

## **Consultation on revised Guidance on conduct and ethics for students**

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 We are the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). This consultation seeks the views of our stakeholders on draft revised Guidance on conduct and ethics for students.
- 1.2 In this document, you can find out information about the guidance and its links to the standards we set including our standards of conduct, performance and ethics.
- 1.3 This consultation will be of interest to students on approved education and training programmes, registrants, as well as education providers, practice placement providers, employers, professional bodies and those who use the services of registrants or students.
- 1.4 The draft guidance for consultation has been published alongside this document on our website. Please see: [www.hcpc-uk.org/aboutus/consultations/index.asp?id=194](http://www.hcpc-uk.org/aboutus/consultations/index.asp?id=194)
- 1.5 The consultation runs from **19 October 2015** to **29 January 2016**.

## 2. About the HCPC

- 2.1 We are a regulator and were set up to protect the public. To do this, we keep a register of professionals who meet our standards for their training, professional skills, behaviour and health. Individuals on our Register are called 'registrants'.
- 2.2 We currently regulate 16 professions:
  - arts therapists
  - biomedical scientists
  - chiropodists / podiatrists
  - clinical scientists
  - dietitians
  - hearing aid dispensers
  - occupational therapists
  - operating department practitioners
  - orthoptists
  - paramedics
  - physiotherapists
  - practitioner psychologists
  - prosthetists / orthotists
  - radiographers
  - social workers in England
  - speech and language therapists.

### **3. About the Guidance on conduct and ethics for students**

- 3.1 The Guidance on conduct and ethics for students is based on our standards of conduct, performance and ethics. These standards are the high level ethical standards we set for all the professionals we register. They describe what behaviour we expect of our registrants and provide a framework which can assist registrants in making ethical decisions.
- 3.2 The standards apply to both registrants and those applying to be registered. Students on approved education and training programmes will learn about these standards and the behaviour that will be expected of them as professionals. We have written this guidance in order to make students more familiar with how the standards apply to them.
- 3.3 The ten headings we have used in the guidance have been taken from the revised standards on conduct, performance and ethics (see section 4.1 below for further details). Under each heading we have provided bullet points which give guidance on how the particular requirement relates to students.
- 3.4 Education providers and practice placement providers often produce their own policies and procedures which should be followed by students in conjunction with this guidance.

### **4. The standards of conduct, performance and ethics**

- 4.1 The revised standards of conduct, performance and ethics were recently the subject of a public consultation. We intend to publish the revised standards in early 2016. Further information on the standards post consultation including our response to the consultation can be found on our website: [www.hcpc-uk.org/aboutus/consultations/closed/index.asp?id=188](http://www.hcpc-uk.org/aboutus/consultations/closed/index.asp?id=188)

### **5. About the review of the guidance**

- 5.1 The Guidance on conduct and ethics for students was first published in 2010. The guidance was based on our existing standards of conduct, performance and ethics.
- 5.2 As a result of the latest review of our standards of conduct, performance and ethics, we have amended this guidance document. This is to ensure that our Guidance on conduct and ethics for students continues to be fit for purpose, up-to-date and well understood by students, education providers, practice placement providers and others.
- 5.3 The draft guidance is based on the revised standards of conduct, performance and ethics and explains what they mean for students on our approved programmes.
- 5.4 Prior to consultation, we sought specific feedback from students on the draft guidance and how we might improve it. This involved conducting a session

with students at a professional conference and the organisation of a dedicated student event at a university.

- 5.5 We would like to thank all of those who helped us by giving their time and input during the review process.
- 5.6 Once the consultation has closed we will consider the feedback we received in finalising the guidance. We expect that the new guidance will be published and in place for the start of the academic year 2016–17.

## **6. About the draft guidance**

- 6.1 We have used the revised standards of conduct, performance and ethics, as well as other feedback we have received to put together the draft revised guidance for consultation.
- 6.2 We have made a range of changes to improve the content and accessibility of the guidance and have outlined some of the main changes below.

### **Introduction**

- 6.3 We have updated the introduction to the guidance to include recent legislative changes regarding the rights of individuals not to disclose certain 'protected cautions' and 'protected convictions' to us as part of our registration processes. See draft guidance for further information.

### **Reporting concerns**

- 6.4 We have strengthened the requirements for students reporting any concerns about the safety and wellbeing of service users or carers; and for ensuring that students place the wellbeing of service users before any personal concerns about their assessments, marks, other work related to their programme, future employment prospects or any personal gain.
- 6.5 This expectation was already included in the existing guidance but has been strengthened in order to make our expectations as clear as possible.

### **Being open when things go wrong**

- 6.6 The report of the Francis Inquiry proposed that health and care professionals should have a 'duty of candour'. This means that they should be open and honest with service users and their carers when something has gone wrong with the care, treatment or other services they have provided to them.
- 6.7 As a result, we have added a requirement for registrants about being open and honest when things go wrong in the revised standards of conduct, performance and ethics. We have also included appropriate reference to this requirement for students in the draft guidance. For example, students should inform an appropriate member of staff at their education provider or practice

placement provider if something has gone wrong in any care, treatment or other services they have carried out on or with a service user.

## **Delegation**

- 6.8 The standards of conduct, performance and ethics require registrants to make sure that anyone they delegate work to has the knowledge, skills and experience to carry it out safely and effectively, and to maintain appropriate oversight where they have delegated a task.
- 6.9 We understand that the issue of delegation by students is complex and often contested. It may not be appropriate for all students. This is because students are not practising as autonomous professionals and remain supervised themselves throughout their programme.
- 6.10 However, for some students as their knowledge and skills develop throughout their programme the issue of delegation may become more relevant. We are also aware that many tasks are delegated to support workers and assistant practitioners in the current workforce.
- 6.11 As a result, we have included new guidance for students to support the development of their knowledge and skills on delegation and to safeguard the safety and wellbeing of service users or carers.
- 6.12 Students should discuss the delegation of tasks with an appropriate member of staff at their education provider or practice placement provider prior to taking any action. They should also follow any relevant policies or guidelines in this area and ensure that the person they delegate a task to has the knowledge, skills and experience to carry out the task safely and effectively. We have asked a specific consultation question on this issue.

## **Structure and language of the guidance**

- 6.13 We have made some changes to the structure of the guidance to improve its accessibility. This has included structuring the guidance to correspond to the revised standards of conduct, performance and ethics.
- 6.14 We have reordered the key statements so that they should now be more logically ordered. We have also tried to improve the language used in the guidance so that, as far as possible, it is easy to understand for students, education providers, practice placement providers, registrants, members of the public and others. We have reworded or removed some content which is now out-of-date, or which is already sufficiently covered in the guidance or other relevant publications.

## **Other changes**

- 6.15 The following provides a brief summary (not exhaustive) of some of the other changes we have made to the draft guidance, in line with the revised

standards of conduct, performance and ethics. The numbers in brackets refer to the relevant heading in the guidance.

- We have strengthened the expectations for students to treat everyone fairly including not to discriminate and to respect the privacy and dignity of their service users and carers (1).
- We have strengthened the statement about ensuring that students obtain consent before they carry out any care, treatment or other services on or with a service user (1).
- We have placed increased emphasis on students communicating appropriately and effectively. This includes listening to their service users and carers and taking account of their needs and wishes; being polite and considerate; and using all forms of communication appropriately and responsibly including social media and networking sites (2).
- We expect students to only work within the limits of their knowledge and skills. However, we have strengthened the feedback requirements for students to ensure that they listen to feedback from others in order to aid their development (3).
- We believe that students should be able to discuss concerns with an appropriate person (such as a member of staff at the education provider or practice placement provider) if confidential information raises concerns about the safety or wellbeing of someone (5).
- We have strengthened the expectations for students to appropriately manage risk including any relevant changes in their physical and mental health; and to follow their education provider or practice placement provider's policies and guidance on managing and limiting risk (6).
- We have placed increased emphasis on students being honest and trustworthy. This includes being open about their experience and role with service users and carers; and providing important information about their conduct, competence or health to their education provider or practice placement provider (9).
- We have clarified the statement about record keeping to distinguish records about work with service users and carers from those related to a student's learning and assessment (10).

## **7. How to respond to the consultation**

- 7.1 We welcome your comments on the draft revised guidance. We have listed some questions to help you below. The questions are not designed to be exhaustive and we would welcome your comments on any aspect of the draft guidance.

- Q1. Do you agree with the structure of the guidance? If not, how could we improve it?
- Q2. Do you think that any additional information or guidance should be included in the Guidance on conduct and ethics for students?
- Q3. Do you think there are any parts of the guidance which should be reworded or removed?
- Q4. Do you think the addition of guidance on delegation for students is appropriate and clear? If not, why not, or how can we improve it?
- Q5. Do you have any comments about the language used in the guidance?
- Q6. Do you have any other comments on the guidance?

7.2 You can respond to this consultation in the following ways:

- By completing our easy-to-use online survey:  
[www.research.net/r/consultationonguidanceonconductandethicsforstudents](http://www.research.net/r/consultationonguidanceonconductandethicsforstudents)
- By emailing us at: [consultation@hcpc-uk.org](mailto:consultation@hcpc-uk.org).
- By writing to us at the following address:

Consultation on Guidance on conduct and ethics for students  
Policy and Standards Department  
Health and Care Professions Council  
Park House  
184 Kennington Park Road  
London  
SE11 4BU

Fax: +44(0)20 7820 9684

- 7.3 Please note that we do not normally accept responses by telephone or in person. We normally ask that consultation responses are made in writing. However, if you are unable to respond in writing, please contact us on +44(0)20 7840 9815 to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help you to respond.
- 7.4 Please complete the online survey or send us your response by **29 January 2016**.
- 7.5 **Please contact us to request a copy of this document in Welsh or in an alternative format.**
- 7.6 Once the consultation period is completed, we will analyse the responses we receive. We will then publish a document which summarises the comments

we received and explains the decisions we have taken as a result. This will be published on our website.