

**Health Professions Council**  
**6<sup>th</sup> July 2006**

**EXTERNAL EXAMINERS: PROPOSED CHANGE TO STANDARD**

**Executive Summary and Recommendations**

**Introduction**

Standard of Education and Training 6.7.5 has been the subject of some discussion at Approvals committee. It has also generated some feedback from approved programmes through annual monitoring, and some debate around the approval of supplementary prescribing programmes.

Although a full review of the SETs is not due to take place this year, it is nevertheless suggested that the Council should consult on a change to the wording of this Standard, which would bring it in line with the requirements of other SETs, and would assist education providers in appointing external examiners with appropriate qualifications. Attached to this coversheet is a draft consultation letter.

**Decision**

The Committee is asked to agree:

- to recommend to the Council that the consultation is undertaken;
- to agree the wording of the consultation letter; and
- to ask the Executive to run the consultation, analyse the results, and bring these back to the Education and Training committee.

**Background information**

This paper was discussed at the Education and Training committee, where it was agreed to keep this standard within the overall heading of SET 6.7, which makes requirements of assessment regulations, and does not require an external examiner to be in post before approval can be granted.

There was also some discussion by the committee about the exceptional nature of this occurring, and some discussion of how to capture this in the wording of the proposed new standard. It is therefore suggested that the wording '*unless other arrangements are agreed*' is consistent with the language in the rest of the standards, and conveys the committee's sense that external examiners will normally be registered in the relevant part of the Register. It is suggested that this should be further elaborated in the amendment to the SETs guidance, which will come back to the Council with the results of this consultation.

This issue was discussed at Approvals committee in November 2005, March 2006, and May 2006. Minutes of these discussions are available on the HPC website.

**Resource implications**

Employee time in organising mailing, receiving and analysing results, and reprinting SETs

**Financial implications**

There is provision in the Policy & Standards budget for a number of consultations this year.

**Background papers**

None applicable.

**Appendices**

Appendix 1

**Date of paper**

2<sup>nd</sup> June 2006

## Appendix 1

Dear colleague,

### Consultation on a change to the Standards of Education and Training

I am writing to invite you to respond to our consultation on changing one of our Standards of Education and Training.

We approve programmes against the Standards of Education and Training. We set these standards to ensure that those who successfully complete programmes will meet the Standards of Proficiency for the safe and effective practice of their profession. If the Standards of Education and Training are met, the programme is added to our approved course list, and those who successfully complete the programme can apply to us for registration.

Currently, Standard 6.7.5 requires that:

‘Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for the appointment of at least one external examiner from the relevant part of the HPC Register.

We have received feedback about this standard which suggests that it may be causing difficulties to approved programmes, and may not be suitably flexible to meet the needs of the education sector.

In particular, when approving programmes for supplementary prescribing, education providers may wish to appoint an external examiner from a profession that has had prescribing rights for a longer period of time, in order to ensure good professional prescribing knowledge into the programme. We have also received queries from programmes in operating department practice who have successfully appointed external examiners who are registered nurses, and various pieces of feedback concerning external examiners in clinical science and biomedical science. We recognise the role that health professionals from other professions can play in education (for example, we already recognise that programme leaders, and practice placement educators may be from other professions, if appropriate) and do not wish to restrict this un-necessarily.

Because of this feedback, we are now consulting on a change to this standard. We propose that standard 6.7.5 should read,

‘Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for the appointment of at least one external examiner from the relevant part of the Register, unless other arrangements are agreed.’

Adding in the wording ‘unless other arrangements are agreed’ draws on the language used for our requirements for the registration and training of practice placement educators. We also believe that this wording captures the Education and Training committee’s belief that in most circumstances, the external examiner should be on the relevant part of the Register, but that there may be some circumstances where this is not applicable, and can be agreed at the approvals visit by the Visitors.

We believe that this gives the Standards of Education and Training greater consistency, and greater flexibility, without compromising public protection or the quality of programmes.

We will be reviewing all of the Standards of Education and Training more fully in the future, at which time we will look again all the standards to ensure that they are fit for purpose, and that they enable us to approve programmes effectively, ensuring that those who complete them meet our standards. However, given the comments we received, we felt it was important to hold this separate consultation, to respond to the feedback, and ensure that our standards do not prevent effective ways of working.

We are also planning to publish Standards of Education and Training guidance for education providers, which was the subject of a separate consultation earlier this year. Please note that if we change the wording of this standard, we will also amend this guidance document appropriately.

I would like to encourage you to respond to this consultation, and tell us your opinion of our proposed change to this standard. If you would like to take part, please send your response to:

External Examiner standard consultation  
Health Professions Council  
Park House  
184 Kennington Park Road  
London  
SE11 4BU  
Email: [consultation@hpc-uk.org](mailto:consultation@hpc-uk.org)  
Phone: 0207 840 9815  
Website: [www.hpc-uk.org/aboutus/consultations](http://www.hpc-uk.org/aboutus/consultations)

Please send your response by XXth Xmonth in order for it to be included. If you would prefer your response not to be made public, please indicate this when you respond. When the consultation period has ended, we will analyse the responses that we have received; we will then publish a summary of them, and the decision that we have taken as a result.

Yours sincerely,



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