
Standards of education and training

Introduction

This document sets out the standards of education and training (SETs). These are the standards against which we assess education and training programmes.

A programme which meets the SETs allows a learner who successfully completes that programme to meet the standards of proficiency for their profession. They are then eligible to apply to the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) for registration.

We conduct approval visits to education providers to assess their programmes against the SETs. If a programme meets the SETs we will normally grant open-ended approval, subject to ongoing monitoring.

Annual monitoring is a documentary process used to determine whether a programme continues to meet the SETs. If any changes are made which significantly affect a programme, we consider these through our major change process to make sure that the SETs continue to be met.

We have produced detailed guidance on the SETs, which is intended to give more information about the meaning and intention of the standards and what our expectations will be when we assess and monitor education and training programmes against them. This guidance can be found on our website.

We have also produced supplementary information documents for education providers when preparing for an approval visit, completing annual monitoring submissions, or making significant changes to programmes. These documents, which can also be found on our website, give more information about the processes we use to assess and monitor programmes against the SETs.

Level of qualification for entry to the Register

- 1.1 The Council normally expects that the threshold entry routes to the Register will be the following:

Bachelor degree with honours for:

- biomedical scientists (with the Certificate of Competence awarded by the Institute of Biomedical Science, or equivalent);
- chiropodists / podiatrists;
- dietitians;
- occupational therapists;
- orthoptists;
- physiotherapists;
- prosthetists / orthotists;
- radiographers;
- social workers in England; and
- speech and language therapists.

Diploma of Higher Education for operating department practitioners.

Equivalent to Certificate of Higher Education for paramedics.

Foundation degree for hearing aid dispensers.

Masters degree for:

- arts therapists;
- clinical scientists (with the Certificate of Attainment awarded by the Association of Clinical Scientists, or equivalent);
- forensic psychologists (with the award of the British Psychological Society qualification in forensic psychology, or equivalent);
- health psychologists (with the award of the British Psychological Society qualification in health psychology, or equivalent);
- occupational psychologists (with the award of the British Psychological Society qualification in occupational psychology, or equivalent); and

- sport and exercise psychologists (with the award of the British Psychological Society qualification in sport and exercise psychology, or equivalent);

Professional doctorate for clinical psychologists.

Professional doctorate, or equivalent for:

- counselling psychologists; and
- educational psychologists.

Programme admissions

- 2.1 The admissions process must give both the applicant and the education provider the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to take up or make an offer of a place on a programme.
- 2.2 The selection and entry criteria must include appropriate academic and professional entry standards.
- 2.3 The admissions process must ensure that applicants have a good command of English.
- 2.4 The admissions process must assess the suitability of applicants, including criminal conviction checks.
- 2.5 The admissions process must ensure that applicants are aware of and comply with any health requirements.
- 2.6 There must be an appropriate and effective process for assessing applicants' prior learning and experience.
- 2.7 The education provider must ensure that there are equality and diversity policies in relation to applicants and that they are implemented and monitored.

Programme governance, management and leadership

- 3.1 The programme must be sustainable and fit for purpose.
- 3.2 The programme must be effectively managed.
- 3.3 The education provider must ensure that the person holding overall professional responsibility for the programme is appropriately qualified and experienced and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, on the relevant part of the Register.
- 3.4 The programme must have regular and effective monitoring and evaluation systems in place.
- 3.5 There must be regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and practice education providers.
- 3.6 There must be an effective process in place to ensure the availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners.
- 3.7 Service users and carers must be involved in the programme.
- 3.8 Learners must be involved in the programme.
- 3.9 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.
- 3.10 Subject areas must be delivered by educators with relevant specialist knowledge and expertise.
- 3.11 An effective programme must be in place to ensure the continuing professional and academic development of educators, appropriate to their role in the programme.
- 3.12 The resources to support learning in all settings must be effective and appropriate to the delivery of the programme, and must be accessible to all learners and educators.
- 3.13 There must be effective and accessible arrangements in place to support the wellbeing and learning needs of learners in all settings.
- 3.14 The programme must implement and monitor equality and diversity policies in relation to learners.
- 3.15 There must be a thorough and effective process in place for receiving and responding to learner complaints.
- 3.16 There must be thorough and effective processes in place for ensuring the ongoing suitability of learners' conduct, character and health.

- 3.17 There must be an effective process in place to support and enable learners to raise concerns about the safety and wellbeing of service users.
- 3.18 The education provider must ensure learners, educators and others are aware that only successful completion of an approved programme leads to eligibility for admission to the Register.

Programme design and delivery

- 4.1 The learning outcomes must ensure that learners meet the standards of proficiency for the relevant part of the Register.
- 4.2 The learning outcomes must ensure that learners understand and are able to meet the expectations of professional behaviour, including the standards of conduct, performance and ethics.
- 4.3 The programme must reflect the philosophy, core values, skills and knowledge base as articulated in any relevant curriculum guidance.
- 4.4 The curriculum must remain relevant to current practice.
- 4.5 Integration of theory and practice must be central to the programme.
- 4.6 The learning and teaching methods used must be appropriate to the effective delivery of the learning outcomes.
- 4.7 The delivery of the programme must support and develop autonomous and reflective thinking.
- 4.8 The delivery of the programme must support and develop evidence-based practice.
- 4.9 The programme must ensure that learners are able to learn with, and from, professionals and learners in other relevant professions.
- 4.10 The programme must include effective processes for obtaining appropriate consent from service users and learners.
- 4.11 The education provider must identify and communicate to learners the parts of the programme where attendance is mandatory, and must have associated monitoring processes in place.

Practice-based learning

- 5.1 Practice-based learning must be integral to the programme.
- 5.2 The structure, duration and range of practice-based learning must support the achievement of the learning outcomes and the standards of proficiency.
- 5.3 The education provider must maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and ensuring the quality of practice-based learning.
- 5.4 Practice-based learning must take place in an environment that is safe and supportive for learners and service users.
- 5.5 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff involved in practice-based learning.
- 5.6 Practice educators must have relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, must be on the relevant part of the Register.
- 5.7 Practice educators must undertake regular training which is appropriate to their role, learners' needs and the delivery of the learning outcomes of the programme.
- 5.8 Learners and practice educators must have the information they need in a timely manner in order to be prepared for practice-based learning.

Assessment

- 6.1 The assessment strategy and design must ensure that those who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency for the relevant part of the Register.
- 6.2 Assessment throughout the programme must ensure that learners demonstrate they are able to meet the expectations of professional behaviour, including the standards of conduct, performance and ethics.
- 6.3 Assessments must provide an objective, fair and reliable measure of learners' progression and achievement.
- 6.4 Assessment policies must clearly specify requirements for progression and achievement within the programme.
- 6.5 The assessment methods used must be appropriate to and effective at measuring the learning outcomes.
- 6.6 There must be an effective process in place for learners to make academic appeals.
- 6.7 The education provider must ensure that at least one external examiner for the programme is appropriately qualified and experienced and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, on the relevant part of the Register.