

Health Professions Council
Education and Training Committee, 5th December 2006
Fees rise consultation

Executive Summary and Recommendations

Introduction

Article 7 (3) of the Health Professions Order 2001 requires that: *'Before determining or varying any fees mentioned in paragraph (2) the Council shall consult the Education and Training Committee and such of those persons in article 3 (14) as it considers appropriate'*.

At its meeting on 4th October 2006, the Council agreed to consult on a variation to its fees.

On 1st November 2006, the President wrote to the chair of the Education and Training Committee to invite the Committee to respond to the consultation.

A copy of the letter and consultation document is appended.

Decision

The Committee is invited to respond to the consultation.

Background information

None

Resource implications

None

Financial implications

None

Background papers

None

Appendices

Letter to Education and Training Committee
Fees rise consultation document

Date of paper

1st November 2006

3rd November 2006

Eileen Thornton

Dear Eileen

Article 7 (3) of the Health Professions Order 2001 requires that: *'Before determining or varying any fees mentioned in paragraph (2) the Council shall consult the Education and Training Committee and such of those persons in article 3 (14) as it considers appropriate'*.

At its meeting on 4th October 2006, the Council agreed to consult on proposals to vary the level of its fees.

I am writing to formally invite the Education and Training to respond to the consultation. I enclose a copy of the consultation document for your consideration.

Yours sincerely

Anna van der Gaag
President

cc. Colin Bendall, Secretary to the Education and Training Committee



Our fees

consultation document

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Foreword

The last three years have seen a steady increase in the costs of regulation. During this period we have kept our fees the same. We now need to increase our income to cover our rising costs. This document sets out our proposals for achieving a fees rise that is as fair as possible to all those involved.

Renewal fees are currently £60 per year – or £120 for each two year registration cycle. We set our existing fees in July 2003 and they have remained unchanged since this date. Inflation during the period 2003 to 2005 has averaged 2.9% and we calculate that the value of the yearly registration fee, in real terms, fell to £54.93 by the end of 2005.¹

In this document we put forward two different options for our renewal fees. We also present two options for the fees we charge applicants who have successfully completed an approved course and are applying to be registered for the first time.

We propose that the scrutiny fees we charge for processing applications via our international, EEA and grandparenting routes should increase. We also propose to introduce higher fees for people who are applying to come back on to the Register (this is known as 'readmission').

Following the consultation, if the changes to our fees are adopted, they would require amendments to our rules (please see page 14 for more information). The changes to our fees would be effective from June 2007. Existing registrants would pay the new renewal fee when their profession next renews its registration.

In this document we set out our proposals in full. We explain the reasons behind our proposals and invite the comments of our stakeholders.

¹ Figures are based on data from the Office for National Statistics and use figures from the Retail Price Index.

The consultation process

We strongly believe that it is important to engage with our stakeholders so that we can take account of their views. The Health Professions Order 2001 also says that we must consult our stakeholders every time we propose to change our fees.

We have sent this document to every registrant on our register. We have also sent it to over 300 organisations on our consultation list. This includes employers, professional bodies and education providers. You can find a list of organisations who we have consulted by visiting our website:

www.hpc-uk.org/aboutus/consultations

You can also download further copies of this document from our website, or you can contact us if you would like to be sent a copy through the post.

Please let us know if you would like to be sent a copy of the document in an alternative format.

The consultation will run until **6 February 2007**.

Once the consultation period is completed, we will analyse the responses we receive. We will also publish a document that details the comments we receive and explains the decisions we take as a result. This will be available on our website.

How to respond

We ask a number of questions about our proposals throughout this consultation document and would welcome your response to them. You may submit general comments in response to the consultation – but it would be helpful to us if you address the specific questions in this document. You can find a summary of these questions on page 15.

If you would like to respond to this consultation document, please send your response in writing to:

Fees consultation
Health Professions Council
Park House
184 Kennington Park Road
London
SE11 4BU
Email: consultation@hpc-uk.org
Fax: 020 7820 9684

Introduction

About us

We are the Health Professions Council (HPC). We are a health regulator, and our job is to protect the health and wellbeing of people who use the services of the health professionals registered with us.

When we say health professional, we mean a person whose work is concerned with improving and promoting the health and wellbeing of their patients, clients and users in a variety of different ways and in a variety of different settings.

To protect the public, we set standards that health professionals must meet. Our standards cover health professionals' education and training, behaviour, professional skills, and their health. We publish a register of health professionals who meet our standards.

Health professionals on our register are called 'registrants'. If registrants do not meet our standards, we can take action against them – which may include removing them from the Register so that they can no longer practise.

Who do we regulate?

The health professionals we regulate at the moment are:

- arts therapists;
- biomedical scientists;
- chiropractors / podiatrists;
- clinical scientists;
- dietitians;
- occupational therapists;
- operating department practitioners;
- orthoptists;
- paramedics;
- physiotherapists;
- prosthetists / orthotists;
- radiographers; and
- speech and language therapists.

We may regulate other professions in the future.

Benefits of registration

Our main role is to protect the public. There are also many important benefits of registration for the health professionals we register. They include:

- **Set standards:** Our standards of performance conduct and ethics, standards of proficiency and standards for education and training provide clear and consistent standards across the different professions we regulate.
- **Protected professional titles:** Each of the professions we regulate has at least one professional title which is protected by law. This means that only someone who meets our standards and is on our register can use a protected title. We can take action against practitioners fraudulently using our registrants' professional titles.
- **Increased public confidence and trust in the professions:** We can take action against the very small number of registrants who do not keep to our standards and whose behaviour might damage public trust and confidence in their profession.
- **Increased recognition:** Registration benefits our registrants by increased recognition of their work, amongst other professionals and the public. We have an important role in raising the profile of our register and the professionals we regulate.

You can find out more information from our leaflet '10 benefits of registration', which is available to download from our website: www.hpc-uk.org/publications

Our proposals

We propose to increase our registration fees and scrutiny fees as shown in the tables below.

Table 1 shows our existing fees. Tables 2 and 3 show two different options for our renewal fees and the fees we charge applicants who have successfully completed an approved course, who are applying to become registered for the first time.

Please see pages 10 to 14 for a full explanation of the proposed increases to our fees and specific questions on our proposals.

Table 1: Our existing fees

Route to registration	Scrutiny fee £	Registration fees	
		Year one £	Year two £
Approved course	n/a	30.00	30.00
		60.00*	60.00*
Renewal	n/a	60.00	60.00
Readmission	n/a	60.00	60.00
Restoration	n/a	60.00	60.00
International/EEA	200.00	60.00	60.00
Grandparenting	200.00	60.00	60.00

Table 2: Our proposed new fees – option 1

Route to registration	Scrutiny fee £	Registration fees	
		Year one £	Year two £
Approved course	100.00	70.00	70.00
		280.00*	70.00*
Renewal	n/a	70.00	70.00
Readmission	n/a	180.00	70.00
Restoration	n/a	180.00	70.00
International/ EEA	400.00	70.00	70.00
Grandparenting	400.00	70.00	70.00

Table 3: Our proposed new fees – option 2

Route to registration	Scrutiny fee £	Registration fees	
		Year one £	Year two £
Approved course	30.00	36.00	36.00
		280.00*	72.00*
Renewal	n/a	72.00	72.00
Readmission	n/a	182.00	72.00
Restoration	n/a	182.00	72.00
International/ EEA	400.00	72.00	72.00
Grandparenting	400.00	72.00	72.00

Key

*Applicants who have successfully completed an approved course who apply to become registered two or more years after completing their course.

Explanation

Each profession renews in two-yearly cycles, so the tables show fees payable in the first and second year of a cycle.

There are six different 'routes to registration' shown in each table. Please see pages 10 to 14 for more information about these routes to registration and an explanation of the proposed new fees.

Paying our fees

Registrants are able to pay for their registration in one payment, or they can spread the cost and pay by direct debit. Scrutiny fees are non-refundable and payable in full on receipt of an application.

Tax relief

Registration fees are tax deductible for UK taxpayers and may be claimed by registrants on their tax return or on application to their tax office. Standard rate tax payers benefit from a 22% discount on their renewal fee.

This means that the renewal fee is reduced by £15.40 to £54.60 per year (option 1), or by £15.84 to £56.16 per year (option 2).

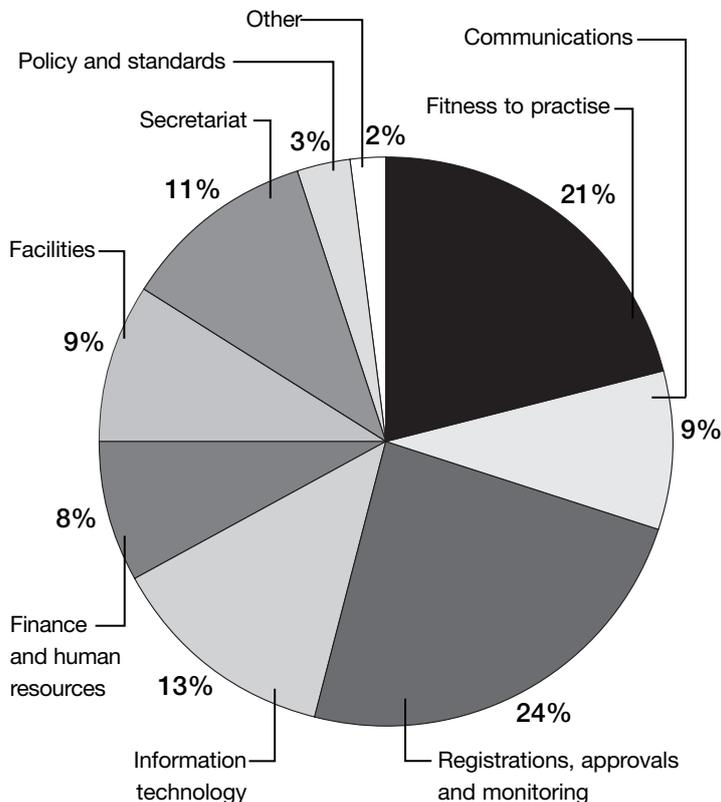
There are three different ways in which registrants can claim back tax relief on their registration fees:

- by providing details of the payment on their tax return;
- by writing to their tax office, including their national insurance number and details of the payment; or
- by obtaining form P358 from their local tax enquiry office and sending the completed form to their tax office.

You can find out more information about our fees and about tax relief by visiting our website: www.hpc-uk.org/registrants

Background to our proposals

Where the current fees go



On page 4 we explained our role in protecting the public. We spend the fees we receive in a number of ways to achieve this.

The chart above shows how we spent registration fees received over the last two financial years.

- **Fitness to practise** includes the costs of investigating and ‘hearing’ complaints about registrants; health and character cases; and appeals against registration decisions and health and character cases.
- **Registrations, approvals and monitoring** includes the costs involved in handling and processing applications for registration, and in visiting education providers to approve and monitor education programmes.
- **Finance and human resources** includes costs related to producing accounts and recruiting employees and HPC ‘partners’.

- **Facilities** includes the costs of maintaining our buildings and facilities.
- **Information technology (IT)** includes costs related to developing and maintaining our IT systems.
- **Policy and standards** includes the costs of publishing and reviewing standards and the costs involved in running consultations.
- **Communications** includes costs involved in advertising, publicity and holding stakeholder events.
- **Secretariat** includes costs of holding Council and committee meetings and the costs of running elections for Council members.

HPC’s largest cost is running our fitness to practise processes; which accounted for 19% of our budget in 2004/05 and 24% of our budget in 2005/06.

Where the money will go

Increasing our fees will help us carry out our duties in the following areas:

Fitness to practise

We consider complaints about health professionals on our register from members of the public, employers, professionals, the police and others. We take action to protect the public, which can include cautioning a registrant, placing conditions on their registration, suspending them from practice or, in the most serious cases, removing them from the Register.

Our predecessor, the Council for Professions Supplementary to Medicine (CPSM), was only able to remove a registrant from the Register or take no further action. With such a limited number of sanctions available, CPSM only considered a relatively small number of cases each year. When HPC first started operating under the new legislation in 2003, we were given additional powers to deal with fitness to practise issues. This increased range of powers now enables us to better protect the public.

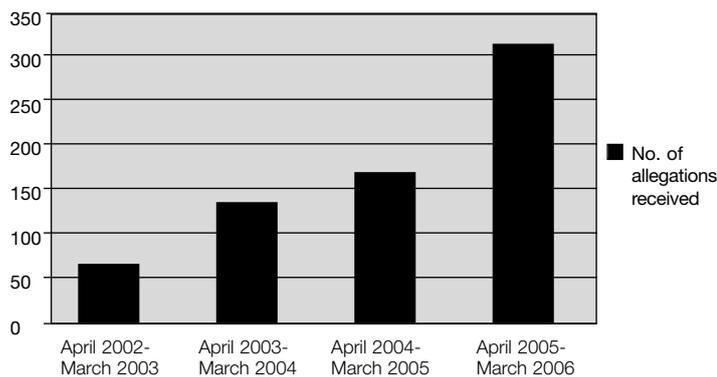
The chart overleaf shows that the number of allegations received by HPC has more than doubled since our first year of operating under our new rules and procedures. This figure has in fact quadrupled since the last year of operating under the rules of our predecessor. This is because our powers now allow us to deal with more cases. It is also because we have

worked hard to increase awareness of our role amongst members of the public and employers.

There are a number of different costs involved in handling fitness to practise cases. These include legal costs involved in investigating, preparing and presenting cases, as well as the costs involved in holding hearings (including venues and paying panel members). So that we handle cases as quickly and efficiently as possible, we have increased the numbers of staff involved in handling and investigating cases. In 2005/06, we held 140 public hearings.

We expect the number of cases we handle to increase further in the coming years.

Number of allegations received per year



Approvals and monitoring

An important part of our work is making sure that graduates who follow education and training courses can meet our standards for safe and effective practice. We regularly visit education providers across the UK to assess their courses against our standards of education and training. We need to ensure that these courses allow graduates to meet our standards of proficiency for the safe and effective practice of the professions we regulate.

We recruit and train 'visitors' who are experienced members of these professions to assess each course against our standards. A course which meets our standards is approved. This means that someone who successfully completes an HPC approved course is able to apply to us to be registered.

In the last academic year we held 60 approvals visits. We will hold further visits in the coming years. We now also have an annual monitoring process to make sure that courses continue to meet our standards.

Communications

We have worked hard over the last three years to increase public and professional awareness of our role. In particular, our activity has focused on explaining to members of the public what registration means, our powers to protect common professional titles and the importance of checking that health professionals are registered.

In the coming years, we will build on this work through campaigns which will run alongside continuing work with referrers (eg GP surgeries, hospitals and patient groups) to promote and allow the public easy access to our services. We will seek to develop and increase the ways we communicate and engage with registrants. We will also develop ongoing dialogue with key stakeholders including government, consumer groups, employers and professional bodies.

Continuing professional development (CPD)

In June 2005 we agreed our standards for continuing professional development (CPD). These standards became effective from 1 July 2006. The standards mean that for the first time CPD is now linked to registration. This means that registrants must now undertake CPD and keep a record of their CPD. From 2008 we will audit a random sample of registrants each time they renew their registration to make sure that the standards have been met.

So far, our work has been focused on developing our CPD standards and communicating them to registrants. We are now working on ensuring we have resources and effective processes in place to carry out CPD audits from July 2008. We will be recruiting and training a number of CPD assessors from each profession who will assess the CPD profiles we receive.

Our financial performance

Although we have managed our costs carefully, we now need to increase our fees to reflect our increasing costs and workload.

In developing our fee proposals we engaged PKF (accountants and business advisors) to look carefully at our costs and our forecasts for the coming years – and to make recommendations about our future fee levels. We have carefully set the level of our fees to reflect our costs and our workload.

We are confident that our proposed new fees, if adopted, will mean that we will have sufficient income to meet our demanding workload, so that we can continue to carry out our role to protect the public efficiently and effectively.

You can find more information about our financial performance by looking at our annual reports. These are available from the ‘publications’ section of our website:

www.hpc-uk.org/publications

How our fees compare to those of other regulators

We regulate the members of 13 different healthcare professions. At the time of producing this document, there were approximately 175,000 health professionals on our register.

Multi-professional regulation has a number of important benefits, including financial ones. Because we regulate a number of different professions, this means the costs of regulation are proportionately lower. The fees we charge each registrant are lower because we benefit from cost savings as a result of our size.

Table 4 shows the registration fees charged by the nine UK healthcare regulators. This includes information about the fees they charge for registering, renewing registration and for coming back on to their respective registers. Some regulators also charge for marking their registers to show, for example, where someone is a supplementary prescriber.

Fee structures vary between regulators and this can make direct cost comparisons difficult. This is because there are differences between what regulators are allowed to charge for, whether they have ‘practising’ or ‘non-practising’ registration and how they handle the income they receive from fees. However, the table does show that our proposed renewal fee is lower than that currently charged by most other regulators.

Table 4: Other regulators’ registration fees

Regulator	Registration £	Renewal £	Readmission £
HPC*	66 / 170	70 / 72	180 / 182
GCC	1250	1000	1250
GDC – dentists	408	409	509
GDC – dental nurses	72	72	90
GMC	290	290	290
GOC	169	169	239
NMC**	43	43	43
PSNI	295	295	382
RPSGB – pharmacists	129	267	267
RPSGB – technicians	75	88	88
GOsC	375***	750	750

It is more difficult to compare the fees that other regulators charge for considering international and grandparenting applications. This is because some regulators will charge a flat-fee for processing an application, whilst others charge fees for attending interviews or undertaking examinations. Most other regulators do not presently have grandparenting arrangements.

However, where regulators charge a flat-fee, our proposed international scrutiny fee compares favourably. For example, the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain (RPSGB) currently charge £595 for the consideration of an international application, whilst the General Chiropractic Council (GCC) currently invites all international applicants to an interview at a cost of £1500 each.

Key

* These are the proposed new fees. The figure given for registration is for someone who has successfully completed an approved course, applying for registration within the first two years of completion. The alternative options for the fees are given.

** At the time of publishing this document, the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) were consulting on raising their renewal fee to £80 per year.

*** The General Osteopathic Council (GOsC) currently charge £375 for the first year of registration, £500 for the second year of registration and £750 for every subsequent year.

HPC: Health Professions Council
GCC: General Chiropractic Council
GDC: General Dental Council
GMC: General Medical Council
GOC: General Optical Council
NMC: Nursing and Midwifery Council
PSNI: Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland
RPSGB: Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain
GOsC: General Osteopathic Council

All figures given in this table were correct at the time of publication.

Explanation

The figures given for registration and readmission above include any fees for processing applications and the first year of registration. For example, the General Dental Council (GDC) charge £509 to readmit dentists to their register and this includes the first year of registration. All figures are for a full year of registration.

Some regulators have practising and non-practising registration. The fees given in the table above are for practising registration (if applicable).

Our future fees

If we increase our fees as proposed in this document, we do not intend to increase our fees any further until at least June 2009 (unless there is a dramatic increase in inflation or some other significant or unforeseen increase in our expenses).

We think that registrants would prefer us to consider our fees every two years rather than wait for a longer period and have to make a much more substantial increase.

Q2. Do you agree that we should review our fees every two years?

Cross-subsidisation

We want to make sure we charge fees that are as fair as possible. We believe it is important that someone who renews their registration is not substantially paying for the cost of someone who registers for the first time, or for someone who applies to come back on to the Register after a career break.

We have therefore decided that we should minimise cross-subsidisation between different fees. This means that the fee we charge an applicant who qualified outside of the UK or a grandparenting applicant should cover (as closely as possible) our costs in processing and assessing their application. We also believe that the fees we charge someone who registers for the first time, or who applies to rejoin the Register, should reflect our costs in processing their application.

Q1. Do you agree that we should set our fees to minimise cross-subsidisation between different services?

About our proposals

Registration and scrutiny fees

We charge fees when someone first becomes registered, when they come back on to the Register after a break, and when they renew their registration.

The costs of registering these different groups of people vary because of the amount of information we need to process. For example, when someone first applies to become registered they need to complete an application form including health and character references. When an existing registrant renews their registration we need less information from them and because of this the time and costs involved are lower.

Registration fees pay for all our running costs, including the costs of our fitness to practise processes.

We currently charge scrutiny fees to reflect our costs in processing applications via our international and grandparenting routes to registration.

About renewal fees

Each profession renews its registration in two-yearly cycles. We send each registrant a renewal form and ask that they sign their professional declaration and return the form to us with payment of their fee (or a direct debit authorisation) by their renewal date.

We propose that the renewal fee should increase to reflect our increasing costs. Two options for the level of the renewal fee are described below and shown in tables 2 and 3 on page 5.

About approved courses

Most of the people we register for the first time have successfully completed an HPC 'approved course'. Someone who successfully completes one is eligible to apply to us for registration. We sometimes refer to this as the 'UK approved course' route.

When we first consulted on our fees in 2002, we received many requests to reduce our fees for this group of applicants when they first register. We decided that we would reduce their registration fees by 50% for their first two years of registration.

However, the fees we currently receive from this group of applicants do not cover our costs in processing their applications. We also need to account for our costs in visiting education providers to ensure that their courses meet our standards.

We recognise that new registrants may not yet have secured employment and because of this may have less money than existing registrants. We think it is important to treat this group of applicants, as well as existing registrants, as fairly as possible.

Because of this we are putting forward two proposals for our fees. We have produced these two options after carefully looking at our costs in registering applicants from approved courses and our costs in approving courses.

We very much welcome the views of our stakeholders on which of these two options is more appropriate.

Please note: The fees proposed in this document would also be payable should we regulate any further professions.

Option 1

Renewal fee

The level of the renewal fee would be set at £70 per year. If adopted, this change would be effective from June 2007 and would be payable by existing registrants when they next renew their registration.

Approved courses

We would charge a scrutiny fee of £100 for applicants who have followed an approved course and are applying to be registered within two years of completing their course.

The scrutiny fee would be non-refundable and payable on receipt of an application. The registration fee would be the same as the fee charged to all registrants, £70 per year. If agreed, this change would be effective from June 2007.

Explanation

This would mean that the fees we receive from applicants via the approved course route would cover the majority of our costs in processing their applications and in approving courses. It also means that existing registrants would not be subsidising the costs of registering new applicants.

However, we would still propose to charge this group of applicants less to process their applications than health professionals who are applying to rejoin the Register.

This proposed change to our fees is shown in table 2 on page 5.

Option 2

Renewal fee

The level of the renewal fee would be set at £72 per year. If adopted, this change would be effective from June 2007 and would be payable by existing registrants when they next renew their registration.

Approved courses

We would charge a scrutiny fee of £30 to applicants who have followed an approved course and are applying to be registered within two years of completing their course. We would also maintain the existing 50% discount on the cost of registration for the first two years.

The scrutiny fee would be non-refundable and payable on receipt of an application. The cost of registration would be £36 per year for the first two years. If agreed, this change would be effective from June 2007.

Explanation

Asking applicants registering via the approved course route to pay a lower scrutiny fee would not account for all of the costs of processing applications and approving courses and we would need to pass on some of the costs to existing registrants. Therefore, with this alternative option, we would need to increase the renewal fee to £72 per year.

This proposed change to our fees is shown in table 3 on page 5.

Q3. Do you agree with the proposals for our fees laid out in option 1?

Option 1: Applicants who have successfully completed an approved course (applying within two years of completion) pay a £100 scrutiny fee on application and £70 per year for the cost of registration. The renewal fee is increased to £70 per year.

Q4. Do you agree with the proposals for our fees laid out in option 2?

Option 2: Applicants who have successfully completed an approved course (applying within two years of completion) pay a £30 scrutiny fee on application, and a discounted registration fee of £36 per year for the first two years of registration. The renewal fee is increased to £72.

Two years after completion

At the moment, someone who holds an approved course and registers for the first time two or more years after they have completed their course does not receive a discount on their registration fee. We propose that the scrutiny fee for this group of applicants should be £280.

If the fee payable by this group of applicants is increased, as proposed, this would be effective from June 2007. The scrutiny fee would be non-refundable and payable on receipt of an application. This does not include the cost of registration. The fee to fund this service would be £70 per year (option 1) and £72 per year (option 2).

Q5. Do you agree that we should introduce a scrutiny fee of £280 for applicants who hold an approved course and are applying to become registered for the first time two or more years after completing their course – to cover our costs in processing their applications?

Readmission and restoration fees

The majority of registrants send us their renewal forms by the due date and have their registration successfully renewed. However, presently around 10% of each profession fails to renew on time. We have worked very hard to improve our processes and have worked with professional bodies to explain the importance of registrants renewing on time and of keeping us up-to-date with their address details.

Registrants come off the Register, and subsequently seek to rejoin the Register for a number of reasons. These might include career breaks or because they fail to return their renewal forms to us on time. When someone comes off the Register because they have failed to renew, we say that their registration has 'lapsed'.

The table below shows the numbers of registrants lapsed from the Register in five professions which renewed their registration in 2005/2006. It also shows how many of these registrants subsequently applied to come back on to the Register. Around 51% of registrants who lapse in each profession have not applied to come back on to the Register within 150 days.

Table 6: Registrants lapsing and readmitting 2005/2006

Profession	Lapsed %	Readmitted %					Remain lapsed %
		Within 30 days	31-60 days	61-90 days	91-120 days	121-150 days	
Average	10.1	2.7	1.4	0.7	.01	0.0	5.2
OR	12.3	4.3	1.7	0.6	0.2	0.2	5.4
PA	13.7	6.7	2.3	0.8	0.2	0.2	3.4
CS	7.4	0.8	1.5	0.3	0.4	0	4.5
PO	7.5	1.6	2.1	0.1	0.1	0	3.7
SL	9.3	1.6	2.2	0.3	0.2	0	4.8
OT	10.6	2.6	0.8	1.3	0	0	5.8

Key:

- OR: Orthoptists
- PA: Paramedics
- CS: Clinical scientists
- PO: Prosthetists and orthotists
- SL: Speech and language therapists
- OT: Occupational therapists

When a registrant wants to come back on to the Register, they need to complete readmission forms, which must include health and character references. This means that our costs in processing an application to rejoin the Register are higher than our costs in renewing someone's registration.

When we set our fees we decided to set the level of the readmission fee at the same level as the renewal fee. However, we believe that registrants who renew their registration should not

pay for the costs of processing the applications of registrants who are applying to rejoin the Register. We believe that it is fair to introduce a higher readmission fee at this time because registrants have now become familiar with the renewal process.

We propose to charge a fee to cover our costs in processing applications for readmission. This would be set at £180 (option 1) or £182 (option 2) and would cover the costs of processing these applications and the first year of registration.

If a higher readmission fee is introduced, as proposed, this would be effective from June 2007.

Q6. Do you agree that we should introduce a higher readmission fee, including the first year of registration, to cover our costs in processing these applications?

We know that sometimes registrants might have lapsed from the Register unintentionally, perhaps because they sent us their renewal form too late or because they forgot to tell us about a change of address. We know that people in this situation often want to return to the Register quickly and we would not want to unduly disadvantage this group of people.

We therefore propose that the higher readmission fee should not be charged if we receive an application to come back on to the Register within one month of registration having lapsed. In these circumstances, the normal registration fee of £70 per year (option 1) or £72 per year (option 2) would be payable.

Q7. Do you agree that we should not charge a higher readmission fee if we receive an application within one month of a registrant being lapsed from the Register?

When a registrant is struck off the Register, they can apply to us to be registered again after five years. If a panel decides that they can be registered again, they need to fill in registration forms and pay the appropriate fee. We call this process 'restoration'. We propose to charge the same fee for restoration as we do for readmission.

Q8. Do you agree that we should introduce a higher restoration fee, including the cost of registration, to cover our costs in processing these applications?

International and EEA scrutiny fee

In 2005/06 we received approximately 5,000 applications from individuals who qualified outside of the UK. This includes EEA applicants exercising mutual recognition rights.² We look at each application individually so that we can decide whether the combination of an applicant's education, training and experience means that they meet our standards for safe and effective practice.

A registration officer checks and processes each application. Each application is then sent to two registration assessors who are experienced members of the profession. They look at each application against our standards of proficiency and make a decision about whether we can register the applicant. We think that it is important to look at each application individually, so that we can make sure our standards are met and that we only register people who are fit to practise.

There are therefore many costs associated with handling these applications. They include the costs of recruiting and training registration assessors and paying them for their work, and the resources involved in processing applications. We believe it is important that the fee we charge for processing these applications reflects our costs. The fee we currently charge (£200) does not cover these costs.

The scrutiny fee is currently the same for both EEA applicants exercising mutual recognition rights and all other applicants. As our costs in processing these applications are the same, we propose that the scrutiny fee should be the same for both groups of applicants.

We propose to increase the scrutiny fee from £200 to £400. The fee would not include registration fees. These would be £70 per year (option 1) or £72 per year (option 2).

2 An applicant who is a national of an EEA member state and who has the right to practise in an EEA country is able to exercise 'mutual recognition rights' under the EC General Systems Directives. For more information, please see our website: www.hpc-uk.org/apply/international/

If the scrutiny fee for international and EEA applications is increased as proposed, this would be effective from June 2007. The scrutiny fee is non-refundable and payable on receipt of an application.

Q9. Do you agree that the scrutiny fee for international and EEA applications should increase to £400 to cover the costs of processing these applications?

Grandparenting scrutiny fee

'Grandparenting' is a transitional route of entry to our register. It allows individuals to register who do not hold a qualification approved by us, but who can demonstrate certain criteria for the practise of their profession. This route to registration is only open for a limited time period when a profession first becomes statutorily regulated.

The grandparenting period for the first 12 professions we regulated ended on 9 July 2005. The grandparenting period for operating department practitioners ended on 17 October 2006. If we regulate further professions we will open a new grandparenting period for these professions, which will open for a fixed period of time, before closing again.

We handle each application in a similar way to international applications. Each application is assessed by two registration assessors from the profession who decide whether the criteria and standards have been met. If we feel that we can't make a decision on the basis of the application we receive, we invite the applicant to an interview, where our assessors can better establish their skills, knowledge and experience.

The costs involved in handling grandparenting applications are similar to those involved in handling international applications. They include training and paying registration assessors and costs involved in setting up and holding interviews. The fee we currently charge (£200) does not cover these costs.

We therefore propose to increase the scrutiny fee from £200 to £400 to reflect our costs in processing these applications. The fee would be the same for all applicants and would not include registration fees. These would be £70 per year (option 1) or £72 per year (option 2).

If the scrutiny fee for grandparenting applications is increased as proposed, this would be effective from June 2007. The scrutiny fee is non-refundable and payable on receipt of an application.

Q10. Do you agree that the scrutiny fee for grandparenting applications should increase to £400 to cover the costs of processing these applications?

Rule changes

If the proposals set out in this document are adopted, they would require amendments to our rules.

We propose to amend the The Health Professions Council (Registration and Fees) Rules Order of Council 2003 to reflect the increased level of our fees. Please see appendix 1 for the proposed amendments.

You can also find copies of our existing rules in the 'publications' section of our website:

www.hpc-uk.org/publications/ruleslegislation/

Q11. What are your views on the proposed amendments to our rules?

Our questions

We have asked a number of questions in this document. The questions are repeated below. It would greatly assist us if you could address these specific questions in your response.

Q1. Do you agree that we should set our fees to minimise cross-subsidisation between different services?

Q2. Do you agree that we should review our fees every two years?

Q3. Do you agree with the proposals for our fees laid out in option 1?

Option 1: Applicants who have successfully completed an approved course (applying within two years of completion) pay a £100 scrutiny fee on application and £70 per year for the cost of registration. The renewal fee is increased to £70 per year.

Q4. Do you agree with the proposals for our fees laid out in option 2?

Option 2: Applicants who have successfully completed an approved course (applying within two years of completion) pay a £30 scrutiny fee on application, and a discounted registration fee of £36 per year for the first two years of registration. The renewal fee is increased to £72.

Q5. Do you agree that we should introduce a scrutiny fee of £280 for applicants who hold an approved course and are applying to become registered for the first time two or more years after completing their course – to cover our costs in processing their applications?

Q6. Do you agree that we should introduce a higher readmission fee, including the first year of registration, to cover our costs in processing these applications?

Q7. Do you agree that we should not charge a higher readmission fee if we receive an application within one month of a registrant being lapsed from the Register?

Q8. Do you agree that we should introduce a higher restoration fee, including the cost of registration, to cover our costs in processing these applications?

Q9. Do you agree that the scrutiny fee for international and EEA applications should increase to £400 to cover the costs of processing these applications?

Q10. Do you agree that the scrutiny fee for grandparenting applications should increase to £400 to cover the costs of processing these applications?

Q11. What are your views on the proposed amendments to our rules?

More information

You can get more information about us and our role from our website at: www.hpc-uk.org

You can download copies of our annual reports and fitness to practise annual reports from the 'publications' section of our website. You can also find information about our recent fitness to practise cases, as well as information on our communications activity.

Appendix 1

[DRAFT] THE HEALTH PROFESSIONS COUNCIL (REGISTRATION AND FEES) (AMENDMENT) RULES 2007

The Health Professions Council, in exercise of its powers under articles [7(1), 7(2), 33(7), 41(2) and 45(1) of the Health Professions Order 2001³ and of all other powers enabling it in that behalf and following consultation in accordance with articles 7(1), 7(3) and 41(3) of that Order, hereby makes the following Rules:

Citation and commencement

1. These Rules may be cited as the Health Professions Council (Registration and Fees) (Amendment) Rules 2007 and shall come into force on [date].

Interpretation

2. In these Rules "the principal Rules" means the Health Professions Council (Registration and Fees) Rules 2003⁴.

Amendments to the principal Rules

3. (1) In rule 4 of the principal Rules (applications for registration)—
 - (a) in paragraph (1), after "admission" insert "or re-admission"; and
 - (b) for paragraph (1)(c) substitute—

"(c) accompanied by:

 - (i) in the case of an application for registration, the registration fee prescribed by rule 14 and the scrutiny fee prescribed by rule 17, or
 - (ii) in the case of an application for readmission, the readmission fee prescribed by rule 15A; and".

Option 1: [(2) In rule 14 of the principal Rules (registration fee) for paragraph (1) substitute—

"(1) Subject to paragraph (2) the fee to be charged for registration following an application for registration is £140."]

Option 2: [(2) In rule 14 of the principal Rules (registration fee), in paragraph (1) substitute—

"(a) in sub-paragraph (a):

- (i) for "one year" substitute "two years", and
- (ii) for "£60" substitute "£72"; and

(b) in sub-paragraph (b), for "£120" substitute "£144".]

- (3) For rule 15 of the principal Rules (renewal and readmission fee) substitute—

"Renewal fee

15. The fee to be charged for renewal of registration is £[140][144].

Readmission fee

15A The fee to be charged for readmission to the Register is £[250][254].".

- (4) In rule 16 of the principal Rules (restoration fee) for "£120" substitute "£[250][254]".

- (5) In rule 17 of the principal Rules (scrutiny fee)—

- (a) in paragraph (1) for "£200" substitute "£400";
- (b) after paragraph (1) insert—

"(1A) The fee to be charged for scrutinising an application for registration where the applicant is relying on article 12(1)(a) of the Order is:

- (i) in a case where an applicant applies for registration less than two years after the date on which he was first awarded an approved qualification, £[100][30], or
- (ii) in a case where an applicant applies two or more years after that date, £ 280.".

Sealed with the common seal of the Health Professions Council on [date].

L.S.

Anna van der Gaag
President

³ SI 2002/254

⁴ SI 2003/1572

Appendix 2

Regulatory Impact Assessment

Guidance from the Cabinet Office suggests that a Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) should be carried out for all policy changes which could affect the public or private sectors, charities, the voluntary sector or small businesses. That guidance makes clear that RIAs should be proportionate to the changes being proposed. For complex regulatory changes the RIA may be lengthy but, as an example, the guidance indicates that a RIA is not necessary where statutory fees are being increased in line with inflation by means of a predetermined formula.

Although the proposals in this document would not vary fees by means of a predetermined index-linking formula, the majority of the proposed changes would be limited to increasing fees broadly in line with inflation. In those cases where it is proposed that a fee rises by more than inflation, the change is being proposed in order to reduce the level of cross-subsidy among registrants and to ensure that, so far as possible, the fees charged for particular services properly reflect the cost to HPC of providing those services.

Fees are paid by individual registrants rather than by organisations and, as noted above, the majority of the proposed fee changes would only increase costs in line with inflation. Where it is proposed that fees rise by more than inflation, such as in relation to fees for first registration and the scrutiny of international applications, these are one-off costs which in most cases would only be paid once during a registrant's career.

On the basis that most fees would only rise by inflation and thus be cost-neutral in real terms, that fees are payable by individuals (and in most cases tax deductible) and that those fees which would rise by more than inflation are generally one-off lifetime costs, the Council has concluded that these proposals are very unlikely to have any significant impact on the public or private sectors, charities, the voluntary sector or small businesses.



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