
Education Seminars 2011 – Practice placements

Introduction

This document provides a summary of all the common questions which delegates asked across all of our general education seminars delivered in autumn 2011. If you require any further information regarding any of the information contained within this document please contact us at: education@hpc-uk.org.

Frequently asked questions

How does the HPC define a practice placement educator?

The HPC defines a practice placement educator as a person who is responsible for a student's education during their period of clinical or practical experience.

How does the HPC define appropriate training for practice placement educators?

HPC does not have a comprehensive definition of the training a practice placement educator would need to undergo before supervising students. We do not set specific requirements for the length or content of practice placement educator training as we feel this level of detail is best decided by individual education providers. However, we consider appropriate training to be training which fully prepares practice placement educators to undertake their role. For instance where practice placement educators are involved in assessment, we would want to see how they are prepared to deliver both formative and summative assessment, and how the education provider makes sure this is consistent across all placements. We also expect that all new practice placement educators would be trained by education providers and that regular refresher training would be undertaken.

Are there plans for HPC to approve mentorship qualifications?

No. As highlighted above, we feel that the detailed requirements of the training that should be undertaken by practice placement educators should be determined by education providers. However, for many of the professions we regulate there are other organisations, such as professional bodies, who offer accreditation schemes for practice placement educator training. This could be something that an education provider may put in place and provide the HPC information about how it ensures that practice placement educators are fully prepared to supervise their students.

Does the HPC determine who can act as practice placement educators and who can supervise a student at any point during a practice placement?

No, HPC does not have a detailed set of criteria about who can be a practice placement educator or not. However, as required by standard 5.7 of our standards of education and training (SETs), we expect practice placement educators to have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support students. Similarly standard 5.9 states that we would normally expect that a practice placement educator will be registered with us in the relevant profession. However, there are other appropriate practice placement educators whose backgrounds do not match the specific profession that the student is studying. For example, occupational therapists may supervise physiotherapy students in areas such as hand therapy, and nurses may supervise radiographers in aseptic techniques. If an education provider chose to use practice placement educators who are not registered with us, we would expect the education provider to provide us with information about how their experience, qualifications and training ensures that they are appropriate to supervise students.

For more information about the HPC standards of education and training you can download copies of the guidance document using the link below:

[www.hpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10002C0DSETsguidance\(finalversion\).pdf](http://www.hpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10002C0DSETsguidance(finalversion).pdf)

Does the HPC require education providers to have to check someone's registration if they supervise students?

Yes, as highlighted above, SET 5.9 requires practice placement educators to be appropriately registered unless other arrangements are agreed. Usually this checking is undertaken as part of the education provider's thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring all placements. This thorough and effective system needs to be in place in order for an education provider to meet the requirements of SET 5.4. Any change in a practice placement educator's registration status should be picked up through this monitoring or through the regular and effective collaboration between practice placement providers and education providers, a requirement of SET 5.10.

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Can the HPC help education providers ensure that practice placement educators are released from their professional roles to take any necessary training?

No. HPC exists to protect the public by ensuring that those people who use any of the 15 professional titles on the HPC Register are safe and effective practitioners who practice within the bounds of their knowledge and skills. As a multi-professional statutory regulator HPC does not have a role in determining the terms and conditions of employment of its Registrants. Therefore HPC cannot provide any assistance in ensuring that potential practice placement educators are released from their primary job role. As part of the approval and monitoring process it is expected that education providers demonstrate how they will identify, recruit and train sufficient numbers of

practice placement educators to ensure that students on their programme receive the supervision they require to successfully complete their period of clinical or practical experience.

Does HPC recommend any system for education providers to approve and monitor placements?

HPC does not recommend any particular system for education providers to approve and monitor placements. As with practice placement educator training we feel this level of detail is best decided by individual education providers. However, through meeting SET 5.4 we would expect education providers to demonstrate how any system they have in place is thorough and effective.

It is often the case that these systems are used to ensure that several of the standards of education and training are met. For instance any system in place could ensure that practice placement settings provide a safe and supportive environment (SET 5.3) It could ensure that practice placement providers have equality and diversity policies in relation to students, together with an indication of how these will be implemented and monitored (SET 5.5). It could ensure that learning, teaching and supervision encourages safe and effective practice, independent learning and professional conduct (SET 5.12). It could also ensure that a range of learning and teaching methods, that respect the rights and needs of service users and colleagues must be in place throughout practice placements (5.13).

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Would the use of an agency, external to an education provider, to approve and monitor practice placements, be adequate to meet HPC's standards of education and training?

The use of an external agency to approve and monitor practice placements could be sufficient to meet HPC's standards of education and training. However, we hold the education provider responsible for ensuring that any practice placement sites are thoroughly and effectively approved and monitored. Therefore if an arrangement such as this was utilised by an education provider we would expect evidence of how the education provider ensured that placement were being assessed effectively. We would also expect that the education provider would have policies or processes in place to respond appropriately if any difficulties arose.

If an approved programme changed its practice placement assessment forms to use different criteria in assessing whether a placement site is suitable to take students, does this constitute a major change?

Possibly. When a change occurs to a programme we expect an education provider to consider the impact on how the SETs and standards of proficiency (SOPs) continue to be met. However, we do not require an education provider to notify us of every change

to a programme. If a change does not have an impact on how a programme meets our standards it can be reported to us in annual monitoring. You should only notify us of changes to your programme that change:

- the overall way in which a programme meets our standards; and / or
- the way a programme is recorded on our website.

As this change would seem to directly affect how the programme continues to meet SET 5.4 we would expect an education provider to notify us of this change using a change notification form. We then assess the change notification form and make a decision about which of our three processes are most appropriate to assess how the programme continues to meet our standards based on the information provided. We can decide to assess the impact of a change on our standards using the annual monitoring, major change or approval processes at this stage. If necessary, we may request additional information to assist in making this decision. The decision is made on a case-by-case basis. But, in general terms, a change such as this would most likely go through one of our monitoring processes rather than requiring a full approval visit.

For more information about the HPC major change process you can download copies of the guidance document using the link below:

www.hpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10002C0CMajorChange-Oct2009-PDF.pdf

Who has overall responsibility for the performance and conduct of students when they are on practice placement?

HPC expects that the education provider has overall responsibility for ensuring that students remain fit to practice throughout their period of study and that any successful graduates meet the relevant standards of proficiency (SOPs). This responsibility covers all students regardless of their employment status with any practice placement provider.

This responsibility is a requirement of SET 6.3 which requires professional aspects of practice to be integral to the assessment of students in both the education and practice placement settings. SET 6.5 also requires any education provider's measurement of student performance to ensure their fitness to practice while SET 4.5 requires the education provider to ensure that students understand the implications of the HPC's standards of conduct performance and ethics. If an education provider has serious concerns over a student's performance or conduct while they are on practice placement it is expected that remedial action would be taken to address the issue which may include removing a student from the programme. The education provider must ensure that students and practice placement educators are prepared for placement which should include details of how, if an issue such as this occurred, the education provider would be informed and what action would be taken.

Guidance on conduct performance and ethics for students has been published by HPC and you can download copies of the guidance document using the link below:

www.hpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10002C16Guidanceonconductandethicsforstudents.pdf

For more information about the HPC standards of education and training you can download copies of the guidance document using the link below:

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Does the HPC put any limit on the timescale of overseas placements?

We do not approve individual practice placement sites and therefore do not set any limit on timescales for individual placements undertaken overseas. However, to approve a programme we will want to be sure there are clear reasons for the number, length and range of placements for a programme, including any decisions to provide overseas placements. We will also need to see evidence that the education provider has overall responsibility for all placement sites, including all aspects of placement learning and that they have suitable systems in place to support this learning.

This would include evidence of:

- How placement sites are approved by the education provider before use, how these sites are regularly monitored and how the placement has links to the management of the programme;
- How the education provider manages all teaching, learning and assessment on placement;
- How information is provided to students and practice placement providers;
- How the education provider ensures each placement has adequate numbers of appropriately qualified and experienced staff and;
- How the education provider provides regular training to practice placement educators.
- Please refer to SET 5 of our Standards of education and training which provides further information on practice placements.

Can a Healthcare Science Practitioner register with the HPC?

There is currently no statutory requirement for any practitioner to be registered with any regulator in order to use the title healthcare science practitioner. However, a healthcare science practitioner may be able to register with the HPC to use one of the titles that we do protect; biomedical scientist, clinical scientist or hearing aid dispenser. To do this a healthcare science practitioner will have to have successfully completed an education or training programme which has been approved by the HPC as leading to eligibility to apply as either a biomedical scientist, clinical scientist or hearing aid dispenser.

Any education provider who is developing a degree programme for healthcare science practitioners may seek HPC approval so that their students are eligible to apply to register as biomedical scientists upon successful completion of their programme. All four of the themes within the life sciences division are eligible to seek approval by the HPC. As with all requests for approval, the HPC will assess programmes on a case by case basis against our standards of education and training and standards of proficiency. Accreditation of a programme by the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS) or MSC (via Medical Education England (MEE)) does not equate to HPC approval.

Further information about the implications for education providers of the implementation of the modernising scientific careers agenda can be found on our website:

www.hpc-uk.org/education/providers/news/index.asp?id=434

Can the HPC align any of its standards of education and training with other accrediting or validating bodies in order to reduce the administrative burden on staff that run education and training programmes?

The HPC is a statutory regulator whose remit is public protection. To do this we set standards for registrants' education and training, professional skills, conduct, performance, ethics and health. The Health Professions Order 2001 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. Therefore the HPC need to set our standards independently to ensure that we are setting standards at an appropriate level to protect the public. This is why our standards are set at a 'threshold' level (a minimum level of safe and effective practice) the order decides what we do and how we do it.

As a consequence we are not in a position to alter our standards to more closely align them with other bodies which may be involved in the accreditation or validation of education or training programmes. However, as part of our processes we do our utmost to limit the amount of HPC specific information that we request. We endeavour to request information from education providers that are usually readily available as part of the quality assurance systems of the education provider. It is not anticipated that the education provider would have to create new documentation for the HPC alone and in this way we hope to make any administrative burden less onerous.

Does the HPC provide students with any guidance about their responsibilities when undertaking an approved education or training programme?

Currently the HPC sets no specific requirements on students' conduct during their time on an approved education or training programme. However HPC has produced the publication 'Guidance on conduct and ethics for students'. This document provides students on education programmes information about our standards of conduct and ethics. There is also student information available on the HPC website that can act as further information for students wishing to study a professional programme. You can download copies of the guidance document using the link below:

www.hpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10002C16Guidanceonconductandethicsforstudents.pdf

What does the HPC do to work with regulatory bodies in other countries to facilitate mutual recognition of educational qualifications?

HPC does not mutually recognise any qualifications from education providers in other countries in order to facilitate someone joining the HPC Register. However, there is an international applications route onto the Register which involves scrutiny of the relevant qualifications and how it ensures applicants can meet the relevant standards of proficiency for their profession. Each profession at the HPC has its own specific criteria for assessment, which are set out in the profession specific elements of the standards of proficiency. The overarching framework applies to all professions and an applicant

must satisfy the Registration Assessor in their application how they meet the benchmark Standards of proficiency.

Further information about the international route to registration can be found on our website:

www.hpc-uk.org/apply/international/

If an applicant is established in another 'relevant European State' (another country within the European Economic Area or Switzerland) in a profession regulated in the UK by the Health Professions Council and wish to practise in the UK on a temporary and occasional basis, they may apply for temporary registration with HPC. Temporary registration is valid for one year but may be renewed. In order to obtain temporary registration they need to prove that they are a national of a relevant European State, that they are legally established to practise their profession in another relevant European State and that they have moved to the UK to provide services on a **temporary and occasional** basis.

Further information about temporary registration with HPC can be found on our website:

<http://www.hpc-uk.org/apply/temporary/index.asp>