

Standards of Education and Training guidance for education providers

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Introduction

About this document

This document has been written to supplement our programme approvals process.

This document provides **additional guidance on our Standards of Education and Training**, in order to give more information about how Visitors will assess against our standards.

It is written for education providers who are preparing for an **approvals visit**, whether the approvals visit is for a pre-registration programme or for a post-registration programme that we approve, such as supplementary prescribing, or local analgesia / prescription only medicine.

It will also be useful for education providers who are preparing information to inform us about a **minor or major change** to their programme, or as background information for education providers preparing for their **HPC monitoring report**.

Throughout the document, ‘we’ refers to the Health Professions Council, and ‘you’ refers to staff working on an approved programme, or a programme that is seeking approval. Where the abbreviation ‘SET’ followed by a number is used, this refers to a specific Standard of Education and Training.

About us (the HPC)

We are the Health Professions Council. We are a health regulator, and we were set up to protect the public. To do this, we keep a Register of health professionals who meet our standards for their training, professional skills, behaviour and health.

We currently regulate thirteen health professions:

- Arts therapists;
- Biomedical scientists;
- Chiropodists and podiatrists;
- Clinical scientists;
- Dietitians;
- Occupational therapists;
- Operating department practitioners;
- Orthoptists;
- Paramedics;
- Physiotherapists;
- Prosthetists and orthotists;
- Radiographers; and
- 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: www.hpc-uk.org

Each of these professions has one or more ‘protected titles’ (protected titles include titles like ‘physiotherapist’ and ‘dietitian’). Anyone who uses one of these titles must be on our Register. Anyone who uses a protected title who is not registered with us is breaking the law, and could be prosecuted.

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

Our key functions

In order to protect the public, we:

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

About our standards

We set threshold standards which are required in order to protect the public. The Health Professions 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, which is why they are set at a threshold level.

When you are developing your programme, you may also wish to refer to documents published by other organisations which take a role in developing and fostering good practice, e.g. the professional bodies, and the Quality Assurance Agency.

A note about guidance

This document provides guidance on the standards. The detail that it contains against each standard is a suggestion of the information that you could provide, or the questions that could be asked, in order to show how you meet the Standards of Education and Training. This document details some of the ways that you may show how you meet the standards.

Because this document is only guidance, you do not have to use it in order to have your programme approved. You may choose to meet the standards in other ways, but however you choose to meet our standards, you will need to explain how the standards are achieved by your programme.

Documents published by other organisations

In particular, where we have referenced other documents that are published by other organisations, this does not mean that we have ‘approved’ those documents, or that they offer a definitive way of meeting our standards.

The Standards of Education and Training, and Standards of Proficiency, remain the only standards against which we will assess programmes which lead to eligibility to apply for registration. You do not have to use the other documents that we refer to, or to follow the information in them, but however you choose to prepare for approval, you will have to show *how* your programme meets our standards.

In this document we have referenced other documents because they may be useful to you in providing additional information and context about educating people who are going to be registered with us. They may help you, in providing ways that you can show how you meet our standards.

In particular, where we have referenced documents published by professional bodies, you should be aware that these documents are an indication of how you may wish to meet our standards. You can meet our standards in other ways, without reference to these documents, if you wish to do so.

For example, in meeting our standards, you may follow definite indications in professional body information regarding, for example, staff / student ratios, practice placement structure, and numbers of practice placement hours. But you could choose to meet our standards regarding resources, and practice placements in other ways, if you wished.

You may still wish to meet the requirements of other organisations for other accreditation of recognition purposes (for example, clinical supervision may be a requirement for the arts therapies, and the World Federation of Occupational Therapists requires that qualifications in occupational therapy include one thousand practice placement hours) but you should be aware that we do not require this in order for us to approve a programme.

Working with the professional bodies

The professional bodies for the professions we regulate have had important input into the drafting of this document (see the section ‘How this document was written’ on page 43).

Under the new process for approving pre-registration programmes, we have overall responsibility for the standards which programmes must meet, and under our legislation, we need to assess against those standards independently. However, the professional bodies have an important role in promoting and representing their respective professions. They are the holders, and primary shapers, of their professions’ respective knowledge, skills and evidence base.

In particular the professional bodies may develop the learning and curriculum frameworks for their profession. In this document, we have referenced the curriculum documents published by the professional bodies which will provide useful information, background and context to you when you are developing new programmes.

The professional bodies may also be able to refer you to examples of good practice in your profession, which could be useful to you in developing a programme.

Preparing for a visit

For more information about the process of programme approvals, including timings, procedures, the role of Visitors, etc, please see our document ‘The Approvals Process’, which we anticipate will be published on our website in late 2005.

Working alongside your quality assurance processes

When we visit your programme, we will normally ask if you can invite us to your internal validation event (although we can hold a separate event if we need to). Because we want to work in partnership with your existing processes, we will try to attend on the same day as your event, and will normally follow the same agenda. We therefore ask you to send to us the information that you would submit to your internal validation panel.

We also ask that you ensure that the Chair of the panel and other members of the internal validation team know why HPC is attending and the implications for the students and the programme if HPC approval is not given. (If the programme is not approved, then students completing the programme will not be able to register with us, and will therefore not be able to practise using the protected title for their profession.)

We need to be sure that the information we receive shows us how you meet our standards. We will therefore send you two ‘Word’ documents for completion before the visit. These are both cross-referencing document, one of which contains the Standards of Education and Training, and the other contains the Standards of Proficiency for your profession.

We ask you to complete these cross-referencing documents to show us where in your documentation the Visitors can find the evidence they need to see that you meet our standards.

Cross-referencing documents

We **strongly recommend** that you complete these cross-referencing documents as fully as you can, to show how and in what ways your documentation shows how you meet our standards. Doing this will save both your programme team and the HPC Visitors time on the day of the visit; the Visitors will be able to refer easily to the information you’ve provided, and will be able to concentrate only on those standards where further information is required.

Please note that in order to make the cross-referencing helpful to the Visitors, we recommend that you do not use phrases such as ‘implicit through entire programme’ or ‘throughout’. If you reference exactly where the Visitors can find evidence to show how you meet the standards, this will help the visit to proceed more smoothly.

Additional information for the Visitors

When preparing your documentation for a visit, you should make sure that the information you send to the Visitors addresses each of our standards. This may mean that as well as sending us the documentation for your internal validation panel, you

supplement it with additional information which addresses certain Standards of Education and Training more specifically.

For example, a university panel would not need to know about the university's equal opportunities policy, since they would already be aware of it. The Visitors, however, need to see your policy, and to assure themselves that it is implemented and monitored, so that they can report to the Education and Training Committee that you meet SET 2.3. You would therefore need to send your Visitors a copy, or direct them before the day to where they can find it online.

Providing information during the visit

You should ensure that you provide hard copies of crucial information, and only direct Visitors to *supplementary* information online, or in hard copy on the day. It would not be reasonable to ask the Visitors to read a large amount of tabled material during the visit.

In addition to tabled information, there are other ways in which the Visitors will gain supplementary information during the visit, for example during their tour, during any demonstrations or presentations you want to give, or by asking questions of the various groups that they meet. But this notwithstanding, the Visitors will still expect to find full information in the documents you provide, showing how you meet our standards. The visit, any tour, and any demonstrations given, or questions are, act as an enhancement to your documentation, not as a replacement for them.

Delivering one programme on multiple sites

If you have a programme which you deliver on multiple sites, then before you prepare any documentation, you will need to decide whether, for the purposes of your HPC approval, you consider the programme to be one programme. The alternative is that you ask us to approve two separate programmes, similar (or indeed almost identical) in content, but delivered at two sites.

If you decide to present two separate programmes, we can consider them both at the same approvals event, and you do not necessarily have to present two copies of paper work: you can present one set of documentation, but complete two sets of cross-referencing documentation.

If you decide to present one programme, you should be aware that any approval will only be awarded by the Education and Training Committee if they are satisfied, from reading the Visitors' report, that all the standards are met at both sites. If, for example, approval was given subject to conditions, full approval of the course (and publication on the approved course list, and the institution's ability to advertise their programme as approved) could only be forthcoming when all of the conditions had been met, at both sites. You should also be aware that Visitors will want to be assured that the sites are sufficiently integrated in terms of staffing, and resources, and that there is no particular advantage, in terms of teaching and learning, to completing the programme on one site rather than another.

Even if your institution regards the programme as being one, you can still apply for approval by us for two programmes, if you wish to do so.

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The structure of this document

We have divided up the main part of this document into six parts, to reflect the six sections of our Standards of Education and Training.

Under the title of each standard is a **Summary**, which summarises the areas that the standard is concerned with. There is then a section called '**Overall guidance**' which gives guidance for the whole of that standard, including information about how education providers can show how they meet this standard: the documents they may provide, or the people whom the Visitors may wish to meet. This is followed by a section called '**Further information**'. Here we reference any other documents which may be useful to education providers in finding further information related to the whole of the standard. Certain documents, like the professional body curriculum outlines or equivalent, may have relevant information in them which relates to so many standards that, in order to save space, we have not referenced them against each one, but instead have given a list at the end. We have also provided a list of '**Example questions**'. These are questions that the Visitors might ask at an Approvals event, and also can be used as prompt questions when you are putting together evidence for your documentation, or considering your Annual Monitoring, or a major / minor change to your programme.

The final, and most substantial section is called '**Detailed guidance**'. Here, we have broken down each Standard of Education and Training into its individual, numbered parts. Each part is in a table like the one below:

1. This box contains the Standard title, ie: 'Assessment standards'
1. 1 This box contains the full text of the relevant Standard of Education and Training.
Guidance This box contains guidance on the standard. Where specific sessions with groups, or documents that you may supply, are referred to in this guidance, they are in bold. For example, 'Visitors may ask students questions about this standard.' 'This information may be available in your practice placement handbook , or equivalent.'
Other sources of guidance This box, where applicable, indicates other documents which may contain further background information on possible ways of meeting the standard. Here, as with the 'further information' for the whole of the standard, you will find that certain documents may have relevant information in them which relates to so many

standards that we have not referenced them against each one separately, but instead have given a list at the end.

SET 1. Level of qualification for entry to the Register

Summary

This standard is concerned with the academic level of the qualifications awarded in order to allow eligibility to apply for registration with us.

Overall guidance

None applicable

Further information

- Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (2001) Qualifications Framework for England, Wales and Northern Ireland. QAA, Gloucester
- Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (2001b) Qualifications Framework for Scotland. QAA, Gloucester
- Handbook of the Joint Validation Committee (Radiography) Revision 2004 3.4 Registerable qualification¹
Appendix Two – Guidance for the Development and Approval of M Level Programmes with Eligibility for Registration
- Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, Subject benchmark statements.
- Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (2004) Expectations of Master's Level Programmes within qualifying physiotherapy education. CSP London.

Example questions

What differentiates the MA from the PG Dip?
Is there an exit route other than BSc / MA etc?

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:

1. 1. 1. Bachelor degree with honours for the following professions:
- chiropody or podiatry;
 - dietetics;
 - occupational therapy;

¹ The Joint Validation Committee of the Radiographers Board no longer exists, and hence much of the content of the entire document has been superseded by HPC or Society of Radiographers guidance, however, this section is still relevant.

- orthoptics;
- physiotherapy;
- prosthetics and orthotics;
- radiography;
- speech and language therapy;
- biomedical science (with the Certificate of Competence awarded by the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS), or equivalent if appropriate); and

1.1.2 Masters degree for the arts therapies.

1.1.3 Masters degree for the clinical sciences (with the award of the Association of Clinical Scientists' Certificate of Attainment, or equivalent).

1.1.4 Equivalent to Certificate of Higher Education for paramedics.

1.1.5 Diploma of Higher Education in operating department practice for operating department practitioners.

Guidance

We expect that most of the programmes on our approved list will be at the standard which we have outlined above, but we realise that there may be some exceptions (programmes offered by organisations which are not universities, for example, may not be at BSc honours level).

This is why this standard contains the word 'normally', to show that you may be able to design a course which does not meet this standard, but which meets all of the other standards.

Although some universities offer an exit route of a Bachelors degree without honours which is approved (and therefore students from these programmes can apply for registration), we expect that most education providers will move away from this in the future, and we do not expect to approve any new ordinary degrees.

Because this standard (and all of our standards) is a threshold level, this means that some education providers may deliver programmes which exceed this level. For example, there is an increasing trend within some of the professions for pre-registration Masters degrees.

SET 2. Programme admissions

Summary

This standard concerns the admissions procedures for your programme, including the selection procedure, and the information provided to those involved. It is designed to ensure that students are allowed to make an informed choice about the course, and also that education providers are able to make an informed choice about students who will go on to meet our standards.

Overall guidance

Examples of the kinds of information that you could provide under this standard could include the information that is sent to students when they apply to you, information handed out at open days or interviews, any welcome/information pack sent in the post to successful applicants, or a copy of your section of the university prospectus.

The Visitors may want to see that you are keeping your admission procedures under review to evaluate their effectiveness and to guard against discrimination. You may therefore want to provide information about how you analyse application and admission patterns.

It is important that both your admissions staff and your applicants understand that when you assess applications, you are looking at that person's suitability to do your programme, and that you are not assessing or giving any assurances about their fitness to practise for eventual registration. This particularly applies to the sections of this standard which refer to criminal conviction checks, and health requirements.

Admissions staff, and applicants, should be aware that the offer of a place is not a guarantee of registration at the end of the programme, neither is it an opinion from the institution as to the likelihood of eventual registration. When we refer in these standards to criminal conviction tests, and health requirements, we are referring to *your* admissions processes, and the steps that you take to assure yourself that you can offer someone a place on your course, not to the requirements that we make for registration.

When someone applies to us for registration, we will look at their application individually, and make a decision about their registration based on their own individual circumstances. We cannot offer future guarantees of registration, or definite indications that a future application for registration would not be successful.

Further information

- 'A disabled person's guide to becoming a health professional', Health Professions Council. Expected to be published early 2006.
- 'Information about the health reference', Health Professions Council. Expected to be published early 2006.

- QAA Code of Practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education: recruitment and admissions
- QAA guidance on AP(E)L (Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning)
- Health Professions Council, Standards of conduct, performance and ethics, 2003

Example questions

- How much information do students get in advance?
 What information do you give to applicants?
 Do you tell students at any point that exit level English in IELTS is required by HPC?
 How do you ensure students reach IELTS 7.0 on graduation?
 What are your English language requirements?
 Are your criminal records check requirements specified in detail for applicants?
 How do you ensure that overseas applicants undergo the same checks as EU students?
 What provision do you have to monitor relevant health issues in applicants?
 What is the attrition rate on your course?
 What is the process for assessing an applicant's AP(E)L on entry? How often do you do it?
 Do you give credit to applicants with prior AP(E)L?
 How do you monitor / implement your equal opportunities policy?
 What happens if there is a breach of equal opportunities?
 How are applicants and students informed about your equal opportunities policy?

Detailed guidance:

2. Programme admissions

The admissions procedures must:

2.1. give both the applicant and the education provider the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to make or take up the offer of a place on a programme;

Guidance

All of your entry requirements should be clearly stated in the information sent to interested potential applicants, with contact details of your admissions tutor or equivalent.

An issue which can arise during a visit is the information which students have about their placements. You may want to supply information to show how students are informed about the duration and possible location of their placements in advance, including whether they will need to stay away from the university, their travel, and how this is funded.

You should also ensure that none of your programme documentation gives students the impression that they will 'automatically' be registered with us once they have completed the programme.

Phrases like ‘completing this course entitles you to be registered with the HPC’ or ‘once you have completed this course, you will be registered’ are potentially misleading, since all students need to *apply* for registration after they have completed their course. Instead, you should make sure that your documentation clearly tells students that completing the course means they are ‘eligible to apply’ for registration with us.

See also the guidance under SET 2.2.2 and SET 2.2.3, in order to ensure students 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.

2. Programme admissions

The admissions procedures must

- 2.2 apply selection and entry criteria, including:
 - 2.2.1 evidence of a good command of written and spoken English;

Guidance

We do not require that you interview applicants to your programme, but we do need to see evidence of your selection and entry criteria, with information about how these are applied.

Please see also SET 4.1, which requires that all graduates from your course must be able to meet the Standards of Proficiency. This means that any English language requirements you set at entry to the programme should take account of the fact that at the **end of the programme**, all students must meet the required level of English proficiency for the Standards of Proficiency for their profession.

Those students whose first language is English will not normally provide evidence of meeting an IELTS standard. However, you may want, as part of your selection criteria, to look for students with good communication skills who can then communicate effectively with patients, clients and users, and with colleagues. If you do so, you may wish to provide information about it to the visitors, but you should be aware that this does not form part of our requirements.

2. Programme admissions

The admissions procedures must

- 2.2 apply selection and entry criteria, including:
 - 2.2.2 criminal convictions checks;

Guidance

You will probably want to run checks on your students through the Criminal Records Bureau or the Scottish Criminal Record Office, and we would expect that this would be 'enhanced' disclosure or equivalent, due to the positions of responsibility in which health professionals are placed.

See also the comments above in the general guidance for this standard, about the role of your staff in assessing applicants for your programme, and not for registration.

However, 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 how far any criminal conviction might impair that person's ability to meet those standards. You may also find it helpful to consider whether your practice placement educators, and practice placement providers would be willing to accommodate the applicant, if they knew of the conviction.

You may also have a mechanism for monitoring criminal records during the programme such as an annual self-declaration form that students sign, which you can provide for the Visitors as further information.

2. Programme admissions

The admissions procedures must

- 2.2 apply selection and entry criteria, including:
- 2.2.3 compliance with any health requirements;

Guidance

At the time of writing this document, we are planning to publish a document in early 2006 called 'A disabled person's guide to becoming a health professional', with information for disabled applicants to approved courses, and for admissions staff on considering applications from disabled people.

We are also planning to publish a document called 'Information about the health reference' in early 2006, with information for applicants and doctors about the health reference.

Both of these documents will be consulted on before they are published.

See also the comments above in the general guidance for this standard, about the role of your staff in assessing applicants for your programme, and not for registration.

If students will be required to have a course of Hepatitis B vaccinations prior to starting their clinical work they should be given this information when they apply for the programme.

2. Programme admissions

The admissions procedures must

- 2.2 apply selection and entry criteria, including:
 - 2.2.4 appropriate academic and/or professional entry standards;

Guidance

The Visitors will want to see evidence of your academic and / or professional entry standards, and also to see how you communicate these standards to applicants, and how they are applied.

2. Programme admissions

The admissions procedures must

- 2.2 apply selection and entry criteria, including:
 - 2.2.5 Accreditation of Prior Learning and other inclusion mechanisms.

Guidance

You must show that you have a system for accrediting prior learning, and show how this is implemented. You may wish to show how your AP(E)L policies are stated clearly to applicants, including any details of charges that education providers may make for this administrative work (this information may also be relevant to show how you meet SET 2.1) You should also ensure that students who are eligible for AP(E)L are able to meet the Standards of Proficiency for their profession when they successfully complete the programme.

The Visitors will wish to see that students' prior learning is mapped against the learning outcomes for a programme / individual modules and a correlation ensured between that prior learning and that which is developed / assessed within the programme in question.

It can be helpful for Visitors if profiles of students who will be eligible for AP(E)L are included in the documentation in addition to giving details of which parts of the programme are compulsory and from which AP(E)L candidates may be exempt.

2. Programme admissions

The admissions procedures must:

- 2.3 ensure that the education provider has an equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory policy in relation to candidates and students, together with an indication of how this will

be implemented and monitored.

Guidance

In order to assure themselves that you meet this standard, the Visitors will need to see a copy of your equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory policy.

You may have a separate policy for equal opportunities, and one for anti-discrimination, or the documents may be published together, or perhaps your equal opportunities policy also tackles how you will deal with discrimination. This is not necessarily problematic, as long as the Visitors have sufficient evidence to show that you have these policies, and that they are implemented and monitored.

Your department, school or course may have its own policy, or your University may have a policy that applies to you.

The Visitors may also want to see that information that you give to students (for example, a student handbook) includes this information, with information about the procedure to follow if a student feels that discrimination has occurred.

SET 3. Programme management and resource standards

Summary

This standard concerns the management of the programme, and the resources available to the academic and support staff, and to the students on the programme.

Overall guidance

Visitors will usually take note of the on-site resources available during their **tour of the library and facilities**. Notes taken on this tour may help to show the Visitors how you meet this standard. You might want to use the tour to draw attention to facilities which you feel meet the standards particularly effectively.

Visitors may also want to ask questions of the **programme team**, regarding how well the policies and procedures that you outline in your documentation are working in practice. Questions that the Visitors ask the **practice placement educators** about the management of placements, and the resources available during placements may be relevant to this standard, as well.

Visitors may also ask questions of **head of school, or department**, if time has been allowed for this, about the whole of SET 3.

Further information

- QAA Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Education (Revised 2004)
- Partnership Framework for Quality Assurance of Healthcare Education, Department of Health (England) 2003

Example questions

Do you use visiting lecturers? If so, how do you quality assure them?

Do you have annual staff appraisals?

Do you do peer observation as part of staff development? If so, does it feed into staff appraisals?

Do students participate as clients in teaching? If so how do you get their consent?

How do you monitor student attendance? If students don't attend what mechanisms are used to follow this up?

What resources would you like to offer students in addition to what is already provided?

Can students access IT and library resources remotely or at weekends?

Detailed guidance:

3. Programme management and resource standards

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

Guidance

The Visitors would normally need to see a business plan, to assure themselves that the programme was secure within the institution, not under any threat, and adequately supported.

A secure place means that the education provider is committed to providing adequate resources to deliver the programme; the risks or threats to programme delivery are minimal; that there is a long-term future for the programme within the education provider's range of provision.

As part of your documentation, you may wish to include university planning statements, as returned to HEFCE, SHEFC, HEFCW and Department of Health Commissioners, if appropriate.

You could, for example:

- explain the institutional context of your programme; e.g. in terms of how it fits with its research profile and strategy;
- demonstrate how programme management and oversight of resources and capacity are undertaken in partnership with providers of practice-based learning to ensure the effective development, delivery and on-going review of your programme; and/or
- explain your processes for reviewing the delivery of your programme and the related need for development and capacity building.

3. Programme management and resource standards

3.2 The programme must be managed effectively.

Guidance

The Visitors may ask questions of the **head of department or school**, and of the **programme leader**, in order to assure themselves that this standard is met.

Evidence you could provide that would help to show you meet this standard might include:

- external examiner reports;
- a critical review of current provision;
- student feedback through module evaluations; placement evaluations; course committees; staff student liaison committees;
- placement provider feedback through placement audits and evaluations; partnership meetings;
- tutor feedback through module evaluations; course committees; annual reports;
- quality audits of practice placements; and
- clear action plans.

If your programme leader is not registered in the relevant profession with us, then the Visitors may wish to see information about how they are supported in their role by ready access to relevant profession-specific information.

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

Partnership arrangements may be evident. For example between:

- Health Trust and education provider;
- education provider and practice placements; or
- education provider and another education provider where practice placements are shared by both.

Where a partnership exists for a third party to deliver the academic content of the programme e.g. another Higher Education Provider, or where a Trust employs the academic staff as well as the practice placement educators then Visitors may ask to see the partnership agreement and ascertain under whose regulations and disciplinary procedures etc both students and staff exist. The Visitors will want to see that there are clear notes to deal with any problems in this area explicitly written into any partnership agreement.

3. Programme management and resource standards

3.3 There must be a named programme leader who has overall responsibility for the programme and who should be either on the relevant part of the HPC Register or otherwise appropriately qualified and experienced.

Guidance

You will probably wish to supply the **CV of your programme leader**, to show how you consider them to be ‘appropriately qualified and experienced’. Your programme leader will probably be registered with us, but they do not have to be. If they are not, you may wish to provide more detail about their qualifications, and their experience (and if they are not registered, then you should ensure that their job title does not give the impression that they are registered by using a protected title).

The information that you can provide the Visitors with about your programme leader might include: evidence of previous effective programme leadership, an ability to effectively organise the delivery of the programme, a professional qualification, or an education qualification.

3. Programme management and resource standards

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

Guidance

We do not set staff / student ratios, but our Visitors will want to be assured that there are enough staff to deliver the programme effectively, without compromising our standards. The Visitors may want to look at the staffing within the context of your health and social care provision, and the staffing resources to support this. For example, the involvement of your staff in other programmes in the same profession, your expected research activity, or you inter-professional learning and teaching, all might impact on staffing capacity for the programme under consideration.

You may wish to provide information about staffing levels (including whether staff are part-time or full-time), including their CVs and experience, and any research activity, in order to show how you meet this standard.

You will probably wish to take account of the practical requirements of your programme, and the potential need for small group teaching when determining the number of staff required. You may also require clinical as well as academic experience of your staff.

Your professional body may have a requirement for a certain staff / student ratio, and you may wish to refer to this in order to decide on your required staffing level. The information that you give the Visitors about staffing at your placements (SET 5.2) will also be relevant to this standard.

3. Programme management and resource standards

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

Guidance

Your **staff CVs** will probably address this, but if they do not, you may find it helpful to set out more explicitly in your **cross-referencing document** how your staff, and practice placement providers have the specialist expertise and knowledge required in order to deliver the programme.

We do not specify the precise expertise and knowledge which are required in order to deliver certain aspects of your programme, since we feel that this may change as best practice develops, and we do not want to set requirements which would hinder high quality teaching by qualified staff.

Visitors may also consider the input from 'specialist visiting lecturers' and the expertise

and knowledge that they bring to the programme balanced against quality of delivery and continuity of student experience. If visiting lecturers teach on your programme, the Visitors may want to know how you assure their teaching quality.

3. Programme management and resource standards

3.6 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, in order to ensure that they continue to deliver the programme effectively. Your staff development strategy may be informed by the education provider's organisational development needs, the programme team's development needs and/or the individual's development needs.

The Visitors will want to see information about the way that your staff are encouraged to develop their skills, and how they are supported in this. The information you provide to support this might include:

- departmental planning documents;
- staff development strategies;
- CVs;
- staff appraisals;
- staff profiles; and
- professional development portfolios.

The Visitors may want to ask members of your **programme team** about how this works, and how accessible and available staff development is. They may ask your **practice placement educators** about the ways in which they are supported by you in their development. They will also want to know about any peer observation or mentoring schemes that are run and what training is available to new lecturers.

3. Programme management and resource standards

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

Guidance

'Resources' in this context may include:

- student handbooks and module guides;
- Information Technology (IT);

- academic and support staff;
- buildings;
- books;
- equipment; and
- materials.

This standard means that resources must not only be available, but should also be used effectively. You could therefore provide information about how students are given access to resources including, for example, how equipment booking systems are implemented, or how laboratory resources are utilised. (The Visitors will look separately at your library provision, see SET 3.13)

In all settings means that the Visitors will want to be assured that resources are effectively used on placement, so as part of your evidence to show that you meet this standard, you could demonstrate to the Visitors how you support student learning in a practice placement setting.

The Visitors may wish to see evidence of the evaluation of effectiveness of the deployment and use of resources in your **quality assurance mechanisms and reports**.

3. Programme management and resource standards

3.8 The facilities needed to ensure the welfare and well-being of students must be both adequate and accessible.

Guidance

In order to show how you meet this standard, you will need to give information about the facilities for student support, and also show how you inform students about them, and how you ensure that they are accessible.

Visitors may look for evidence of support facilities which could include counselling, health centre (or other arrangements for medical advice during term time); student advice telephone line, etc.

It would also be helpful to provide information about how you ensure the welfare and well-being of students on their placements. This could be through how you quality assure your placements to ensure that they are a safe environment for students, and / or through the facilities and support offered to students while they are on placement. Visitors may want more information if students on placement undertake domiciliary visits.

This may be within your **practice placement documentation**, in which case you may wish to refer Visitors to it in your **cross-referencing document**. During the visit, Visitors may also ask questions of your **practice placement educators** regarding this standard.

3. Programme management and resource standards

3.9 Where students participate as patients or clients in practical and clinical teaching, appropriate protocols must be used to obtain their consent.

Guidance

This standard is primarily concerned with prevention of injury and/or emotional distress and helps to ensure that education and placement providers acknowledge risk factors. The level of participation of students will vary from profession to profession.

Examples of activities where you will need to have a protocol for gaining student consent include:

- role play;
- bio-mechanical assessments;
- patient positioning through manipulation of bony anatomical landmarks; and
- practising profession-specific techniques.

You should make potential candidates aware of the expectations of the programme regarding the level of participation expected by and from the student, taking account of, for example, the cultural differences or personal medical health of the individual. In your cross-referencing document, you could refer the Visitors to how this is made clear in the **programme documentation**, or **student handbook**, and included in the **programme recruitment and admissions procedures**, for example.

The Visitors will want to satisfy themselves that mechanisms for gaining consent are clearly in place. They will need to be provided with a copy of relevant protocols, and they may in addition ask question during their meetings with **students or placement providers**.

Other possible sources of guidance

- Guidelines of Good Practice – Student Consent
Information for HEI Physiotherapy Programmes and Physiotherapy Students,
Chartered Society of Physiotherapy

3. Programme management and resource standards

3.10 A system of academic and pastoral student support must be in place.

Guidance

See also the guidance under SET 3.8.

To show how you meet this standard, you can supply the Visitors with information about the support that you offer to students. Visitors may wish to see how your systems can support students on part-time, in-service or work-based learning, or how you support mature or disabled students.

For example, if you operate a personal tutor system, you will probably wish to provide information on how this operates to show how you meet this standard. Or you could show how you support students with dyslexia, including how they are supported on placement. In addition, Visitors may ask **students** about how well they feel the support systems are working.

3. Programme management and resource standards

3.11 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

You should provide information to the Visitors to show when attendance is mandatory, and when it is not. You should show the Visitors how you monitor attendance, for example by a lecture register. You may also wish to show the systems you have in place for implementing this, for example the action that is taken if students do not attend mandatory parts of the course.

The Visitors will need to assure themselves that all students can meet all of the standards of proficiency in order to be able to practise safely and effectively. This means, for example, that aspects of the programme which were essential in order to ensure that students met the Standards of Proficiency would need to be mandatory, with attendance monitored, and lack of attendance followed up to ensure that students gain this knowledge before they complete the course.

The Visitors will probably wish to see that your requirements, and any consequences of missing mandatory teaching, are clearly communicated to students, for example in a **student handbook** or equivalent.

3. Programme management and resource standards

3.12 The resources provided, both on and off site, must adequately support the required learning and teaching activities of the programme.

Guidance

During the **tour** of facilities, you may wish to show the Visitors evidence of resources, which may include lecture theatres, tutorial rooms, presentation equipment, etc., while your documentation may show how these resources support your programme's learning and teaching activities.

Off-site could refer to, for example, a second site where parts of the programme are delivered, or to resources that are available to students on practice placements. The Visitors may not need to see lecture rooms, but will be interested to see other resources such as skills laboratories.

3. Programme management and resource standards

3.13 The learning resources, including the stock of periodicals and subject books, and IT facilities, including internet access, must be appropriate to the curriculum and must be readily available to students and staff.

Guidance

You should provide information in your documentation regarding the learning resources provided for students and for staff, and in addition, you may wish to draw the Visitors' attention to the learning resources during the course of the **tour** of the library and facilities, including Information Technology (IT) facilities.

The Visitors will wish to assure themselves of the quantity, accessibility and currency of resources. They will therefore wish to see information to show that stocks are kept up to date, that there is sufficient budget for replenishment, that there are sufficient stocks of core texts (or that arrangements are made such as reserving certain titles for reference only, or short term loan, or similar), and that opening hours etc. mean that the facilities are available to students and to staff. You could also provide information about any mechanism for liaison between academic and library staff to ensure that the books reflect changes to the programme.

You may wish to cross-reference your evidence under this standard to the information in SET 4.4 'The curriculum must remain relevant to current practice', to show how your resources remain up to date with developments in the programme.

In addition to your library facilities, the Visitors will also need to assure themselves that your IT facilities are appropriate, and readily available. They may **ask the students** how easy they found it to access computers, and whether they considered the number of computers available to be adequate for their needs. If you are using a virtual learning system such as WebCT or Blackboard it can be helpful to the visitors to see a demonstration of how this is used during the **tour** of the library or the IT suites.

SET 4. Curriculum standards

Summary

This part of the standards is concerned with the curriculum: ensuring that graduates meet our standards for their professional skills and knowledge, and are fit to practise. We have created a set of enabling curriculum standards which will allow you to design your own curriculum. You may choose to do this by following a curriculum framework document produced by your professional body, where this is available.

Our standards are designed to be flexible enough to allow programmes to develop (and be re-approved) and still meet our standards in the future.

Overall guidance

The professional bodies, as the learned societies for each profession, may be involved in designing curriculum frameworks. We do not set more detailed standards for curricula, or prescribe more detail about the content of programmes and how they are delivered.

Different professional bodies are at different stages regarding curriculum frameworks: some have been engaged in this for some time, certain professional bodies are beginning to develop this, and some professional bodies may not get involved in this area. For a list of documentation, please see the back of this document, or our website.

Further information

- Professional body:
 - curriculum outlines; and
 - codes of professional conduct.(where available). See the back of this document for a list of publications.
- Health Professions Council Standards of Proficiency, July 2003
- Partnership Framework for Quality Assurance of Healthcare Education, Department of Health (England) 2003
- QAA Benchmark subject benchmark statements (QAA various 2001 – 2004)
- QAA Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (1998 – 2001)

Example questions

What is the theoretical underpinning knowledge of the programme?

Can you discuss the rationale for choosing a work portfolio rather than a dissertation?

Does the programme have sufficient comparative analysis and critiques of other approaches?

Will graduates be fit to practise in a range of settings as wide and diverse as the client group?

What drives the design of your curriculum?

Would you explain the overall coherence of the programme and how a student progresses from day one to graduation?

Can you explain how the learning outcomes of the programme meet the Standards of Proficiency?

Would you clarify how, on graduation, your students will be able to use a range of approaches in their practice?

How do you teach, and what is your approach to teaching?

Would you explain the rationale for the programme content and the balance between the number of hours for different subjects covered?

How do you ensure your curriculum stays relevant to current practice?

Detailed guidance

4. Curriculum standards

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.

Guidance

This is one of the most crucial standards, and one that we advise you to address by completing the Standards of Proficiency cross-referencing document that we provide, as fully as possible.

You should refer the Visitors to the module descriptors, or their equivalent, and learning outcomes which show how all of the Standards of Proficiency are addressed by successfully completing the course.

Please ensure that you cross-reference against the generic, and also the profession-specific parts of the standards.

The Visitors will want to assure themselves that every student completing the course can meet all of the Standards of Proficiency, no matter which options for modules they choose, and also if they have to defer their studies for a period of time.

As well as the cross-referencing document we will send you, you can download a copy of the Standards of Proficiency for your profession from our website, in the publications section.

You should also be aware that in considering how your students can meet the Standards of Proficiency at the end of their programme, you can take into account any reasonable adjustments you have made to the way that you deliver the programme to disabled students.

When the Visitors meet with students they are likely to ask them if they are aware of the Standards of Proficiency and we welcome the inclusion of these in your reading lists.

Other sources of guidance

- A disabled person's guide to becoming a health professional, Health Professions Council
- The Standards of Proficiency, Health Professions Council

4. Curriculum standards

4.2 The programme must reflect the philosophy, values, skills and knowledge base as articulated in the curriculum guidance for the profession.

Guidance

The area of curriculum guidance (or curriculum outline / framework) is one where the professional bodies for each profession are particularly involved. The professional bodies, as the 'learned society' for each profession, act as the keepers of knowledge for their profession, and may be involved in designing curriculum or similar detailed work around the philosophy, values, skills, and knowledge base for their profession. (see also the overall guidance for this section, above)

In meeting this standard, you may therefore refer to any relevant professional body documentation. If no relevant documentation is produced by your professional body, then you may refer to the QAA Benchmark Statements for your profession.

Other sources of guidance

Profession specific sources of guidance may include professional body:

- curriculum frameworks;
- practice placement standards;
- good practice guidelines;
- clinical guidelines; and
- codes of practice.

(where available).

Examples of multi-professional key external reference frameworks could include:

Education and Quality

- QAA subject benchmark statements;
- QAA Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education
- Qualifications Framework for England, Wales and Northern Ireland
- Qualifications Framework for Scotland

Legislation

- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Health and Safety at Work Act and regulations there under, for example
 - Ionising Radiation Regulations 1999
 - Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) Regulations 2000
- The Children Act 1989

Health and Social Care Policy

- National Service Frameworks
- National Occupational Standards
- Knowledge and Skills Framework (Department of Health 2003)

See the list at the back of this document for a list of publications which you may find useful.

4. Curriculum standards

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

Guidance

The Visitors will be looking for evidence within your curriculum documentation that theory and practice are integrated. This applies to both the academic and practice setting.

In showing that you meet this standard, you could demonstrate how this integration forms an integral part of your programme planning. If your quality assurance mechanisms evaluate how successful this integration has been, and how it could be further improved, you could also refer the Visitors to this in your cross-referencing document. You could also draw the Visitors' attention to aspects of your programme delivery or design where you feel that this integration is well demonstrated.

4. Curriculum standards

4.4 The curriculum must remain relevant to current practice.

Guidance

Examples of the kinds of evidence you could submit to show how you meet this standard could include:

- regular contact with employers;
- staff CVs, which might include information about how you maintain currency through the ongoing clinical or research experience, or professional activity of

- members of the programme team;
- evidence of where research and scholarly activity impact on the programme, and programme development;
- peer-reviewed journals used in curriculum;
- QAA major review reports;
- evidence of the contribution of stakeholders (placement educators, employers, practitioners, past and present students, service users, workforce development confederations/strategic health authorities) in the programme planning process; and
- evidence of how changes in policy and health and social care developments effect your programme's development.

You may want to provide information about how current external frameworks and drivers influence the profession, and hence influence the education and training that you provide, and how your programme design and delivery:

- anticipate or reflect change in health and social care and its organisation, changes in legislation, and in patient need;
- absorb and reflect developments in a profession's research base and technological advances; and
- nurture students' capability to be responsive to – and to initiate effective change in practice.

4. Curriculum standards

4.5 The delivery of the programme must assist autonomous and reflective thinking, and evidence based practice.

Guidance

Students should be encouraged to reflect upon their own practice, the limits of their safe and effective practice, and their accountability, to ensure that they are safe autonomous practitioners when they graduate.

The Visitors will look for evidence of autonomous and reflective thinking, and evidence-based practice through student-centred and independent learning, teaching and assessment strategies. The evidence that you could show the Visitors in order to show how you meet this standard could include:

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

We do not require that undergraduate students write a dissertation in order for you to meet this standard. Evidence based practice could be demonstrated, for example, by a research methods course, or the production of a research proposal.

Other sources of guidance

- Professional body:
 - codes of ethics; and
 - guidance on reflective practice.(where available). See the back of this document for a list of publications.

4. Curriculum standards

4.6 The range of learning and teaching approaches used must be appropriate to the subjects in the curriculum.

Guidance

In this standard, the term ‘subjects’ includes practice placements, so the information that you provide here may also be used to show how you meet SET 5, which is concerned with practice placements.

‘Appropriate’ means appropriate to the learning outcomes required, both academic and theoretical knowledge, and the skills required in professional practice.

Meeting this standard means that you will need to show that you employ a ‘range’ of learning and teaching approaches in delivering the programme. We do not specify how many approaches you should adopt, but it is unlikely (but not impossible) that a programme which relied on only one learning and teaching approach would be able to give evidence to show that it met this standard.

NB: This standard will also inform SETs 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5

Further sources of guidance

- The Higher Education Academy’s website www.hea.ac.uk

4. Curriculum standards

4.7 Where there is inter-professional learning the profession specific skills and knowledge of each professional group must be adequately addressed.

Guidance

We recognise that where inter-professional learning exists, and is successful, it can develop students' capacity for collaboration and communication with other members of the health and social care team, which will foster effective working with others.

However, we also recognise that you may not be able to offer inter-professional learning, since capacity to do so may depend on your total provision, and structure, and other factors beyond your direct control. Here, therefore, we only specify that if your programme includes inter-professional learning, you must ensure that the skills and knowledge of each separate professional group are adequately addressed.

To show how you meet this standard, you might provide information about which parts of the curriculum are shared, and which are not, with the rationale behind this, and the ways that you see inter-professional education developing in your institution, and how it benefits those groups which participate.

Further sources of guidance

- 'Interprofessional education', Commissioned by the Department of Health from the UK Centre for the Advancement of Interprofessional Education (CAIPE), 2002

SET 5. Practice placements standards

Summary

This section of the standards concerns your practice placements. We do not normally need to approve individual practice placements (although some professional bodies may do so). However, we may visit practice placements if specific queries have been raised about whether your placements meet our standards.

The responsibility for assuring the quality of the placement lies with you: the education provider. (Please note that this is different from the approach taken by the QAA, where placements may be regarded as a partnership where the placement provider and education provider are jointly responsible). If you share practice placement arrangements with another education provider, you will each need to separately demonstrate approval and ongoing quality assurance of placements. You should also have arrangements in place to ensure that your own learning outcomes can still be achieved.

We need to see evidence about the way that you manage your placements, support and provide information to your students and practice placement providers, and monitor the placements to ensure that they continue to be useful, and to meet our standards.

Overall guidance

In order to assure themselves that you meet all of the standards for practice placements, the Visitors will normally wish to see:

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

You may produce documents which have a different title, or this information may be published in some other form, with other documentation, or online. This is not necessarily a problem, as long as in doing so you can show that you can meet all of the standards below.

The Visitors would normally also meet **with practice placement educators, placement co-ordinators and / or practice education facilitators** and they may raise questions relating to the information in the documentation you have provided, or any standards which raised queries.

Please note that we do not make specific requirements regarding the duration, structure, organisation or timing of placements. Other organisations may have set requirements of a certain number of hours of clinical contact, or a number of weeks that a placement must last. While you may wish to meet these, you should be aware that we do not make these

requirements of you, and that it is not necessary to meet these in order for us to approve your programme. See SET 5.5 for more information on this.

The whole of SET 5.8 begins with the text '*unless other arrangements are agreed*', hence you can agree with the Visitors to meet this standard in other ways. To discuss this, please contact the Education Officer organising your visit, who will send your information to the Visitors for their comments.

Example questions

How is clinical governance integrated?
How useful is the placement handbook to those who use it?
How well prepared are your students for their placement?
Where does one-to-one work with a client come in with regard to placements?
How are placements found? How are they monitored?
How successful are you with the integration of theory and practice?
How do you know that placement staff are appropriately qualified?
Do you visit placements? How often?
What process do students follow through their placements?
How do you quality assure your placements?
Can you map clear lines of responsibility / communication between the students, placements, and placement managers?
Are placement supervisors trained? How / when are they trained?
How much communication is there between yourselves and the practice educators? How do you collaborate?
How do you ensure that placements have adequate equal opportunities systems in place?

Further information

- The Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics, the Health Professions Council
- Professional body practice placement guidelines (where available)
- The Development of Quality Standards for Practice Placements, NHS Education for Scotland
- Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Education: Placement Learning, Quality Assurance Agency
- Department of Health, Placements in Focus: Guidance for education in practice for health care professions
- NHS Education for Scotland, The Development of Quality Standards for Practice Placements
- Northern Ireland Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, Review of Clinical Placements for the Allied Health Professions
- Case studies in Dietetics, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and Radiography, published by 'making Practice-Based Learning work'.
www.practicebasedlearning.org

Detailed guidance

5. Practice placements standards

5.1 Practice placements must be integral to the programme.

Guidance

The structure of your programme must show that practice placements are an integral part of the programme. You could demonstrate this through reference to your ongoing partnership arrangements with your practice placement educators, the way that they are supported and encouraged to participate in programme development, the way that the practice placement learning outcomes and progression are aligned with the rest of the programme, and through your rationale for your placement structure.

5. Practice placements standards

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

Guidance

We do not dictate how many staff must be present at each placement (nor that those staff must be registered with us) as we acknowledge that there are different models of practice-based learning. However, the Visitors will want to assure themselves that there is an adequate number to ensure that the students are supported in their learning in a safe practice environment.

‘Appropriately qualified’ can be interpreted in different ways depending on the student's learning objectives for the placement.

If the staff present at certain placements are not registered with us, then you may want to provide information about their professional qualifications (and their registration with other regulators or organisations, if appropriate) and also to show how their qualifications are appropriate to the placement, and to the learning outcomes.

We are aware that different professions practise different models of practice placement, including the relationship with the practice educator/supervisor. For instance a one to one relationship may be the ideal for many professions whereas there may be four or five students to one supervisor in others. The Visitors will look for evidence in documentation, and at meetings with the programme team and placement educators, that you have clearly justified what you consider to be adequate numbers and ratios. Ratios may also vary according to the level of support needed by the student.

Other sources of guidance

Possible definitions of the terms ‘qualified and experienced’, with specific suggestions for ways to meet this requirement, may be found in professional body curriculum documentation.

5. Practice placements standards

5.3 The practice placement settings must provide:
5.3.1 a safe environment;

Guidance

A safe environment means one where staff and student have carried out relevant assessments of risk within the area of practice and where safety policies and procedures are in place. In showing how you meet this standard, you may therefore show the Visitors evidence of your consideration of issues which may include:

- physical risk from equipment;
- risk from substances hazardous to health;
- radiation risk;
- fire safety; and
- infection control.

The Visitor will look for evidence of how education and placement providers ensure that the student and others working alongside them, and in their care, are safe. Placement induction processes should clearly articulate how risks and safety issues are brought to the student's attention.

Placement should adhere to all elements of clinical governance to ensure protection of the public.

You could also provide information about how you quality assure your placements, including whether, as part of this, you require your 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 to how you meet this standard, and you may wish to cross-reference it here.

You could also show how you enable students to assess risk in clinical situations, and to make measured, professional decisions. (This kind of evidence may also be relevant in showing how you meet SET 4.5)

Other sources of guidance

Any Health and Safety documentation produced by:

- education provider; and

- professional bodies.
(where available).

5. Practice placements standards

5.3 The practice placement settings must provide:
5.3.2 safe and effective practice.

Guidance

In showing how your placements provide for safe and effective practice, you could refer the Visitors to how you map your placements against learning outcomes, or you could explain the resources available to students (including, for example, learning contracts, portfolios, library provision, e-learning resources) or how the role of the practice placements educators helps to ensure that the students can practice safely and effectively.

You could also show how you enable students to assess risk in clinical situations, and to make measured, professional decisions. (This kind of evidence may also be relevant in showing how you meet SET 4.5)

5. Practice placements standards

5.4 Learning, teaching and supervision must be designed to encourage safe and effective practice, independent learning and professional conduct.

Guidance

The Visitors will want to see how the placements prepare your students for entry into their profession. You could provide evidence about how your programme prepares your students for independent learning on placement, and how they are equipped with the resources and skills to work more autonomously. Visitors may want to see information about how students learn about the conduct expected of them on placement; you could relate this to any teaching about our standards.

The evidence that you give to the Visitors might include:

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

This kind of information could also be relevant to showing how you meet SET 4.5, and SET 5.3.2.

Information about how students progress through their placements (and how they are supported in doing so) and how they are enabled to gain an appropriate mix and range of practice-based experience to fulfil the learning outcomes for the award and the Standards of Proficiency may also be relevant to showing that you meet this standard, and also SET 5.5 and SET 6.4.

Other sources of guidance

- Health Professions Council ‘Standards of conduct, performance and ethics’
- Professional body standards of conduct /codes of ethics.

5. Practice placements standards

5.5 The number, duration and range of placements must be appropriate to the achievement of the learning outcomes.

Guidance

We do not dictate the number, length or range of placements that you must include in your course in order to meet our standards. But this standard does require that the placement structure be appropriate to the learning that you expect students to achieve. Visitors might have questions regarding this standard if there appeared to be a mis-match between the length of your placements, and the learning outcomes. Visitors will want to see that there is a clear rationale for the chosen number, duration and range of placements.

Visitors may want to see that all students gain access to a breadth of learning experiences in a variety of practice environments so as to reflect the nature of contemporary practice and practice settings of the profession to which they are preparing for entry. You may want to provide information about how you support students in recording and articulating how their learning in practice environments relates to the core areas of practice of that profession.

The Visitors may also want to know about how students are expected to progress in terms of their clinical skills during the placements, and how, therefore, the learning outcomes for the first placement differ from those of the final one.

5. Practice placements standards

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

Guidance

In order to show how you meet this standard, you will need to provide the Visitors with

information about how you approve placements before you use them, and also how they are subsequently monitored.

The evidence to support this could include:

- policies and processes for initial approval of placements;
- examples of how these are implemented;
- mechanisms for ongoing monitoring and audit of placements;
- how feedback from students is collected, analysed and acted upon;
- how you gain feedback from practice placement educators and co-ordinators, and ensure that channels of communication are clear;
- how you feed this information back into your processes; and
- policies or processes for how you deal with placements where difficulties arise.

5. Practice placements standards

5.7 Students and practice placement educators must be fully prepared for placement which will include information about and understanding of the following:

5.7.1 the learning outcomes to be achieved;

5.7.2 timings and the duration of any placement experience and associated records to be maintained;

5.7.3 expectations of professional conduct;

5.7.4 the assessment procedures including the implications of, and any action to be taken in the case of failure; and

5.7.5 communication and lines of responsibility.

Guidance

In order to show the Visitors how you meet this standard, you will need to show not only that this information is provided to students and to practice placement educators, but also that this information is accessible to them, and that it is provided with adequate time for them to read it, and follow up any queries they have.

You might want to show how information is provided, and also how you ensure that students and practice placement educators have understood the information that you have provided. This might be through follow-up training, or teaching, or opportunity for discussion. This could be in your **student handbook**, **practice placement handbook**, or equivalent. The Visitors may ask questions during their **meeting with the students or with the practice placement educators** to find out how well-informed they feel about the expectations of them and their responsibilities during a placement.

See also the guidance provided for SET 5.11

5. Practice placements standards

5.8 Unless other arrangements are agreed, practice placement educators:
5.8.1 must have relevant qualifications and experience;

Guidance

We do not make specific requirements regarding the qualifications and experience that your practice placement educators must have, but the Visitors will want to see information showing that they have the knowledge, skills and experience to support students adequately and to ensure that they have a safe environment for effective learning.

(See also the information that we have provided under SET 5.2)

Your professional body may offer an accreditation scheme for practice placement educators. (For example, the College of Occupational Therapists, and the Chartered Society of Physiotherapists offer schemes of this nature.) If you participate in such a scheme, you could provide the Visitors with information about how it operates, to show how you meet this standard.

5. Practice placements standards

Unless other arrangements are agreed, practice placement educators:
5.8.2 must be appropriately registered;

Guidance

Normally, your practice placement educators will be registered with us in the relevant profession. However, it is reasonable to assume that there are other entirely appropriate practice placement educators who do not have a profession-specific background which matches that of the student. For example occupational therapists may supervise physiotherapy students in areas such as hand management; nurses may supervise radiographers in aseptic techniques.

Because this standard contains the text '*unless other arrangements are agreed*', this means that your practice placement educators may include health professionals who are not registered with us, but are registered with another statutory regulator, or members of a relevant voluntary register, or not registered at all. If you choose this, then you will probably wish to provide additional information to the Visitors to assure them of the practice placement educator's experience, qualifications and training, and how this is relevant to the placement, and how this facilitates your students' learning. The Visitors will want to see that arrangements are in place to support these educators. This support may or may not be the same as that which is provided for profession-specific educators.

5. Practice placements standards

Unless other arrangements are agreed, practice placement educators:
5.8.3 must undertake appropriate practice placement educator training.

Guidance

We expect that you will wish to train all of your practice placement educators, and to follow this up with refresher training at intervals, as well as making provision for new practice placement educators who may come on board during the year.

We do not make specific requirements for this training, either in length or content, since we feel that this level of detail is best decided by individual education providers. There may be best practice in other organisations, or advice published by other bodies about the content that you will wish to cover. Your training may take a variety of forms e.g. attendance at the education provider institution for training; training in the workplace; on-line support; written support; peer support through workshops and meetings.

Practice placement educator training requirements will vary across the professions and also between education providers. Those education providers who use the same placements regularly and recurrently and have relatively low staff turnover may need less ongoing training for practice educators/supervisors. Where placements are used less regularly or where staff turnover is high training should be more regular.

Visitors may want to see evidence of training for these placement providers involved in either formative or summative assessment to ensure consistency of assessed standards across all placements (see also SET 6)

Because this standard says ‘unless *other arrangements are agreed*’, it is possible for a programme to be approved that does not make provision for practice placement educator training. However, if you choose not to provide training, the Visitors will want to see how you give information to your practice placement educators in order to assure themselves that you meet SETs 5.3, 5.6 and 5.7. If you anticipate not meeting this standard, then please contact the Education Officer organising your visit, who can forward information to the Visitors for their comment.

5. Practice placements standards

5.9 There must be collaboration between the education provider and practice placement providers.

Guidance

Visitors will want to see information about how you collaborate with your practice placement providers. This might take the form of regular meetings or channels of communication with your practice placement providers, or systems whereby they feed back on their experience of supervising students on placement, or ways in which

placement providers influence the structure of the placements or programme planning and design. Any information that you can supply which shows a partnership, ongoing relationship and not one that peaks around the time of programme planning and approval will help to show the Visitors how you meet this standard.

5. Practice placements standards

5.10 The education provider must ensure necessary information is supplied to practice placement providers.

Guidance

The Visitors will want to see that the necessary information is supplied, and also how it is supplied to practice placement educators. This information might include:

- names of students and their year of study;
- information about the responsibilities of practice placement educators, their role in the programme, and expectations;
- induction information;
- programme management information;
- information about supporting disabled students on placement;
- contact details, both routine and emergency; and
- details of learning outcomes of placements.

We expect that some of this information will normally take the form of a **practice placement educators handbook**, or equivalent. This would normally be supplied to practice placement educators prior to the beginning of a placement, wherever possible.

5. Practice placements standards

5.11 Practice placement providers must ensure necessary information is available at the appropriate time for both the education provider and students.

Guidance

In order to meet this standard, you should show how you ensure that students receive information from the practice placement providers, and that you are in receipt of the information you need from placement providers.

‘The appropriate time’ may mean, for example, that pre-placement information is provided in advance of the placement, with adequate time for both parties to read the information, and to ask any questions which arise from it. However, there are other pieces of information for which ‘the appropriate time’ will mean a suitable duration after the placement, for example a record of student attendance, progress or placement reports,

completed student feedback, completed placement audits, completed placement assessments, etc.

5. Practice placements standards

5.12 A range of learning and teaching methods that respect the rights and needs of patients or clients 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. The important thing is that whatever the range used, these must respect the needs of patients, clients, users, and also colleagues as laid out above.

The Visitor may wish to see evidence that you have a system in place which ensures that, wherever possible, patients/clients are aware that students are involved in their care. You can show how you inform your placement providers of this system, and give them any relevant documentation. The system might be communicated verbally, in writing or through information such as posters or leaflets. If placement providers have local systems to adhere to then these systems may override your requirements but should at least match them and you should show how you are made aware of this, and monitor it.

5. Practice placements standards

5.13 The placement providers must have an equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory policy in relation to students, together with an indication of how this will be implemented and monitored.

Guidance

You do not need to submit to the Visitors copies of the equal opportunities and anti-discrimination policies (or equivalent) of all your placements. In order to show that you meet this standard, you will need to give the Visitors information about how you ensure that these are in place and that they are implemented. The students on placement will need to know how they can access these policies and the steps they should take if they feel that discrimination has occurred. You may decide to have an audit process for your placements and this could be part of that process.

Further information

- Supporting disabled physiotherapy students on clinical placement, Chartered Society of Physiotherapy
- Guidance on Disability and Learning, College of Occupational Therapy

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SET 6. Assessment standards

Summary

This part of the Standards of Education and Training concerns how you assess your students, to ensure that they meet the requirements of your course, that they meet our Standards of Proficiency, and that they are assessed fairly and consistently.

Overall guidance

You may wish to provide the Visitors with a copy of your institution's **assessment strategy**, or equivalent, as well as any additional information about the assessment of your programme which sits alongside this.

The Visitors may be interested in how you ensure that assessment of practice placements is rigorous, consistent, and fair. Hence information about how you train practice placement educators, and how marks are moderated, may also be relevant here. You may therefore wish to refer to this information in your cross-referencing document both in section 5 (practice placements) and here, in the assessment standards section.

Example questions

How did you develop your assessment profile?

What is your policy on re-sits?

If students fail on a placement can they do it again?

What happens if a student fails the dissertation?

How does your assessment comply with external reference frameworks?

How have you used external reference points?

How does your assessment design deliver 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 excludes you from registering with the HPC?

Without special circumstances, do students still have the right of appeal?

Who is the external examiner? Is the external examiner HPC registered?

Further information

- Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Education. Section 6, Assessment of students, Quality Assurance Agency
- Subject benchmark statements, Quality Assurance Agency

Detailed guidance

6. Assessment standards

6.1 The assessment design and procedures must assure that the student can demonstrate fitness to practise.

Guidance

When you assess a student you must ensure that you are testing not only academic and theoretical learning and knowledge, but also the practical application of skills necessary in order that the student can be fit to practise their profession.

The Visitors will want to be assured that, in order to complete the course, students have to show that they have the skills and knowledge to become independent, accountable professionals.

If you have provided a copy of your **assessment strategy**, or similar, the Visitors will want to see the programme specifications which should clearly articulate this strategy and include sections directly referring to subject/professional/practice learning outcomes and associated assessment methods. This therefore provides a direct link to fitness to practise. Each module outline/descriptor will explain the strategy and methods for that module.

The Visitors may also be interested to see information about your regulations on issues such as:

- number of re-sit attempts allowed (and within what period of time);
- number of module re-sits allowed within any one year;
- maximum number of re-sits permitted per year for practice placement modules ;
- compensation and condonement regulations; and
- the maximum length of a programme

Although we do not set limits on, for example, the number of re-sit attempts allowed, you should show the Visitors how your policy on re-sits strikes an adequate balance between the need to support students, and the need to ensure that those who successfully complete the programme are fit to practise.

6. Assessment standards

6.2 Assessment methods must be employed that measure the learning outcomes and skills that are required to practise safely and effectively.

Guidance

In order to show how you meet this standard, you might want to provide information about your assessment methods, your rationale behind the different assessment methods that are used for different parts of the programme, and how the methods are aligned to the learning outcomes in each module. The Visitors will need to see that, whatever method of assessment applies, it ensures safe and effective practice.

6. Assessment standards

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

Guidance

You may want to provide information here not only about how your assessment methods are rigorous and effective, but also about how your programme complies with any relevant external reference frameworks. An example of this would be if your course is a pre-registration Masters programme: showing how your programme meets the requirements of a Masters programme as well as meeting the requirements to be approved by us, could be part of your evidence for this standard.

Further information

- Any relevant institution regulations
- Professional body guidelines

6. Assessment standards

6.4 The measurement of student performance and progression must be an integral part of the wider process of monitoring and evaluation, and use objective criteria.

Guidance

The Visitors will want to see information not only about how you monitor student performance, but also about your expectations for student progression through the course: what criteria you use to assess students who are at different stages in their learning, and how this reflects an overall progression in the programme to an acceptable standard.

Your institution's **assessment strategy**, or a similar school or department-level document, may contain information about the criteria used for assessment, and how this is objective. In addition, the moderation of marks, and the way that students are assessed on placement, may all be relevant information to provide to the Visitors.

When Visitors meet with students they often ask them about the level of feedback they receive on their assignments and whether the students feel it is sufficient. However, we

do not normally expect to see samples of students' work.

6. Assessment standards

6.5 There must be effective mechanisms in place to assure appropriate standards in the assessment.

Guidance

Under this standard, you could provide information about how your programme is assessed, for example, by your University validation process (if applicable), or comments from your external examiner in their report. In order to see that you meet this standard, Visitors will want to see not only that your criteria are robust and consistently applied, but also that the standards students are assessed against are appropriate: for your programme; for the student's progression; and to ensure that they can meet the Standards of Proficiency when they complete the course.

The Visitors may want to see that internal and external moderation are carried out. You could refer the Visitors to external examiner reports and responses to these reports as part of an identified audit trail.

The Visitors may use **CVs and staff profiles** to evaluate where educators from the programme team have a depth and breadth of experience in assessment. For example where staff act or have acted as external examiners at other education provider institutions. The Visitors will then be able to see how internal moderation systems of the education provider have additional comparisons to external standards.

6. Assessment standards

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

Guidance

'Professional aspects of practice' may include, for example, the students' familiarity with concepts of autonomy and accountability, or their understanding of the nature of professional regulation, and the responsibilities this entails.

It is vital to students' learning that they are prepared for the professional aspects of practice once they are registered. In order to show how you meet this standard, you could provide information to the Visitors about the way that your assessment procedures assess this. For example, you may have a specific module which addresses professional issues, with information about how this is assessed.

You could also show the Visitors how a student can redeem a referred, failed or incomplete placement within an appropriate timeframe that allows progression to the next stage of the programme.

Further information

- Health Professions Council, Standards of conduct, performance and ethics (2003)

6. Assessment standards

6.7 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for:

6.7.1 student progression and achievement within the programme;

Guidance

The assessment regulations (or equivalent) of your programme or institution, must make it clear how you assess students in order to ensure and recognise their continuing progression within the programme. These must be clear in order for students to understand the expectations of them at each stage of the programme, and in order that staff assessing work can apply criteria consistently to students' work.

The information that you provided for SET 6.4, which also refers to student progression, may also be relevant here.

6. Assessment standards

6.7 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for:

6.7.2 awards which do not provide eligibility for inclusion onto the Register not to contain any reference to an HPC protected title in their title;

Guidance

It is important that there is no confusion regarding which programmes are approved by us, and which are not. We therefore require under this standard that students who are not eligible for apply for registration should not be given an award which makes a reference to an approved title. Some education providers give these students awards with titles like 'Healthcare studies' which reflects the academic standard achieved, but does not give the impression that they are eligible to apply for registration. The Visitors will want to see that programme titles are clear, in order that applicants, students, staff and the public understand who is eligible to apply for registration with us, and who is not.

6. Assessment standards

6.7 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for:
6.7.3 an aegrotat award not to provide eligibility for admission to the Register

Guidance

It must be clear to students and to staff that those who are awarded an aegrotat degree are not eligible to apply for registration. In order to show that you meet this standard, you could refer the Visitors to where this policy is laid out, and how students are informed, for example on your **website**, in your **student handbook**, etc.

6. Assessment standards

6.7 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for:
6.7.4 a procedure for the right of appeal for students; and

Guidance

You may give the Visitors information about the appeal procedure, and also information about how students are informed of this. Visitors would normally expect to find this in a **student handbook**, or equivalent, and in your institution's regulations for examinations. This should contain information about how the procedure works, and how it is judged, and by whom.

Visitors will also expect to see clear information for students about where they should go for advice on your institution's appeals process.

6. Assessment standards

6.7 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for:
6.7.5 the appointment of at least one external examiner from the relevant part of the Register.

Guidance

We require that you have at least one external examiner for each programme, but we do not play any part in their appointment. The Visitors will expect to see, however, that the external examiner has been selected with due regard to their qualifications and experience. You may want to refer to comments made by your external examiner in your self-evaluation document.

How this document was written

We consulted on our Standards of Education and Training, and our approvals process, in 2004. We held six meetings around the UK to present our proposals, and sent copies of our proposals out to interested parties, which included professional bodies, education

providers, and others involved in training or representing the professionals on our Register.

As a result of this consultation, we published our standards and our processes, but we also committed to publishing further guidance on our Standards. In our ‘Key Decisions’ document we refer to publishing ‘guidance’ and ‘curriculum guidance’.

We established a professional liaison group to meet these responsibilities, and the group met for the first time in March 2005. The view of this group was that the term ‘curriculum guidance’ was misleading, and had the potential to lead to confusion about our role and the role of the professional bodies. The group agreed that further guidance on the standards for education providers was needed, but that it was not appropriate or necessary for us to replace the detailed curriculum information published by professional bodies, who are the learned societies for their professions, and play an important role in the development of the profession, and setting standards for best practice. The documentation our group would draft was therefore named the ‘Standards of Education and Training guidance for education providers’.

The group agreed that liaison with the professional bodies in the production of this guidance would be essential, and therefore invited the professional bodies to an initial ideas meeting where representatives discussed the document, and gave valuable input and ideas for a first draft. The professional body representatives subsequently gave more detailed notes about the standards after consulting with others in their organisation, and then gave comments on a first draft which was circulated by email.

We are very grateful for the time and effort that members of professional bodies have given to help make these documents full, complete, and useful. We would like to thank the people below who have contributed to the writing of this document.

Derek Pearson	Association of Clinical Scientists
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We would also like to thank Helen Best, who worked on an original draft of a document called 'Visitors guidance', much of which has now been integrated into this document.

We would, however, like to emphasise that this document remains the property of the Health Professions Council. Any queries about its content should be directed to us, and any mistakes in this document remain our responsibility.

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These documents may be changed, updated or replaced. For a more up-to-date list of documentation, you may wish to see our website.

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