

Consultation on revised standards of education and training (SETs) and supporting guidance

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 We are the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). This consultation seeks the views of stakeholders on our draft revised standards of education and training (SETs) and supporting guidance document.
- 1.2 We have reviewed the SETs and supporting guidance and are proposing changes in order to ensure that they remain up to date, effective and fit for purpose, and are well understood by our stakeholders.
- 1.3 This document explains the background to the SETs and supporting guidance; summarises the changes we are proposing; and provides information on how to respond.
- 1.4 The consultation will run from **5 September to 25 November 2016**. It will be of particular interest to education providers, practice educators, employers of HCPC registered professionals, and service users and carers involved in education and training.

About this document

- 1.5 This document is divided into five sections.
 - **Section 1** introduces the document.
 - **Section 2** provides background information on the SETs and supporting guidance.
 - **Section 3** explains how we reviewed the SETs and supporting guidance.
 - **Section 4** describes the changes we are proposing to these documents and the reasons behind those changes.
 - **Section 5** provides information on implementation of the revised SETs and supporting guidance, as well as other future work.
- 1.6 The draft revised SETs and supporting guidance, along with a detailed commentary on the revisions we are proposing, are set out in separate documents which can be found on our website here: <http://www.hcpc-uk.org/aboutus/consultations/>.

About us

- 1.7 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 professional skills and behaviour. Individuals on our Register are called 'registrants'.
- 1.8 We currently regulate 16 professions.
 - Arts therapists
 - Biomedical scientists
 - Chiropractors / 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

Consultation questions

1.9 We would welcome your response to this consultation. We have listed some consultation questions below to help you. These questions are not exhaustive and we would also welcome your comments on any related issue. Please provide reasons alongside your answers where possible.

- Q1. Do you think the draft revised SETs are at the threshold level necessary to ensure that all learners are able to practise their profession safely and effectively by completion of a HCPC-approved programme?
- Q2. Do you think the draft revised SETs and supporting guidance are applicable across all HCPC approved pre-registration programmes?
- Q3. Do you think there are any additional standards or guidance needed?
- Q4. Do you think there are any standards or guidance which should be amended or removed?
- Q5. Do you have any comments about the language used in the SETs or supporting guidance?
- Q6. Do you have any other comments on the SETs or supporting guidance?

How to respond to the consultation

1.10 You can respond to this consultation in one of the following ways:

- By completing our easy-to-use online survey:
<https://www.research.net/r/revisedSETsandguidance>

- By emailing us at: consultation@hcpc-uk.org
- By writing to us at:

Consultation on revised SETs and supporting guidance
Policy and Standards Department
The Health and Care Professions Council
Park House
184 Kennington Park Road
London
SE11 4BU

Fax: +44(0)20 7820 9684

- 1.11 Please note that we do not normally accept responses by telephone or in person. We ask that consultation responses are made in writing to ensure that we can accurately record what the respondent would like to say. However, if you are unable to respond in writing please contact us on +44 (0)20 7840 9815 to discuss any reasonable adjustments which would help you to respond.
- 1.12 **Please contact us to request a copy of this document in an alternative format, or in Welsh.**
- 1.13 Once the consultation period has finished, we will analyse the responses we have received. We will then publish a document detailing the comments received and explaining the decisions we have taken as a result. This will be available on our website. If you would prefer we do not make your response public, please indicate this when you respond.
- 1.14 We look forward to receiving your comments.

2. About the SETs and supporting guidance

- 2.1 The SETs are the requirements for pre-registration education and training programmes which are approved by us¹. They are common across all 16 professions regulated by the HCPC. A programme that meets the SETs will enable a learner to meet the HCPC standards of proficiency (SOPs) by completion of the programme.
- 2.2 If a learner successfully completes the approved programme they are eligible to apply for registration with the HCPC, subject to health and character checks and payment of the registration fee.
- 2.3 The guidance supporting the standards has been written to provide further information and advice to education providers on the meaning and intention of

¹ You can find the existing SETs and supporting guidance here: <http://www.hcpc-uk.org/aboutregistration/standards/sets/>

the SETs and how programmes are assessed against them. It is not meant to add further requirements to those which are set out in the standards.

Our approach to setting standards

- 2.4 We set all of our standards, including the SETs, to be outcome-focused. Therefore, they avoid being too prescriptive in what they require or exactly how education providers should meet them. We want to make sure that we do not hinder the development of new education and training programmes or the ability of existing providers to structure or deliver their programmes in different or innovative ways.
- 2.5 In addition the SETs should:
- be set at the **threshold** level necessary to ensure that approved programmes provide learners with the skills and understanding to practise safely and effectively and to meet the standards of proficiency for their profession;
 - be **flexible**, in that we aim to minimise prescription and to enable education providers to meet the standards in the way they consider most effective and appropriate (given institutional and professional considerations);
 - be **meaningful**, clear and useful to education providers and other stakeholders; and
 - reflect **existing provision** within education and training programmes, or be realistic or reasonable as requirements.

Our role in quality assurance of education and training programmes

- 2.6 We have a statutory role in approving and monitoring education and training programmes for the professions we regulate. We use the SETs to assess programmes which lead to eligibility for admission to the HCPC Register.
- 2.7 We currently approve 887 pre-registration programmes delivered by 139 education providers.² Although the majority of programmes are delivered or validated by a Higher Education Institution (HEI), we also approve programmes delivered by other providers such as professional bodies.
- 2.8 We assess new programmes during approval visits. The assessment is carried out by ‘visitors’ who are appointed by us; these include registrants as well as lay people representing service users and carers. The visitors make recommendations about approval to our Education and Training Committee, which may include recommending that a programme should meet certain conditions before approval is granted.
- 2.9 Approval is normally granted on an open-ended basis, subject to regular monitoring to ensure that our standards continue to be met.

² As of 10 August 2016

3. About the review

- 3.1 The SETs and supporting guidance were last reviewed and published in 2009. The SETs were also amended in 2014 with the addition of a standard requiring service user and carer involvement in approved programmes.
- 3.2 We began reviewing the SETs and supporting guidance in 2014. The purpose of the review was to ensure that they remain effective and fit for purpose; are well understood by our stakeholders and the public; and take account of change including changes in practice, legislation, technology, guidelines and wider society.

Work with stakeholders

- 3.3 During the review we engaged with a wide range of external stakeholders including education providers, commissioners, learners, registrants, professional bodies, practice educators, and service users and carers. We are grateful to all of our stakeholders who have participated in the review to date, offering their views and comments on how the SETs and supporting guidance might be strengthened or improved.
- 3.4 Additionally we conducted internal engagement activities in order to utilise the expertise of HCPC visitors and employees in the Education Department who have experience of using the SETs operationally in approval and monitoring of programmes.

Research

- 3.5 We also commissioned two pieces of research to support the review. One was a project to examine the extent and nature of interprofessional education in HCPC-approved programmes. The second was aimed at determining the role of the SETs in ensuring that newly qualified professionals are prepared and fit to practise.
- 3.6 The results from these pieces of research have been used to inform a number of proposed amendments to the SETs and supporting guidance.

Professional Liaison Group

- 3.7 Between September 2015 and March 2016, a working group called a Professional Liaison Group (PLG) was convened to help us put together the revised drafts of the SETs and supporting guidance for consultation.
- 3.8 The PLG comprised representatives from our Council and key stakeholder groups including education providers, practice educators, service users, professional bodies, commissioners and newly qualified professionals. The group examined a number of themes which emerged from discussions with stakeholders and proposed a wide range of revisions.

3.9 The members of the group and their organisations or affiliations are listed in Appendix 1. We are grateful for the role they played in developing and refining these documents.

4. Proposed changes to the SETs and supporting guidance

4.1 We have used the feedback we received through stakeholder engagement, commissioned research and discussions among members of the PLG to put together draft revised SETs and supporting guidance for consultation. This section outlines some of the key changes we have made as a result of the review.

4.2 You can find the full consultation drafts and a more detailed commentary on the changes we are proposing, alongside this consultation document on our website here: <http://www.hcpc-uk.org/aboutus/consultations/>.

Terminology

4.3 We have made a number of changes to key terminology used in these documents:

- We have replaced the term ‘student’ with ‘learner’, which we consider to be a more inclusive term encompassing students, trainees and practitioners in training or work-based learning.
- We have changed ‘practice placement’ to ‘practice-based learning’, which we consider to be more applicable to different types of programmes. The word ‘placement’ implies that the learning takes place in a separate environment from the rest of the programme and during a discrete period of time – which is not the case for all approved programmes.
- Accordingly, we have stopped using the terms ‘practice placement educator’ and ‘practice placement provider’. These are now ‘practice educator’ and ‘practice education provider’, respectively.

Format

4.4 There is a modest reduction in the number of individual standards from 58 to 52. We have retained the current format of the SETs – i.e., six broad sections containing individual standards – given stakeholder feedback that it was clear and helpful.

4.5 However, three of the sections have been renamed to better correspond with the actual subject matter of the individual standards within them. SET 3 has been renamed ‘Programme leadership, management and governance’; and SET 4 has been renamed ‘Programme design and delivery’. The title of SET 5 has also been changed to ‘Practice-based learning’, to correspond with the change in terminology mentioned above.

- 4.6 Additionally, we have made amendments to the supporting guidance to bring greater consistency to the format throughout this document. For instance, we have added or reorganised parts of the detailed guidance underneath individual standards to ensure that the intention behind the standards is clear.
- 4.7 We have also removed the example questions which were provided for each section of the guidance in the current version. In many cases the questions would not be applicable to all programmes and may lead a programme to meet or evidence the standards in a particular way, which is not the intention of the guidance

Link with the standards of conduct, performance and ethics

- 4.8 The HCPC standards of conduct, performance and ethics (SCPE)³ are broad standards that apply to everyone on our Register and those applying for registration. They set out our expectations regarding a professional's behaviour and cover their ethics, decision-making, communication and interaction with service users, carers, colleagues and others.
- 4.9 We received a large number of comments from stakeholders about the link between the SETs and the SCPE. Specifically, these stakeholders felt that the existing standards did not contain strong enough statements about the importance of ensuring that learners are able to meet the SCPE upon qualifying.
- 4.10 We are therefore proposing changes to two individual standards (see revised SETs 4.2 and 6.2), in order to strengthen the link between the SETs and achievement of the SCPE. These standards now contain stronger expectations that learners understand, are able to meet and demonstrate the expectations of professional behaviour, including the SCPE.

Interprofessional education

- 4.11 Reference to interprofessional education (IPE) – the process of learning about and with other relevant professions – in the existing SETs is viewed by stakeholders as being 'negatively framed', in that it focuses on ensuring that, where IPE takes place, it is not to the detriment of profession-specific skills.
- 4.12 Feedback during the review has been overwhelmingly in favour of introducing a requirement for IPE in the SETs. The results of research commissioned during the review also supported our view of the value of IPE; it helps to develop learners' ability to communicate and work with those outside of their own profession, ultimately improving the environment and quality of care for service users.
- 4.13 We are proposing a new standard (SET 4.9) which requires that all learners have the opportunity to learn from and with professionals and learners in other

³ Available on our website here: <http://www.hcpc-uk.org/aboutregistration/standards/standardsofconductperformanceandethics/>

relevant professions. The supporting guidance underneath this new standard introduces the term 'interprofessional education' and describes the benefits of IPE for ensuring fitness to practise.

Involving learners

- 4.14 A new standard (SET 3.8) has been proposed requiring that learners must be involved in the design, delivery and review of an approved programme.
- 4.15 Discussions with stakeholders, particularly education providers and service users and carers, during the review highlighted the importance of ensuring that the learning experience is central to the design and delivery of the programme. We also view learners as a valuable source of feedback for review and continuous improvement of programmes.

Supporting learners to raise concerns

- 4.16 We are also proposing a new standard (SET 3.17) to require that education providers have an effective process in place to support and enable learners to raise concerns about the safety and wellbeing of service users.
- 4.17 We recently reviewed and re-published our 'Guidance on conduct and ethics for students'⁴, which provides information on how the SCPE apply to learners while on an approved programme. The guidance includes the expectation that learners will raise their concerns about the safety or wellbeing of service users by speaking to an appropriate member of staff, such as an educator or practice educator.
- 4.18 Discussions with stakeholders have highlighted the important role that learners play in raising concerns in the interests of service users; but also the challenges they can face. The new proposed standard aims to ensure that learners are enabled and effectively supported by the education provider to raise concerns and are not penalised for doing so.

Other amendments

- 4.19 Other amendments include the following:
- A number of the individual standards have been reordered or placed in a different section where it was felt that this provided for a more logical arrangement.
 - We have merged some individual standards to remove unnecessary duplication.
 - Throughout the supporting guidance we have removed specific references to the approval and annual monitoring processes (although a brief explanation is retained in the introductory sections); this is because the

⁴ The guidance is available on our website here: <http://www.hcpc-uk.org/publications/brochures/index.asp?id=219>

standards apply no matter how long the programme has existed or been approved.

- We have endeavoured to streamline parts of the guidance where possible; and have removed some detail (such as examples of evidence to be provided by the programme) where it implies a more prescriptive requirement than was intended.
- A significant number of editing amendments have been made to the standards and guidance for clarity and consistency.

5. Next steps

- 5.1 This consultation closes on **25 November 2016**. We will then analyse all of the responses we receive in order to determine whether there are further amendments need to the revised SETs and supporting guidance. Following this, we will publish our response to any issues raised and our final decisions.
- 5.2 We anticipate publishing the revised standards and guidance in mid-2017. They will begin to be phased into our operational processes from the 2017-18 academic year.
- 5.3 After that time, we will consider making corresponding changes to other HCPC standards which are based in part on the SETs, including the standards for prescribing and the standards for podiatric surgery.

Appendix 1

Members of the Professional Liaison Group (PLG) for review of the standards of education and training and supporting guidance

Name	Organisation / representing
Stephen Wordsworth (Chair)	HCPC Council registrant member
Samantha Baron	Joint University Councils Social Work Education Committee (JUC SWEC)
Fiona Coutts	Council of Deans of Health
Sally Gosling	Allied Health Professions Federation (AHPF)
Lucy Horder	British Psychological Society
Sonya Lam	HCPC Council registrant member
Jane Morris	National Association of Educators in Practice
Patricia Saunders	Health Education England
Tom Shakespeare	Service user / Norwich Medical School, University of East Anglia
Joy Tweed	HCPC Council lay member, Chair of the Education and Training Committee
Alan Wainwright	Institute of Biomedical Science
Lizzie White	Newly qualified registrant

Note: The content of this consultation, including any errors or omissions, remains the HCPC's responsibility.