

Communications Committee, Wednesday 21 January 2009

Communicating with prospective registrants (students)

Executive summary and recommendations

Introduction

This paper will outline the research commissioned and actions being taken to increase awareness of the HPC, standards of conduct, performance and ethics (SCPE) and registrations processes amongst students and educators.

Decision

The Committee is requested to note the document. No decision is required.

Background information

Resource implications

Within 2008/9 budget

Financial implications

Appendices

Students' awareness and understanding of the Health Professions Council:
qualitative research findings – EdCom March 2008

Date of paper Wednesday 21 January 2009

Date	Ver.	Dept/Cmte	Doc Type	Title	Status	Int. Aud.
2009-01-06	a	COM	AGD	Communicating with prospective registrants (students)	Draft DD: None	Internal RD: None

Background

A programme of work has been initiated which is intended to bring up to date and relevant information to all students and course tutors involved with HPC approved courses. Although we are already communicating with students the programme of work will provide information with both greater consistency and effectiveness.

Current communication with students consists of talks delivered by members of staff from the Communications team. Talks are currently conducted on an ad-hoc basis by team members responding directly to requests from HEI's. Detailed information on getting registered is also available via the 'apply' section of the HPC website.

The registration department received 8971 applications from UK graduates in 2007/8. These numbers are expected to increase over the coming years to 11600 by 2011/12 (this figure includes psychologists). The large numbers involved and the emphasis on delivering a cost effective and value for money service to students and educators mean that a range of new communication tools are required.

The work is planned and budgeted for in the 2008/2009 workplan. The project began following research conducted on behalf of the HPC by EdComs in March 2008 (see appendix 1).

Research findings

The report and recommendations have formed the basis of the key elements of the project.

In summary the key findings were:

1. Final year student mindset
 - Students rely on their tutors to guide them through any practicalities they need to know – few are taking the initiative to delve deeper.
2. Awareness and understanding of HPC and its role
 - HPC need to consider the wider context in which their communications are likely to be received and work to address the barriers.
 - HPC need to emphasise the relevance of registration at the right time in a students course to make them take action.
 - HPC should consider improving the perception and understanding of HPC amongst tutors in order to encourage them to communicate more effectively with students.
3. Awareness, knowledge and understanding of registration
 - Most final year students are expecting to be told what they need to do next in relation to HPC registration.
4. Awareness and understanding of student responsibilities and SCPEs
 - There is a need for HPC to ensure that students relate the standards they already follow to the HPC and SCPEs.

- HPC should consider how best to communicate SCPEs and responsibilities in a motivating and engaging way.
5. Future communications and awareness raising
- Current communications organised on an ad hoc basis. Tutors would welcome more information and structure to aid their communications to students.

Proposed work

In response to the key areas highlighted in the research the initial areas of the project to be delivered will be:

1. PowerPoint slides and notes will be provided for course tutors to incorporate into their curriculum specifically targeting 1st and final year students. The first category will inform students about the role of the HPC and their responsibilities, whilst the second will focus on “how to get registered”. These will be uploaded directly to the HPC website’s education area to allow real-time updating of information by the HPC.
2. A short film on the HPC and registration is being produced which will be uploaded directly to the HPC website, this will allow both students and tutors to access it when necessary. Then four key elements of the film will be, the role of the Health Professions Council, information on regulation, how to apply for registration and how to stay registered. The technology to allow the film to be viewed is being developed with accessibility as a priority; the first release will include subtitles and a downloadable version of the script. This video player will also enable the CPD DVD to be uploaded in a similar way.
3. A student area of the website will also be developed to provide relevant information for students including guidance on the SCPE’s once this is published. It will also include information on applying for registration, application forms and guidance notes.
4. The Policy and Standards department will shortly be carrying out a public consultation on draft guidance for students on conduct and ethics. The guidance is based upon the standards of conduct, performance and ethics. These standards apply to both registrants and prospective registrants and the guidance is designed to build familiarity with those standards. The guidance also provides principles based on the standards which are particularly relevant to individuals completing approved programmes. The consultation will run until April and the guidance will be published in late autumn.
5. An updated brochure on the role and registration processes of the HPC is also being produced, providing similar information to the video in an alternative format. It is intended that whilst this brochure will be used for conferences and events it will also be of benefit to students.

Communicating the work

The scheduled launch date of the main project deliverables is spring 2009. We intend to market the new facilities provided by sending a letter with a HPC branded data key to all HPC approved course leaders with a message from the president and web links to the resources. We will be asking course leaders to forward the message and links to their tutors. This process will be repeated each year with relevant updates included.

We will also promote the resources via HPC In Focus, external talks and presentations, conferences and events.

Evaluation

The project will be evaluated by undertaking similar research to that conducted by EdComs in the future. We will also be able to monitor website hits on the new student and education pages once they are launched.

The feedback and information we receive will enable us to initiate a second phase of work in 2011/12.