

Council

Meeting Date	16 October 2025
Title	Consultation on revisions to the Standards of Education and Training
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Executive Summary

Our review of the Standards of Education and Training (SETs) began in March 2024. The aims of the review are to:

- Identify changes to current practice and if appropriate, reflect these in the SETs
- Identify ways to strengthen the SETs that enable education providers to prepare learners for professional practice effectively
- Ensure appropriate alignment across HCPC standards
- Ensure that education providers can implement any changes effectively

Throughout the pre-consultation period, we have undertaken targeted engagement with stakeholders that may be most impacted by any changes to the SETs. We have focused our engagement on education providers, learners, service users and professional bodies. This has informed the development of proposals to update the SETs and we plan to launch a public consultation in November 2025.

We have taken these proposals to the Education and Training Committee (ETC) to gain their approval, and they endorsed our proposals and consultation questions. We would like the Council to approve our proposals for public consultation.

This paper sets out:

- The proposed revisions to the SETs
 - Aligning SET 1 (level of qualification for entry to the Register) with the rest of the SETs
 - Embedding equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) throughout the SETs, including expectations for data use, inclusive curriculum design, and learner support
 - Strengthening expectations around the use of technology in education, including digital tools and emerging technologies while ensuring our standards remain outcome focussed
 - Structural changes to formalise the split of standards by institution and programme level (to align with our education quality assurance model), to

reorder standards into new thematic groupings, and renumbering to support these changes

- Questions for public consultation

We have attached the following annexes for your information:

- A. Proposed revised standards
- B. Draft consultation document
- C. Revisions commentary – which sets out proposed changes to current standards, new proposed standards, and the rationale for these proposed changes.
- D. An equalities impact assessment

Action required	The Council is asked to consider and approve the proposal or recommendation.
Previous consideration	<p>We have updated the ETC on the progress of the SETs regularly since March 2024 including a verbal update in June 2024, a presentation in September 2024 and a paper in November 2024, March 2025 and June 2025.</p> <p>We took these proposals to the ETC in September 2025, and they endorsed our recommendations.</p>
Next steps	We plan to launch a public consultation in November 2025.
Financial and resource implications	The costs of this project are incorporated into the 2025-26 budget.
Associated strategic priority/priorities	<p>Build a resilient, healthy, capable and sustainable organisation</p> <p>Continuously improve and innovate</p> <p>Promote high quality professional practise</p>
Associated strategic risk(s)	<p>1. We are unable to deliver our regulatory requirements effectively in a changing landscape, affecting our ability to protect the public</p> <p>2. Our standards do not reflect current practice and/or they are not understood by registrants and our stakeholders</p> <p>4. We are unable to effectively build trust, engage with and influence our stakeholders, reducing our ability to understand their perspectives and regulate effectively</p>
Risk appetite	<p>Regulation - measured</p> <p>Influence/leadership - seeks</p>

Communication and engagement	<p>We have undertaken engagement with internal and external stakeholders including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A stakeholder survey to professional bodies, education providers and service users • External stakeholder workshops including with education providers, learners and service users • Workshops with the HCPC education team (who use the SETs operationally to approve and monitor education programmes) • Discussions at the professional bodies' forum, EDI forum and education professional bodies forum • Four meetings with each of the four expert panels on equality, diversity and inclusion, technology & artificial intelligence, simulation in learning, and different models of learning (a total of 16 meetings with four further meetings scheduled) • Individual meetings with professional bodies <p>In collaboration with the communications team, we have developed an engagement plan for the consultation period.</p>
Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) impact and Welsh language standards	<p>An equality impact assessment (EIA) of the current standards was completed and was shared with the ETC in our paper in June 2025.</p> <p>We are continuing to update the EIA on the proposed changes, and this will be included in the paper to the Council. This will provide an assessment of potential impacts of changes to the standards on people due to their protected characteristics. It will consider each characteristic in turn and include reflections of the potential impact of proposed changes on learners, newly qualified registrants and service users.</p> <p>It will also ensure that the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language and ensure the accessibility of the SETs for people who speak the Welsh language.</p> <p>We will be translating the consultation, revised standards, and commentary on changes into Welsh.</p>
Other impact assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Reason for consideration in the private session of the meeting (if applicable)	<p>Select reason or not applicable</p>

Consultation on revisions to the Standards of Education and Training

1. Summary

- 1.1. We are currently reviewing our Standards of Education and Training (SETs), which set out how education providers must prepare learners for professional practice. These outcome-focused standards ensure education providers are appropriately organised to deliver high-quality education and training.
- 1.2. We plan to launch a public consultation on proposed changes this autumn (subject to Council's approval). This paper includes an overview of the review we have undertaken, a summary of the proposed changes to the SETs, an overview of our communications and engagement plan and next steps. Annexed to this paper are the proposed revised standards for consultation (Annex A), the proposed consultation document (Annex B), a commentary document that explains the rationale for all proposed changes to the SETs (Annex C), and equality impact assessment (Annex D).
- 1.3. We have engaged with the Education and Training Committee (ETC) throughout the review over the last 18 months and have presented our proposals to them. They are supportive of the proposals that we have drafted and have endorsed taking them to the Council.
- 1.4. The purpose of this paper is to seek Council approval for our proposals and to launch the consultation. It sets out our proposed changes to the SETs alongside our proposed consultation questions.
- 1.5. At a high level the proposed changes relate to:
 - 1.5.1. the structure of the SETs;
 - 1.5.2. how the SETs specify the academic level of qualification required for entry to the Register;
 - 1.5.3. different delivery models for learning;
 - 1.5.4. futureproofing the SETs, particularly in the context of rapidly evolving technology, such as artificial intelligence (AI); and
 - 1.5.5. strengthening and embedding equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- 1.6. Following the Council's decision, we intend to publish the consultation document, along with the Annexes to this paper.

2. Background

- 2.1. The Standards of Education and Training (SETs) set out how education providers must prepare learners for professional practice and ensure education providers are properly organised to deliver education and training. The last review was carried out in 2014-17.

- 2.2. In line with our overarching objective to ensure that the SETs are up to date with current practice, the aims of this review are to:
- identify changes to current practice and if appropriate reflect these in the SETs;
 - identify ways to strengthen the SETs that enable education providers to prepare; and learners for professional practice effectively;
 - ensure alignment across HCPC standards; and
 - ensure that education providers can implement any changes effectively.
- 2.3. The review includes six key phases: Phase 1: Mobilisation and research; Phase 2: Listening and gathering insights; Phase 3: Formulating proposals with our stakeholders; Phase 4: Preparing consultation; Phase 5: Consultation analysis and finalising changes; and Phase 6: Implementation.
- 2.4. In phase 1 of the review we have completed a literature review and desk-based research. This included reviewing the education and training standards of other regulators. We also ensured that there was due consideration of insights from our internal work such as the education annual report, our standards of conduct, performance and ethics (SCPEs) review and preparedness for practice project (which looked at how prepared new registrants felt for practice).
- 2.5. In phase 2, we established stakeholder engagement groups, identified the scope of the review, established internal working groups, and have gathered initial feedback on the current SETs.
- 2.6. During this phase, we set-up expert panels to help formulate our proposals. We provided information about the expert panels to education providers, professional bodies and other stakeholders via our comms channels and encouraged individuals to provide expressions of interest. We received 103 expressions of interest for the panels. We undertook shortlisting and considered; individuals' experience relevant to the panel, their profession, location and place of work. The expert panels discuss key topics as part of the review:
- Simulation in learning
The expert panel discussed how learners can develop and/or enhance their knowledge and skills in a simulated environment.
 - Technology and artificial intelligence
The expert panel members considered topics such as how education providers can continue to maintain academic integrity, supporting staff and learners to become AI literate – including the risks and benefits – and how education providers cover emerging technology within practice as part of programme curricula.
 - Different models of learning
The expert panel provides views on different routes of learning, such as apprenticeships, portfolio based or employer led learning, and non-HEI programmes.
 - Equality diversity and inclusion (EDI)
The expert panel considers how EDI principles can be implemented into education programmes, identifying best practice and where the SETs can be updated.

- 2.7. Each panel has met four times throughout the review. We plan to have a final meeting of each panel during the consultation. This will be an opportunity to seek further views on the published proposals and how any changes may be implemented.

3. Revisions to the SETs

- 3.1. The proposed revisions to the SETs, as outlined in Annex A, are the result of extensive engagement with stakeholders, expert panels, and research. They aim to ensure the standards remain outcome-focused and fit for purpose across a changing education and health and care landscape.
- 3.2. There are currently 52 standards. We propose a varying degree of change to all 52 of the existing standards (including merging some standards), and the addition of five new standards. This results in a revised set of 46 proposed standards. The proposed revisions can be summarised as follows:
- 3.2.1. 17 standards with major revisions, such as introducing stronger expectations or incorporating the purposes of another existing standard;
 - 3.2.2. 15 standards with moderate revisions, such as clarifying expectations or making the standard more outcome focused;
 - 3.2.3. 8 standards with minor revisions, like adjusting language to be more active or aligned with other standards;
 - 3.2.4. 12 standards “removed” by being incorporated into another standard; and
 - 3.2.5. five new standards, on use of technology and competency, staff support and feedback to learners.
- 3.3. The proposed revised SETs are available at Annex A and the consultation document at Annex B. A commentary to explain each of the proposed changes is available at Annex C.
- 3.4. The revisions respond to key themes identified during the review, which are summarised below in the paper. We are seeking the Council’s approval to take these proposals forward to consultation in November 2025.

Structural revisions to the SETs

- 3.5. As part of the review, we are proposing a series of structural changes to the SETs to improve clarity, usability, and alignment with current educational practice. These changes respond to feedback from stakeholders and internal analysis, which identified that the current structure—particularly the division between institution-level and programme-level standards—can be difficult to navigate and interpret.
- 3.6. Key structural changes include:
- 3.6.1. Formalising the institution/programme split: the proposed revised SETs clearly distinguish between standards that apply at the institutional level (e.g. governance, admissions, resourcing) and those that apply at the programme level (e.g. curriculum, delivery, assessment). This formalisation supports clearer accountability and implementation across different parts of an organisation, and it aligns with our education quality assurance model which assesses standards at an institution level where appropriate, to lessen regulatory burden.

- 3.6.2. New thematic groupings: the revised SETs have been reordered and regrouped under updated themes that reflect a logical sequence based on how programmes are developed and delivered, instead of following the learner journey, to help support interpretation and assessment. These are:

Institution-level standards

1. Resourcing
2. Management
3. Safety and wellbeing
4. Admissions
5. Communication and information
6. People and partnerships
 - Programme staff
 - Learners and service users

Programme-level standards

7. Programme establishment
8. Programme design and curriculum
 - Learning outcomes and assessment
 - Curriculum content
9. Programme delivery
 - Staffing
 - Learning approaches
 - Partnerships

- 3.6.3. Renumbering: the standards have been renumbered to reflect the above changes to the institution/programme split and thematic groupings.

- 3.6.4. Glossary: The existing glossary in the guidance has been updated and will be included alongside the standards, aligning with the approach taken in the Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics (SCPEs). The glossary defines key terms used in the standards, supporting consistent interpretation. This will help ensure the standards remain outcome-focused while being accessible to a wide range of users.

- 3.7. These structural changes are designed to make the SETs easier to understand, apply, and assess, while maintaining their regulatory rigour and flexibility across diverse education models.

- 3.8. We are also proposing a new foreword to the standards that sets out our expectations of education providers in relation to person-centred education and being evidence-based, action orientated, collaborative, and future-focused. This will complement the standards and help education providers interpret and apply them.

- 3.9. We are exploring the development of an easy-read version of the SETs to support learners and applicants in understanding what to expect from education providers. This aligns with our commitment to accessibility and transparency. We produced an easy-read version of our revised SCPEs.

- 3.10. We seek the Council's approval of these proposals and to take them forward to consultation in November 2025.

Changes to SET 1

- 3.11. Currently, SET 1 defines the minimum qualification level normally expected for entry to the HCPC Register across the 15 regulated professions. It ensures programmes deliver the necessary knowledge, skills, and understanding for safe and effective professional practice.
- 3.12. The standard currently refers to a “threshold level of qualification for entry to the Register,” which has caused confusion and limits flexibility. The language implies a fixed academic level requirement, which may not reflect the diversity of programme models.
- 3.13. We propose changing the standard to sit at programme level, rather than where it currently sits at institution level. This reflects the recent changes in the approach to assessing this standard, as noted in the [Education Performance Report](#) to the ETC on 4 June 2025.
- 3.14. We propose removing the list of “normally expected” minimum qualifications from the wording of the standard and moving it into the guidance. This will:
- 3.14.1. Improve the readability by significantly reducing the length of the standard. This also improves alignment with the rest of the SETs and helps keep the standards outcome focused.
 - 3.14.2. Retain the clarity provided by the current qualifications list, which will support programme designers and our staff assessing programmes.
- 3.15. The guidance will also be updated to clarify that the list of qualification levels sets out what is “normally expected” but that qualification level is not the sole determinant of approval (i.e. that we may approve a programme with an equivalent or different qualification if it meets all other standards). Further clarity will be provided by new criteria to determine equivalent qualifications, which will emphasise alignment with the Standards of Proficiency (SOPs) and assuring public protection. This will also help futureproof the standards.
- 3.16. We are not proposing to change the list of qualifications at this stage, as they are informed by stakeholder input and have been updated recently.
- 3.17. We propose amending the wording of the standard to focus on learners' ability to meet the requirements for entry to the Register, rather than the specific qualification that is awarded. This will:
- 3.17.1. delink qualification level from direct entry to the Register and focus on outcomes (meeting the Standards of Proficiency) rather than qualification titles. This is in line with the outcome focused nature of the SETs;
 - 3.17.2. better align with our legal remit; that registration requires successful completion of an approved programme (and meeting other registration requirements), not a specific qualification title; and
 - 3.17.3. support greater flexibility in programme design (including apprenticeships and employer-led models) and enable changes to be made to the list of qualifications within guidance without having to amend the SETs themselves.

3.18. The risk of these revisions is that it could be perceived as weakening the SETs by removing the minimum threshold of qualification level, potentially raising concerns about allowing programmes with a lower qualification level. This risk is mitigated by retaining the list of qualifications in the guidance, and by our existing approvals process, as programmes will still need to be assessed and would not be approved if they did not meet our expectations for this standard.

3.19. Other options that we considered but are not recommending include:

3.19.1. Retaining the current wording of SET 1, including the qualifications list, with clarified guidance. This option was not taken forward because it is not fully in keeping with the outcome focused nature of the SETs, and it retains the limitations that any future changes to the qualifications list would require a change to the SETs themselves.

3.19.2. Entirely removing the list of qualifications from both the wording of the standards and the guidance. This option was not taken forward because it does not provide sufficient clarity on expected level of qualification and poses a greater risk of being perceived as a lowering our expectations.

3.20. We are seeking the Council's approval to take these proposed changes forward to consultation in November 2025.

Diverse delivery models

3.21. The revised SETs aim to ensure that all learners—regardless of their route into the profession—receive a high-quality, fair education experience. This includes learners undertaking programmes delivered through non-traditional models such as apprenticeships, employer-led routes, blended learning, and distance learning.

3.22. Stakeholder feedback, including from expert panels and learner workshops, highlighted the need for clearer expectations and stronger accountability mechanisms in all settings where the programme is delivered. Learners in employer-led or remote environments may face challenges such as isolation, inconsistent supervision, and variable access to support and ability to participate in assessment. These disparities can impact learner outcomes, fairness, and quality of education delivery.

3.23. In response, we have drafted proposed revisions which are delivery-model agnostic, meaning they apply equally across traditional and non-traditional programmes. This ensures consistency in quality and public protection, while allowing education providers to innovate and respond to workforce needs.

3.24. We have also deliberately avoided creating separate standards for specific models of learning. Instead, the revised SETs embed expectations that are applicable across all contexts, supported by guidance and examples where needed. This approach maintains the high-level nature of the standards while ensuring they are relevant and adaptable.

3.25. The revised SETs include:

3.25.1. Strengthening standards on partnership governance, requiring formal agreements and shared oversight between education providers and delivery partners. This will ensure consistency in the quality of learner experience and support, as well as futureproofing the standards as the delivery of education programmes changes.

- 3.25.2. Clarifying expectations around learner support, ensuring that wellbeing, supervision, and access to resources are consistent across all settings. Clarifying these expectations will help education providers avoid disadvantaging learners from different backgrounds and entry routes.
- 3.25.3. Promoting inclusive and competency-based assessment methods that are adaptable. This will support meeting the needs of learners, as well as help address variation in the quality of assessment practices across different models of learning.
- 3.25.4. Ensuring that practice-based learning is fair and safe across all sites, with clear responsibilities for each partner. This will ensure that all learners, regardless of the method of learning they are undertaking, are afforded the same protections and support.
- 3.25.5. Supporting flexibility in admissions, including recognition of prior learning and diverse entry routes. Including this flexibility will futureproof the standards further as increasingly learners enter education programmes through non-traditional routes.

3.26. We are seeking the Council's approval to take these proposed changes forward to consultation in November 2025.

Futureproofing and technology

- 3.27. Technology is a key theme in the current review of the SETs. Stakeholders have consistently highlighted the growing role of digital tools, simulation, and artificial intelligence (AI) in education and practice. Our proposed revisions aim to ensure that the SETs remain relevant and futureproofed, supporting education providers to prepare learners for evolving professional environments.
- 3.28. Rather than referencing specific technologies such as AI, we have chosen to frame the standards in terms of broader expectations around the appropriate, ethical, and effective use of technology. This approach is intentional and designed to futureproof the standards and keep them outcome focused. By avoiding references to specific tools or platforms, we ensure that the SETs are focused on outcomes rather than inputs, and that they remain applicable as technologies change and new innovations emerge.
- 3.29. This decision reflects feedback from our expert panel on technology and AI, which emphasised the need for flexibility and clarity in how education providers and learners engage with emerging tools. Panel members highlighted the widespread use of technologies such as AI within education providers, to both support learners in new and innovative ways in their learning, as well as prepare learners for new ways of working within the healthcare space.
- 3.30. Panel members also raised concerns about the use of technologies, such as the limitations of current systems to detect AI use, the risks of bias, and the challenges of maintaining fairness and transparency in assessment. They also highlighted the importance of human oversight, ethical frameworks, and clear guidance on acceptable use.
- 3.31. The revised standards therefore focus on outcomes—such as academic integrity, learner preparedness, and safe practice—rather than prescribing specific technologies and how they should be used or managed. This enables education providers to adapt their programmes to incorporate new technologies and digital tools while maintaining alignment with HCPC expectations.

- 3.32. We propose the following changes to the SETs in order to strengthen the standards in relation to the use of technology:
- 3.32.1. an amendment to an existing standard on programme design and curriculum to encourage the considered integration of technologies;
 - 3.32.2. a new standard outlining the expectation that learners understand the limitations and expectations of where they should use certain technologies in their learning; and
 - 3.32.3. a new standard for educators to outline the expectation that they should be competent in using relevant technologies and supporting learners to use relevant technologies in their practice.
- 3.33. In addition to the standards themselves, we will update our guidance to help education providers interpret and apply these expectations in practice. This will include examples of good practice and ethical considerations.
- 3.34. We are seeking the Council's approval to take these proposed changes forward to consultation in November 2025.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

- 3.35. Equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) is another key theme identified for the current review of the SETs. Our proposed revisions aim to embed EDI more consistently and meaningfully across all aspects of education provision, reflecting stakeholder feedback, insights from the EDI expert panel, and the equality impact assessment (EIA) for the review.
- 3.36. The revisions align with the HCPC's shift towards a more active and directive approach to EDI issues in education and training, which can also be seen in the recent work to develop the EDI quality indicators for education, and the changes to better embed EDI through the most recent reviews of the SOPs and SCPEs.
- 3.37. The current SETs include explicit references to EDI in two standards at institution-level; one relating to admissions, and one relating to programme governance, management and leadership. In the revised standards, one standard has been moved to programme level, and both have been strengthened and expanded to ensure that EDI is not treated as a standalone issue but is embedded across the design, delivery, and culture of programmes.
- 3.37.1. The standard at institution level requires that EDI is embedded in strategies and policies in all settings, and that these are meaningfully implemented, monitored, and reviewed to support good quality experiences and outcomes for all learners and others involved in programmes.
 - 3.37.2. The standard at programme level ensures that strategies and policies to embed EDI are effectively implemented and monitored across the programme.
- 3.38. Beyond these specific standards, EDI is reflected throughout the revised SETs. For example:
- 3.38.1. the standard on monitoring and evaluation includes expectations for using data to enhance fairness and quality, supporting proactive and reflective practice;

- 3.38.2. the standards on learner and staff support emphasise accessible arrangements and support systems for all individuals involved in the programme;
 - 3.38.3. the standard on learning environments requires that all settings are safe and supportive for learners, service users, and others, with implications for psychological safety and inclusive practice;
 - 3.38.4. the standards on learning outcomes ensure that learners understand and can meet the SCPEs and SOPs, which include expectations around inclusive, non-discriminatory practice; and
 - 3.38.5. the proposed foreword includes expectations of education providers in relation to fairness, transparency, and inclusive practice.
- 3.39. The EIA has informed the development of these changes. It identifies risks and opportunities across all protected characteristics and highlights areas where the SETs can better support fairness, safety, and inclusion.
- 3.40. We are seeking the Council's approval to take these proposed changes forward to consultation in November 2025.

4. Sustainability

- 4.1. After the review of the standards of conduct, performance and ethics in 2022-2024, we committed to consider how sustainability could be a part of a review of our standards of education and training.
- 4.2. Before our review of the standards began, we published materials on sustainable practice on our website. These pages recognise that environmental sustainability is an important area of focus for health and care professionals.¹
- 4.3. We considered how sustainability might feature in the revised SETs, and how this would fit with the outcome focussed nature of the standards.
- 4.4. At an institutional level, our standards (as outlined in our legislation) relate to topics such as governance, admissions and resourcing rather than how an institution as a whole is run. Setting standards that apply beyond this institutional level aspect, and which link to our programme approval process, would be regulatory overreach.
- 4.5. At a programme level, our standards relate to the programme design, such as learning outcomes and assessment and programme delivery. It is the role of professional bodies to set curriculum content. The teaching of environmental sustainability forms a part of curriculum guidance for many professional bodies. As discussed with the ETC in September we decided against including a specific standard on environmental sustainability.

5. Equality Impact Assessment

- 5.1. We have completed an equality impact assessment based upon our proposed standards. This considers how the proposals may affect different individuals based upon their protected characteristics. Following the consultation we will update the EIA focusing on the proposals we plan to implement.

¹ [Sustainable practice | The HCPC](#)

6. Timeline of delivery

- 6.1. We are seeking the Council's approval to consult on these proposals through public consultation. We plan for the consultation on the revisions to run from early November 2025 to early February 2026. The consultation period will equate to 13 weeks which provides an additional week to account for the holiday period.
- 6.2. We will monitor consultation responses throughout the consultation period to ensure we are reaching a diverse range of people and key stakeholders. This will guide our engagement activities and ascertain any further target stakeholders.
- 6.3. In early 2026 we will share findings with the ETC and then the Council. We aim to publish any revisions to the SETs by September 2026.
- 6.4. We propose a 12-month period for implementation, which will be further informed by feedback through the consultation and the scale of the final changes. The date when the revised SETs will come into force will be announced when the revisions are published and will be accompanied by communication and engagement activities to support the education sector to meet the deadline.

7. Consultation document

- 7.1. We have included a draft consultation document in Annex B. This sets out the main aims of the consultation to the public and sets out the consultation questions and how to respond. The consultation questions test some of the key proposed revisions to the standards.
- 7.2. We seek the Council's approval of these consultation questions.

Consultation questions

1. What effect has the revised structure (including the institution/programme split and glossary) had on the accessibility and understanding of the standards? Please explain your reasons as to why things have improved or not.
(Substantially worsened it / Somewhat worsened it / no change / Somewhat improved it / Substantially improved it)
2. How well do the revised standards support the embedding of equality, diversity and inclusion across all aspects of education and training, and where could further improvements be made?
(Strongly believe they worsen the embedding of EDI/believe they worsen the embedding of EDI/neutral/believe they support the embedding of EDI/ strongly believe they support the embedding of EDI)
3. Do the revised standards take the right approach to supporting inclusive education and training and addressing barriers to access, participation, and course completion? Please explain your reasoning.
(strongly disagree that they take the right approach/disagree that they take the right approach/neutral/believe that they take the right approach/strongly agree that they take the right approach)
4. Do the revised standards set out sufficient expectations for providers on the appropriate role of technology in education? How could they be further improved?
(Strongly disagree that they set out sufficient expectations/disagree that they set out sufficient expectations/neutral/agree that they set out sufficient expectations/strongly agree that they set out sufficient expectations)

expectations/strongly agree that they set out sufficient expectations)

5. Are the revised standards applicable to all models of learning, including apprenticeships, blended learning, and employer-led programmes? Please explain any gaps you believe to be present.

(Applicable to none/Applicable to some/Applicable to all)

6. Are the expectations around partnership working and shared governance clear and appropriate for all settings where programmes are delivered? What could be improved?

(Strongly disagree that they are clear and appropriate/disagree that they are clear and appropriate/neutral/agree that they are clear and appropriate/strongly agree that they are clear and appropriate)

7. Are there any aspects of the revised standards that could result in equality and diversity implications for groups or individuals based on protected characteristics, as defined by the Equality Act 2010?

- ☐ Age
- ☐ Disability
- ☐ Gender reassignment
- ☐ Marriage and civil partnership
- ☐ Pregnancy and maternity
- ☐ Ethnicity
- ☐ Religion or belief
- ☐ Sex
- ☐ Sexual orientation

8. What challenges, if any, do you foresee in implementing the proposed revised standards within your organisation or sector?

9. Once any changes to the standards are finalised, how long would your organisation need to implement the changes?

10. Do you have additional comments, concerns, or recommendations about the proposed revisions to the standards of education and training not already discussed above?

8. Consultation period communication plan:

- 8.1. Working with the Communications team we will:

- 8.1.1 finalise the consultation document, revised standards, and commentary on changes taking on board any feedback from the Council;
- 8.1.2 complete design work for all consultation materials;
- 8.1.3 arrange the translation of all consultation materials documents into Welsh;
- 8.1.4 develop communications collateral such as web content, FAQs, social assets, animated video, talking head video, slide pack, and newsletter content. All

content will be made accessible and will be used across a variety of channels; and

8.1.5 communicate and promote the consultation across all of our channels and direct communication to reach targeted stakeholders.

8.2. Summary of activity is below.

Stage	Dates	Summary of activity
<p>Consultation launch</p> <p>(Initial launch comms, followed by regular promotion across all channels between launch and close of consultation)</p>	4 November – 2 February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates to the consultation web page with FAQs and up to date information and a link to smart survey consultation. • News article on web linking to web page above • Social posts launching consultation • Further social posts with a SETs explainer animation (what are the SETs, why are they important) • Further social media posts with SETs changes explainer (what are the main changes and why) • Signpost consultation on the student hub • Assets shared with education providers to send to learners (direct to Education programme leads) • Education newsletter – education update to promote consultation • In Focus newsletter to registrants about the consultation • Stakeholder newsletter • Webinars (to be aimed at education providers, or employers) • Include in any presentations by the professional liaison service (PLS) at universities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PLS to send details of the consultation to programme lead contacts • Send to professional bodies and unions and including holding session at December Professional Body Forum • Hold three consultation events (education providers, learners, and service users) – themed, targeted to audiences (promoted across all channels above)

9. Next steps

- 9.1. We seek the Council's approval to launch the consultation in November 2025. We will run the consultation for 13 weeks. During this time, we deliver the communications activities outlined above to support understanding of the proposals and encourage responses to the consultation.
- 9.2. In planning for implementation, we will consider the academic year and the quality assurance processes of education providers to ensure a smooth and effective transition. We propose a 12-month period for implementation.
- 9.3. We will be updating the supplementary guidance which will reflect any updates and changes to the standards following the consultation. We do not expect to make any substantial changes that would be outside of the scope of the proposals we are taking through to consultation.
- 9.4. In early 2026 we will share findings with the ETC and then the Council. We aim to publish any revisions to the SETs by September 2026

Revised Standards of Education and Training

Introduction

About the standards

This document sets out the standards of education and training (SETs). These are outcome-focused standards and are designed to ensure education providers deliver high-quality education and training. 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.

Our work with education providers

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.

Our work with professional bodies

Professional bodies play an invaluable role within education quality assurance and enhancement. They often define profession-specific expectations within pre-registration education and training through curriculum guidance and education standards, and support education providers in developing new and existing high-quality programmes.

Many professional bodies accredit, endorse, or approve education programmes against their own criteria. Often, professional bodies set expectations for areas like entry requirements to programmes, programme design and delivery (including curriculum guidance), resourcing arrangements including staff / learner ratios, and the duration and range of practice-based learning. These are determined according to their expert views and insight about education and training needs, which will often vary across different professions.

Meeting the standards

The standards of education and training are underpinned by the following principles. Together, these principles form the foundation of the SETs and reflect our shared ambition to deliver education that is inclusive, innovative, and grounded in public protection.

Person-centred education

At the heart of the SETs is a commitment to safe, fair, and person-centred education. We expect education providers to foster inclusive and accessible learning environments where all individuals—regardless of background or identity—can thrive.

Evidence-based and action orientated

Education providers are expected to make thoughtful, purposeful decisions informed by data, research, and reflection. This includes considering ethical implications, seeking diverse perspectives, challenging assumptions, and remaining open to innovation—particularly in the integration of new tools, technologies, and educational approaches.

Collaborative

The SETs promote a collaborative approach to education. We expect education providers to work in partnership with learners, service users, educators, and other stakeholders to develop and co-produce programmes that reflect shared values and lived experiences.

Future-focused

Education must be up-to-date and future focused. Education providers should be adaptable, responsive to change, and committed to preparing learners for evolving professional practice.

The standards

Institution level standards

1. **Resourcing**

- 1.1. Programmes are financially sustainable within the education provider and are fit for purpose with the support of all stakeholders involved.

2. **Management**

- 2.1. The programme is clearly and effectively managed, with defined responsibilities for all aspects of programmes, including with strategic and operational partners.
- 2.2. Equality, diversity, and inclusion are embedded in strategies and policies in all settings, and these are meaningfully implemented, monitored, and reviewed to support good quality experiences and outcomes for all learners and others involved in programmes.
- 2.3. The education provider regularly monitors, evaluates, and enhances the quality, safety, and fairness of education and training provision across all settings.
- 2.4. There is a fair and effective process in place for appointing individuals with overall professional responsibility for programmes, ensuring they are suitably qualified and able to support safe and effective delivery of education and training.

3. **Safety and wellbeing**

- 3.1. All learning environments are safe and supportive for learners, service users, and others involved in programmes.
- 3.2. The wellbeing and learning needs of all learners are effectively supported across all settings.
- 3.3. The wellbeing of staff and others involved in programmes are supported to enable effective contribution to the programme and the quality of learning.
- 3.4. The ongoing conduct, character and health of learners is considered to maintain the safety of service users and carers.
- 3.5. Learners are supported to identify and raise concerns about the safety and wellbeing of service users.

4. **Admissions**

- 4.1. The admissions process is fair, transparent, and accessible, and enables both the applicant and the education provider to make an informed choice about admissions to programmes.
- 4.2. The selection and entry criteria are appropriate to the level and content of a programme and are fairly applied in admission decisions.
- 4.3. The education provider assesses applicants' prior learning and experience to support fair admissions decisions across diverse entry routes.
- 4.4. The education provider sets and implements fair, appropriate, and effective admissions requirements, covering health, conduct, character, and English language proficiency, to ensure learners can safely participate in programmes and meet professional standards.

5. Communication and information

- 5.1. Learners and educators have the practical and academic information they need to be appropriately prepared for practice-based learning.
- 5.2. The education provider effectively communicates the role of the HCPC to learners and that only successful completion of an approved programme may lead to eligibility for admission to the Register to learners, educators and others.
- 5.3. There are clear expectations for attendance, including identifying and communicating which parts of programmes require mandatory attendance and attendance is monitored to ensure learners are fully engaged in essential learning activities.
- 5.4. Assessment requirements for progression and achievement across programmes are clearly set, communicated, and monitored.
- 5.5. Education providers determine, set, and clearly communicate expectations for the appropriate use of technology in learning and teaching, ensuring these are understood by learners and educators.
- 5.6. Learners receive timely and meaningful feedback to empower and enable them to have an active role in their own development.

6. People and Partnerships

Programme staff

- 6.1. All educators undertake regular and effective learning and development which is appropriate to their role, learners' needs, and the delivery of learning outcomes.
- 6.2. There is effective external scrutiny of programmes including at least one appointed person who has the appropriate professional experience and qualifications relevant to the programme.

Learners and service users

- 6.3. Service users and carers are actively and meaningfully involved in the design, delivery, and evaluation of programmes contributing to their quality, effectiveness and relevance to health and care practice.
- 6.4. Appropriate consent is obtained from service users and carers, in ways that uphold their rights and reflect ethical practice.
- 6.5. Appropriate consent is obtained from learners, in ways that uphold their rights and maintain their safety in all settings.
- 6.6. Learners are actively and meaningfully involved in the design and evaluation of programmes, contributing to their quality, effectiveness, and continuous improvement.
- 6.7. Education providers receive and respond effectively to all complaints, feedback, and learner requests for academic appeals.

Programme level standards

7. Programme establishment

- 7.1. The academic level of the programme is appropriate to support learners in achieving the Standards of proficiency and delivering safe and effective practice.

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- 7.2. Strategies and policies to embed equality, diversity, and inclusion are effectively implemented and monitored across the programme.
- 7.3. The resources to support learning in all settings are effective and appropriate to the delivery of the programme and are accessible to all learners and educators.
- 7.4. There is sufficient availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners throughout the programme.

8. Programme design and curriculum

Learning outcomes and assessment

- 8.1. The learning outcomes effectively integrate the requirements for professional practice as defined in our Standards of conduct, performance and ethics and Standards of proficiency for the relevant part of the Register.
- 8.2. Assessments ensure that those who successfully complete the programme understand our Standards of conduct, performance, and ethics and meet our Standards of proficiency for the relevant part of the Register.
- 8.3. Learning and teaching methods are appropriate to the effective delivery of the learning outcomes.
- 8.4. The structure, duration, and range of practice-based learning enables learners to develop the knowledge, skills, and experience required to achieve the learning outcomes and to meet our standards for admission to the Register.
- 8.5. Assessment methods are appropriate and effective for measuring the learning outcomes.
- 8.6. Assessments provide an objective, fair, and reliable measure of learners' progression and achievement.

Curriculum content

- 8.7. The programme reflects the philosophy, core values, skills, and knowledge base of the profession and relevant external reference points.
- 8.8. The curriculum is regularly reviewed and updated to ensure it remains responsive to developments in professional practice and continues to prepare learners for safe and effective practice.
- 8.9. Practice-based learning and the integration of theory and practice are central to the programme.
- 8.10. The programme design is informed by evidence and reflective practice and supports integration of appropriate methods and technologies.

9. Programme delivery

Staffing

- 9.1. There are sufficient qualified and experienced staff in all settings to deliver and support the programme in a way that enables learners to achieve the Standards of proficiency and prepare for safe and effective practice.
- 9.2. Learning is supported by educators with relevant specialist knowledge and expertise, whose competence and training enable learners to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for safe and effective practice.

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- 9.3. Educators are up to date in the use of contemporary technologies and digital tools relevant to their profession and that are used in teaching, supervision, and assessment.

Learning approaches

- 9.4. Learners learn with, and from, professionals and learners in other relevant professions.

Partnerships

- 9.5. There are formal partnerships between the education provider and their delivery partners, that involve regular and effective collaboration and joint evaluation, which ensure the provider's responsibility for the programme.

Glossary

You may not be familiar with some of the terms we use throughout the Standards and guidance documents, so we have explained them below.

Academic appeal A request by a learner for a review of a decision of an academic body about their progression, assessment or award. An academic appeal should not be confused with a complaint or concern.

Accessible Designed or adapted to ensure that individuals, including those with disabilities or other needs, can fully participate in learning and assessment activities.

Apologising Making it clear that you are sorry about what has happened. The HCPC does not regard an apology, of itself, as an admission of liability or wrongdoing.

Applicant Anyone applying to a programme you provide

Appropriate Suitable or fitting for a particular purpose, context or individual, especially in relation to professional judgement, behaviour, or educational provision.

Approval The process that leads to decisions about whether a programme meets the requirements of our standards of education and training. Continuing approval depends on satisfactory monitoring.

Assessment The process of evaluating a learner's knowledge, skills, and professional behaviours to determine whether they meet the required standards for progression or qualification.

Carer Anyone who looks after, or provides support to, a family member, partner or friend.

Care, treatment or other services A general term to describe the different work that our registrants carry out.

Colleague Other health and care professionals, learners and trainees, support workers, professional carers and others involved in providing care, treatment or other services to service users.

Complaint The expression of a specific concern by a learner about the quality of the programme and learning opportunities or, more generally, about issues such as unequal treatment or bullying. A complaint should not be confused with an academic appeal.

Conduct A health and care professional's behaviour.

Consent Permission for a registrant to provide care, treatment or other services, given by a service user, or someone acting on their behalf, after receiving all the information they reasonably need to make that decision.

Curriculum A structured plan to provide specific learning to support learners' knowledge, skills, behaviour and associated learning experiences. The learning plan is generally organised as a sequence of modules so that a learner receives specific

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education and training. The curriculum includes the syllabus, teaching guides, an assessment guide and necessary learning resources.

Delegate To ask someone else to carry out a task on your behalf.

Discriminate To unfairly treat a person or group of people differently from other people or groups of people. This includes treating others differently because of views about their lifestyle, culture or social or economic status, as well as their characteristics protected by law: age, disability, gender reassignment, race, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Education provider The institution (for example, a college, university, company or private higher education provider) which maintains overall responsibility for delivering the programme. This includes responsibility for the quality and conferment of the award given. We hold the education provider responsible for meeting all of our SETs.

Educator Someone involved in teaching, assessing or aiding learning on a programme. This term can include people who are permanently employed by the education provider and others who help to deliver the programme, such as sessional or visiting lecturers and practice educators.

Effective/effectively Achieving the intended outcome in a competent, timely and professional manner, particularly in relation to teaching, learning, assessment or practice.

Equality and diversity laws Legal frameworks that education providers and others involved in the programme must comply with to ensure fair treatment and reasonable adjustments for all applicants and learners, including those with disabilities.

Escalate To pass on a concern about a service user's safety or wellbeing to someone who is better able to act on it, for example, a more senior colleague, a manager or a regulator.

Ethics The values that guide a person's behaviour or judgement.

Experience Having practical contact with and observation of facts or events, or having gained knowledge and skills through involvement in relevant activities over time.

Fair Treating people equally, impartially and justly, without bias or discrimination, and in line with legal and ethical standards.

Fit to practise When someone has the skills, knowledge, character and health to practice safely and effectively.

Focused review Our assessment process which enables timely engagement with education providers based on the information or intelligence we receive or discover

Governance The policies, processes and monitoring arrangements that make sure that a programme is well run.

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Impartial Not influenced by personal feelings or interests; showing fairness and objectivity in decision-making and interactions.

Leadership Providing a strategy, vision or direction for the education provider, programme, or other partner organisation.

Learner Anyone studying or training on a programme which leads to them being eligible to join our Register. The term includes students, trainees, apprentices and practitioners in training or work-based learning.

Learning outcomes Statements that describe what a learner is expected to know, understand, and be able to do after completing a learning activity or programme.

Management Overseeing the day-to-day delivery of a programme, including setting roles and responsibilities and the allocation of resources.

Monitoring The ongoing processes by which the HCPC ensures that approved programmes continue to meet the required standards. This includes focused review and performance review.

Needs Requirements or conditions necessary for a learner to succeed, which may include academic support, reasonable adjustments, or wellbeing considerations.

Non-discriminatory Acting in a way that does not treat individuals or groups unfairly based on protected characteristics

Objective Based on facts and evidence rather than personal feelings or opinions; used in assessment, decision-making and evaluation processes.

Performance review Our periodic engagement with education providers to understand performance and risk linked to our standards

Practice education provider The organisation that provides practice-based learning for a programme. In many cases this is a separate organisation from the education provider. This includes, for example, health and care providers, local authorities, schools, community organisations and charities across the public, private and voluntary sectors.

Practice educator A person who is responsible for a learner's education during their practice-based learning and has received appropriate training and support for this role.

Practice-based learning The clinical or practical experience that forms an essential part of an approved programme. It may take place in separate periods of time or throughout a programme.

Practitioner A health and care professional who is currently practising in their profession.

Practice placement A structured period of practice-based learning within a health or care setting, designed to help learners apply theoretical knowledge in real-world environments.

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Programme The academic teaching, practice-based learning, assessment, qualification and other services provided by the education provider, which together form the programme for approval and monitoring purposes.

Programme sustainability The ability of a programme to continue operating effectively over time, including having sufficient resources, staffing, and strategic planning.

Protected title A professional title that can only be used by individuals who are registered with the HCPC. Misuse of a protected title is a criminal offence.

Reasonable adjustments Changes or accommodations made by an organisation involved in education and training to support learners with disabilities or health conditions, ensuring equal access to learning and assessment.

Recognition of prior learning assessment of an applicant's previous learning from experience or formal learning (or both). This can lead to credit transfer or other transition arrangements into a programme, where appropriate.

Refer To ask someone else to provide care, treatment or other services which are beyond a registrant's scope of practice or, where relevant, because the service user has asked for a second opinion.

Register The list (or any part of it) that we keep of the professionals who meet our standards for their training, professional skills, behaviour and health.

Registrant A person who is currently on our Register.

Regular Occurring at consistent intervals or in a routine manner, such as scheduled reviews, meetings or monitoring activities.

Relevant Closely connected or appropriate to the matter at hand, particularly in relation to curriculum content, assessment criteria or professional practice.

Reliable Consistently good in quality or performance; able to be trusted to deliver accurate and dependable outcomes.

Safe Minimising risk and harm to learners, service users and others, and ensuring that environments and practices support wellbeing and professional standards.

Scope of practice The areas in which a registrant has the knowledge, skills and experience necessary to practise safely and effectively.

Staff Anyone involved in delivering the programme. The term applies to all roles including educators, management, administrative and support staff, as well as people in both paid and unpaid positions. In practice-based learning, this term may also refer to others working in the practice-based learning setting who interact with learners.

Standards of conduct, performance and ethics (SCPEs) Standards that apply to everyone on our Register and people who are applying for registration. They set out our expectations regarding a professional's behaviour, and cover their ethics, decision-

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making, communication and interaction with service users, carers, colleagues and others.

Standards of proficiency (SOPs) Standards which set out the knowledge, skills and understanding that are necessary to practise a profession safely and effectively. Professionals must meet these standards when they complete an approved programme before they can be registered.

Suitability assessment A process to determine whether an applicant has the appropriate character, health, and conduct to train and practice safely and effectively.

Suitable Meeting the necessary criteria or conditions for a particular role, activity or context, especially in relation to admissions, placements or professional practice.

Supportive Providing encouragement, assistance or resources to help learners succeed and maintain wellbeing throughout their education and training.

Thorough Complete and detailed in approach, ensuring that all aspects of a task, process or decision are considered and addressed.

Threshold level The minimum standard of education and training required for safe and effective practice, as defined by the HCPC for each profession.

Valid Logically sound and legally or professionally acceptable; in assessment, refers to accurately measuring what it is intended to measure.

Wellbeing A person's overall physical, mental and emotional health, which affects their ability to engage with and succeed in their education and training.

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Commentary on the proposed revised standards of education and training

The extent of the changes we are proposing to the structure and content of the existing standards may make tracked changes difficult to understand. We produced this document to provide more information and outline the differences between the draft standards for consultation and the existing standards. We identify where the content of the existing standards can be found in the consultation draft. We also provide a short commentary of the main changes we have made.

Existing standard	Draft proposed standard	Commentary
Institution level standards		
1. Level of qualification for entry to the Register		
<p>1.1 The Council normally expects that the threshold entry routes to the Register will be the following.</p> <p>Bachelor degree with honours for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • biomedical scientists (with the Certificate of Competence awarded by the Institute of Biomedical Science, or equivalent); • chiropodists / podiatrists; • dietitians; • occupational therapists; • orthoptists; • paramedics; • physiotherapists; • prosthetists / orthotists; • radiographers; and • speech and language therapists. <p>Diploma of Higher Education for operating department practitioners.</p>	<p><i>Programme—Programme establishment.</i></p> <p>7.1 The academic level of the programme is appropriate to support learners in achieving the Standards of proficiency and delivering safe and effective practice.</p>	<p>SET 1 defines the minimum qualification levels normally expected for entry to the HCPC Register across the 15 regulated professions. Considering increasingly varied delivery models in health and care education, it is important that this standard enables flexibility to accommodate innovation and difference while ensuring public protection. To achieve this, the standard has been significantly reworded. The draft new standard (7.1) emphasises that the academic level must support learners in achieving the Standards of Proficiency and practising safely. This also reflects stakeholder feedback calling for greater clarity and flexibility, especially for apprenticeship and non-traditional routes. The draft standard would apply to the education programme rather than the</p>

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<p>Foundation degree for hearing aid dispensers.</p> <p>Master's degree for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • arts therapists; • clinical scientists (with the Certificate of Attainment awarded by the Association of Clinical Scientists, or equivalent (pdf)); • 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). <p>Professional doctorate for clinical psychologists.</p> <p>Professional doctorate, or equivalent for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • counselling psychologists; and • educational psychologists 		<p>institution. It therefore is a programme level standard. This reflects recent changes in the approach to assessing this standard.</p> <p>The current qualifications list will be retained as part of the guidance, to provide clarity for education providers and support programme assessment/approval.</p>
<p>2. Programme admissions</p>		
	<p><i>Institution—Admissions</i></p>	<p>The draft standard (4.1) retains the core intent of enabling informed choice and strengthens expectations of fairness,</p>

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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.	4.1 The admissions process is fair, transparent, and accessible, and enables both the applicant and the education provider to make an informed choice about admissions to programmes.	transparency, and accessibility. This responds to stakeholder feedback about potential barriers faced by applicants from marginalised groups and different entry routes and aligns with HCPC's commitment to fairness in admissions. The revised wording also reflects a more outcome-focused approach, consistent with our regulatory approach.
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.	<i>Institution—Admissions</i> 4.4 The education provider sets and implements fair, appropriate, and effective admissions requirements, covering health, conduct, character, and English language proficiency, to ensure learners can safely participate in programmes and meet professional standards.	These standards have been consolidated into draft standard 4.4 to improve clarity and reduce duplication. The new wording sets expectations for fair and effective admissions requirements covering health, conduct, character, and English language proficiency. This change reflects stakeholder concerns about inappropriate barriers for disabled applicants or those with different linguistic backgrounds. It also aligns with HCPC's fitness to practise principles and ensures providers are fair in their assessment of applicants' ability to safely participate in programmes.
2.6 There must be an appropriate and effective process for assessing applicants' prior learning and experience.	<i>Institution—Admissions</i> 4.3 The education provider assesses applicants' prior learning and experience to support fair admissions decisions across diverse entry routes.	Draft standard 4.3 strengthens expectations for recognition of prior learning, especially for non-traditional entry routes such as apprenticeships and employer-led models. This responds to feedback from stakeholders which highlighted inconsistencies in how education providers assess prior learning. The revised wording promotes transparency and fairness.
	<i>Institution—Management</i>	Draft standards 2.2 and 7.2 combine the existing Equality, diversity and inclusion

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<p>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.</p> <p>3.14 The programme must implement and monitor equality and diversity policies in relation to learners.</p>	<p>2.2 Equality, diversity, and inclusion are embedded in strategies and policies in all settings, and these are meaningfully implemented, monitored, and reviewed to support good quality experiences and outcomes for all learners and others involved in programmes.</p> <p><i>Programme—Programme establishment</i></p> <p>7.2 Strategies and policies to embed equality, diversity, and inclusion are effectively implemented and monitored across the programme.</p>	<p>(EDI) standards at an institution level (2.7 and 3.14).</p> <p>They also expand the scope of the original standards to set out EDI expectations across all settings. They strengthen the expectation that EDI is embedded at both a strategic and operational level, and not just in standalone policies.</p> <p>This reflects the HCPC's broader commitment to embedding EDI across education and training, as seen in recent updates to the SOPs and SCPEs.</p> <p>The change also responds to stakeholder requests for more active and reflective EDI strategies at all levels of the institution, including addressing structural barriers, monitoring of differential attainment, and supporting diverse learner needs.</p>
<p>3. Programme governance, management and leadership</p>		
<p>3.1 The programme must be sustainable and fit for purpose.</p>	<p><i>Institution—Resourcing</i></p> <p>1.1 Programmes are financially sustainable within the education provider and are fit for purpose with the support of all stakeholders involved.</p>	<p>Draft standard 1.1 clarifies the concept of sustainability to financial viability and stakeholder support.</p> <p>This reflects reports of increased financial pressure on institutions. We have seen this in education reports and throughout our stakeholder feedback during the review. Stakeholder feedback emphasised the importance of a programme maintaining strategic support and planning resources effectively.</p> <p>The change also aligns with broader sector expectations of institutional resilience and programme viability, especially in the context</p>

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		of workforce planning and evolving delivery models.
3.2 The programme must be effectively managed.	<p><i>Institution—Management</i></p> <p>2.1 The programme is clearly and effectively managed, with defined responsibilities for all aspects of programmes, including with strategic and operational partners.</p>	<p>The revised standard (2.1) introduces clearer expectations regarding programme management and defined responsibilities, including with strategic and operational partners.</p> <p>This responds to challenges identified in employer-led and multi-site delivery models, where governance and accountability can be fragmented.</p> <p>The proposed change supports clearer oversight of partnerships. It also aligns with proposals to strengthen the way education providers make joint decisions with partners.</p>
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.	<p><i>Institution—Management</i></p> <p>2.4 There is a fair and effective process in place for appointing individuals with overall professional responsibility for programmes, ensuring they are suitably qualified and able to support safe and effective delivery of education and training.</p>	<p>Draft standard 2.4 sets out the requirements for those who hold professional responsibility for the programme. The reference to individuals being on the relevant part of the register has been removed to align with the current application of the standard as set out in existing guidance.</p> <p>The current standard allows for exceptions to the requirement that the responsible person be part of the register. However, it is worded in a complex and negative way.</p> <p>Removing this part of the wording maintains the current application of the standard, whilst simplifying the wording, and moves away from the negative framing.</p> <p>The draft standard focuses on the responsible person being appropriately qualified and experienced for the role. The updated guidance would provide further detail on how we expect the education</p>

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		<p>provider to demonstrate suitable qualification including where appropriate, the person being a part of the HCPC register. The change aligns with broader EDI principles and stakeholder feedback on flexibility in staffing.</p> <p>The draft change also emphasises the importance of a fair and effective appointment process. This addresses concerns about bias and unnecessary barriers, while maintaining the expectation that individuals are suitably qualified to support safe and effective delivery of education and training.</p>
<p>3.4 The programme must have regular and effective monitoring and evaluation systems in place.</p> <p>5.3 The education provider must maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and ensuring the quality of practice-based learning.</p>	<p><i>Institution—Management</i></p> <p>2.3 The education provider regularly monitors, evaluates, and enhances the quality, safety, and fairness of education and training provision across all settings.</p>	<p>Draft standard 2.3 combines existing standards on monitoring and evaluation systems, including in practice-based learning, and strengthens expectations by explicitly referencing quality, safety, and fairness.</p> <p>This supports consistency in quality across all learning environments, particularly in employer-led and remote settings, reflecting stakeholder concerns about poor quality practice-based learning and negative placement experiences. The change supports a more reflective and data-informed approach to programme improvement.</p>
<p>3.7 Service users and carers must be involved in the programme.</p>	<p><i>Institution—People and partnership: Learners and service users</i></p> <p>6.3 Service users and carers are actively and meaningfully involved in the design, delivery, and evaluation of programmes contributing to</p>	<p>Draft standard 6.4 places service user and carer experiences at the heart of programmes. The change supports public accountability and ensures learners are prepared to meet professional standards in real-world contexts.</p>

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	their quality, effectiveness and relevance to health and care practice.	It clarifies the nature of service user involvement, specifying their role in design, delivery, and evaluation. The existing standard was set at a high level to enable providers to build the systems needed meet this standard. Now that this standard is long-established, these revisions strengthen the existing standard and set higher expectations that are reflective of what is required now and in the future. This responds to stakeholder feedback calling for more meaningful engagement and clearer expectations.
3.8 Learners must be involved in the programme.	<i>Institution—People and partnership: Learners and service users</i> 6.6 Learners are actively and meaningfully involved in the design and evaluation of programmes, contributing to their quality, effectiveness, and continuous improvement.	Draft standard 6.6 mirrors the changes to service user involvement, emphasising meaningful learner participation in programme design and review. This reflects stakeholder feedback which highlighted the value of learner voice in improving programme quality and fairness.
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. 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.	<i>Institution—People and partnership: Programme staff</i> 6.1 All educators undertake regular and effective learning and development which is appropriate to their role, learners' needs, and the delivery of learning outcomes.	Draft standard 6.1 consolidates expectations regarding educator development in Standard 3.11 and 5.7. This is to reduce duplication and supports consistency in quality across all learning environments. The draft standard responds to concerns about potential inconsistencies in the quality of training and support, particularly in delivery methods such as apprenticeships. It supports high-quality supervision across education settings. We heard requests from some stakeholders to introduce minimum standards – such as setting minimum qualifications and experience of educators. However, this

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		would change the nature of the standards of education and training to be input focused. The draft standard addresses these requests whilst maintaining the output-focused nature of the standards.
3.13 There must be effective and accessible arrangements in place to support the wellbeing and learning needs of learners in all settings.	<i>Institution—Safety and wellbeing</i> 3.2 The wellbeing and learning needs of all learners are effectively supported across all settings.	Draft standard 3.2 retains the expectations of the original standard and updates the wording to align with the rest of the revised SETs. Improving the clarity of this standard helps address stakeholder concerns about inconsistent support, especially in remote or third-party settings. It aligns with proposals to strengthen reasonable adjustments and inclusive support systems.
3.14 The programme must implement and monitor equality and diversity policies in relation to learners.	See 2.7	See 2.7
3.15 There must be a thorough and effective process in place for receiving and responding to learner complaints. 6.6 There must be an effective process in place for learners to make academic appeals.	<i>Institution—People and partnership: Learners and service users</i> 6.7 Education providers receive and respond effectively to all complaints, feedback, and learner requests for academic appeals.	Draft standard 6.6 consolidates existing standards 3.15 and 6.6 regarding complaints and academic appeals into a single standard. It expands the scope to include other forms of feedback, and feedback and complaints from service users. The changes also make the standard concise and outcome focused by emphasising effective responses and learner voice, rather than processes. These changes align with stakeholder feedback regarding, the length of the standards and the effectiveness of education providers responsiveness to feedback and complaints.

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<p>3.16 There must be thorough and effective processes in place for ensuring the ongoing suitability of learners' conduct, character and health.</p>	<p><i>Institution—Safety and wellbeing</i></p> <p>3.4 The ongoing conduct, character and health of learners is considered to maintain the safety of service users and carers.</p>	<p>This standard has been reframed in draft 3.4 to emphasise the relation between service user safety and assessment of a learners conduct character and health.</p> <p>The change clarifies that education providers are expected to assess learners' conduct, character and health in relation to ensuring the safety of service users.</p> <p>This change aligns with our equality impact assessment. It also aligns with the 2022 updates to the standards of conduct, performance and ethics, which emphasised the relationship between registrants' health and character to safe practice.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p><i>Institution—Safety and wellbeing</i></p> <p>3.5 Learners are supported to identify and raise concerns about the safety and wellbeing of service users.</p>	<p>Draft standard 3.5 simplifies the existing standard 3.17 and highlights the expected outcome from application of the standard.</p> <p>The change also attends to stakeholder feedback emphasising the importance of psychological safety and understanding of internal processes to deal with complaints and safety.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p><i>Institution—Communication and information</i></p> <p>5.2 The education provider effectively communicates the role of the HCPC to learners and that only successful completion of an approved programme may lead to eligibility for admission to the Register to learners, educators and others.</p>	<p>Draft standard 5.2 improves the clarity and of standard 3.18. It ensures that learners, educators, and other users of the standards of education and training understand that only successful completion of a HCPC approved programme leads to eligibility to join the HCPC register. This supports transparency and aligns with our public protection remit.</p> <p>We have also added a new expectation for education providers to communicate the role of the HCPC to learners.</p>

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4. Programme design and delivery		
4.9 The programme must ensure that learners are able to learn with, and from, professionals and learners in other relevant professions.	<p><i>Programme—Programme delivery: Learning approaches</i></p> <p>9.4 Learners learn with, and from, professionals and learners in other relevant professions.</p>	<p>Draft standard 9.4 strengthens standard 4.9 and highlights the importance of interprofessional learning rather than the learners' ability. This change aligns the standard with the interpretation set out in the guidance and adds clarity. By highlighting the provision of interprofessional learning, it reflects stakeholder feedback regarding the importance of preparing learners for team-based care environments. The change also aligns with the SOPs relating to communication and teamwork. The standard is complemented by guidance that sets out that we expect programmes to also ensure that learners are sufficiently engaged in interprofessional learning.</p>
4.10 The programme must include effective processes for obtaining appropriate consent from service users and learners.	<i>See New Standards at the end of the document</i>	<i>See New Standards at the end of the document</i>
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.	<p><i>Institution—Communication and information</i></p> <p>5.3 There are clear expectations for attendance, including identifying and communicating which parts of programmes require mandatory attendance, and attendance is monitored to ensure learners are fully engaged in essential learning activities.</p>	<p>Draft standard 5.3 improves clarity around mandatory attendance and monitoring. It ensures learners are fully engaged in essential learning activities and supports programme transparency. This responds to feedback about inconsistent attendance policies and the need for clearer expectations.</p>

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5. Practice-based learning		
5.3 The education provider must maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and ensuring the quality of practice-based learning.	See 3.4	See 3.4
5.4 Practice-based learning must take place in an environment that is safe and supportive for learners and service users.	<i>Institution—Safety and wellbeing</i> 3.1 All learning environments are safe and supportive for learners, service users, and others involved in programmes.	Draft standard 3.1 expands the scope to include all learning environments and stakeholders. This aligns with feedback on safeguarding and psychological safety.
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.	See 3.11	See 3.11
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.	<i>Institution—Communication and information</i> 5.1 Learners and practice educators have the practical and academic information they need to be appropriately prepared for practice-based learning.	Draft standard 5.1 retains the expectations of the original standard and updates the wording to align with the rest of the revised SETs. The revised wording emphasises the importance of enabling preparedness, which helps address concerns about gaps in communication and the need for better orientation to placement settings. The standard is complemented by guidance that sets out that preparation includes practical and academic preparation.
6. Assessment		
	<i>Programme—Programme design and curriculum: Learning outcomes and assessments</i>	Draft standard 8.6 retains the original intent, ensuring assessments are objective, fair, and

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6.3 Assessments must provide an objective, fair and reliable measure of learners' progression and achievement.	8.6 Assessments provide an objective, fair, and reliable measure of learners' progression and achievement.	reliable. This standard supports consistency and transparency in evaluating learner progression and achievement and aligns with stakeholder calls for more inclusive and competency-based assessment methods.
6.4 Assessment policies must clearly specify requirements for progression and achievement within the programme.	<i>Institution—Communication and information</i> 5.4 Assessment requirements for progression and achievement across programmes are clearly set, communicated, and monitored.	Draft standard 5.4 clarifies assessment requirements and progression criteria. The change ensures that the focus of the standard is the outcome of application rather than setting out what assessment policies must say. This highlights the importance that learners understand expectations and supports programme transparency. This change reflects feedback on the need for clearer communication of academic standards for learners.
6.6 There must be an effective process in place for learners to make academic appeals.	See 3.15	See 3.15
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.	<i>Institution—People and partnerships: Programme staff</i> 6.2 There is effective external scrutiny of programmes including at least one appointed person who has the appropriate professional experience and qualifications relevant to the programme.	Draft standard 6.2 strengthens expectations for effective external scrutiny but removes the Register clause and shifts away from HEI-focused language. This supports flexibility while maintaining quality assurance. Similarly to draft standard 2.4, it responds to concerns about unnecessary barriers and promotes inclusive recruitment of external examiners.
Programme level standards		

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2. Programme admissions		
2.2 The selection and entry criteria must include appropriate academic and professional entry standards.	<i>Institution—Admissions</i> 4.2 The selection and entry criteria are appropriate to the level and content of a programme and are fairly applied in admission decisions.	Draft standard 4.2 improves clarity around selection and entry criteria by focusing on their appropriateness to the level and content of the programme. This replaces the more technical language of “academic and professional entry standards” and supports fairer, more transparent admissions decisions. It also aligns with the broader aim of making the SETs more accessible and focused on outcomes rather than setting processes.
3. Programme governance, management and leadership		
3.5 There must be regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and practice education providers.	<i>Programme—Programme delivery: Partnerships</i> 9.5 There are formal partnerships between the education provider and their delivery partners, that involve regular and effective collaboration and joint evaluation, which ensure the provider’s responsibility for the programme.	Draft standard 9.5 strengthens expectations regarding formal partnerships between education providers and delivery partners. It introduces requirements for joint evaluation, addressing concerns about inconsistent collaboration in employer-led and multi-site models. This change supports accountability and quality assurance in practice-based learning. The change also highlights the need for partnership to ensure the providers’ overall responsibility for the programme.
3.6 There must be an effective process in place to ensure the availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners.	<i>Programme—Programme establishment</i> 7.4 There is sufficient availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners throughout the programme.	Draft standard 7.4 maintains the expectation that education providers ensure that there is sufficient availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners. The change to this standard emphasises the outcome-based nature of the SETs rather than highlighting specific processes.

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		Stakeholders were supportive of maintaining the current approach for providers to consider placement availability to enable consideration of inequitable access, particularly in non-traditional routes.
<p>3.9 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.</p> <p>5.5 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff involved in practice-based learning.</p>	<p><i>Programme—Programme delivery: Staffing</i></p> <p>9.1 There are sufficient qualified and experienced staff in all settings to deliver and support the programme in a way that enables learners to achieve the Standards of proficiency and prepare for safe and effective practice.</p>	<p>Draft standard 9.1 consolidates staffing expectations for theory and practice-based learning into a single, more concise standard, to reduce duplication, and support consistency in quality across all learning environments. The revised standard ensures that there are sufficient qualified and experienced staff in all settings, to deliver the programme and support learners effectively. This supports safe and effective practice and aligns with feedback on the need for consistent expectations for staffing across all delivery models and the importance of supervision quality.</p>
<p>3.10 Subject areas must be delivered by educators with relevant specialist knowledge and expertise.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p><i>Programme—Programme delivery: Staffing</i></p> <p>9.2 Learning is supported by educators with relevant specialist knowledge and expertise, whose competence and training enable learners to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for safe and effective practice.</p>	<p>Draft standard 9.2 combines and clarifies expectations for educator expertise, qualifications, and training, including in practice-based learning. This makes the standard more concise, reduces duplication, and supports consistency in quality across all learning environments. This change responds to concerns about variability in educator preparation and supervision quality. Similarly to draft standard 2.4, the current standard allows for exceptions to the requirement that the responsible person be part of the register. However, it is worded in a complex and negative way.</p>

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		<p>Removing this part of the wording maintains the current application of the standard, whilst simplifying the wording, and moves away from the negative framing.</p> <p>The draft standard focuses on practice educators being appropriately qualified and experienced for the role. The updated guidance would provide further detail on our expectations.</p>
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.	<p><i>Programme—Programme establishment</i></p> <p>7.3 The resources to support learning in all settings are effective and appropriate to the delivery of the programme and are accessible to all learners and educators.</p>	<p>Draft standard 7.3 retains the expectations of the original standard and updates the wording to align with the rest of the revised SETs.</p> <p>To ensure clarity and aid application of this standard, we have also strengthened the guidance to provide examples of the resources that may be helpful to support learning and accessibility.</p>
4. Programme design and delivery		
<p>4.1 The learning outcomes must ensure that learners meet the standards of proficiency for the relevant part of the Register.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p><i>Programme—Programme design and curriculum: Learning outcomes and assessment</i></p> <p>8.1 The learning outcomes effectively integrate the requirements for professional practice as defined in our Standards of conduct, performance and ethics and Standards of proficiency for the relevant part of the Register.</p>	<p>Draft standard 8.1 consolidates the expectations about learning outcomes into a single standard. This makes the standards more concise and reduces duplication. This standard supports readiness for registration and professional behaviour and reflects the outcome-focused direction of the revised SETs.</p>
4.3 The programme must reflect the	<p><i>Programme—Programme design and curriculum: Curriculum content</i></p>	<p>Draft standard 8.7 updates expectations for curriculum content to ensure it reflects the philosophy, core values, skills, and knowledge base of the profession, rather</p>

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philosophy, core values, skills and knowledge base as articulated in any relevant curriculum guidance.	8.7 The programme reflects the philosophy, core values, skills, and knowledge base of the profession and relevant external reference points.	than only those articulated in curriculum guidance. This acknowledges the different reference points that may be reflected in programme content as well as the differences across professional bodies and whether reference points are termed “curriculum guidance” or otherwise. It also focuses the standard on the expected outcome - the need to show how external guidance is reflected in the programme. This aligns the standard more clearly with guidance and supports relevance and responsiveness to current practice.
4.4 The curriculum must remain relevant to current practice.	<i>Programme—Programme design and curriculum: Curriculum content</i> 8.8 The curriculum is regularly reviewed and updated to ensure it remains responsive to developments in professional practice and continues to prepare learners for safe and effective practice.	Draft standard 8.8 clarifies that we expect providers to have appropriate mechanisms to regularly review and update the curriculum, beyond the point of programme approval. This ensures that programmes remain responsive to developments in professional practice and continue to prepare learners for safe and effective practice. It reflects stakeholder feedback on the need for future-readiness and adaptability.
4.5 Integration of theory and practice must be central to the programme. 5.1 Practice-based learning must be integral to the programme.	<i>Programme—Programme design and curriculum: Curriculum content</i> 8.9 Practice-based learning and the integration of theory and practice are central to the programme.	Draft standard 8.9 combines the purposes of existing standards to make the standards more concise. This standard supports holistic programme design and reflects the importance of experiential learning in preparing learners for real-world practice.
4.6 The learning and teaching methods used	<i>Programme—Programme design and curriculum: Learning outcomes and assessment</i>	Draft standard 8.3 retains the expectations of the original standard and updates the wording to align with the rest of the revised SETs. It ensures that delivery methods are

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must be appropriate to the effective delivery of the learning outcomes.	8.3 Learning and teaching methods are appropriate to the effective delivery of the learning outcomes.	aligned with learning outcomes and supports effective pedagogy across diverse delivery models.
<p>4.7 The delivery of the programme must support and develop autonomous and reflective thinking.</p> <p>4.8 The delivery of the programme must support and develop evidence-based practice.</p>	<p><i>Programme—Programme design and curriculum: Curriculum content</i></p> <p>8.10 The programme design is informed by evidence and reflective practice and supports integration of appropriate methods and technologies.</p>	<p>The original standards (4.7 and 4.8) were about the learner being autonomous, reflective, and evidence informed. These requirements can be removed from the SETs as expectations of autonomy, reflective thinking, and evidence-based practice have now been included in the updated SOPs. The principles of the original standards have been combined and replaced by draft standard 8.10, which sets expectations for providers to embody these same principles when undertaking programme design. This is a significant change in the focus of the standard, but rests on the same principles. It aligns with stakeholder feedback on purposeful programme design.</p>
5. Practice-based learning		
5.1 Practice-based learning must be integral to the programme.	See 4.5	See 4.5
5.2 The structure, duration and range of practice-based learning must support the achievement of the learning outcomes and the standards of proficiency.	<p><i>Programme—Programme design and curriculum: Learning outcomes and assessment</i></p> <p>8.4 The structure, duration, and range of practice-based learning enables learners to develop the knowledge, skills, and experience required to achieve the learning outcomes and to meet our standards for admission to the Register.</p>	<p>Draft standard 8.4 clarifies expectations about learner outcomes from practice-based learning. This change clarifies the intention of the standard, and more explicitly links the standard to the expected outcome.</p>

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5.5 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff involved in practice-based learning.	See 3.9	See 3.9
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.	See 3.10	See 3.10
6. Assessment		
<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p><i>Programme—Programme design and curriculum: Learning outcomes and assessment</i></p> <p>8.2 Assessments ensure that those who successfully complete the programme understand our Standards of conduct, performance, and ethics and meet our Standards of proficiency for the relevant part of the Register.</p>	<p>Draft standard 8.2 consolidates expectations of assessments into a single, more concise standard that ensures that learners who complete the programme understand the SCPEs and meet the SOPs. It supports readiness for registration and reflects the importance of aligning assessment with professional standards.</p>
6.5 The assessment methods used must be appropriate to, and effective at, measuring the learning outcomes.	<p><i>Programme—Programme design and curriculum: Learning outcomes and assessment</i></p> <p>8.5 Assessment methods are appropriate and effective for measuring the learning outcomes.</p>	<p>Draft standard 8.5 retains the expectations of the original standard and updates the wording to align with the rest of the revised SETs. It supports fair and inclusive evaluation of learning outcomes and reflects stakeholder interest in authentic and competency-based assessment.</p>

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New Standards		
No existing standard for comparison.	<p><i>Institution—Safety and wellbeing</i></p> <p>3.3 The wellbeing of staff and others involved in programmes are supported to enable effective contribution to the programme and the quality of learning.</p>	This new standard introduces expectations for appropriately supporting staff. It ensures that staff and others involved in the programme have access to appropriate support from their institutions to enable them to effectively deliver quality education, training and support to learners. This responds to concerns about increasing demands on educators and the impact of that on learning environments.
No existing standard for comparison.	<p><i>Institution—Communication and information</i></p> <p>5.5 Education providers determine, set, and clearly communicate expectations for the appropriate use of technology in learning and teaching, ensuring these are understood by learners and educators.</p>	This standard introduces expectations regarding the appropriate use of technology in learning and teaching. It ensures that learners and educators understand how to use digital tools effectively and ethically, supporting academic integrity and digital readiness.
No existing standard for comparison.	<p><i>Institution—Communication and information</i></p> <p>5.6 Learners receive timely and meaningful feedback to empower and enable them to have an active role in their own development.</p>	This standard introduces expectations for timely and meaningful feedback to learners. It ensures that learners receive good quality feedback, to support learner development and promote engagement, responding to stakeholder feedback about the value of co-production and feedback loops. It also helps address differential attainment (which research links to inequalities in the provision and quality of feedback) by ensuring feedback is actionable and equitable. Similar expectations have been included in the guidance for draft standard 3.3 (above), in relation to effective feedback for staff and others involved in the programme.

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No existing standard for comparison.	<p><i>Programme—Programme delivery: Staffing</i></p> <p>9.3 Educators are up to date in the use of contemporary technologies and digital tools relevant to their profession and that are used in teaching, supervision, and assessment.</p>	This standard introduces expectations for educator competence in contemporary technologies and digital tools. It ensures that educators are prepared to support learners in using emerging technologies in teaching, supervision, and assessment.
4.10 The programme must include effective processes for obtaining appropriate consent from service users and learners.	<p><i>Institution—People and partnership: Learners and service users</i></p> <p>6.4 Appropriate consent is obtained from service users and carers, in ways that uphold their rights and reflect ethical practice.</p> <p>6.5 Appropriate consent is obtained from learners, in ways that uphold their rights and maintain their safety in all settings.</p>	Draft standards 6.4 and 6.5 focus on the outcome-focused nature of the standards rather than focusing on the existence of processes. It also separates service users and carer consent from that of learners. The reference to rights and ethical practice in the standard provides a clear definition of consent and reflects ethical practice principles. This supports service user, carer and learner rights, aligning with the SCPEs and SOPs relating to dignity and autonomy.

Equality Impact Assessment (Level 2)

Section 1: Project overview

Project title: Review of the Standards of Education and Training	
Name of assessor: Rebecca Kidson	Version: 2

What are the intended outcomes of this work?

1. To have Standards of education and training (SETs) that are fit for purpose and appropriately aligned to the Standards of Proficiency and the Standards of conduct, performance and ethics (SCPEs). We conduct regular reviews with the aim to strengthen the standards, and where necessary, to reflect changes to current practice within health and care practice.
2. The SETs provide outcome focused standards for education and training that providers must meet. The purpose of the standards is to ensure high quality education and training, encourage positive student experiences, and enable learners to meet the HCPC's standards of conduct, performance, and ethics and standards of proficiency for their profession. The SETs protect learners by ensuring that they will gain the necessary knowledge, skills, and experience to practise safely, lawfully, and effectively. This approach protects the integrity and reputation of the profession and protects the public.
3. The proposed updates to the SETs follow review of the current SETs, which included public engagement. The proposed changes are intended to ensure the standards effectively fulfil their purpose, are easy to navigate and understand by their intended readers, and are up to date with health and care practice.
4. The SETs are outcome focused and are not intended to replicate any protections, rights, or responsibilities dictated by legislation such as the Human Rights Act 1998, Equality Act 2010, or Employment Rights Act 1996. Therefore, neither the SETs nor this EIA will make exhaustive reference to considerations covered by superseding legislation.

Who is affected by the work and how will they be affected?

5. Education and training providers, including practice education providers, apply the SETs. Therefore, the proposed changes will have the greatest impact for education providers. For example, the proposals may require changes to institution policies, governance structures, approach to monitoring and evaluation, internal processes and procedures, and support provided to learners and staff.
6. The SETs ensure that learners receive effective and high-quality education and training. For example, the proposed SETs relating to staffing (2.4, 3.3, 6.1, 6.2, 9.1-9.3) and programme design and delivery (8.1-8.10, 9.4, 9.5) will influence the content and quality of the education and training that learners receive. Proposed SETs relating to safety and support in the learning environment (3.1, 3.2), expectations for ensuring service user safety (3.4, 3.5), admissions processes (4.1-4.4), communication of information and expectations from education providers (5.1-5.5), and learners receiving or providing feedback (5.6, 6.6, 6.7) will influence how learners interact with their institutions. It is

helpful for learners to understand the proposed changes so that they can feed into the consultation, and to understand the final changes that will come into effect so that they know what to expect from their education provider and how to raise a concern.

7. Professional bodies have a role in ensuring high standards, aligning educational requirements and advocating for their members. The proposed changes to the SETs, particularly SETs related to curriculum content (8.7-8.10), may prompt professional bodies to review their own standards, update guidance, or support education providers to implement any changes. Some professional bodies may identify a need to adjust accreditation processes, ensure that training continues to meet the professions' needs, and manage the operational and resource implications of any change.
8. Faculty and staff involved in the creation, delivery, or assessment of education and training programmes will need to keep apprised of any changes to the SETs so that they can ensure they are meeting and applying the standards appropriately. For example, SETs relating to methods of teaching or assessment (5.6, 6.3, 6.6, 8.1-8.10), or applying and monitoring institution policies and processes (2.2, 2.3, 3.4, 4.1-4.4, 5.1-5.5, 6.7, 7.2) will influence how educators and other staff perform their roles. Standards relating to resourcing and governance structures (1.1, 2.1, 9.5), staff appointments and qualifications (2.4, 6.1, 6.2, 9.1-9.3), and supporting staff (3.1, 3.3) may also affect staff members' access to and experience of working in education and training settings.
9. The SETs influence the quality of education and training that professionals receive and thereby the quality of the care that they deliver to service users and the public. There are also more direct impacts for service users from SETs relating to ensuring service user safety when interacting with learners (3.1, 3.4, 3.5, 6.4), and service users contributing to the design, delivery, and evaluation of programmes (6.3).
10. HCPC Partners and employees in the education department use the SETs to assess institutions and programmes for approval. Any changes to the SETs will impact these groups and the processes used to assess and approve institutions and programmes.

Section 2: Evidence and Engagement

Lack of data should not prevent a thorough EIA. Be proactive in seeking the information you need.

What evidence have you considered towards this impact assessment?

11. Desk research, including reviewing the education and training standards of other regulators, and a literature review of the key themes identified for the review, such as EDI, technology, different models of learning, and data-led decision making.
12. Consideration of internal work completed since the last SETs review, including the recent review of the SCPEs, education annual reports, a research project on newly qualified registrants' preparedness for practice, and other work in the organisation on EDI in education.
13. Results of work completed by our education team to develop EDI quality indicators for education and training, including feedback from stakeholders on defining usual and good practice for EDI practices, enabling consistent judgements about compliance, ensuring clear expectations, and any required development linked to EDI across the standards.
14. HCPC registrant database including protected characteristics data of our registrants.
15. Insights from stakeholder engagement, detailed below, and supporting literature.

How have you engaged stakeholders in gathering or analysing this evidence?

16. We have sought information and feedback from a variety of stakeholders throughout the pre-consultation stages of the review. Each stage has involved multiple forms of engagement.
17. Our key external stakeholder groups for this review include:
 - a. Education providers
 - b. Employers
 - c. Learners
 - d. Newly qualified registrants
 - e. Patients and service users
 - f. Professional bodies
18. External stakeholder activities so far include:
 - Seeking feedback from existing HCPC forums for external stakeholders such as the professional bodies' quarterly forum and EDI forum.
 - Inviting professional bodies to seek individual meetings to discuss specific concerns or questions about the SETs review.
 - Workshops with education providers to discuss the purpose of the review, how they use the SETs, and any feedback or suggested changes. The workshops included questions specific to EDI.
 - Workshops with learners and with service users to hear about their needs and experiences and what they want to see from education providers.
 - An online pre-consultation survey of professional bodies, education providers, and service users. The survey sought feedback on the current standards and thoughts on some initial ideas for changes, including questions specifically related to EDI. We received 24 responses from professional bodies and education providers.
 - A student survey about a range of topics, including inclusion and wellbeing, which was shared with students through workshops at education institutions. We received 59 responses.
19. We established four expert panels for this review, on the topics of artificial intelligence (AI) and emerging technologies, simulation in learning, different models of learning, and EDI. The panels have each met four times between February and July 2025 to contribute to the development of the review and the proposed changes to the SETs, with a further round of meetings scheduled to take place during the consultation period.
20. We held workshops with the HCPC education team involved in the assessment and approval of education and training programmes. These workshops helped to better understand how the SETs are used and develop proposals for change.
21. We have been engaging with the HCPC's Education and Training Committee (ETC) throughout the review as part of our governance process.
22. We will be seeking feedback on the proposed changes, and this EIA, through public consultation. The consultation is open to submissions from anyone, and our

communications and engagement plan will target education providers, employers, learners and professional bodies.

Section 3: Analysis by equality group

The Equality and Human Rights Commission offers information on the [protected characteristics](#).

Describe any impact to groups or individuals with the protected characteristics listed below that might result from the proposed project. Draw upon evidence where relevant.

For all characteristics, consider **discrimination, victimisation, harassment and equality of opportunity** as well as issues highlighted in the guidance text.

General (considerations that apply to multiple groups or protected characteristics)

23. While not explicitly referenced in all the SETs, equality is an underlying value in the standards and is crucial for ensuring that providers create a high-quality and inclusive learning environment. The proposed introduction highlights some of our high-level expectations of education providers in relation to equality—primarily in the principle of person-centred education, but also in seeking diverse perspectives, challenging assumptions, and working in partnership.
24. We are also proposing changes to several SETs and the associated guidance to strengthen and clarify our expectations regarding equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). We know that good practice for EDI in education and training helps deliver fairer outcomes and secure a skilled, safe workforce. When education and training embeds good practice for EDI, it better prepares learners for the realities of practice, and reduces the risk of unfair barriers to success for capable learners. This contributes to the diverse and skilled workforce that is needed to meet the changing health and care needs of the public.
25. We propose to strengthen and expand the SETs relating to EDI strategies and policies (2.2, 7.2) to ensure that education providers consistently and meaningfully embed EDI across all aspects of education and training, at both a strategic and operational level. This responds to feedback from the EDI expert panel about the importance of ensuring that a commitment to EDI is present at both a programme and institution level. We are also proposing to strengthen expectations that programmes keep up to date with evolving best practice for EDI (8.8) and that monitoring and evaluation processes are used to enhance fairness and quality (2.3).
26. Proposed changes to the SET regarding monitoring and evaluation (2.3) responds to feedback from stakeholders that data collection on its own is most meaningful when followed by action. Literature supports that the value of data and evidence lies in its application and a diverse range of information sources. It also suggests that skilled data leadership and a structured approach to turning insights into action can enable education providers to make effective changes towards equity and wellbeing.¹
27. We are proposing changes to strengthen expectations that providers are proactively using relevant data to take meaningful actions towards improvement in programme quality and learner experiences. This is complemented by the principle of evidence-based and action-orientated in the introduction. Future changes to the guidance will emphasise the

¹ [Data-driven success: Leveraging evidence-based strategies in higher education | Advance HE](#), [Misconceptions about data-based decision making in education: An exploration of the literature - ScienceDirect](#)

importance of seeking and effectively utilising a wide range of evidence and insights from different perspectives to make improvements. These changes may help education providers to identify and reduce systemic barriers and increase fairness and inclusion.

28. We are also proposing a new SET that may help improve the evidence and information that learners receive about their own learning, and enable and empower them to have a more active role in their development (5.6). Research indicates that quality of feedback is strongly linked to student achievement, and suggests that inequalities in the provision of timely and meaningful feedback may contribute to differential attainment.²
29. The proposed new standard on providing timely and meaningful feedback to learners is intended to have positive impacts for all learners and may help to reduce the disadvantage that some groups can experience when feedback is not tailored, timely and constructive. This also supports the Professional Standards Authority's (PSA) expectation that regulators develop and implement plans to reduce any identified unfair differential attainment in education and training.³
30. We are proposing changes to the SETs about learner support (3.1, 3.2, 7.3) and proposing a new standard about supporting staff (3.3). These changes emphasise the importance of meeting the needs of those involved in programmes to enable quality education outcomes.
31. Similarly, proposed changes to standards about staff competencies (2.4, 6.1, 9.1, 9.2) are intended to clarify our expectations that educators and other staff involved in programmes can support the needs of a wide range of learners and have sufficient skills and knowledge around EDI, as appropriate to their role. This responds to feedback from stakeholders that some staff can be disproportionately given responsibilities relating to EDI based on their perceived identity or level of comfort with EDI matters rather than their role.
32. To further highlight expectations of fairness in education and training, we are proposing to add the word 'fair' to the wording of SETs relating to management (2.3), admissions (4.1-4.4), staff appointments (2.4), and assessments (8.6), as well as referencing fairness as a principle underpinning the SETs in the introduction. We also propose additional guidance relating to admissions and processes to appoint staff, to highlight the risk of bias in these processes through the individuals involved in the processes, as well as any tools being used.
33. This responds to insights from the expert panels and literature about the real and perceived risks of systems, such as those that utilise AI assessment tools, sometimes perpetuating bias and discrimination against disadvantaged groups.⁴ We are also proposing new standards about appropriate skills and use of technology (5.5, 9.3) to reduce the risks of uninformed technology use or the use of biased information or tools contributing to unfair, discriminatory practices.

² [Frontiers | Students' perceptions and outcome of teacher feedback: a systematic review](#); [Differential Attainment in Summative Assessments within Postgraduate Medical Education & Training: 2020 Thematic Series on Tackling Differential Attainment in Healthcare Professions – ScienceOpen](#), [2024-improving-feedback-in-the-context-of-differential-attainment.pdf](#); [Closing the awarding gap: why an inclusive curriculum makes a difference to all students | Teaching & Learning - UCL – University College London](#); [SchneiderPreckel2017.pdf](#).

³ [Professional Standards Authority Standard 3 evidence matrix](#).

⁴ [Fair Admissions, Fair Decisions, and Fair Outcomes: An Analysis of Algorithmic Bias in Education, Employment, Healthcare, and Housing](#); [Screened out Onscreen: Disability Discrimination, Hiring Bias, and Artificial Intelligence](#); [Implications of AI \(un-\)fairness in higher education admissions | Proceedings of the 2020 Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency](#); [Automated Decision-Making Fairness in an AI-driven World: Public Perceptions, Hopes and Concerns: Key Findings](#).

34. We heard from stakeholders that the quality of education received by learners can vary across different models of learning, particularly 'non-traditional' models such as apprenticeships, employer-led routes, blended learning, and distance learning. We also know that there is increasing diversity in the available routes into a profession. We are proposing changes to the SETs relating to admissions (4.2, 4.3) and threshold qualifications (7.1) that may help to improve fair access to learning routes to registration; and changes to SETs regarding governance and management structures (2.1, 9.5) that may help to improve oversight of learner experience in all education settings.
35. The proposed changes also combine some existing SETs that have similar purposes but for different settings, so that the same SETs apply to all settings (6.1, 9.1, 9.2). These changes may help to improve consistency in the quality of education and training for all learners, regardless of their route into the profession.
36. These changes may positively impact outcomes and experiences for all groups. They may also reduce the risk of unfairness or discrimination to the learners, service users, or educators involved in programmes. This in turn, supports long-term improvements for patient safety and health outcomes.

Age (includes children, young people and older people)

37. Individuals can be at risk of encountering discrimination, harassment, or victimisation due to misconceptions or discriminatory attitudes regarding their age.⁵ We are proposing changes throughout the SETs that may help reduce the risks of age-related discrimination for learners, staff, or others involved in programmes.
38. These changes include highlighting fairness, safety, openness, collaboration, and evidence-based action as principles underpinning the SETs, updating guidance to emphasise the value of listening to feedback and drawing on a wide range of perspectives and evidence, and clarifying our expectations that equality, diversity, inclusion, and fairness are embedded in policies and strategies across the institution (2.2, 3.1, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 7.2, 7.4, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 8.6) with the right structures and resources in place to support them (2.1, 2.4, 3.2, 3.3, 5.1, 6.1, 7.3, 9.1, 9.2, 9.5). These changes are intended to strengthen expectations that education providers challenge discrimination and deliver fair opportunities for learners to participate and succeed.
39. Some service users may be vulnerable in practice settings due to their age. We are proposing to strengthen the SETs about safety and consent (3.1, 3.4, 6.4, 6.5, 3.5), which may help to help reduce the risk of harm to service users involved in programmes.
40. Most programmes we approve are delivered to learners between the ages of 18 and 25. Research by the Office for Students (OfS) shows that this age range has a higher likelihood of experiencing sexual harassment or assault. This is discussed further in the section on sex.
41. Learners beginning tertiary study under the age of 18 (minors) may face barriers to enrolment on programmes and/or participating in placements and/or apprenticeships. Literature also found trends in learners' outcomes from apprenticeship programmes according to their age and socio-economic status.⁶ We are proposing changes to the SETs that may help improve experiences of learners undertaking less 'traditional' learning

⁵ [Attitudes to ageing amongst health care professionals: a qualitative systematic review - PMC; Promoting Age Inclusivity in Higher Education: Campus Practices and Perceptions by Students, Faculty, and Staff | Research in Higher Education.](#)

⁶ [A multi-institutional exploration of the social mobility potential of degree apprenticeships.](#)

routes, such as apprenticeships, and that may improve consistency in access to and quality of learning in different settings.

42. These changes include strengthening expectations that there is regular monitoring and evaluation that enhances quality, safety, and fairness across all settings (2.3), sufficient availability of practice-based learning to meet the needs of all learners (7.4), sufficient staff to deliver programmes (9.1), and that education providers maintain their overall responsibility for all settings through formal partnerships with delivery partners (9.5). We anticipate these proposals may improve oversight points across all settings and have a positive impact on learners' experience across delivery models.
43. OfS considers someone to be a 'mature student' if their age on entry to higher education is 21 years or over. OfS research suggests that mature learners tend to perform less well than younger students.⁷ Proposed changes to the SETs about improving outcomes and experiences for learners may help to address differential attainment for disadvantaged learners, such as mature students.
44. These changes include emphasising our expectations that insights gained from monitoring and evaluation processes are used to take actions towards improvements (2.3), ensuring that learners receive the necessary feedback to play a more active role in their development (5.6), and strengthening expectations that learners' needs are met (3.1, 3.2, 6.1, 7.3). This aligns with the Professional Standards Authority's (PSA) expectation that regulators develop and implement plans to reduce any identified unfair differential attainment in education and training.

Disability (includes physical and mental health conditions. Remember 'invisible disabilities')

45. Individuals can be at risk of encountering discrimination, harassment, or victimisation due to misconceptions, unconscious bias, or discriminatory attitudes regarding disability. We are proposing changes throughout the SETs that may help reduce the risks of disability-related discrimination for learners, staff, or others involved in programmes.
46. These changes include highlighting fairness, safety, openness, collaboration, and evidence-based action as principles underpinning the SETs, updating guidance to emphasise the value of listening to feedback and drawing on a wide range of perspectives and evidence, and clarifying our expectations that equality, diversity, inclusion, and fairness are embedded in policies and strategies across the institution (2.2, 3.1, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 7.2, 7.4, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 8.6) with the right structures and resources in place to support them (2.1, 2.4, 3.2, 3.3, 5.1, 6.1, 7.3, 9.1, 9.2, 9.5). These changes are intended to strengthen expectations that education providers challenge discrimination and deliver fair opportunities for learners to participate and succeed.
47. Disabled people can also experience systemic barriers to accessing and succeeding in higher education and employment.⁸ Data from the OfS and the House of Commons suggests that disabled learners are more likely to leave higher education before they complete their course, and that outcomes are not the same for all disability types.⁹

⁷ [A statistical overview of higher education in England - Office for Students.](#)

⁸ [Inclusion of disabled Higher Education students: why are we not there yet? ; Full article: Higher education and disability: Exploring student experiences; University gatekeepers' use of the rhetoric of citizenship to relegate the status of students with disabilities in Canada; Ableism within health care professions: a systematic review of the experiences and impact of discrimination against health care providers with disabilities; Epistemic injustice, healthcare disparities and the missing pipeline: reflections on the exclusion of disabled scholars from health research; Inclusion and Belonging in Higher Education: A Scoping Study of Contexts, Barriers, and Facilitators; Barriers and Facilitators in the Transition From Higher Education to Employment for Students With Disabilities: A Rapid Systematic Review.](#)

⁹ [A statistical overview of higher education in England - Office for Students; Equality of access and outcomes in higher education in England | House of Commons Library.](#)

Proposed changes to the SETs about improving outcomes and experiences for learners may help to address differential attainment for disadvantaged learners, such as disabled learners.

48. These changes include emphasising our expectations that insights gained from monitoring and evaluation processes are used to take actions towards improvements (2.3), ensuring that learners receive the necessary feedback to play a more active role in their development (5.6), and strengthening expectations that learners' needs are met (3.1, 3.2, 6.1, 7.3). This aligns with the Professional Standards Authority's (PSA) expectation that regulators develop and implement plans to reduce any identified unfair differential attainment in education and training.
49. We are also proposing changes that may help improve accessibility in learning environments. These include adding the word accessible to the SET about admissions processes (4.1), including references to accessibility in guidance for SETs relating to staff support, feedback and complaints processes, and learners and service users contributing to the programme, and updating the guidance for SETs about learning environments and practice-based learning to clarify expectations around adjustments or accommodations for disability and different access requirements. These changes may help improve accessibility and reduce barriers to participation for disabled learners, service users, and staff.
50. The word 'accessible' is included in the current wording of the SET relating to supporting learners' wellbeing and learning needs. Proposed changes to simplify the wording of this SET (3.2) and make it more outcome-focused mean that it no longer includes the word 'accessible', which may be perceived as decreasing expectations of accessibility. To address this, and ensure accessibility expectations remain intact, we are proposing to update the guidance to include an explicit expectation that the support systems or services to support learners' wellbeing and learning needs are accessible, safe, and person centred.
51. Insights from stakeholders and literature indicate that when learners require or seek reasonable adjustments to a programme, education providers may make a judgement on the learner's ability to join our Register based on the availability of similar adjustments in practice-based settings. This presents a risk if education providers use those judgements as the rationale to unfairly reject an applicant as part of admissions decisions or prevent a learner from completing a programme for being unable to meet the Standards of proficiency (SOPs).¹⁰
52. We propose updating guidance about admissions, appropriate teaching, learning, and assessment methods, and ensuring learners who complete the programme can meet the Standards of proficiency, to clarify education providers' role and obligations regarding reasonable adjustments and equity and diversity laws, and how these interact with the SOPs. This may help to facilitate appropriate support for disabled learners during their learning and help enable fairer and more informed decisions about undertaking a programme. The guidance is intended to help reduce the risk of the SETs being misinterpreted to impose unnecessary or unfair barriers to participation and progress for disabled learners.

¹⁰ [University gatekeepers' use of the rhetoric of citizenship to relegate the status of students with disabilities in Canada; The experience of disabled and non-disabled students on professional practice placements in the United Kingdom; Full article: Experiences of higher education for students with chronic illnesses; Disability and omnicompetence: facing up to the challenges in the training of veterinary practitioners; 'I have something to contribute to working life' – students with disabilities showcasing employability while on practical placement.](#)

53. We also heard from stakeholders that there can be challenges ensuring that certain policies or standards, such as reasonable adjustments, are implemented or upheld in external environments like practice-based settings. Proposed changes to the SETs relating to delivery partners (2.1, 9.5) are intended to clarify and strengthen expectations of formal partnerships between education providers and programme delivery partners that ensure the education provider's overall responsibility for the programme. We also propose complementary guidance that highlights expectations in relation to reasonable adjustments. These changes may have a positive impact on the provision of reasonable adjustments across education settings.
54. We know that some service users may be vulnerable in practice settings due to disability. We are proposing to strengthen the SETs about safety and consent (3.1, 3.4, 6.4, 6.5, 3.5), which may help to help reduce the risk of harm to service users involved in programmes.
55. Proposed changes to the SET about ensuring learners can maintain service user safety (3.4) may also have positive impacts for disabled learners. The proposed wording clarifies the purpose of considering learners' ongoing health by emphasising the focus on service user safety, which may help to reduce the risk of the standard being misinterpreted and creating unfair or unnecessary barriers for learners with a disability or long-term health condition to successfully complete a programme. We also propose complementary guidance to clarify expectations around health requirements at admissions.
56. Learners and staff with disabilities or long-term health conditions may be impacted differently by policies around absences, exemptions, or extenuating circumstances.¹¹ We are proposing updated guidance for SETs relating to attendance, assessments, and supporting learner needs, which may help to reduce the risk of these policies creating systemic barriers or disadvantage.
57. Insights from the literature and the expert panels suggest that technologies, such as AI tools, can have different impacts for neurodiverse learners, both positive and negative.¹² We are proposing two new SETs relating to determining and clearly communicating appropriate use of different technologies in programmes (5.5) and educators being up to date with relevant technologies and tools (9.3)—as well as strengthening expectations that the integration of new technologies in programmes considers the potential impacts for different groups (8.10), both positive or negative. These changes may help to reduce the risks of inadvertent negative impacts when using or adopting new tools and technologies, as well as help to future-proof the standards and enable opportunities for innovation to improve experiences for different groups, such as neurodiverse learners.

Marriage and civil partnerships (includes same-sex unions)

58. Individuals can be at risk of encountering discrimination, harassment, or victimisation due to misconceptions or discriminatory attitudes regarding their marriage or civil partnership. We are proposing changes throughout the SETs that may help reduce the risks of discrimination related to relationship status for learners, staff, or others involved in programmes.
59. These changes include highlighting fairness, safety, openness, collaboration, and evidence-based action as principles underpinning the SETs, updating guidance to

¹¹ [View of From Policy to Practice: Trauma-Informed Approaches to Student Attendance.](#)

¹² [Designing Teaching Strategies Using Artificial Intelligence for Neurodivergent Students in Higher Education; AI Wizards: Pioneering Assistive Technologies for Higher Education Inclusion of Students with Learning Disabilities; AI Detection's High False Positive Rates and the Psychological and Material Impacts on Students.](#)

emphasise the value of listening to feedback and drawing on a wide range of perspectives and evidence, and clarifying our expectations that equality, diversity, inclusion, and fairness are embedded in policies and strategies across the institution (2.2, 3.1, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 7.2, 7.4, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 8.6) with the right structures and resources in place to support them (2.1, 2.4, 3.2, 3.3, 5.1, 6.1, 7.3, 9.1, 9.2, 9.5). These changes are intended to strengthen expectations that education providers challenge discrimination and deliver fair opportunities for learners to participate and succeed.

60. Learners or staff may be impacted differently by policies around absences, exemptions, or extenuating circumstances, depending on their relationship status and recognition of any long-term partnership.¹³ We are proposing updated guidance for SETs relating to attendance, assessments, and supporting learner needs, which may help to reduce the risk of these policies creating systemic barriers or disadvantage.

Pregnancy and maternity (includes people who are pregnant, expecting a baby, up to 26 weeks post-natal or are breastfeeding)

61. Individuals can be at risk of encountering discrimination, harassment, or victimisation due to misconceptions or discriminatory attitudes regarding their pregnancy, status as expectant parents, or having recently given birth. We are proposing changes throughout the SETs that may help reduce the risks of discrimination related to pregnancy or maternity for learners, staff, or others involved in programmes.
62. These changes include highlighting fairness, safety, openness, collaboration, and evidence-based action as principles underpinning the SETs, updating guidance to emphasise the value of listening to feedback and drawing on a wide range of perspectives and evidence, and clarifying our expectations that equality, diversity, inclusion, and fairness are embedded in policies and strategies across the institution (2.2, 3.1, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 7.2, 7.4, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 8.6) with the right structures and resources in place to support them (2.1, 2.4, 3.2, 3.3, 5.1, 6.1, 7.3, 9.1, 9.2, 9.5). These changes are intended to strengthen expectations that education providers challenge discrimination and deliver fair opportunities for learners to participate and succeed.
63. Learners and staff who are pregnant or have recently given birth may be impacted differently by policies around absences, exemptions, or extenuating circumstances in relation to physical mobility, restrictions on activities, or increased absences for medical reasons.¹⁴ We are proposing updated guidance for SETs relating to attendance, assessments, and supporting learner and staff needs, which may help to reduce the risk of these policies creating systemic barriers or disadvantage.
64. Proposed changes to emphasise accessibility in SETs relating to suitable learning environments (3.1, 5.1, 7.4) may also have positive impacts for learners and staff who are pregnant or have recently given birth.
65. Some service users may be vulnerable in practice settings if they are pregnant or have recently given birth. We are proposing to strengthen the SETs about safety and consent (3.1, 3.4, 6.4, 6.5, 3.5), which may help to help reduce the risk of harm to service users involved in programmes.

¹³ [View of From Policy to Practice: Trauma-Informed Approaches to Student Attendance.](#)

¹⁴ [View of From Policy to Practice: Trauma-Informed Approaches to Student Attendance;](#)

Race (includes nationality, citizenship, ethnic or national origins)

66. Individuals can be at risk of encountering discrimination, harassment, or victimisation due to misconceptions or discriminatory attitudes regarding their ethnicity, race, or nationality. These risks can also overlap with those experienced by migrants, international students, and refugees.¹⁵ We are proposing changes throughout the SETs that may help reduce the risks of racial discrimination for learners, staff, or others involved in programmes.
67. These changes include highlighting fairness, safety, openness, collaboration, and evidence-based action as principles underpinning the SETs, updating guidance to emphasise the value of listening to feedback and drawing on a wide range of perspectives and evidence, and clarifying our expectations that equality, diversity, inclusion, and fairness are embedded in policies and strategies across the institution (2.2, 3.1, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 7.2, 7.4, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 8.6) with the right structures and resources in place to support them (2.1, 2.4, 3.2, 3.3, 5.1, 6.1, 7.3, 9.1, 9.2, 9.5). These changes are intended to strengthen expectations that education providers challenge discrimination and deliver fair opportunities for learners to participate and succeed.
68. We are also proposing changes that may help reduce the risk of racial discrimination or other harm experienced by service users in programmes, including strengthening the SETs about safety and consent (3.1, 3.4, 6.4, 6.5, 3.5).
69. We know that race and ethnicity can have an impact on learners' outcomes and experiences in education and training. We know from work on differential attainment in UK programmes of education that White learners are less likely than any other ethnic groups to attend university, but those who do attend higher education tend to perform better and are less likely to drop out than other ethnic groups.¹⁶ This aligns with research which has shown that non-White learners are at higher risk of experiencing racism and other barriers due to ethnic or cultural differences, in both health and care settings and in education.¹⁷ Proposed changes to the SETs about improving outcomes and experiences for learners may help to address differential attainment for learners of different ethnic groups.
70. These include emphasising our expectations that insights gained from monitoring and evaluation processes are used to take actions towards improvements (2.3), ensuring that learners receive the necessary feedback to play a more active role in their development (5.6), and strengthening expectations that learners' needs are met (3.1, 3.2, 6.1, 7.3). This aligns with the Professional Standards Authority's (PSA) expectation that regulators develop and implement plans to reduce any identified unfair differential attainment in education and training.
71. Learners and staff from different cultural backgrounds or nationalities may be impacted differently by policies around absences, exemptions, or extenuating circumstances. For example, conceptions of who is close family member, needing to travel overseas, or

¹⁵ [The super-disadvantaged in higher education: barriers to access for refugee background students in England; \(In\)validation and \(mis\)recognition in higher education: the experiences of students from refugee backgrounds; UK University Initiatives Supporting Forced Migrants; The Neglected Minority: Higher Education Opportunities for Refugee Background Students in England and Poland; International tourism and racism; A Modern Guide to Refugee Education: Comparative Perspectives and Innovative.](#)

¹⁶ [Equality of access and outcomes in higher education in England - House of Commons Library; Undergraduate degree results - GOV.UK Ethnicity facts and figures; A statistical overview of higher education in England - Office for Students.](#)

¹⁷ [Exploring BAME Student Experiences in Healthcare Courses in the United Kingdom: A Systematic Review; Racial Microaggressions, Racial Battle Fatigue, and Racism-Related Stress in Higher Education; 'Getting in, getting on, getting out': Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff in UK higher education; "To tell you the truth I'm tired": a qualitative exploration of the experiences of ethnically diverse NHS staff; The post-racial myth: rethinking Chinese university students' experiences and perceptions of racialised microaggressions in the UK; 'Where are you really from?': a qualitative study of racial microaggressions and the impact on medical students in the UK | BMJ Open.](#)

different practices around significant events like births, deaths, or marriages.¹⁸ We are proposing updated guidance for SETs relating to attendance, assessments, and supporting learner needs, which may help to reduce the risk of these policies creating systemic barriers or disadvantage.

72. Literature suggests differences in proportions of learners from different ethnic groups in different models of learning, which may be due to different barriers to entry for 'non-traditional' models such as degree apprenticeships compared to more traditional models of learning.¹⁹ We have proposed changes to the SETs to reflect the complexity of modern programme delivery, particularly where education is delivered in partnership with employers or across multiple sites. This may positively impact the experiences of learners in 'non-traditional' routes.
73. Literature highlights a risk that work to implement improvements and reduce discrimination in organisations can be disproportionately carried by staff from minority groups when it is not part of their role, and often without appropriate compensation for their time or resource—which can create increased pressure and stress at work.²⁰ Proposed updates to the guidance about monitoring, evaluating, and enhancing programmes, embedding EDI across all settings, and supporting staff needs are intended to clarify expectations around appropriate resourcing and support to identify and implement improvements. This may help reduce the risk of staff being unfairly overburdened.
74. Learners who have recently moved to the UK or completed some of their previous study overseas—such as migrants, refugees, or international students—may encounter administrative challenges with assessment of their previous study, qualifications, work experience, or criminal record if systems are not set up to accept non-UK documents or evidence. We are proposing changes to SETs relating to admissions (4.1, 4.3), and the associated guidance, to emphasise fairness and strengthen our expectations that admissions processes are accessible to applicants who may have non-typical documents or evidence required for admissions assessment.
75. Learners whose first language is not English, or who completed their previous study overseas, are more likely to be impacted by the SET relating to English language proficiency (4.4). The proposed changes to this SET retain the existing expectations around ensuring sufficient levels of English language proficiency, while emphasising expectations of fairness in these assessments and aligning the wording with the language used in applications to the Register through the international route.
76. Insights from the literature and the expert panels suggest that technologies, such as AI tools, can have more significant impacts for learners whose first language is not English—both positive and negative.²¹ We are proposing two new SETs relating to determining and clearly communicating appropriate use of different technologies in programmes (5.5) and

¹⁸ [View of From Policy to Practice: Trauma-Informed Approaches to Student Attendance.](#)

¹⁹ [A multi-institutional exploration of the social mobility potential of degree apprenticeships; How employers are rising to the 20% challenge: increasing the uptake of degree apprentices from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds - ProQuest.](#)

²⁰ [Addressing disparities in academic medicine: what of the minority tax? | BMC Medical Education | Full Text; Diversity and inclusion in UK Higher Education: staff perspectives on institutional representations and their reality; Time Tax Put On Scientists of Colour; Tackling the Minority Tax: A Roadmap to Redistributing Engagement in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiatives, 2022; The burden of service for faculty of color to achieve diversity and inclusion: the minority tax; Workplace experiences of LGBTQIA+ trainees, staff, and faculty in academic psychology, psychiatry, and neuroscience departments.](#)

²¹ [AI Detection's High False Positive Rates and the Psychological and Material Impacts on Students; Health professions school applicant experiences of discrimination during interviews.](#)

educators being up to date with relevant technologies and tools (9.3)—as well as strengthening expectations that the integration of new technologies in programmes considers the potential impacts for different groups (8.10), both positive or negative. These changes may help to reduce the risks of inadvertent negative impacts when using or adopting new tools and technologies, as well as to help to future-proof the standards and enable opportunities for innovation to improve experiences for different groups, such as learners whose first language is not English.

Religion or belief (includes religious and philosophical beliefs, including lack of belief)

77. Individuals can be at risk of encountering discrimination, harassment, or victimisation due to misconceptions or discriminatory attitudes regarding their religion or belief. Literature has particularly focused on the experiences of Muslim learners and practitioners.²² We are proposing changes throughout the SETs that may help reduce the risks of discrimination related to religion or belief for learners, staff, or others involved in programmes.
78. These changes include highlighting fairness, safety, openness, collaboration, and evidence-based action as principles underpinning the SETs, updating guidance to emphasise the value of listening to feedback and drawing on a wide range of perspectives and evidence, and clarifying our expectations that equality, diversity, inclusion, and fairness are embedded in policies and strategies across the institution (2.2, 3.1, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 7.2, 7.4, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 8.6) with the right structures and resources in place to support them (2.1, 2.4, 3.2, 3.3, 5.1, 6.1, 7.3, 9.1, 9.2, 9.5). These changes are intended to strengthen expectations that education providers challenge discrimination and deliver fair opportunities for learners to participate and succeed.
79. Learners and staff with different religions or beliefs may be impacted differently by policies around absences, exemptions, or extenuating circumstances. For example, if learning activities or assessment schedules conflict with religious observances such as significant holidays or periods of rest, fasting, or prayer.²³ We are proposing updated guidance for SETs relating to attendance, assessments, and supporting learner needs, which may help to reduce the risk of these policies creating systemic barriers or disadvantage.
80. Some service users may be vulnerable in practice settings due to their religion or belief. We are proposing to strengthen the SETs about safety and consent (3.1, 3.4, 6.4, 6.5, 3.5), which may help to help reduce the risk of harm to service users involved in programmes.

Sex (includes men and women)

81. Individuals can be at risk of encountering discrimination, harassment, or victimisation due to misconceptions or discriminatory attitudes regarding their sex. In fields that are more male-dominated or female-dominated, those whose sex is less represented in the profession are more likely to be disadvantaged or have negative experiences due to their sex. The majority of HCPC-registrants are female, with some professions being more significantly female-dominated; and 2023 statistics suggest that the majority of staff in UK HEIs are female, with health subjects showing the highest proportion of female academic

²² [Denial of Islamophobia is harming Muslim doctors in the NHS; Protecting Religion and Belief on Campus: A Case Study of Muslim Students in Three Universities in England; Discrimination, harassment and non-reporting in UK medical education; Religion and belief in health and social care: the case for religious literacy; Religion and higher education : making sense of the experience of religious students at secular universities through a Bourdieuan lens.](#)

²³ [View of From Policy to Practice: Trauma-Informed Approaches to Student Attendance; Shabbat and Shattered Dreams: Religious Accommodations for Public Exams in South Korea | Journal of Law and Religion | Cambridge Core; Religious observance accommodation in Ontario universities.](#)

staff).²⁴ Therefore, male learners and staff are more likely to be in the minority in education and training settings relating to HCPC-regulated professions. Most research focuses on the experiences of women in male-dominated environments and there is comparatively less research on the experience of men in female-dominated environments. But research comparing the experiences of both groups suggests that while the experiences are different for men and women, each group encounters difficulties and prejudice.²⁵ We are proposing changes throughout the SETs that may help reduce the risks of discrimination related to sex for learners, staff, or others involved in programmes.

82. These changes include highlighting fairness, safety, openness, collaboration, and evidence-based action as principles underpinning the SETs, updating guidance to emphasise the value of listening to feedback and drawing on a wide range of perspectives and evidence, and clarifying our expectations that equality, diversity, inclusion, and fairness are embedded in policies and strategies across the institution (2.2, 3.1, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 7.2, 7.4, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 8.6) with the right structures and resources in place to support them (2.1, 2.4, 3.2, 3.3, 5.1, 6.1, 7.3, 9.1, 9.2, 9.5). These changes are intended to strengthen expectations that education providers challenge discrimination and deliver fair opportunities for learners to participate and succeed.
83. Data from OfS and the Higher Education Statistics Agency indicates that men are less likely to go to university and are less likely to perform well—and in subjects allied to medicine, significantly more female learners have enrolled and obtained qualifications in the UK in the past five years.²⁶ Proposed changes to the SETs about improving outcomes and experiences for learners may help to address differential attainment for disadvantaged learners, such as male learners in allied health courses.
84. These changes include emphasising our expectations that insights gained from monitoring and evaluation processes are used to take actions towards improvements (2.3), ensuring that learners receive the necessary feedback to play a more active role in their development (5.6), and strengthening expectations that learners' needs are met (3.1, 3.2, 6.1, 7.3). This aligns with the Professional Standards Authority's (PSA) expectation that regulators develop and implement plans to reduce any identified unfair differential attainment in education and training.
85. Research by OfS on sexual misconduct in universities and colleges shows that those between the ages of 18 and 24 are significantly more likely to have experienced sexual harassment or assault in the last year, which correlates strongly with the age of most learners in higher education.²⁷ Gender/sex is significant in relation to this, with women being more likely to be the victims of sexual harassment and assault, and men more likely to be perpetrators. We are proposing several changes to the SETs that may help to reduce the risks of sexual harassment or assault.
86. These changes include broadening the SET relating to safe and supportive learning environments (3.1) to include all those involved in a programme, separating the SET about obtaining consent into two distinct SETs about consent from learners (6.5) and service users and carers (6.4), strengthening guidance relating to learner complaints, and

²⁴ [Diversity data | The HCPC](#); [Equality in higher education: statistical reports 2023 | Advance HE](#).

²⁵ [Comparison within gender and between female and male leaders in female-dominated, male-dominated and mixed-gender work environments](#); [Women and Men in Conflicting Social Roles: Implications from Social Psychological Research](#).

²⁶ [A statistical overview of higher education in England](#); [What are HE students' progression rates and qualifications?](#).

²⁷ [Tackling sexual misconduct in universities and colleges - Office for Students](#).

adding explicit reference to safety in SETs relating to monitoring and evaluation (2.3), admissions (4.4), and overall professional responsibility for programmes (2.4).

87. Some service users may also be vulnerable in practice settings due to their sex, as there is a gendered element to the likelihood of perpetrating or being the victim of inappropriate or unwanted physical touch and similar types of sexual harassment in health and care settings. We are proposing to strengthen the SETs about safety and consent^{3.1, 3.4, 6.4, 6.5, 3.5}), which may help to help reduce the risk of harm to service users involved in programmes.

Gender reassignment (consider that individuals at different stages of transition may have different needs)

88. Individuals who are intersex, non-binary, or whose gender identity does not match their sex recorded at birth can be at risk of encountering discrimination, harassment, or victimisation due to misconceptions or discriminatory attitudes regarding their gender reassignment status. We are proposing changes throughout the SETs that may help reduce the risks of discrimination related to gender reassignment for learners, staff, or others involved in programmes.
89. These changes include highlighting fairness, safety, openness, collaboration, and evidence-based action as principles underpinning the SETs, updating guidance to emphasise the value of listening to feedback and drawing on a wide range of perspectives and evidence, and clarifying our expectations that equality, diversity, inclusion, and fairness are embedded in policies and strategies across the institution (2.2, 3.1, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 7.2, 7.4, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 8.6) with the right structures and resources in place to support them (2.1, 2.4, 3.2, 3.3, 5.1, 6.1, 7.3, 9.1, 9.2, 9.5). These changes are intended to strengthen expectations that education providers challenge discrimination and deliver fair opportunities for learners to participate and succeed.
90. Similarly, some service users may be vulnerable in practice settings due to their gender reassignment status. We are proposing to strengthen the SETs about safety and consent (3.1, 3.4, 6.4, 6.5, 3.5), which may help to help reduce the risk of harm to service users involved in programmes.
91. Learners and staff in different stages of gender reassignment may be impacted by policies around absences, exemptions, or extenuating circumstances in relation to gender-affirming medical treatments.²⁸ We are proposing updated guidance for SETs relating to attendance, assessments, and supporting learner needs, which may help to reduce the risk of these policies creating systemic barriers or disadvantage.

Sexual orientation (includes heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer and other orientations)

92. Individuals can be at risk of encountering discrimination, harassment, or victimisation due to misconceptions or discriminatory attitudes regarding their sexual orientation.²⁹ We are proposing changes throughout the SETs that may help reduce the risks of discrimination related to sexual orientation for learners, staff, or others involved in programmes.
93. These changes include highlighting fairness, safety, openness, collaboration, and evidence-based action as principles underpinning the SETs, updating guidance to emphasise the value of listening to feedback and drawing on a wide range of perspectives

²⁸ [View of From Policy to Practice: Trauma-Informed Approaches to Student Attendance.](#)

²⁹ [Challenges of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual \(LGBTQIA\) Students in Higher Education.](#)

and evidence, and clarifying our expectations that equality, diversity, inclusion, and fairness are embedded in policies and strategies across the institution (2.2, 3.1, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 7.2, 7.4, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 8.6) with the right structures and resources in place to support them (2.1, 2.4, 3.2, 3.3, 5.1, 6.1, 7.3, 9.1, 9.2, 9.5). These changes are intended to strengthen expectations that education providers challenge discrimination and deliver fair opportunities for learners to participate and succeed.

94. Some learners or service users may be vulnerable in practice settings due to their sexual orientation. We are proposing to strengthen the SETs about safety and consent (3.1, 3.4, 6.4, 6.5, 3.5), which may help to help reduce the risk of harm to service users involved in programmes.

Other identified groups

Socio-economic disadvantage and lower income.

95. OfS considers learners from low socio-economic backgrounds and deprived areas to be a disadvantaged group, and a House of Commons briefing indicates a pattern of learners from areas with higher levels of deprivation being more likely to drop out of university.³⁰ Proposed changes to the SETs about improving outcomes and experiences for learners may help to address differential attainment for disadvantaged learners, such as those with fewer financial resources or from low socio-economic backgrounds.
96. These changes include emphasising our expectations that insights gained from monitoring and evaluation processes are used to take actions towards improvements (2.3), ensuring that learners receive the necessary feedback to play a more active role in their development (5.6), and strengthening expectations that learners' needs are met (3.1, 3.2, 6.1, 7.3). This aligns with the Professional Standards Authority's (PSA) expectation that regulators develop and implement plans to reduce any identified unfair differential attainment in education and training.
97. Learners with lower income or fewer financial resources are more likely to be impacted by costs associated with programmes, particularly unanticipated or out-of-pocket costs. We are proposing updated guidance relating to admissions, meeting learner needs, and the accessibility of resources to support learning about considering financial barriers to access and communicating expected costs and financial implications of undertaking a programme. This is intended to have positive impacts for learners from low socio-economic backgrounds where cost and affordability pose a barrier to access, and help to reduce the risks of learners encountering unexpected financial barriers after commencing a programme.
98. Learners, service users, and carers may also experience barriers to contributing to programmes due to socio-economic pressures. We are proposing updates to the guidance for SETs relating service users, carers, and learners being involved in programme design and evaluation, which may have a positive impact on the risk of financial barriers to participation in these processes.
99. Stakeholders highlighted possible risks when the number of places on programmes outstrip employer demand, leading to limited employment opportunities and high competition for jobs. These impacts may be more significant for learners with lower income or socio-economic disadvantage. We are proposing changes to SETs relating to the financial sustainability of programmes (1.1) and the availability and capacity of

³⁰ [Equality of access and outcomes in higher education in England | House of Commons Library.](#)

practice-based learning (7.4). These changes may help reduce the risks of learners being put in at financial risk.

100. The expert panels discussed the significance of socio-economic status or income as a factor in decisions about which model of learning to undertake, i.e. more traditional courses or earn-and-learn routes like paid employment-based programmes or apprenticeships, and the possible impacts of this on outcomes for these learners due to differences in learning experiences between models of learning. Proposed changes about improving oversight and aligning expectations of learner experience in all education settings (2.1, 2.3, 6.1, 9.1, 9.2, 9.5) may help ensure that learners receive the same quality of learning and support in all settings, regardless of the method of learning they are undertaking.

Caring responsibilities (includes those with young children or caring for a relative)

101. Learners and staff with caring responsibilities may be impacted by policies around absences, exemptions, or extenuating circumstances in relation to gender-affirming medical treatments.³¹ We are proposing updated guidance for SETs relating to attendance, assessments, and supporting learner needs, which may help to reduce the risk of these policies creating systemic barriers or disadvantage.

Care experience (includes foster care, residential children's homes, adoption, supported accommodation or secure units, and kinship care or informal care arrangements)

102. OfS considers care-experienced learners a disadvantaged group and literature shows connections between experience in care and lower educational outcomes and lower continuation rates.³² Proposed changes to the SETs about improving outcomes and experiences for learners may help to address differential attainment for disadvantaged learners, such as those with care experience.
103. These changes include emphasising our expectations that insights gained from monitoring and evaluation processes are used to take actions towards improvements (2.3), ensuring that learners receive the necessary feedback to play a more active role in their development (5.6), and strengthening expectations that learners' needs are met (3.1, 3.2, 6.1, 7.3). This aligns with the Professional Standards Authority's (PSA) expectation that regulators develop and implement plans to reduce any identified unfair differential attainment in education and training.

Four countries diversity

104. Differences in local laws and legislation in the four countries create different environments for providers in different UK countries. Beyond this, it is not expected that the changes proposed will impact any one of the four countries differently.

Section 4: Welsh Language Standards

³¹ [View of From Policy to Practice: Trauma-Informed Approaches to Student Attendance](#); [Student carer experiences of higher education and support: a scoping review](#); [The Identification of Student Carers and the Burden of Their Caring Responsibilities on Academic Engagement and Student Life](#); ['Little islands': challenges and opportunities for student carers in higher education](#).

³² [Patterns of participation in higher education for care-experienced students in England: why has there not been more progress?](#); [Resilience, higher education and widening participation: generating change for care experienced students](#); ['It was me, but it was them that helped me': Exploring the issues for care experienced young people within higher education](#).

What effects does this policy have on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language and engage with our commitments under the Welsh Language Standards?

105. It is not expected that the proposed changes will impact opportunities to use the Welsh language or engage with our commitments under the Welsh Language Standards.

How does this policy treat the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language?

106. The consultation documents and updated Standards will be available in Welsh and English.