

Education and Training Committee, 4 December 2007

Generic standards of proficiency

Executive summary and recommendations

Introduction

At meetings of the Professional Liaison Group (PLG) putting together draft standards of proficiency for applied psychologists, there was some discussion about the existing generic standards of proficiency. In particular, this focused on their applicability to the disciplines of applied psychology likely to be regulated.

At the final PLG meeting on 25 October 2007, the chair invited the British Psychological Society (BPS) to submit their views about the generic standards of proficiency so the Committee could consider an appropriate way forward. However, unfortunately this will not be ready for the Committee's consideration until their meeting in March 2008.

A brief paper from the Executive is attached which summarises the background to the generic standards and the discussion by the PLG.

Decision

The Committee is invited to discuss the attached paper. In particular, the options discussed by the PLG.

A further paper appending the BPS's statement of their views will be brought to the Committee's meeting on 26 March 2008.

Background information

The consultations on a threshold level of qualification for entry to the applied psychologists part of the Register and draft standards of proficiency for applied psychologists began on 9 November 2007 and will run until 8 February 2008.

Resource implications

None. Any early review of the generic standards would have resource implications.

Date	Ver.	Dept/Cmte	Doc Type	Title	Status	Int. Aud.
2007-11-16	a	POL	PPR	Generic standards of proficiency	Final DD: None	Public RD: None

Financial implications

None. Any early review of the generic standards would have financial implications.

Appendices

None

Date of paper

22 November 2007

Generic standards of proficiency

Background

The standards of proficiency were first published in 2003 for the first 12 professions regulated by HPC. The standards were reviewed from October 2005 by a Professional Liaison Group (PLG). Following consultation, revised standards were agreed by the Council in May 2007. These standards became effective for the first 12 professions on 1 November 2007 and will apply to any new professions regulated in the future.

When the standards were reviewed by the PLG, the group were keen to ensure that the generic standards were as applicable as possible to the variety of professions regulated. A number of changes were made to the existing standards to ensure, in the view of the group at that time, that the terminology was appropriate.

Discussion by the PLG

At meetings of the PLG, some concern was expressed about the applicability of some of the generic standards, particularly around some of the terminology used.

Some members of the group argued that the generic standards focus on health and social care which is inappropriate for all applied psychology disciplines. For example, the generic standards make reference to 'care', 'dysfunction' and 'diagnostics', terms which, it was argued, are not universally applicable.

The PLG discussed possible options for resolving the concerns raised about the generic standards.

The group discussed:

- whether an explanatory foreword could be added to the standards of proficiency for applied psychologists to explain the use of language in the generic standards; and
- whether the generic standards could be reviewed earlier than planned.

Standards review

On 5 December 2006, the Education and Training Committee approved a workplan for future standards work. The Council subsequently ratified the workplan on 14 December 2006.

The workplan established the concepts of ongoing and periodic review and established a timetable for future periodic review of the Council's standards.

Ongoing review is defined as the 'day-to-day' reviewing of the standards by the Council, its Committees and the Executive. This is primarily to ensure that the standards do not limit effective ways of working for health professionals and education providers. Ongoing review might indicate that a specific change to a standard was necessary or indicate that a more detailed 'periodic' review should be brought forward.

For example: The Council consulted between October 2006 and February 2007 on a proposed amendment to Standard 6.7.5 of the standards of education and training. This was in response to information received from education providers about difficulties in meeting the standards.

A **periodic review** looks at the standards at a given point in time to:

- ensure that the standards remain fit for purpose – in making decisions about education programmes and in making fitness to practise decisions, for example;
- ensure that they are well understood by our stakeholders including registrants, patients, education providers and the public; and
- ensure that they take account of change including changes in practice, legislation, technology, guidelines and wider society.

A periodic review therefore looks at the standards in the round, seeks to engage more widely with the Council's stakeholders, and is structured with a clear workplan.

The workplan outlined a timetable for periodic review, on a five yearly cycle:

Standard	Date of publication	Date of first review	Date of next review
Standards of proficiency	2003	2005/2006	2010/2011
Standards of conduct, performance and ethics	2003	2008	2011/2012
Standards of education and training	2004	2009	2012/2013
Standards for continuing professional development	Effective 07/2006	TBC	TBC
Standards for returning to practise	Effective 07/2006	2009/2010	2014/2015

Notes:

- Periodic reviews every five years thereafter
- Standards of proficiency review in 2005/2006 did not include the standards of operating department practitioners which have been the subject of a separate review.