whatever structures you have in place meet the SETs and standards of proficiency. See SET 5.2 for more information on this.

We will want to make sure that there is evidence of governance within practice placement settings. This will normally be through the following three main themes.

- Continuous improvement – informed choice, managing risk

- Professional development of staff – continuing professional development (CPD), education and training (lifelong learning) and investment in staff
- Organisational development – showing evidence-based practice (research basis of planning and delivery) and examples of good practice (making changes)

You should see overall governance as a process for reviewing and improving the service user's experience. So, we will need to make sure that there is evidence of a quality-assurance system to support both the student and the service user within the practice placement setting.

More information

- Health and Care Professions Council, Standards of conduct, performance and ethics
- Health and Care Professions Council, Guidance on conduct and ethics for students

A full, up-to-date list of documents, including those published by other organisations can be found on our website at www.hcpc-uk.org/education/downloads

Example questions

- How do you make sure you have enough placements and practice placement educators?
- How do you make sure that practice placement educators are trained and prepared to effectively supervise students?
- What form of contact do you maintain with practice placement educators?
- How often do you meet with practice placement providers?
- How do you make sure of the quality of the placements provided?
- What support systems do you have in place for practice placement educators?
- How do you measure students' progression?

Detailed guidance

5 Practice placements

5.1 Practice placements must be integral to the programme.

Guidance

The structure of your programme must show that practice placements are an important part of the programme. You could show this by referring to:

- your ongoing partnership arrangements with your practice placement educators;
- how you support and encourage practice placement staff to take part in developing programmes;
- how the practice placement learning outcomes and progression are in line with the rest of the programme; and
- your reasons for your placement structure.

It is good practice to have a formal arrangement with practice placement providers, wherever possible.

Please see SETs 3.1 and 4.3 for more guidance on this issue.

5 Practice placements

5.2 The number, duration and range of practice placements must be appropriate to support the delivery of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes.

Guidance

We will want to be sure that there are clear reasons for the number, length and range of placements you have chosen. We do not set the number, length or range of placements that you must include in your programme to meet our SETs. However, you must show that the number, length and range of practice placements must be appropriate to the design of the curriculum as well as the number of students.

We will want to see that all students gain access to a wide range of learning experiences in a variety of practice environments which reflect the nature of modern practice, and the range of practice settings of the profession they are preparing to enter. You may want to show how you support students to record how their practice placement environment relates to the main areas of practice of that profession.

We will also want to know how you expect students to progress in terms of their practical skills during the placements, and how the learning outcomes for the first placement are different from those of the final one. Evidence you could provide might include a 'map' of the programme and details of assessment.

5 Practice placements

5.3 The practice placement settings must provide a safe and supportive environment.

Guidance

A 'safe and supportive environment' means one where staff and students have carried out relevant assessments of risk within the area of practice. It is also an environment where safety policies and procedures are in place, and where policies and procedures are in place to support students' learning.

In showing how you meet this SET, you may include evidence of how you consider issues such as:

- physical risk from equipment;
- manual handling;
- risk from substances that are dangerous to health;
- radiation risk;
- fire safety;
- infection control;
- aggression from service users, staff or students;
- emotional stress; and
- working alone.

Placement induction processes should explain how you tell students about risks and safety issues.

You should also provide information about how you check the quality of your placement providers. It is good practice for practice placement providers to give you information about their health and safety policies. Information that you have provided for SET 3 about student support may also be relevant here, and you may want to cross-reference it.

You could also show how you help students to assess risk in practical situations, and to make professional decisions. The evidence supplied here may also be relevant to SETs 4.6 and 4.7.

Please see SET 5.12 for more guidance on this issue.

Other sources of guidance

A full, up-to-date list of documents, including those published by other organisations can be found on our website at www.hcpc-uk.org/education/downloads

5 Practice placements

5.4 The education provider must maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring all placements.

Guidance

You will need to give us information about how you approve placements before you use them, how you then monitor them regularly, and how they have links to the management of the programme. We will also want to see that you have policies in place to respond appropriately when any difficulties arise.

We do not normally visit placement settings, and we give open-ended approval to programmes. We monitor programmes to show they still meet the standards, and we can remove open-ended approval if they do not. If the placement is with another organisation, you will need to show that you assess this effectively. We will want to see evidence that you are working together with placement providers.

The evidence to support this could include:

- policies and processes for approving placements;
- examples of how these policies and processes are put into practice;
- details of systems for ongoing monitoring and assessing placement providers;
- an explanation of how you collect, analyse and act on feedback from students;
- details of how you gain feedback from practice placement educators and co-ordinators, and make sure that there are clear and easy methods for you and them to communicate with each other;
- details of how you use feedback to inform processes; and
- copies of policies or details of processes for dealing with placement providers where difficulties arise.

Please see SETs 3.13 and 5.5 for more guidance on this issue.

5 Practice placements

5.5 The placement providers must have equality and diversity policies in relation to students, together with an indication of how these will be implemented and monitored.

Guidance

You should give us information about how you make sure that equality and diversity policies are in place and that they cover all of the placement providers' activities. You will need to show that students on placements know how they can gain access to these policies and what they should do if they feel that they have been discriminated against. We would normally expect you to have an auditing or monitoring process for your placement providers and this will be part of that process.

Please see SET 5.4 for more guidance on this issue.

Other sources of guidance

A full, up-to-date list of documents, including those published by other organisations can be found on our website at www.hcpc-uk.org/education/downloads

5 Practice placements

5.6 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff at the practice placement setting.

Guidance

We will want to make sure that there are enough members of staff to support the students in their learning in a safe environment. We realise that there are different models of practice-based learning and the level of supervision at the placement can vary between the professions we regulate. As a result, we do not say how many staff must be present at each placement, or that those staff must be registered with us.

We will look for evidence in documents – and, in the case of an approval visit, at meetings with the programme team and practice placement educators – that you have clearly justified what you consider to be enough staff. This will include whether the number of staff is appropriate for the size of the student group. This may vary according to the level of support the student needs. For example, a one-to-one relationship may be ideal for many professions, while there may be four or five students to one practice placement educator in others.

If any of your practice placement educators are not registered with us, you may want to provide information about their professional qualifications (and their registration with other regulators or organisations, if appropriate). You should also show how their qualifications are appropriate to the practice placement, and to the learning outcomes of the programme as a whole. We may want to see job descriptions of practice placement educators and the recruitment policies of the placement providers so that we can see how the practice placement educators are qualified to teach or supervise students.

Some professional bodies play an active role in providing advice on staff-to-student ratios. Please contact the individual professional bodies if you want further guidance in this area.

5 Practice placements

5.7 Practice placement educators must have relevant knowledge, skills and experience.

Guidance

We will want to be sure that your practice placement educators have the knowledge, skills and experience to support students and that they provide a safe environment for effective learning. We do not set specific requirements about the qualifications and experience that they must have, but we will want to see how you make sure they have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience.

Please see SETs 5.6 and 5.13 for more guidance on this issue.

5 Practice placements

5.8 Practice placement educators must undertake appropriate practice placement educator training.

Guidance

We expect that you will train all new practice placement educators, and follow this up with regular refresher training. We will want to see evidence of the content, broad learning outcomes and any assessments or qualifications from all the training you provide for practice placement educators. Where practice placement educators are involved in assessment, we will want to see how they are prepared to deliver both formative and summative assessment, and how you make sure this is consistent across all placements.

We do not set specific requirements for the length or content of this training, as we feel that this level of detail is best decided by individual education providers. You may choose to follow the example of other education providers, or follow best-practice advice published by other organisations. Your training may take a variety of forms, which may include:

- attending your site;
- training in the workplace;
- online support;
- written support; and
- peer support through workshops and meetings.

Professional bodies may offer accreditation schemes for practice placement educators, so you may want to put these in place. If you take part in one of these schemes, you could give us information about how it works and how it is put into practice.

5 Practice placements

5.9 Practice placement educators must be appropriately registered, unless other arrangements are agreed.

Guidance

Normally, your practice placement educators will be registered with us in the relevant profession. However, there are other appropriate practice placement educators whose backgrounds do not match the specific profession that the student is studying. For example, occupational therapists may supervise physiotherapy students in areas such as hand therapy, and nurses may supervise radiographers in aseptic techniques. If you choose to use practice placement educators who are not registered with us, you will need to give us information about their experience, qualifications and training relevant to the practice placement.

5 Practice placements

5.10 There must be regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and the practice placement provider

Guidance

We will need to be sure that you regularly work together with your practice placement providers and educators, and that the joint work and communication happens in both directions. This might take the form of regular meetings or other methods of communication with your practice placement providers and educators. You may also use a system where providers comment on their experience of supervising students on placement, or develop ways for practice placement providers and educators to influence the structure of the practice placements or provide feedback on the programme's planning and design. Any information you can provide which shows a partnership and ongoing relationship, and not one that only happens around the time the programme is approved and monitored, will help to show us how you work together effectively with practice placement providers.

5 Practice placements

5.11 Students, practice placement providers and practice placement educators must be fully prepared for placement which will include information about an understanding of:

- **the learning outcomes to be achieved;**
- **the timings and the duration of any placement experience and associated records to be maintained;**
- **expectations of professional conduct;**
- **the assessment procedures including the implications of, and any action to be taken in the case of, failure to progress; and**
- **communication and lines of responsibility.**

Guidance

You will need to show not only that you provide information to students, practice placement providers and practice placement educators, but also that this information is easily available for them, in an appropriate format. You should also show that you provide information when necessary – to allow enough time for you to answer any questions before practice placements begin.

You might want to show how you provide the information, and how you make sure that everyone involved has understood the information. This might be through follow-up training, teaching, or opportunities for discussion. Information could be in your student handbook, practice placement handbook, or similar material. We may look for evidence to show that the students and practice placement educators feel well informed about what is expected of them, and their responsibilities, during a placement, as well as evidence that you have given placement providers the names and details of the visiting students. It is good practice to have in place a formal arrangement with placement providers, wherever possible.

Examples of practical information to provide to students could include:

- dates, times and venues (including details of the venue, such as maps); and
- placement induction materials.

Please see SET 5.10 for more guidance on this issue.

Other sources of guidance

A full, up-to-date list of documents, including those published by other organisations can be found on our website at www.hcpc-uk.org/education/downloads

5 Practice placements

5.12 Learning, teaching and supervision must encourage safe and effective practice, independent learning and professional conduct.

Guidance

We will want to be sure that your placements prepare your students for entry into their profession. You should provide evidence of how your programme prepares your students for independent learning on their placement, and show how they are given the resources and skills to work more independently. We will want to see information about how students learn about the behaviour expected of them on their placement. You could relate this to any teaching about our standards.

The evidence you could refer to might include:

- reflective logs or diaries;
- professional development portfolios;
- tutorial records; and
- placement reports.

The evidence supplied here may also be relevant to SETs 4.6, 4.7 and 5.11.

Other sources of guidance

- Health and Care Professions Council, Standards of conduct, performance and ethics
- Health and Care Professions Council, Standards for continuing professional development

A full, up-to-date list of documents, including those published by other organisations can be found on our website at www.hcpc-uk.org/education/downloads

5 Practice placements

5.13 A range of learning and teaching methods that respect the rights and needs of service users and colleagues must be in place throughout practice placements.

Guidance

Students may learn on placement in different ways, and different practice placement educators may structure the learning and teaching according to their own preferences and experience, or the individual needs of the students. It is important that the educators' methods respect the needs of service users and colleagues.

We will want to see evidence that you have a system in place which makes sure that:

- wherever possible, service users are aware that students are involved; and
- you have the appropriate consent.

SET 6: Assessment

Summary

This part of the SETs is about how you assess your students, to make sure that they:

- meet the requirements of your programme;
- meet our standards of proficiency; and
- are assessed fairly and consistently.

Overall guidance

You may want to give us a copy of your assessment strategy, or equivalent, as well as any other information about how you assess your programme.

We will need to see how you make sure that your assessment of practice placements is thorough, consistent and fair. So, information about how you train practice placement educators, and how marks are moderated, will also be relevant here.

More information

- Health and Care Professions Council, Standards of proficiency
- Health and Care Professions Council, Standards of conduct, performance and ethics

A full, up-to-date list of documents, including those published by other organisations can be found on our website at www.hcpc-uk.org/education/downloads

Example questions

- Why have you chosen particular types of assessment for each module?
- What is your policy on resits, for the theoretical and placement parts of the programme?
- How does your assessment meet external reference frameworks?
- Is there a system for continuous assessment and ongoing feedback for students on a practice placement?
- What happens if a student is failing in practice placements but is doing well in academic subjects?
- How does the design of your assessment procedure produce students who are fit to practise?
- Do you have the option to award an aegrotat award? If so, do you make it clear that an aegrotat award means a student cannot register with us?
- Do students have the right to appeal against assessment decisions?
- Is your external examiner appropriately qualified and experienced and registered with us?

Detailed guidance

6 Assessment

6.1 The assessment strategy and design must ensure that the student who successfully completes the programme has met the standards of proficiency for their part of the Register.

Guidance

When you assess a student, you must make sure that you are testing not only theoretical learning and knowledge, but also the practical use of skills to allow the student to practise their profession safely and effectively.

We will want to make sure that students meet the standards of proficiency of their profession when they complete the programme.

We will want to make sure that the documents you provide as evidence clearly set out your assessment strategy and include a direct reference to the learning outcomes and associated assessment methods. This provides a direct link to fitness to practise. We would expect each module descriptor to explain the assessment methods used for that module.

We will need to see information about the:

- pre-requisites and co-requisites in your programme;
- compulsory and optional modules;
- individual module pass marks;
- number of resits students are allowed (and within what period of time);
- number of module resits allowed within any one year;
- maximum number of resits allowed every year for practice placement modules;
- compensation and condonement regulations;
- maximum length of a programme; and
- maximum time a student can take to complete the programme.

Although we do not set limits on the number of resits or amount of compensation allowed, you should show us how your policies strike a suitable balance between the need to support students, and the need to make sure that those who successfully complete the programme achieve the standards of proficiency.

You can set your own requirements relating to resits and compensation, or follow the requirements of other education providers or professional bodies.

6 Assessment

6.2 All assessments must provide a rigorous and effective process by which compliance with external-reference frameworks can be measured.

Guidance

You should provide information about how your assessment methods are thorough and effective, and also about how your programme meets any relevant external reference frameworks. An example of this would be if your programme is a pre-registration Masters programme. Showing how your programme meets the requirements of a Masters programme as well as meeting the standards of proficiency could be part of the evidence for this SET.

The threshold levels of academic attainment for entry to the Register are not the same for all professions, so the expectations for each will be different, particularly in relation to the standards of proficiency. For example, under standard 2b.1, applicants need to 'be able to use research'. If the threshold level of academic attainment for a profession is equivalent to the Masters level, students' academic experience may be very different from those in professions where the level of attainment needed is equivalent to a Bachelors degree or Certificate in Higher Education.

Other sources of guidance

A full, up-to-date list of documents, including those published by other organisations can be found on our website at www.hcpc-uk.org/education/downloads

6 Assessment

6.3 Professional aspects of practice must be integral to the assessment procedures in both the education setting and practice placement setting.

Guidance

'Professional aspects of practice' may include, for example, the students' familiarity with:

- independence and the need to be able to justify their actions;
- values and ethics; or
- their understanding of the nature of professional regulation, and the responsibilities this involves.

You could provide information about how your assessment procedures assess this area of learning. For example, you may provide information about a specific module which covers professional issues, with information about how this is assessed. Or, you may provide this information in the placement handbook, learning log and other relevant parts of the curriculum.

You may want to show how you involve service users in your assessment procedures. You could, for example, explain how service users are involved directly in assessing students or how service users contribute to the development of assessment tools.

Other sources of guidance

- Health and Care Professions Council, Standards of conduct, performance and ethics
- Health and Care Professions Council, Standards of proficiency

A full, up-to-date list of documents, including those published by other organisations can be found on our website at www.hcpc-uk.org/education/downloads

6 Assessment

6.4 Assessment methods must be employed that measure the learning outcomes.

Guidance

You will need to provide information about your chosen assessment methods, including your reasons for using the different assessment methods for different parts of the programme. You should show how your chosen methods are in line with the learning outcomes of each module. We will need to be sure that, whatever assessment methods you use, they make sure that those students who successfully complete the programme can practise safely and effectively.

6 Assessment

6.5 The measurement of student performance must be objective and ensure fitness to practise.

Guidance

We will want to see information about how you monitor and measure student performance, and what criteria you use to assess students who are at different stages in their learning. We will also want to see how you use your guidelines or criteria to make sure students are fit to practise.

Your assessment strategy may contain information about the criteria you use for assessment. How you moderate marks, and how you assess students on their practice placement, may also be relevant here.

We do not normally expect to see samples of students' work. However, on an approval visit we may ask students about the level of feedback they receive on their assignments and whether they feel it is enough.

A student who completes a programme must meet the standards of proficiency. The term 'fitness to practise' is specific to the process that professionals who are registered have to maintain. This includes the standards of proficiency, the standards of conduct, performance and ethics, and the health and character requirements of registration.

6 Assessment

6.6 There must be effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place to ensure appropriate standards in the assessment.

Guidance

You will need to provide information about how you monitor your programme. This might include, for example, information about your validation or review process (if this applies), or how you use comments from your external examiner. We will want to be sure that you apply your criteria consistently and that they are appropriate for:

- your programme;
- the students' progression; and
- making sure that students can meet the standards of proficiency when they complete the programme.

We will want to see that you carry out both internal and external moderation. Internal moderation would normally cover marking and double-marking systems. External moderation would cover the role and responsibilities of external examiners or advisors. You could give us copies of your regulations and policies as well as the external examiner's reports and responses to these reports. We may want to see the details of your attrition rates which would normally be included in your own internal monitoring documents.

We will use CVs and staff profiles to assess whether educators from the programme team have experience in assessment (for example, where staff act or have acted as external examiners for other education providers). We will then be able to see how the education provider's internal moderation systems compare with external standards.

6 Assessment

6.7 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for student progression and achievement within the programme.

Guidance

Your assessment regulations must make it clear how you assess students to make sure that they continue to progress within the programme. These regulations must be clear so students can understand what is expected of them at each stage of the programme, and must also make sure that staff can apply assessment criteria consistently to students' work. We will also want to see how you decide what prevents a student from progressing and the options that are available for a failing student.

We will want to see how you make information about the overall requirements of your programme available to students. It should be clear to students what you expect them to achieve. This may include credit-related and non-credit-related elements.

6 Assessment

6.8 Assessment regulations, or other relevant policies, must clearly specify requirements for approved programmes being the only programmes which contain any reference to an HCPC protected title or part of the Register in their named award.

Guidance

It is important that there is no confusion about which programmes we approve and which we do not. Students who are not eligible to apply for registration should not be given an award that refers to a protected title. Step-off or exit awards should be named in a way that makes it clear they do not lead to the person receiving them being eligible to apply for registration. Some education providers give these students awards with titles like 'Healthcare studies' which reflects the academic content the students have achieved, but does not give the impression that they are eligible to apply for registration. We will want to see that programme titles are clear, and that applicants, students, staff and the public understand who is eligible to apply for registration with us, and who is not.

6 Assessment

6.9 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for an aegrotat award not to provide eligibility for admission to the Register.

Guidance

Where you are able to provide an aegrotat award, it must be clear to students and staff that students who are awarded an aegrotat award are not eligible to apply for registration. To show that you meet this SET, you could refer us to where this policy is laid out, and how students are told about this (for example, on your website or in your student handbook).

6 Assessment

6.10 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for a procedure for the right of appeal for students.

Guidance

You should give us information about your appeals procedure. An appeals procedure should outline how a student can ask for a review of a decision made on their assessment, progression or achievement. We will want to make sure that you tell students about the appeals procedure. This should cover how the procedure works, how it is judged, and who by.

We will also expect to see clear information for students about where they should go for advice on your appeals procedure.

6 Assessment

6.11 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for the appointment of at least one external examiner who must be appropriately experienced and qualified and, unless other arrangements are agreed, be from the relevant part of the Register.

Guidance

Under the assessment regulations, there must be at least one external examiner for each programme. They must be appropriately experienced and qualified, and should be on the relevant part of the Register. We will want to be sure that there is an appropriate reason for appointing an examiner who is not from the relevant part of the Register and that you have agreed this with us beforehand.

If you do not have an external examiner in place when we make an approval visit, we will want to be sure that your regulations show that one will be appointed. We do not play any part in appointing them.

Glossary

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

Aegrotat	An award to a student who was not able to complete the degree due to illness.
Accreditation of prior (experiential) learning (AP(E)L)	Experiential learning recognises learning achieved outside a formal education or training system that cover areas of the formal taught programme. The process is often referred to as 'credit transfer'.
Annual monitoring	Our yearly process to make sure approved programmes continue to meet our standards of education and training and standards of proficiency.
Applicant	Anyone applying to a programme you provide.
Approval	The process that leads to decisions about whether a programme meets the requirements of the regulatory body's standards of education and training.
Curriculum	A structured plan to provide specific learning to support students' knowledge, skills, behaviour and associated learning experiences. The learning plan is generally organised as a sequence of modules so that a student receives specific education and training. The curriculum includes the syllabus, teaching guides, an assessment guide and necessary learning resources.
Education and Training Committee	Our committee which has responsibility 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.
'Enhanced' level disclosure	A more detailed check of an individual's criminal record than the 'normal' check. It is a specific term for this type of criminal record check.
External examiner	A person you appoint to monitor the assessment process for the theory and practice elements of programmes and to make sure that you are meeting professional and academic standards.
External reference framework	This term covers any laws and relevant standards.
Fit to practise	When someone has the skills, knowledge, character and health to do their job safely and effectively.

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 a change to a programme can be classed as a major change.
Open-ended approval	When programmes are approved for an unlimited period. Continuing approval depends on satisfactory monitoring.
Partners	Registrants in each of the professions we regulate, who provide the expertise we need to make decisions.
Practice placement	A period of clinical or practical experience that forms part of an approved programme.
Practice placement educator	A person who is responsible for a student's education during their period of clinical or practical experience.
Practice placement provider	The organisation that provides a period of clinical or practical experience for a student.
Programme	The academic teaching, practice placements, assessment, qualification and other services provided by the education or training provider, which together forms the programme for approval purposes.
Programme leader	The person who has the overall professional responsibility for a programme.
Register	The Register we keep, or any part or parts of it.
Registrant	A person who is currently on our Register.
Service user	Anyone who uses or is affected by the services of registrants or students.
Site	A place where the programme or part of the programme is delivered.
Staff	Anyone involved in providing education or training to a student. The term applies to people in unpaid, as well as paid, positions.
Standards of conduct, performance and ethics (SCPEs)	A statement of standards which registrants must read and agree to follow to stay on the Register.
Standards of education and training (SETs)	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 (SOPs)

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.

Visitor

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

Notes

Notes

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