

Standards of Proficiency PLG
Meeting: 7th March 2006
Introduction to the standards of proficiency

Executive Summary and Recommendations

Introduction

At its meeting on 24th January 2006 the PLG considered a draft revision of page 3 to the introduction of the standards of proficiency.

The attached document is a draft revision of the entire introduction of the standards, incorporating the feedback of the group.

Decision

This group is invited to comment on the attached document and suggest any amendments as necessary.

The group will wish to keep this draft under review as it considers further evidence from stakeholders.

Background information

None

Resource implications

None

Financial implications

None

Background papers

‘Scope of practice’ – considered by PLG on 24th January 2006

Appendices

None

Date	Ver.	Dept/Cmte	Doc Type	Title	Status	Int. Aud.
2005-12-08	a	POL	PPR	Suggested changes to SOPs Introduction	Draft DD: None	Confidential RD: None

Date of paper

23rd February 2006

Date	Ver.	Dept/Cmte	Doc Type	Title	Status	Int. Aud.
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Introduction of the Standards of Proficiency

The reworded introduction has been italicised. Each section is followed by an explanation of the wording chosen.

[A new foreword will be necessary which will describe the review and consultation process undertaken in publishing the new standards]

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Introduction

*This document sets out the **standards of proficiency**. These are the standards we have produced for the safe and effective practice of the professions we regulate. They are the minimum standards we think are necessary to protect members of the public.*

You must meet these standards when you first become registered. After that, every time you renew your registration you will be asked to sign a declaration that you continue to meet the standards of proficiency that apply to you.

*We also expect you to keep to our **standards of conduct, performance and ethics** which are published in a separate document.*

This section has been written to explain the role of the standards. It incorporates the feedback from the group regarding the role of the Standards of proficiency as threshold proficiency standards which must be met at the point of entry to the register¹.

This point has been explicitly illustrated by reference to new entrants to the register who must meet these standards in order to become registered. All registrants are then required to sign a declaration upon renewal which includes confirming that they continue to meet the standards that apply to them. Ideas around scope of practice are then explored more fully in 'A note about our expectations of you'.

The sentence: 'They are the minimum standards we think are necessary to protect members of the public' has been added to better describe the role of the standards and the idea that they are set at a 'minimum', threshold level.

The standards of proficiency in this document include both generic elements, which apply to all our registrants, and profession-specific elements which are relevant to

¹ The only exception to this is applicants under grandparenting route A who are not assessed against the standards of proficiency. They have to demonstrate lawful, safe and effective practise within the area or areas that they practise.

registrants belonging to one of the professions we currently regulate. The generic standards are written in black, and the profession-specific standards are written in blue italics to help you distinguish between them.

The reference to registrants needing to meet all the generic standards has been removed to reflect that registrants need to meet the standards that relate to their scope of practice. Reference to breaching the standards has been removed from this section. The use of the standards in possible fitness to practise proceedings is referred in the section ‘A note about our expectations of you’.

Reference to the summary of standards has also been removed. The group may wish to consider whether they are necessary, taking into account the feedback from the market research and other evidence.

The generic standards explain the key obligations that we expect of you. Occasionally, we have pointed out specific elements of those key obligations. We have not attempted to create exhaustive lists of all the areas that each generic standard covers; we have simply highlighted specific elements where we think this is helpful.

The original wording: ‘... where we think this will help you to understand what we require of you’ has been changed to reflect that we will not require **every** registrant to meet **all** the standards, only those that are relevant to their scope of practice.

For example, we have highlighted the fact that the key obligation of maintaining your fitness to practise also includes a specific obligation about taking care of yourself.

If you are a student, you may only have practised under supervision and not independently. Nonetheless, you must be confident that you will be able to meet these standards when you begin to practise without supervision. Sometimes the standards relate to ongoing practice and normally your clinical placements will have given you the opportunity to demonstrate that you are capable of meeting these.

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‘A note about our expectations of you

The standards of proficiency play a central role in how you can gain admission to, and remain on, the Register and thereby gain the right to the protect title(s) of your profession.

*It is important that you read and understand this document. If your practice is called into question we will consider these standards (and our **standards of conduct, performance and ethics**) in deciding what action, if any, we need to take.*

The standards set out in this document complement information and guidance issued by other organisations, such as your professional body or your employer.

Revisions have been made to this section to incorporate the comments of the group. Reference to exceeding the standards has been removed.

Your scope of practice

Your scope of practice is the area or areas of your profession in which you have the knowledge, skills and experience to practise lawfully, safely and effectively, in a way that meets our standards and does not pose any danger to the public or to yourself.

We recognise that a registrant's scope of practice will change over time and that the practice of experienced registrants often becomes more focused and specialised than that of newly registered colleagues. This might be because of specialisation in a certain clinical area or with a particular client group, or a movement into roles in management, education or research.

The definition of scope of practice has been retained. A registrant's scope of practice is both the area and areas of their profession in which they work and the areas of their profession in which they have the requisite knowledge and skills to be able to practise safely and effectively.

Your particular scope of practice may mean that you are unable to continue to demonstrate that you meet all of the standards that apply for the whole of your profession. For instance, if you work with adults alone, then any standards that relate to how you must work with children will not apply to your day-to-day work. As long as you make sure that you are practising safely and effectively within your given scope of practice and do not practise in the areas where you are not proficient to do so, this will not be a problem. If you want to move outside of your scope of practice you should be certain that you are capable of working safely and effectively, including undertaking any necessary training and experience.

A small number of minor amendments have been made to this paragraph following the comments of this group.

Meeting the standards

It is important that our registrants meet our standards and are able to practise safely and effectively. However, we don't dictate how you should meet our standards. There is normally more than one way in which each standard can be met and the way in which you meet our standards might change over time because of improvements in technology or changes in your practice. As an autonomous professional you need to make informed, reasoned decisions about your practice to ensure that you meet the standards that apply to you. This includes seeking advice and support from education

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providers, employers, colleagues and others to ensure that the wellbeing of patients, clients and users is safeguarded at all times.

The wording ‘there is often more than one way...’ has been amended to ‘there is normally more than one way’. This conveys that there is frequently more than one way to meet our standards whilst encompassing that this might not always be the case.

These standards may change in the future

We have produced this new version of our standards after speaking to our stakeholders about how the standards were working and how relevant they were to registrants’ practice.

We will continue to listen to our stakeholders and will keep our standards under continual review. So we may make further changes in the future to take into account changes in practice.

We will always publicise any changes to the standards that we make by, for instance, publishing notices on our website and informing professional bodies.

The standards (and our standards of conduct, performance and ethics) are written in such a way so that they can be flexibly applied to the variety of situations that registrants are engaged in. They can also (to some degree) take into account changes in practice, such as the development of new treatments and therapies. This section, however, has been written to demonstrate that we will keep the standards under review and make appropriate changes where necessary to reflect changes in the scope of a profession’s practice.

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