

Education and Training Committee, 11 September 2014

Research on preparation for practice

Executive summary and recommendations

Introduction

The standards of education and training (SETs) were last updated in 2009 and are now due to be reviewed again. The Executive proposes that a review be conducted on a staged basis over approximately three years, comprising a range of research and stakeholder engagement activities to gather the views of stakeholders; a Professional Liaison Group (PLG) to discuss changes to the standards; and a full public consultation. A separate paper has been prepared for the Committee setting out the proposed content, activities and timeline for the review.

The Executive has identified preparation for practice as a topic for external research to inform the review. In commissioning this research, we would seek to gain insight into perceptions among newly qualified professionals, educators, students and employers on preparation for practice across the professions we regulate. Importantly, we would expect the research to consider the role of the SETs and supporting guidance in ensuring that approved pre-registration education and training programmes adequately prepare students to meet our standards. By better understanding this role, we hope to be able to identify how the SETs and/or guidance might be strengthened in order to better support preparation for practice.

A similar approach was taken in commissioning external research as part of the review of the standards of conduct, performance and ethics (SCPE), which is on-going. The findings of this research have proven valuable in developing a thematic and evidence-based approach for subsequent phases of the SCPE review and undoubtedly will improve the quality of the standards eventually agreed.

Decision

The Committee is invited to approve the attached research brief (subject to amendments agreed at this meeting and any minor editing amendments) and the commissioning of an external researcher/research team to carry out this work.

Background information

None

Resource implications

Resources would be required for the following:

- Commissioning the research.
- Attendance at research advisory board meetings.
- Supporting the research team (e.g. by sending out information to participants).

The resource implications are accounted for in Policy and Standards Department planning for the 2014-15 financial year and will be accounted for in the 2015-16 financial year.

Financial implications

We anticipate a budget of up to £60,000 for the research (inclusive of all costs). This cost is accounted for in the Policy and Standards Department budget for 2014-15 and will be included in the budget for the 2015-16 financial year.

Appendices

None

Date of paper

29 August 2014

INVITATION FOR RESEARCH PROPOSALS

Preparation for practice: The role of the HCPC's standards of education and training in ensuring that newly qualified professionals are fit to practise

1. Purpose and research aims

- 1.1 We are seeking proposals for research to explore preparation for practice among newly qualified professionals who have completed pre-registration education and training programmes approved by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). This work is being undertaken with the purpose of informing a review of the HCPC standards of education and training and supporting guidance.¹
- 1.2 The aims of this research are as follows:
- To learn from previous literature relevant to this research
 - To gather and analyse views among newly qualified professionals, educators, students, practice placement educators and employers on preparation for practice across the professions regulated by the HCPC
 - To draw on these findings in order to help assess the effectiveness of the HCPC standards of education and training in ensuring newly qualified professionals are fit to practise
 - To develop recommendations for how the standards of education and training and their supporting guidance may be amended or strengthened.
- 1.3 We expect the research to include the following as core components:
- A literature review
 - Primary research with key interested groups including newly qualified professionals, educators, students, practice placement educators, and employers
 - A final report.
- 1.4 A budget of up to **£60,000** is available for this work (depending on the scope of the research). The deadline for proposals is **14 November 2014**.

¹ The current standards of education and training and supporting guidance can be found here: <http://www.hcpc-uk.org/aboutregistration/standards/sets/>.

2. About the HCPC

Who we are

- 2.1 The HCPC is an independent professional regulator set up to protect the public. We were set up in 2002 and now register the members of 16 health and care professions (c. 320,000 registrants), including for example, dietitians, practitioner psychologists and speech and language therapists. Out of the professions we regulate, 15 are regulated UK-wide; we regulate social workers in England only, with separate regulators operating in the other UK countries.
- 2.2 As a regulator we set and maintain standards which cover education and training, behaviour, professional skills and health; approve and monitor educational programmes which lead to registration; maintain a register of people who successfully pass those programmes; and take action if a registrant's fitness to practise falls below our standards.

Our role in quality assurance of education and training programmes

- 2.3 We have a statutory role in approving and monitoring education and training programmes for the professions we regulate. Programmes are assessed against our standards of education and training.
- 2.4 We currently approve 969 programmes delivered by 149 education providers.² Although most programmes are delivered or validated by a Higher Education Institution (HEI), we also approve programmes delivered by other providers including employers and professional bodies. The majority of approved programmes are pre-registration programmes.
- 2.5 We assess programmes during approval visits. The assessment is carried out by 'visitors' who are appointed by us; these include registrants in each of the professions we regulate and also, starting in the 2014-15 academic year, lay people representing service users and carers. The visitors make recommendations about approval to our Education and Training Committee, which may include recommending that certain conditions should be set before approval is granted. We grant open-ended approval subject to on-going checks to ensure that our standards continue to be met.

3. The standards of education and training

About the standards and supporting guidance

- 3.1 The HCPC standards of education and training set out the requirements for pre-registration education and training programmes which are approved by us. They cover areas such as admissions, curricula, programme management and resources, and assessment. The standards are common across all 16 of the professions that we register.

² On 1 July 2014

- 3.2 A programme that successfully meets the standards of education and training will enable a qualifying student to meet the HCPC standards of proficiency.³ These are the threshold standards for safe and effective practice in each profession. If a student successfully completes the approved programme they are eligible to apply for registration with the HCPC, subject to health and character checks and payment of the registration fee.
- 3.3 The guidance supporting the standards has been written to provide advice to education and training providers on how programmes will be assessed and monitored against the standards.
- 3.4 The standards and guidance are intended to be, as far as possible, focused on the outcomes of education and training programmes – that is, the ability of students completing the programmes to practise safely and effectively in their profession. Therefore they avoid being too prescriptive in what they require or exactly how education providers should meet them. We want to make sure that we do not hinder the development of new education and training programmes or the ability of existing providers to structure or deliver their programmes in different or innovative ways.

About the review

- 3.5 This proposed research forms part of an on-going review of the standards of education and training and supporting guidance. The standards were last updated in 2009 and are reviewed approximately every five years to ensure that they remain up-to-date and fit for purpose. An additional piece of research relating to interprofessional education has also been commissioned, and we will carry out other internal research and stakeholder engagement activities to inform the review.
- 3.6 In commissioning this proposed research, we are interested in how our standards for pre-registration education and training ensure that newly qualified professionals are fit to practise. Through this work we hope to be able to identify whether or how the standards and/or supporting guidance should be strengthened and programmes modified as a result.

4. Preparation for practice

Research by other regulators

- 4.1 In the past several years, some of the other health and care professional regulators have examined issues relating to preparation for practice. For example:
- The General Dental Council (GDC) commissioned a literature review to identify risks to patient safety during the transition of newly qualified dentists to independent practice. Recommendations included further research and work to develop proactive ways of supporting new

³ The standards of proficiency for each of the professions we regulate can be found here: <http://www.hcpc-uk.org/aboutregistration/standards/standardsofproficiency/>.

registrants who qualified outside the UK to make an effective transition to practising in the UK context.⁴

- The General Osteopathic Council (GOsC) commissioned an in-depth study about the preparedness to practise of recent osteopathy graduates. This research made recommendations for the GOsC, practising osteopaths and osteopathy education institutions.⁵
- The General Medical Council (GMC) commissioned research to explore the extent to which medical graduates were prepared for the workplace, examining the experiences and perceptions of graduates at three medical schools. The conclusion drawn was that undergraduates' preparation would be improved by having more experiential learning in clinical practice, and recommendations were made for actions by the GMC to facilitate this.⁶
- The General Optical Council (GOC) has undertaken research via focus groups with students on whether they feel prepared for practice once they are fully qualified and registered. The responses identified areas in which education providers could do more to support students' transition to practice, for example through modules related to clinical scenarios and additional hospital placements.⁷

Definitions

- 4.2 The research by other regulators mentioned above all focused on different aspects of preparation for practice. For example, the GDC literature review looked at clinical risks to patients, whereas the GOsC report interprets the concept more broadly to cover clinical knowledge, skills and competence; interpersonal and communication skills; business and entrepreneurial skills; and professionalism.
- 4.3 In commissioning this research our interest is focused on the extent to which individuals who complete an approved pre-registration education or training programme are prepared for safe and effective practice and to meet the HCPC standards of proficiency for their profession.
- 4.4 This implies a broad definition, similar to that used in the GOsC research. In addition to the technical skills, knowledge and competences required for entry into each profession, the HCPC standards also cover confidentiality, diversity and non-discrimination, and communication skills.

⁴ See the full report at <http://www.gdc-uk.org/Aboutus/Thecouncil/Meetings%202013/7%20Transition%20to%20Independent%20Practice.pdf> (Appendix C)

⁵ See the full report at http://www.osteopathy.org.uk/uploads/new_graduates_preparedness_to_practise_report_2012.pdf

⁶ See the full report at http://www.gmc-uk.org/FINAL_How_prepared_are_medical_graduates_to_begin_practice_September_08.pdf 29697834.pdf

⁷ The GOC did not produce a formal research report based on these focus groups but the activity was mentioned in the Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence (CHRE) performance review report 2011/12; see paragraph 13.7: <http://www.professionalstandards.org.uk/docs/scrutiny-quality/chre-performance-review-report-2011-12.pdf?sfvrsn=0>

Fitness to practise vs. fitness for purpose

- 4.5 We are interested in the role of the standards of education and training and supporting guidance in ensuring that education providers have the structures and systems in place to prepare students to be fit to practise as autonomous professionals at entry to the Register.
- 4.6 However, we draw a distinction between being fit to practise with being fit for purpose. Employers will make their own fitness for purpose decisions about whether an individual has the knowledge, understanding, skills and experience to make them suitable for a particular role or to work within a particular setting.
- 4.7 Our standards, and registration with us, do not replace the responsibility of employers, managers and other professionals in the workplace to support newly qualified professionals in their first weeks and months in practice, for example, through preceptorship, induction, training and supervision.
- 4.8 The proposed research may raise broader issues such as those relating to an individual's fitness for purpose in the context of their employment or work environment or how newly qualified professionals are supported in the workplace, but it is important to clarify that this is not the primary focus of this research.

5. Scope of the proposed research

- 5.1 We want to make sure that pre-registration education and training programmes are only approved where they can produce newly qualified professionals capable of meeting all of our standards and therefore of practising safely and effectively. However, the content of the HCPC standards of proficiency and the standards of conduct, performance and ethics is not directly within the scope of this research.
- 5.2 As stated above, we expect that the proposed research will comprise a literature review, primary research, and a final report as key components.

Literature review

- 5.3 We anticipate that the literature review is likely to include (but may not be limited to) the following:
- A summary and evaluation of the different definitions, themes and key concepts used in the literature on relevant topics
 - A review of how preparation for practice has been explored in the past (this could include professions both within and outside the field of health and social care)
 - If available, a summary of any previous assessments or evaluations of preparation for practice within one or more of the professions regulated by HCPC.

5.4 We would be particularly interested in other literature which specifically relates to preparation for practice in the context of professional regulation and/or quality assurance of education and training programmes.

Primary research

5.5 This phase may include both qualitative and quantitative research techniques. The exact methodology should be defined by the appointed researcher(s) based on a consideration of what would be most appropriate, but some examples include interviews, surveys and/or focus groups.

5.6 We expect the primary research will involve, but may not be limited to, the following key groups:

- Newly qualified registrants
- Students on HCPC-approved pre-registration education and training programmes
- Educators
- Practice placement educators
- Employers.

5.7 The primary research should seek to explore topics such as the following (this list is non-exhaustive):

- The role of the HCPC's standards of education and training in preparing newly qualified professionals for practice
- The mechanisms for supporting or improving preparation for practice
- Challenges in preparing students to practice their profession
- The views of students, educators, employers and experienced professionals on preparation to practice
- Possible ways, if any, to strengthen the HCPC standards of education and training and supporting guidance to better support preparation for practice.

5.8 In particular, the research should examine the perceptions of newly qualified professionals about their pre-registration education and training – and the regulatory standards behind it – in light of their first experiences in the workplace.

5.9 We would expect all of the 16 professions regulated by the HCPC to be represented in the primary research in some way.

Final report

5.10 The final report is likely to include the following:

- Executive summary

- Literature review
- Information about the methodologies used
- Research findings
- Recommendations for changes to the standards of education and training and/or supporting guidance which might better ensure that students completing pre-registration education and training programmes are fit to practise.

5.11 The researcher(s) will be required to present their findings and final report to the HCPC's Education and Training Committee in November 2015 (date TBC).

Research governance

5.12 We expect the appointed researcher(s) to convene a research advisory board, or equivalent, with representation from the HCPC, to oversee the conduct of this work.

5.13 We expect that all relevant stakeholders, including service users and carers, should be involved in the conduct of HCPC-commissioned research, wherever appropriate. We recognise, however, that the nature and extent of involvement may vary depending on the context of the research. Proposals should clearly outline how the involvement of relevant stakeholders will be addressed during the research process.

6. Next steps and anticipated timescale

Research proposals

6.1 Research proposals should be submitted by email to Nicole Casey, Policy Manager, by no later than **14 November 2014**.

Email: nicole.casey@hcpc-uk.org

Tel: 020 7840 9168

6.2 There is no prescribed format for submitting research proposals. However, they should include the following:

- A proposal for how the research would be conducted
- An outline timescale including key milestones
- Any ethical considerations or approval needed
- Arrangements for research governance, including the involvement of relevant stakeholders
- Information about the experience of the organisation involved to deliver the project (if applicable)
- CVs of the researcher(s)

- A breakdown of costs.

Timescales

6.3 We anticipate the following timescales for this work. Please note that, in the event that the number of proposals received delays the process of appointing the researcher(s) / research team to carry out this work, these dates may change.

Action	Timescale
Invitation for proposals issued	22 September 2014
Deadline for proposals	14 November 2014
Shortlisting	By 5 December 2014
Interviews/meetings with shortlisted researcher(s) (if required)	By 19 December 2014
Researcher(s) appointed	By 9 January 2015
Deadline for final report	Target date for completion is <u>30 September 2015</u> (with a draft report available for comment prior to this date). Deadlines will be agreed with the appointed researcher(s) based on discussions and what is considered feasible.

Budget

6.4 We anticipate a budget of up to **£60,000** (depending on the scope of the research). This figure is inclusive of all costs, including VAT (if applicable).

Shortlisting criteria

6.5 Our decision to shortlist or appoint will be based on the research brief, and on an overall assessment of how far the proposal has addressed the HCPC's needs and intentions in commissioning this work. We will particularly assess research proposals as to the extent to which they meet or exceed the following indicative criteria:

- The proposal demonstrates understanding of the role of the HCPC as a regulator.
- The proposal demonstrates understanding of the stated research aims and the purpose of the HCPC's standards and guidance.
- The proposal describes an appropriate methodology which is consistent with the research aims.

- The scope of the proposed research covers the required range of HCPC regulated professions.
- The proposal demonstrates that the researcher(s) have proven experience and expertise in fields relevant to the subject of the research.
- The proposal represents value for money.

7. References

Review of the standards of education and training

HCPC Education and Training Committee, 11 September 2014. *Review of the standards of education and training*.
[DN: check title and add link]

HCPC Education and Training Committee, 5 June 2014. *Interprofessional education research*.
<http://www.hpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10004645Enc04-Interprofessionaleducationresearch.pdf>

Approval of education and training programmes

Health Professions Council (2009; amended 2014). *Standards of education and training and Standards of education and training guidance*.
<http://www.hcpc-uk.org/aboutregistration/standards/sets/>

Health Professions Council (2009). *Standards of education and training and guidance – Responses to our consultation*.
<http://www.hpc-uk.org/aboutus/consultations/closed/index.asp?id=70>

Further information about the HCPC's approval process is available here:
<http://www.hpc-uk.org/education/downloads/>

Other references

Boak B., Mitchell, L., Moore, D. (2013). *Transition to independent practice*.
<http://www.gdc-uk.org/Aboutus/TheCouncil/Meetings%202013/7%20Transition%20to%20Independent%20Practice.pdf>

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<http://www.professionalstandards.org.uk/docs/scrutiny-quality/chre-performance-review-report-2011-12.pdf?sfvrsn=0>

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http://www.osteopathy.org.uk/uploads/new_graduates_preparedness_to_practise_report_2012.pdf

Illing, J., et. al. (2008). *How prepared are medical graduates to begin practice? A comparison of three diverse UK medical schools.*

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