Education and Training Committee – 15 November 2012

Implementation of revised standards of proficiency for education providers

Executive summary and recommendations

Introduction

This paper relates to the current reviews of the standards of proficiency across the professions we regulate. It seeks confirmation of how the revised standards will be implemented across currently approved and new programmes.

The Policy and Standards Department began a review of the profession specific standards of proficiency in 2011. The review of the profession specific standards follows from the Council's approval of new generic standards of proficiency in March 2011. As these reviews are to be carried out for all professions, the Policy and Standards Department is a taking a phased approach to the work by reviewing the standards for groups of professions on a rolling basis and consulting on proposed changes to the standards. Once the standards have been finalised, they seek to gain Council's approval and then publish the revised standards of proficiency. The first revised standards are due to be published at the beginning of January 2013, followed by the rest of the professions throughout 2013 and 2014. The only profession that is not included in this review and roll out of revised standards is the social work profession as their standards were produced for the opening of the Register in August 2012. These standards will be utilised to assess all transitionally approved social worker programmes that the Education Department are visiting over three academic years, and all new programmes.

As the revised standards of proficiency are published for each profession the Education Department will need to ensure that the new standards of proficiency are being met. There are likely to be variations around the amount of revisions that are made for each set of standards. The revised standards will include a number of changes to the standards (such as the language used and the potential amalgamation of standards) as well as possible new standards. It is perceived that the scale of amendments to the standards across the professions will not require wholescale changes to approved programmes in order to meet the revised standards.

In previous changes to the standards of proficiency (in 2007 - 2008), and when the standards of education and training were revised in September 2009 the Department has utilised the annual monitoring process to ensure that approved programmes were meeting the revised standards. This process was deemed the most appropriate in both cases due to the small nature of the changes involved, the reduced burden on education providers to evidence they meet the revised standards compared to using other operational processes and the minimal impact on the resources required for the Department to utilise this approach.

Previously, the Committee has determined that utilising the approval process to visit all approved programmes to ensure that revised standards are being met is too resource intensive and over burdensome on education providers, although the process would confirm that all programmes meet any new standards in a shorter period of time. The Committee also decided that asking all approved programmes to submit a major change detailing how they have been amended to take account of the revised standards would also be an additional burden for education providers and would require additional resources in the Department, although again it would confirm that all programmes meet our new standards in a shorter period of time.

Process for assessing the revised standards of proficiency

The Department plan to use the annual monitoring process to assess that the revised standards of proficiency are being met. This approach will require some changes to the standard annual monitoring process to ensure that the required evidence is captured. Utilising the annual monitoring process does cause a delay to our assessment of the revised standards (being a retrospective review process) and therefore delays the time when we will have confirmation that all programmes meet the standards. As already mentioned, it is through this process that we have previously dealt with changes to standards (both to the standards of proficiency and standards of education and training) as Committee have previously determined that it is the most appropriate process to utilise in changes such as these.

As the roll out of the new standards of proficiency takes place over a number of years, the Department intend to deal with the programmes utilising the following framework:

Academic year 1:
- In the majority of cases, the new standards will be required to be implemented in the academic year that they are published in. Where the publication date of the new standards falls too late in the academic year to reasonably expect education providers to start implementing these, the implementation year will be the following academic year.
- In the first academic year of the implementation of the standards, education providers will be expected to incorporate the new standards into their existing programme structure. New programmes will be assessed against the new standards wherever possible depending on the timescales involved. Visits to current approved programmes (required from the annual monitoring or major change processes) will also be assessed against the new standards, wherever possible depending on the timescales, from this first academic year of implementation.

Academic year 2:
- In the second academic year of the implementation process, education providers will be expected to deliver their approved programme to all new students starting the programme using the revised standards of proficiency.

Academic year 2 and 3:
- In the second and third academic year (and potentially fourth academic year for a small number of programmes that have not yet submitted an annual monitoring audit) the incorporation of those standards into the programme will be checked through the annual monitoring process.

Academic year 3 and 4:
- In the third or fourth academic year (depending on the length of the approved programme) the first output of students utilising the new standards will take place.

Decision

The Committee is asked to agree the process and timescales for assessing how currently approved programmes continue to meet the revised standards of proficiency as they are introduced to each profession.

Background information

The Council considered the consultation outcomes on the generic standards of proficiency and approved the new standards at its meeting on 31 March 2011. The paper can be found here: http://www.hpc-uk.org/aboutus/committees/archive/index.asp?id=533 (enclosure 6)

The Committee received the timetable for the review of profession specific standards of proficiency at its meeting on 9 June 2011. The paper can be found here: http://www.hpc-uk.org/aboutus/committees/archive/index.asp?id=588 (enclosure 19)

The Committee considered the operational implementation on the revised standards of education and training at its meeting on 25 March 2009. The paper can be found here: http://www.hpc-uk.org/aboutus/committees/archive/index.asp?id=386 (enclosure 8)

Resource implications

There is a small resource implication in utilising the annual monitoring process to ensure that the professions meet the revised standards of proficiency. Future work plans could accommodate this.

Financial implications

There is no financial implication if the annual monitoring process is utilised to ensure that the revised standards of proficiency are being met.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – standards of proficiency roll-out timetable

Date of paper

15 November 2012

Standards of proficiency roll-out timetable - key to abbreviations

Professions

AT   Arts therapists

BS   Biomedical scientists

CH   Chiropodists / podiatrists

CS   Clinical scientists

DT   Dietitians

HAD   Hearing aid dispensers

ODP   Operating department practitioners

OR   Orthoptists

OT   Occupational therapists

PA   Paramedics

PH   Physiotherapists

PO   Prosthetists / orthotists

PP   Practitioner psychologists

RA   Radiographers

SLT   Speech and language therapists

Note on dates

The dates for consultation, Council approval, and publication may be subject to change.

Standards of proficiency (SOP) roll-out timetable

Profession	Profession specific SOP pre-consultation work starts	Profession specific SOP consultation process starts	Profession specific SOP approved by HCPC Council	Profession specific SOP published	Academic year – plan incorporation (redesign existing programmes internally. Approve new programmes via visits)	Academic year – implement new programmes to new students only	Academic year – annual monitoring (AM) audit (assure incorporation of new standards)	Academic year – first output of students from new standards		Education work plan activity (financial years)
					Year 1	Year 2	Year 2 or 3 (possibly year 4)	Year 4 (3 year undergraduate)		
OR AT	August 2011	April 2012	Oct 2012	Jan 2013	2012-2013	2013-2014	2013-2014 2014-2015	2015-2016 Summer 2016		2011-12 – communication 2012-13 – communication 2013-14 – AM audit 2014-15 – AM audit 2015-16 – AM audit
DT OT PH RA	Oct 2011	April 2012	Dec 2012	Feb/ March 2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2014-2015 2015-2016	2016-2017 Summer 2017		2011-12 – communication 2012-13 – communication 2013-14 – AM audit 2014-15 – AM audit 2015-16 – AM audit
CH PO	June 2012	Dec 2012	July 2013	Sept 2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2014-2015 2015-2016	2016-2017 Summer 2017		2012-13 – communication 2013-14 – communication 2014-15 – AM audit 2015-16 – AM audit 2016-17 – AM audit
ODP SLT	June 2012	April 2013	Oct 2013	Dec 2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2014-2015 2015-2016	2016-2017 Summer 2017		2012-13 – communication 2013-14 – communication 2014-15 – AM audit 2015-16 – AM audit 2016-17 – AM audit

Profession	Profession specific SOP pre-consultation work starts	Profession specific SOP consultation process starts	Profession specific SOP approved by HCPC Council	Profession specific SOP published	Academic year – plan incorporation (redesign existing programmes internally. Approve new programmes via visits)	Academic year – implement new programmes to new students only	Academic year – annual monitoring (AM) audit (assure incorporation of new standards)	Academic year – first output of students from new standards	Education work plan activity (financial years)
PP	Oct 2012	July 2013	March 2014	May 2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2015-2016 2016-2017	2017-2018 Summer 2018	2013-14 – communication 2014-15 – communication 2015-16 – AM audit 2016-17 – AM audit 2017-18 – AM audit
PA	April 2013	October 2013	July 2014	Sept/ Oct 2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2015-2016 2016-2017	2017-2018 Summer 2018	2013-14 – communication 2014-15 – communication 2015-16 – AM audit 2016-17 – AM audit 2017-18 – AM audit
BS CS HAD	June 2013	January 2014	July 2014	Sept/ Oct 2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2015-2016 2016-2017	2017-2018 Summer 2018	2013-14 – communication 2014-15 – communication 2015-16 – AM audit 2016-17 – AM audit 2017-18 – AM audit