Standards of education and training guidance

Introduction

This document provides guidance on the standards of education and training (SETs) including information about how we assess and monitor education and training programmes against them.

As part of our approval and monitoring processes, we use the SETs to make sure that all learners meet the standards for registration when they gain a qualification; that they are suitable to become health and care professionals; and that they are able to practise their profession safely and effectively.

This document is written for education providers who are or will be engaged in our approval and monitoring processes, but will also be useful for practice education providers and others who work with and alongside education providers.

The guidance for each standard explains the purpose behind it, provides further explanation or definitions, and in some cases suggests how you could show that you meet each standard.

About us

We are the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) and we were set up to protect the public. To do this, we keep a Register of professionals who meet our standards for their training, professional skills and behaviour.

We currently regulate 16 professions.
- Arts therapists
- Biomedical scientists
- Chiropodists / podiatrists
- Clinical scientists
- Dietitians
- Hearing aid dispensers
- Occupational therapists
- Operating department practitioners
- Orthoptists
- Paramedics
- Physiotherapists
- Practitioner psychologists

- Prosthetists / orthotists
- Radiographers
- Social workers in England
- Speech and language therapists

For an up-to-date list of the professions we regulate, please see our website at www.hcpc-uk.org

Our Register is available on our website for anyone to search, so that they can check the registration of a professional. Professionals on our Register are called 'registrants'.

Our main functions

To protect the public, we:

- set standards for registrants' education and training, professional skills, conduct, performance and ethics;
- keep a register of professionals who meet those standards;
- approve education and training programmes which professionals must complete to register with us; and
- take action when professionals on our Register do not meet our standards.

About the SETs

The SETs are the standards which pre-registration education and training programmes must meet in order to be approved by us.

The SETs ensure that learners are prepared for safe and effective practice. A programme which meets the SETs allows a learner who completes that programme to meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs). These are the required knowledge, skills and understanding for safe and effective practice in each profession. The SETs also ensure that learners are able to meet the HCPC standards of conduct, performance and ethics (SCPE), the ethical principles and expectations of a professional's behaviour. If a learner successfully completes an approved programme they are then eligible to apply to the HCPC for registration.

Our governing legislation (the Health and Social Work Professions Order 2001) says that we must set our standards, including standards for education providers, at the level necessary for safe and effective practice. This is what we call the 'threshold' level. However we recognise that many education and training programmes exceed this.

All of the SETs apply to all of the education and training programmes we approve. However, the way they are implemented may differ among programmes, often depending on the profession or model of delivery.

We want to encourage the development of new education and training programmes and the ability of existing providers to structure or deliver their programmes in different or innovative ways. We have therefore avoided setting detailed requirements for how you should meet the standards. Instead, we approve and monitor how you have achieved the required outcomes; the policies and processes you have in place; and how you implement, review and evaluate them.

Guidance from other organisations

We have written this guidance document to provide more information about the meaning and intention of the SETs. It does not include good practice examples or other specific suggestions for how a programme should meet the SETs. When you are developing your programme, you may also want to refer to documents published by other organisations which take a role in developing good practice – for example, professional bodies and commissioning or funding bodies.

Language

When we use the abbreviation 'SET', followed by a number, this refers to a section of the standards (e.g. SET 2) or an individual standard (e.g. SET 2.1).

Throughout the document, 'we', 'us' and 'our' refers to the HCPC, and 'you' refers to the education provider, including those involved in leading or managing the programme.

We have used the term 'learner' throughout this document. We use this to mean anyone learning, studying or training on a programme which leads to them being eligible to apply to join our Register. The term includes students, trainees and practitioners in training or work-based learning.

We have also used the term 'educator' throughout the document. We use this to mean an individual who is involved in teaching, assessing or facilitating learning. This can include those who are permanently employed and others who help to deliver the programme such as sessional or visiting lecturers and practice educators.

The term 'staff' is used more broadly to refer to anyone involved in the delivery of the programme, which could include educators as well as those involved in other areas such as management or administration of the programme.

Many statements contained in this document use verbs like 'should', 'may' or 'could' rather than 'must'. This is because the guidance is not intended to impose additional requirements to those set out in the standards themselves. We use words like 'should', 'may' or 'could' in the guidance to indicate something which is recommended but not an absolute requirement, or areas we would expect education providers to consider in how they meet the SETs.

The structure of this document

We have divided up the main text of this document into six main sections, to reflect the six sections of the SETs:

SET 1: Level of qualification for entry to the Register

SET 2: Programme admissions

SET 3: Programme governance, management and leadership

SET 4: Programme design and delivery

SET 5: Practice-based learning

SET 6: Assessment

Under the title of each main section we have summarised the broad areas that the section is concerned with. Detailed guidance is then provided for each individual standard in the section, in a table like the one below.

Under 'Other sources of HCPC guidance' we list other HCPC publications, where available, which may be useful to you to find more information about an individual standard. Certain documents may have relevant information in them which relates to a number of individual standards.

This box contains the full text of the individual standard.
Guidance This box contains guidance on the individual standard. It includes the intention behind the standard and any key definitions.
Other sources of HCPC guidance This box appears after some of the SETs and lists other HCPC publications which contain more background information or other related standards or guidance.

SET 1: Level of qualification for entry to the Register

Summary

This section is concerned with the qualifications which would normally be expected for someone to be eligible to apply to register with us in each profession.

Detailed guidance

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

Bachelor degree with honours for:

- biomedical scientists (with the Certificate of Competence awarded by the Institute of Biomedical Science, or equivalent);

- chiropodists / podiatrists;

- dietitians;

- occupational therapists;

- orthoptists;

- physiotherapists;

- prosthetists / orthotists;

- radiographers;

- social workers in England; and

- speech and language therapists.

Masters degree for arts therapists.

Masters degree for clinical scientists (with the Certificate of Attainment awarded by the Association of Clinical Scientists, or equivalent).

Foundation degree for hearing aid dispensers.

Diploma of Higher Education for operating department practitioners.

Equivalent to Certificate of Higher Education for paramedics.

Professional doctorate for clinical psychologists.

Professional doctorate for counselling psychologists, or equivalent.

Professional doctorate for educational psychologists, or equivalent.

Masters degree for forensic psychologists (with the award of the British Psychological Society qualification in forensic psychology, or equivalent).

Masters degree for health psychologists (with the award of the British Psychological Society qualification in health psychology, or equivalent).

Masters degree for occupational psychologists (with the award of the British Psychological Society qualification in occupational psychology, or equivalent).

Masters degree for sport and exercise psychologists (with the award of the British Psychological Society qualification in sport and exercise psychology, or equivalent).

Guidance

This standard sets out the level of qualification we would normally expect for approved programmes leading to registration in each of the regulated professions.

We have set the level for each profession, based on what we think is needed for programmes to deliver the standards of proficiency. We expect that most approved programmes will be at, or above, the standard we have outlined, but we realise that there may be some exceptions.

This standard contains the word 'normally' and some of the entry routes include the word 'equivalent'. This is to show that you may be able to design a programme which leads to a different qualification, but which meets the rest of the SETs, and the standards of proficiency, and so can still be approved by us. By law, we could not refuse to approve a programme just based on the form of award.

SET 2: Programme admissions

Summary

This section relates to the admissions processes for your programme, including the selection and entry criteria, procedures for assessing applicants and the information provided to the people involved. We expect that, in making decisions during the admissions process, you make sure learners are suitable to undertake the programme, including working with service users and carers in practice, and that they will be able to meet the standards of proficiency for their profession and to practise safely and effectively upon completion of the programme.

However, it is important that your applicants understand that, when you assess applications, you are checking their suitability to undertake the programme, not giving any guarantees about whether they will eventually be registered. This particularly applies to the individual standards in this section which refer to criminal record checks and health requirements.

When someone applies to join our Register, we look at their application individually, and make a decision about whether they can join our Register, based on their individual circumstances. We cannot guarantee that they will be registered in the future, or decide that a future application for registration would definitely not be successful.

Where admissions criteria and processes are applied by a separate organisation, you must retain overall responsibility and oversight. We do not normally visit organisations that you partner or collaborate with; instead we approve the policies and processes that you have in place in relation to them.

Detailed guidance

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 make or take up an offer of a place on a programme.

Guidance

This standard is about ensuring that information provided throughout the admissions process is clear and comprehensive, and facilitates informed decision-making.

The purpose of this standard is two-fold; we want to be sure that the information provided by applicants enables you to come to an appropriate decision about their suitability for a particular programme. Similarly, we want to make sure that you provide applicants with information on the programme that enables them to make a fully informed decision about taking up a place on a programme.

This applies to the information you provide to applicants about all aspects of the programme, including practice-based learning.

We do not give you specific guidance on the detailed information you must ask an applicant for, but we need to be satisfied that it is enough for you to be able to make an appropriate decision about whether to offer the applicant a place on a programme.

Among other things, you should tell applicants about the costs of the programme, including accommodation and other associated costs where relevant, and any options for funding. The information you provide applicants should also be clear about the difference between completing an approved programme and registering with the HCPC; about the different roles that regulatory and professional bodies play; and about the use of protected titles as a learner and as a registrant.

2.2   The selection and entry criteria must include appropriate academic and professional entry standards.

Guidance

This standard is about making sure that the academic and professional entry criteria are appropriate to the level and content of the programme, which in turn ensures learners are able to meet our standards for registration upon completion.

These should include, for example, requirements for prior knowledge or qualifications where relevant. Or you may choose to include selection and entry criteria which relate to applicants' profession-related values, attitudes or personal attributes. Whatever the criteria, you need to be able to show how they are appropriate to the level and content of the programme.

The information you provide to applicants should clearly set out all of the relevant academic and professional entry standards for the programme.

2.3   The admissions process must ensure that applicants have a good command of English.

Guidance

This standard is about ensuring that learners are able to use the English language at the level necessary to communicate effectively with service users and carers, educators and others and to complete the programme successfully.

You must have a thorough process in place for assessing an applicant's command of English. We do not prescribe how this should be done, but it should cover their reading, writing, listening and speaking skills.

We expect that any English language requirements you set at the point of admissions are appropriate to the level and content of the programme. They should take account of the fact that, upon completion of the programme, all learners must have the necessary level of English as set out in Standard 8 of the standards of proficiency for the relevant profession.

Your requirements can apply to all applicants, including those from the European Economic Area (EEA).

We realise that the requirements for applicants who do not have English as their first language may be different from the requirements for those who do. For example, applicants whose first language is English are not likely to be expected to provide evidence of meeting a language testing standard, but may demonstrate their English language skills in another way.

Your process should also make sure that reasonable adjustments are made to allow disabled applicants (e.g. deaf applicants) to demonstrate their English language and communication skills.

Other sources of HCPC guidance

Health and Care Professions Council, Standards of proficiency

| **2.4 The admissions process must include criminal record checks to ensure the suitability of applicants.** |

Guidance

This standard is about ensuring that service users, learners and others are not put at risk through their interaction with learners.

By 'suitability' we mean that an applicant is of appropriate character to train to become a health and care professional and to interact safely with service users and carers.

We expect you to undertake criminal record checks on all applicants. These would normally be through the Disclosure and Barring Service in England and Wales; Disclosure Scotland; Access Northern Ireland; or, where appropriate, an equivalent body in another country. This should normally be at an 'enhanced' level or equivalent, due to the positions of trust and responsibility people on our Register are placed in. It is for you to decide who should pay the cost of carrying out the criminal convictions checks.

In making an admissions decision about someone who has a criminal record, you should consider whether it might affect their suitability to work with service users and carers or affect the public's confidence in their profession.

You should involve partner organisations in assessing the suitability of applicants. For example, you should consult practice education providers to find out whether

the fact that an applicant has a criminal record would cause any problems in practice-based learning.

We also expect that your processes will include consideration of our standards, particularly the standards of conduct, performance and ethics, and whether an individual's criminal record may affect their ability to meet them once qualified. Our Guidance on health and character provides information on how we consider criminal records of people who apply for registration with us.

Other sources of HCPC guidance

Health and Care Professions Council, Standards of conduct, performance and ethics

Health and Care Professions Council, Guidance on health and character

| 2.5 | The admissions process must ensure that applicants are aware of and comply with any health requirements. |

Guidance

This standard is about ensuring that learners will be able to undertake a programme safely and effectively, and to meet our standards for registration upon completion.

The information you make available to applicants must clearly set out any health requirements. Health requirements could relate to the physical and/or mental health of applicants. For some programmes, they may include things that applicants are required to do before commencing a programme (e.g. immunisations); or aspects of the programme which may affect applicants with certain health conditions or disabilities in a different way (e.g. physical participation in some learning activities).

Applicants should be encouraged to disclose information about a health condition which may affect the way they are able to learn on the programme, including the way in which they interact with service users and carers. It is your responsibility to make sure you have made all reasonable adjustments in respect of applicants and learners, in line with equality and diversity law.

We do not view having a disability as a barrier to becoming a health and care professional. Our guidance document, 'Health, disability and becoming a health and care professional', provides information for disabled people applying to approved programmes, and for admissions staff considering applications from disabled people. You should make applicants aware of this and other relevant guidance during the admissions process.

In making an admissions decision about someone who has told you about a health condition, you should take into account our 'Guidance on health and character',

which provides information on how we consider health information about people who apply for registration with us.

Other sources of HCPC guidance

Health and Care Professions Council, Health, disability and becoming a health or care professional

Health and Care Professions Council, Guidance on health and character

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2.6 There must be an appropriate and effective process for assessing applicants' prior learning and experience.

Guidance

This standard is about ensuring that you consider the prior learning and experience of applicants as part of the admissions process in an appropriate and effective way.

This is often known as 'recognition of prior learning' and can relate to an applicant's prior experiential (informal) learning or prior certificated learning (such as relevant qualifications or completed modules). Mechanisms for the recognition of prior certificated or experiential learning may include:

- credit transfer;
- feeder routes; or
- transition arrangements.

This standard relates both to how you assess individual applicants' prior learning and experience on a case-by-case basis, as well as how you assess other programmes or training routes which may give advanced standing to a particular applicant group.

Your process for assessing prior learning should take into consideration factors such as the relevance, level and currency of the prior learning. You should also make sure you have sufficient evidence from the applicant of the prior learning.

There is no requirement for you to recognise or accredit prior learning or experience if you do not consider it appropriate; and likewise we do not set limits on the amount of prior learning or experience you can accredit. Your education provider may have a specific policy or guidance in this area. However we expect you to have a clear rationale for the decisions made and a process in place which provides safeguards to ensure the standards of proficiency are met by all learners by the end of the programme.

You should also be able to show how you explain your processes in this area to applicants and learners.

2.7 The programme must implement and monitor equality and diversity policies in relation to applicants.

Guidance

This standard is about ensuring that the admissions process is open and equitable and does not discriminate unfairly against certain applicants.

There must be equality and diversity policies in place which relate to the admissions process, as well as processes to monitor how these are being implemented. Your programme may have its own equality and diversity policy, or the education provider may have a policy that applies to the programme.

You should be able to show how you make these policies available to applicants, along with information about what an applicant should do if they feel that they have been unfairly discriminated against.

SET 3: Programme governance, management and leadership

Summary

This part of the SETs covers a range of topics, including how the programme is led, managed and governed; the processes for monitoring and review; collaboration with and involvement of stakeholders; and ensuring that the necessary resources are available to learners and educators.

The education provider must make sure that there is robust and effective oversight of the programme, and that there are effective systems and processes in place to establish, review, monitor and improve the delivery of the programme. This applies to all parts of the programme, including practice-based learning.

Where parts of the programme are provided by a separate organisation, the education provider must retain overall accountability and oversight. We do not normally visit organisations that you partner or collaborate with; instead we approve the policies and processes that you have in place in relation to them. These policies and processes must link into governance of the programme as a whole.

Detailed guidance

3.1 The programme must be sustainable and fit for purpose.
Guidance   This standard is about making sure that there is a future for the programme, that it is currently secure and supported by all stakeholders involved.   By 'sustainable', we mean that: – the education provider and any partner organisations are committed to providing enough resources to effectively deliver the programme;   – possible risks or threats to delivering the programme are being effectively managed; and   – the programme has sufficient support from senior management within the education provider.   By 'fit for purpose' we mean that the programme meets the needs of learners who will be entering a profession. This includes ensuring that learners are adequately prepared for practice, and that they are able to meet the standards of proficiency and adhere to expectations of professional behaviour.   Factors relating to this standard may include: – the programme's financial position, including funding arrangements where relevant;

- the programme's place within the education provider's business plan;

- the processes in place for reviewing the way the programme is delivered and the related need for development;

- work undertaken in collaboration with other organisations (such as practice education providers) to make sure the programme is sustainable and fit for purpose; and

- feedback from stakeholders about whether the programme is fit for purpose.

3.2 The programme must be effectively managed.

Guidance

This standard is about ensuring there is effective management and clear accountability for the programme.

We expect there to be a programme management structure in place with clear roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability. You should also make sure that the people involved have the commitment, skills and expertise they need to lead and manage the programme.

Where there is a partnership arrangement in place with another organisation to deliver part of the programme (such as another education provider or a practice education provider), you should make sure that you maintain oversight of the management systems and structures within the other organisation and that all parties have a clear understanding of responsibilities. There should also be clear processes to deal with any issues or problems which arise in the partnership.

3.3 There must be a person with overall professional responsibility for the programme who is appropriately qualified and experienced and, unless other arrangements are agreed, on the relevant part of the Register.

Guidance

This standard is about ensuring that there is a suitable person to lead the programme. This person is sometimes called the 'programme leader', but there may be other titles used for the role.

We do not play a role in appointing or approving the individual named person for this role; but rather we need to be assured that there is an effective process in place to identify a suitable person and, if it becomes necessary, a suitable replacement.

By 'appropriately qualified and experienced', we mean that the person is capable of leading the programme and effectively organising how that programme is

delivered. It may be appropriate for them to hold a particular professional or education qualification.

In addition, we normally expect this person to be registered with the HCPC in the relevant profession and, where there is more than one protected title, to be eligible to use the title the programme relates to.

However, we recognise that there may be circumstances where it is possible and appropriate for a programme to be led by someone who is not registered on the relevant part of the Register. If this is the case, you must be able to show how you make sure they are appropriate for the role and have access to the necessary information and resources specific to the relevant profession.

3.4 The programme must have regular and effective monitoring and evaluation systems in place.

Guidance

This standard is about how you ensure the programme's overall quality and effectiveness on an ongoing basis.

You need to be able to show how you monitor and evaluate the programme's quality and effectiveness and the systems that are in place. This includes processes which enable you to proactively gather information on quality and effectiveness; as well as to respond to any identified risks, challenges or changes.

Where relevant, you should also use this information as a way of ensuring the continuous improvement of the programme.

The processes you use should be appropriate to the programme and may include the following:

– internal and external quality audits;

– critical review of current arrangements;

– regular collection and analysis of feedback from learners, educators, service users and/or carers;

– analysis of learner complaints;

– analysis of concerns raised by learners, educators or others, for example about the safety or wellbeing of service users;

– quality audits of practice-based learning; and/or

– monitoring and evaluation through partnership with other organisations, such as practice education providers.

3.5 There must be regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and practice education providers.

Guidance

This standard is about how you engage and work in partnership with those who provide practice-based learning as a way of ensuring its ongoing quality and effectiveness. We expect this collaboration to also influence the design and delivery of the programme as a whole.

By 'practice education providers' we mean departments, services or organisations which provide a setting or opportunity for learners to participate in practice-based learning, as well as organisations which employ those involved in teaching or assessing learners in practice.

By 'regular' we mean that the arrangements for collaboration must reflect a partnership and ongoing relationship, not collaboration that only happens around the time the programme undergoes approval or annual monitoring, or when specific issues arise with practice-based learning.

We do not set specific requirements but collaboration could take various forms, such as meetings, seeking feedback or other methods of communication with practice education providers. You should make decisions based on what is effective for the continuous improvement of 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.

Guidance

This standard is about the processes you have in place to ensure that all learners on the programme have access to practice-based learning which meets their learning needs.

Meeting this standard requires not only consideration of the learners currently on the programme, but planning for future cohorts as well.

Where practice-based learning is provided separately from the rest of the programme by one or more third-party organisations, we expect these processes to be incorporated in your regular engagement and collaboration with the practice education providers.

In addition, securing the availability and capacity of practice-based learning for your own programme should be undertaken responsibly and include consideration of how it could impact on other programmes (for example, in the same geographical area).

3.7   Service users and carers must be involved in the programme.

Guidance

This standard is about how service users and carers contribute to the overall quality and effectiveness of a programme and ensure that learners completing an approved programme are fit to practise.

We use 'service user' as a broad term to refer to the involvement of those who use or are affected by the services of professionals registered with us. We use 'carer' as a broad term to refer to someone who has looked after, or who currently looks after or provides support to, a family member, partner or friend. They may need support because of their age, an illness, or because they have a disability.

Who the service users and carers are will vary between and within the different professions we regulate. In many professions, registrants will work closely with individuals who are the 'end recipients' of their services, including groups such as patients and clients and their carers. In other professions, registrants' contact with individual 'end recipients' of their services and carers is more indirect. In these professions, service users could legitimately include organisations or other clinicians but they could also include groups such as patients who ultimately benefit from their work. We want to be satisfied that you have considered and can justify the service user and carer groups you have chosen as the most appropriate and relevant to your programme.

Involving service users and carers could include involving individuals. It could also include working with existing groups and networks of service users and carers such as working with voluntary organisations.

By 'involved in the programme' we mean that service users and carers must be able to contribute to the programme in some way. We do not specify the exact areas of a programme in which service users and carers must be involved but they could be involved in some or all of the following:

  – Admissions and selection

  – Developing teaching approaches and materials

  – Programme planning and development

  – Teaching and learning activities

  – Feedback and assessment

  – Quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation

You should make sure that there is support available for service users and carers, including remuneration where appropriate, so that they are able to be appropriately engaged.

You should have processes in place to plan, monitor and evaluate service user and carer involvement. You should also be able to explain where and how involvement takes place, how this is appropriate to your programme, and how it has contributed to governance and continuous improvement.

3.8   Learners must be involved in the design, delivery and review of the programme.

Guidance

This standard is about ensuring that the learning experience is central to the development and review of the programme. We expect that learners are involved throughout the programme, but specifically in its design, delivery and review.

You should have processes in place to seek, enable and encourage learner participation. You should be able to show how learner involvement has been used to inform decisions about the programme or to develop or change the programme with the aim of continuous improvement.

We do not specify exactly how learners must be involved. This could be done through a number of activities, including but not limited to:

- feedback through surveys;

- partnership working between learners and educators;

- staff/learner liaison committees; and/or

- learner representation on committees and working groups.

You should seek learner input regularly and not only when discrete issues arise. You should also make sure that learner involvement is used in a meaningful way to develop or enhance the programme, and that learners are aware of the actions taken as a result of their involvement.

3.9   There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.

Guidance

This standard is about ensuring that the resource provided for the programme allows for an adequate number of staff who are able and equipped to deliver the programme effectively.

We use the term 'staff' to mean anyone involved in delivering a programme, including educators as well as those involved in other areas such as management or administration of the programme.

By 'adequate number', we mean that you must be able to justify the number of staff you have in place, as well as the proportion of their time spent working on the programme, in relation to the practical requirements of the programme, the number of learners, their needs and the learning outcomes to be achieved. We do

not set staff-to-learner ratios; instead, we consider the staffing within the overall context of the education you provide.

You should also have arrangements in place to review the number of staff involved in the programme and to deal with situations such as staff absences.

We need to be sure that their qualifications and experience (whether practical or academic) are appropriate to the programme. This would include, for example, looking at what teaching and learning methods your educators are involved in; how they are involved in other programmes in the same profession; or the expected programme activities.

3.10 Subject areas must be delivered by educators with relevant specialist knowledge and expertise.

Guidance

This standard is about ensuring that educators have the necessary knowledge and expertise to deliver their parts of the programme effectively. This covers teaching as well as assessment and other aspects of delivery.

By 'educators' we mean individuals who are involved in teaching, assessing or facilitating learning. This includes those who are permanently part of the programme team, as well as sessional or visiting lecturers, practice educators or others.

We do not set specific requirements for the knowledge and expertise that is needed to deliver certain parts of your programme, but you must have a process in place to ensure that educators are suitable and well equipped to take part in teaching and to support learning in the subject areas they are involved in.

In addition, we expect your processes to enable you to review the necessary knowledge and expertise as learners' needs and current practice in the profession change.

3.11 An effective programme must be in place to ensure the continuing professional and academic development of educators.

Guidance

This standard is about ensuring that educators continue to develop and maintain their professional and academic skills so they are able to deliver the programme effectively.

We are including not only educators who are permanently employed, but also sessional or visiting lecturers and practice educators.

By 'academic development' we mean activities aimed at developing educators' skills related to teaching, learning and/or research, as appropriate to their role in the programme.

We do not have specific requirements for what arrangements you must have in place but this could include staff development strategies, training or mentoring schemes or professional development portfolios. Whatever the specific arrangements, you should ensure that these are available and easy for educators to gain access to.

We recognise that sessional, visiting or temporary educators may not participate in all professional development arrangements you have in place. However we still want to see how you ensure that these educators are keeping their professional and academic skills relevant to their role up to date. This standard also covers how you support practice educators in keeping up to date their skills related to their role in practice-based learning (e.g. practice educator training).

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.

Guidance

This standard is about how you make sure that programme resources are readily available to learners and educators and are used effectively to support the required learning and teaching activities of the programme.

By 'all settings' we mean to include the setting for theory-based learning, as well as for practice-based learning (where it is separate) and any other site where a part of the programme is delivered.

'Resources' in this context may include, but are not limited to, the following:

– handbooks and module guides

– information technology

– virtual learning environments

– rooms and facilities

– textbooks and journals

– equipment

– any other learning and teaching materials.

You must have systems in place that enable you to assess how resources are used and how effective and accessible they are for learners and educators. This should include whether they are up to date and take into account the cost of replacing resources when needed.

3.13 There must be effective and accessible arrangements in place to support the wellbeing and learning needs of learners in all settings.

Guidance

This standard is about the education provider's commitment to supporting and enabling learners to achieve and successfully complete the programme.

By 'all settings' we mean to include the setting for theory-based learning, as well as the practice-based learning environment (where it is separate) and any other place where part of the programme is delivered.

Such arrangements should include academic and pastoral support, so that learners have access to feedback and regular reviews on their progress as well as support in particular areas of the programme where needed.

They may also include financial support or services relating to learners' physical or mental wellbeing (for example a counselling service or occupational health service). You must ensure that the support and services you provide are able to respond to specific needs and that learners know how to access them and are able to do so in a timely manner.

The arrangements must be available to all learners, but you may wish to consider how to support in particular:

– mature learners;

– disabled learners;

– those who have to take periods of planned or unplanned leave from the programme;

– those with caring responsibilities; and/or

– those with financial difficulties.

3.14 The programme must implement and monitor equality and diversity policies in relation to learners.

Guidance

This standard is about ensuring that the programme provides an equitable, fair and supportive environment to enable learning.

The equality and diversity policies, as well as the processes you have in place to monitor how they are implemented, must apply throughout the programme. Where part of the programme is delivered at or by a separate organisation (e.g. practice-based learning), you must have a process to ensure that appropriate equality and diversity policies are in place and implemented which apply to all learners on different parts of the programme.

The programme may have its own equality and diversity policies, or the education provider may have policies that apply.

You should be able to show that learners know how they can gain access to these policies and what to do if they feel that they have been discriminated against.

Other sources of HCPC guidance

Health and Care Professions Council, Health, disability and becoming a health and care professional

3.15 There must be a thorough and effective process in place for receiving and responding to learner complaints.

Guidance

This standard is about how you address and resolve complaints from learners, and how these contribute to the overall governance of the programme.

Learner complaints may relate to the quality of teaching and learning opportunities; the appropriateness or fairness of programme policies and procedures or how they have been implemented; or allegations of harassment or discrimination. They are different from 'academic appeals' – which are concerned only with the request for a review of a decision about progression or assessment – although the processes may be similar or linked.

The process for receiving and dealing with learner complaints must apply to all parts of the education provider and the programme, including practice-based learning.

In order to be effective, the process should not only respond to and remedy any issues or failings identified through complaints; but also use this information to review parts of the programme and identify potential areas for improvement.

3.16 There must be thorough and effective processes in place for ensuring the ongoing suitability of learners' conduct, character and health.

Guidance

This standard is about how you take responsibility for protecting service users and carers who interact with learners; and for ensuring that learners who complete the programme meet our standards for registration and expectations of professional behaviour.

We expect you to have effective processes in place that allow you to both proactively reassess the suitability of learners' conduct, character and health; and also to deal reactively with concerns about learners that come to light.

For example, it may be appropriate to undertake annual or periodic criminal records checks on learners. Or your processes may enable learners to provide information about issues relating to their character or health (i.e. self-declarations).

In assessing this information, you should consider whether the conduct, character or health-related issue could affect the learner's ability to meet our standards or to practise safely and effectively once qualified. Our 'Guidance on health and character' provides information on how we consider character issues and health conditions where they have been declared by people who apply for registration with us.

Concerns about a learner could be raised by anyone involved in the programme, such as practice educators, other learners or service users and carers, for example where a learner has acted in a way contrary to expected professional values and behaviours.

The processes you have in place should be fair and supportive, focused on helping and supporting learners to address concerns raised about their conduct or health or character issues where appropriate. However they should also be robust and allow for an appropriate range of outcomes. For example, concerns about a learner's conduct may indicate that they require additional support, or in serious cases that they are not suitable to continue on the programme. Where such information comes to light near the end of a programme, an appropriate outcome could be to provide for an award which does not provide eligibility to apply to the Register.

Other sources of HCPC guidance

HCPC, Standards of conduct, performance and ethics

HCPC, Guidance on conduct and ethics for students

HCPC, Guidance on health and character

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.

Guidance

This standard is about enabling learners to recognise situations where service users may be at risk, supporting them in raising any concerns, and ensuring action is taken in response to those concerns.

Learners may encounter situations which cause concern during practice-based learning or in other ways during the programme. There must be a process or processes which cover all parts of the programme.

This is in part about making sure that learners understand their responsibilities with regard to raising concerns when they believe the safety or wellbeing of service users is at risk. We have produced 'Guidance on conduct and ethics for students' to assist learners in understanding our expectations of their behaviour while on an approved programme, and to prepare them to meet the standards of conduct, performance and ethics once registered. This guidance includes an expectation that learners report their concerns about the safety or wellbeing of service users by speaking to an appropriate member of staff, such as an educator.

You must also support learners to raise concerns. You should ensure that learners know how and whom to address their concerns to; and how these will be considered and acted upon.

Your policies must be designed to make sure that learners are not penalised for raising concerns. Other support for learners may include:

– training on raising concerns and the importance of being open when things go wrong;

– dedicated reporting or communication mechanisms for learners to raise concerns; or

– advice from members of staff when situations arise which may be cause for concern.

The appropriate way to address a concern is likely to depend on its nature and where the concern originates; for example, it may be best dealt with by the programme leader or other managers at the education provider or practice education provider. Your process should ensure that, where necessary, the concern will be escalated to another appropriate person or organisation, such as a regulator.

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.

Guidance

This standard is about making sure there is no confusion about which programmes we approve and which we do not. Learners, educators and the public must be clear on which programmes meet our standards for registration and which do not.

Where you provide an aegrotat, 'step off', intermediate or other exit award that we have not approved, it must be clear that these do not lead to eligibility to apply for HCPC registration. (An 'aegrotat award' is an award to a learner who was not able

to complete the full programme due to illness. Other exit awards may be available for learners in other circumstances.)

Learners who are not eligible to apply for registration should not be given an award that refers to a protected title. Where appropriate, you should consider giving these awards titles like 'Healthcare studies' which reflect the academic content, but do not give the impression that they confer eligibility to apply for registration. You should ensure that programme and award titles are clear, and that applicants, learners, educators and the public understand who is eligible to apply for registration with us, and who is not.

SET 4: Programme design and delivery

Summary

This part of the SETs is about how the design and delivery of the programme ensure that learners who complete the programme meet our standards for their professional knowledge and skills, and are fit to practise. The programme must make sure that anyone who completes the programme is able to meet the HCPC standards of proficiency and understands the expectations and responsibilities associated with being a regulated professional.

The standards in this section apply to all parts of the programme, including both theory and practice-based learning.

We do not set prescriptive standards for developing a curriculum or about the detailed content of programmes and how they are delivered. We set broad standards so that you can design a programme that is responsive to changes in current practice and takes account of relevant curriculum frameworks and other profession-specific guidance.

Detailed guidance

4.1 The learning outcomes must ensure that learners meet the standards of proficiency for the relevant part of the Register.

Guidance

This standard is about making sure that learners who complete an approved programme are able to meet the standards of proficiency for their profession. This in turn means that those who apply for HCPC registration are able to practise safely and effectively upon entering the profession.

You must be able to show how all of the standards of proficiency are covered by the learning outcomes in the programme. It is not necessary that each of the standards of proficiency maps to a single learning outcome; it may be that a number of learning outcomes cumulatively ensure that learners are able to meet one or more of the standards of proficiency.

We need to be sure that every learner completing the programme can meet all of the standards of proficiency, no matter what optional modules they choose, or if they have postponed their study.

You should also take account of any reasonable adjustments you have made to the way you deliver the programme to disabled learners, in considering how they can meet the standards of proficiency at the end of their programme.

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.

Guidance

This standard is about ensuring that learners understand and are able to meet the expectations associated with being a regulated professional.

Learners must have the opportunity throughout a programme to learn about professional conduct and to demonstrate an understanding of which types of behaviour are appropriate for a professional and which are not. This should include learning about how context affects professional decision-making.

In particular, learners need to be aware of their obligations to meet the standards of conduct, performance and ethics when they qualify and apply for registration with the HCPC, as well as throughout their future professional practice. These are broad standards that apply to everyone on our Register and those applying for registration. They set out our expectations regarding a professional's behaviour and cover their ethics, decision-making, communication and interaction with service users, carers, colleagues and others. Meeting those standards is an integral part of being fit to practise.

We do not prescribe how the standards of conduct, performance and ethics should be covered during the programme (for example, we do not require a dedicated module on ethics). However the standards should play a prominent and structured role in the design of a programme.

We have produced 'Guidance on conduct and ethics for students' to help learners understand how the standards of conduct, performance and ethics apply to them.

Other sources of HCPC guidance

Standards of conduct, performance and ethics

Guidance on conduct and ethics for students

Confidentiality – Guidance for registrants

[Social media guidance once published]

4.3 The programme must reflect the philosophy, core values, skills and knowledge base as articulated in any relevant curriculum guidance.

Guidance

This standard is about ensuring that a programme remains current with regard to the philosophy, core values, knowledge and skills of a profession. It also aims to allow for changes within the profession.

We use the word 'reflect' rather than 'adhere to' because there may be more than one relevant curriculum guidance and/or you may need to depart from the curriculum guidance in some cases.

However, if the programme does not adhere to any of the curriculum guidance available, we need to understand how, without doing so, you are sure that learners completing your programme are able to practise safely and effectively.

We do not explicitly define 'core values' as they are likely to differ by profession. They could relate to the overarching philosophy which influences practice (e.g. the centrality of the service user), or to ethics, personal attributes or attitudes, among other things.

Curriculum guidance is often produced by professional bodies, but relevant documents are sometimes produced by other organisations, such as commissioning and funding bodies or employers. You must to be able to show how any guidance is reflected in the programme.

4.4 The curriculum must remain relevant to current practice.

Guidance

This standard is about how the programme takes account of and reflects current practice, so that it remains relevant and effective in preparing learners for practice.

Practice changes over time. You must be able to show how you make sure the curriculum stays relevant, and how you update it in line with developments or changes in current practice.

For example, you should be able to show how the design of the curriculum predicts or reflects change in practice and/or services; developments in the profession's research base and advances in technology; changes in the law; and changes in service users' needs and expectations. Additionally, you should consider how to reflect feedback on employability, from learners and employers; changes in workforce development and lifelong learning; and developments in professional and regulatory practice, including research and guidance.

4.5 Integration of theory and practice must be central to the programme.

Guidance

This standard is about ensuring that learners are able to apply knowledge to practice as a fundamental part of being prepared and competent to practise their profession.

We expect theory and practice to be combined within both the theoretical and practical parts of the programme. By 'practical parts of the programme' we mean

to include practice-based learning as well as practical learning in an academic setting.

We expect the programme to not only include both theory and practice elements; you must also ensure that these are integrated, complementary and mutually supportive. Learners must have the opportunity to learn theory and understand why theory is important, but also to reflect on and learn how to apply theoretical frameworks in practice.

This integration needs to be relevant and meaningful to learners and to take place at appropriate times during the programme to ensure it is effective.

4.6   The learning and teaching methods used must be appropriate to the effective delivery of the learning outcomes.

Guidance

This standard is about ensuring that the methods you use to deliver the programme support learners to achieve the learning outcomes.

By 'appropriate' we mean relevant to and effective for achieving the learning outcomes needed, both in terms of theoretical knowledge and the practical skills required in professional practice. Learning and teaching methods should also be evidence-based as a way of ensuring their effectiveness.

We do not set specific requirements for the types, number or range of approaches your programme should include. However we expect that where possible these should take into account individual learning styles and needs to support achievement.

This standard refers to all parts of the programme, including both the theory and practice-based elements.

4.7   The delivery of the programme must support and develop autonomous and reflective thinking.

Guidance

This standard is about enabling learners to become autonomous and reflective practitioners, as a key part of meeting our standards for registration.

Specifically, the ability to practise as an autonomous professional and to reflect on and review practice are requirements set out in standards 4 and 11 of the standards of proficiency (common across all professions).

The delivery of the programme should encourage learners to consider their own practice, including the limits of their safe and effective practice and their

responsibility to make sure that they practise safely when they complete the programme.

We do not set specific requirements for the teaching and assessment methods you should use to achieve this, but you could consider the following:

– self-appraisal with planning and writing action plans;

– discussion groups;

– workshops;

– practice simulation and debriefing;

– reflective diaries or logs; or

– personal development plans.

4.8 The delivery of the programme must support and develop evidence-based practice.

Guidance

This standard is about enabling learners to use evidence to inform and systematically evaluate their practice, as a key part of meeting our standards for registration.

Specifically, the ability to assure the quality of their practice is a requirement set out in standard 12 of the standards of proficiency (across all professions).

By 'evidence-based practice' we mean the ability to gather, use, analyse and appraise evidence to inform and quality assure their practice. Evidence may come from research, audit and evaluation or feedback from service users and carers, for example.

Development of evidence-based practice could be achieved through learner-centred and independent learning, teaching and assessment strategies, as well as learner-led research where appropriate. You should ensure that the programme encourages the development of analytical skills and research appreciation relevant to the profession.

4.9 The programme must ensure that learners are able to learn with, and from, professionals and learners in other relevant professions.

Guidance

This standard is about how learners are prepared to work collaboratively with other professionals and across disciplines for the benefit of service users and carers.

The process of learning with and from other relevant professionals is often referred to as 'interprofessional education' (IPE).

This learning experience can develop learners' ability to communicate and work with those outside of their own profession, ultimately improving the environment and quality of care for service users.

By 'other relevant professions' we mean to include other health and social care professions, as well as professions outside of health and social care. It is up to you to determine which other professions are most relevant to the programme and most useful in preparing learners for practice. Improving the quality of care for service users should be the key factor in determining which other professions or occupational groups are relevant to learners on a programme.

We do not prescribe how a programme should include interprofessional education, nor the type(s) of learning activity, number of professions involved or length of time. However we want to know how you have made decisions regarding the design and delivery of IPE to maximise the relevance to learners, and the benefit for their future professional practice and for service users and carers.

Other sources of HCPC guidance

HCPC, Standards of proficiency

HCPC, Standards of conduct, performance and ethics

4.10 The programme must include effective processes for obtaining appropriate consent from service users and learners.

Guidance

This standard is about how you use the learning process to support and develop learners' understanding of the principles and processes of obtaining consent in practice.

It is about respecting individual rights and minimising the risk of harm, and also making sure that learners understand what will be expected of them as health and care professionals. The principle of obtaining appropriate consent is central to practising in a regulated profession and is included in the standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

The standard is twofold; the first part is about obtaining appropriate consent from service users who interact with learners. You must be sure that learning and teaching methods do not infringe in any way on the rights of service users. Where learners are directly involved in providing care, treatment or services (for example in practice-based learning), we expect there to be a system in place to ensure that service users and carers are made aware that they are learners and that appropriate consent is obtained.

The second part is about obtaining appropriate consent from learners where they participate as service users themselves in practical and clinical teaching. The degree of involvement of learners in practical and clinical teaching will vary by programme and among professions.

You should not assume that broad consent given by a learner at the beginning of the programme will cover all situations. In some cases it will be necessary to obtain explicit consent from learners in relation to their participation in a specific activity. Such activities may include:

- role play;
- biomechanical assessments;
- patient positioning activities;
- practising clinical techniques; and
- experiential groups.

In telling learners about what clinical and practical teaching is included in the programme and obtaining their consent, you should take into account factors such as cultural differences and a learner's physical or mental health.

Other sources of HCPC guidance

Health and Care Professions Council, Standards of conduct, performance and ethics

Health and Care Professions Council, Confidentiality – guidance for registrants

4.11 The education provider must identify and tell learners about the parts of the programme where attendance is mandatory, and must have associated monitoring processes in place.

Guidance

This standard is about ensuring that all learners who complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency, through full participation in those parts of the programme which are essential to achieving them.

We recognise that in some cases, a learner may not always need to be physically present but may engage in other ways, such as online. We use the word 'attendance' in a broad way to cover these situations.

In some cases it may be appropriate to require compulsory attendance of specific days or modules; while in other cases an expectation of average attendance over the course of the programme may be more appropriate. We do not set a minimum level of attendance, and leave this up to the programme (or the wider education provider) to set and be able to justify.

Learners need to be aware of your requirements and any consequences of missing mandatory parts of the programme.

You must have systems in place to monitor attendance and to take appropriate action if learners fail to attend the compulsory parts of the programme. For example, if you find that a learner has poor attendance, you could take follow-up action to make sure that they gain this knowledge before they are able to complete the programme. Other actions may be appropriate if learners fail to attend during assessments or practice-based learning.

SET 5: Practice-based learning

Summary

This section is about the practice-based learning which must be an integral part of your programme. We define 'practice-based learning' as the clinical or practical experience that forms part of an approved programme. It may take place throughout a programme or in discrete periods of time. In some programmes, it is provided in a different setting or by a different organisation than other parts of the programme.

You must have oversight and accountability for all practice-based learning, even where it is provided in a different setting or by a different organisation than other parts of the programme.

While we recognise that you work closely with practice educators and practice education providers, the standards in this section aim to make sure that you maintain responsibility for the governance and quality assurance of practice-based learning, and that you have effective systems and processes in place to support it.

This section covers how you:

– approve and monitor practice-based learning to make sure that it is effective and enables learners to meet the standards of proficiency;

– ensure the safety of service users, learners and others in practice-based learning;

– provide for adequate resource and support; and

– provide the necessary information to learners and practice educators.

We do not approve individual practice-based learning settings, practice educators or practice education providers. However your systems and processes must make sure that these meet our standards.

Detailed guidance

5.1 Practice-based learning must be integral to the programme.
Guidance This standard is about how practice-based learning is used effectively, as a key component of the programme, to prepare learners for future practice. Practice-based learning may take place throughout a programme or in discrete periods of time. In some programmes, it is provided in a different setting or by a different organisation than other parts of the programme. You must be able to show how practice-based learning is an integral part of the programme, for example:

- how practice-based learning outcomes and progression are in line with learning outcomes for the programme as a whole;

- your ongoing partnership arrangements with practice education providers; or

- your reasons for the design of practice-based learning on the programme.

5.2 The structure, duration and range of practice-based learning must support the achievement of the learning outcomes and the standards of proficiency.

Guidance

This standard is about ensuring that the way practice-based learning is designed enables learners to achieve the learning outcomes of the programme and the standards of proficiency.

We do not set requirements for the structure, duration or range of practice-based learning that you must include in your programme to meet our SETs. However we expect you to have clear reasons for your decisions in this regard and that these are appropriate to the design and content of the programme and the learning outcomes.

Some other organisations, such as professional bodies, do set guidelines on practice-based learning. These should be reflected where relevant to your programme.

You must be able to explain how learners progress during practice-based learning, in relation to the standards of proficiency and the learning outcomes of the programme.

You should ensure that learners have access to an appropriate range of practice-based learning experiences which reflect the nature of modern practice and the range of practice settings of the profession they are preparing to enter.

Other sources of HCPC guidance

Health and Care Professions Council, Standards of proficiency

5.3 The education provider must maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and ensuring the quality of practice-based learning.

Guidance

This standard is about ensuring the continuing quality of practice-based learning.

You must have a system for approving practice-based learning and for regularly monitoring it. This may include collecting, analysing and acting on feedback from learners, service users, practice placement educators and others.

In addition we expect you to have processes in place to respond when any concerns, difficulties or adverse incidents arise in the provision of practice-based learning; or where there is evidence which may call into question the suitability of the practice-based learning environment. This might include, for example, information or reports from regulators as well as internal investigations. Responding appropriately may involve making changes to practice-based learning, addressing issues or removing approval if it becomes necessary.

You should view the quality assurance of practice-based learning as a method of continuous improvement of the learning environment and service users' experience. This means that your processes should support both the learners' and service users' needs within practice-based learning.

Where practice-based learning is provided by a separate organisation, the programme must retain overall accountability and oversight. We do not visit individual practice-based learning environments or settings, but we approve the policies and processes that you have in place in relation to them. These policies and processes must link into governance of the programme as a whole.

5.4   Practice-based learning must take place in an environment that is safe and supportive for learners and service users.

Guidance

This standard is about making sure that practice-based learning settings are suitable and that they support safe and effective learning.

You must be sure that practice-based learning does not cause a risk to service users. This is in part about ensuring that learners work within a scope of practice that is appropriate to their level of skills and experience. This is likely to develop for an individual learner as they progress during the course of the programme, and the practice-based learning they participate in should reflect this. You should also consider other factors in providing a safe environment for service users, such as the level of supervision and autonomy that learners have.

We also expect you to have safety policies and procedures in place that enable you to identify and address risks to the health and wellbeing of learners, such as (where relevant):

– infection control;

– manual handling;

– aggression from service users, colleagues or others; and

– mental health and stress.

Where the practice-based learning is provided by an external organisation, you must be able to demonstrate how you assess and monitor the practice environment to ensure it is safe and supportive. This includes collaboration with practice educators and practice education providers.

5.5 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff involved in practice-based learning.

Guidance

This standard is about ensuring there is sufficient support for learners to enable safe and effective practice-based learning.

By 'staff' we mean to include practice educators, as well as others working in the practice-based learning environment or setting.

We recognise that there are different models of practice-based learning and the level of day-to-day supervision or involvement of practice educators and other staff can vary among programmes. As a result, we do not say how many staff must be present at practice-based learning, how exactly they must be involved or what their qualification and experience levels must be.

However, you must be able to justify what you consider to be an adequate number of staff with reference to the number of learners and the level of support specific learners need. For example, a one-to-one relationship may be required for some professions or programmes, while there may be four or five learners to one member of staff in others.

We also expect that the qualifications and experience of staff are appropriate to the specific aspects of practice-based learning they are involved in, and that they are able to effectively support learning and assessment.

Some professional bodies play an active role in providing advice on staff-to-learner ratios. You should contact these professional bodies for further guidance in this area, where relevant.

5.6 Practice educators must have relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning and, unless other arrangements are agreed, must be on the relevant part of the Register.

Guidance

This standard is about how you make sure that practice educators are suitable and able to support and develop learners in a safe and effective way.

A 'practice educator' is defined as a person who is responsible for a learner's education during their practice-based learning.

We do not set specific requirements about the knowledge, skills and experience that all practice educators must have, as this is likely to vary between programmes and among the professions we regulate. However, you must determine what the necessary knowledge, skills and experience are to be able to support safe and effective practice-based learning, in relation to the learning outcomes of the programme.

In addition, we normally expect practice educators to be registered with the HCPC in the relevant profession and, where there is more than one protected title, to be eligible to use the title the programme relates to.

However, we recognise that in some circumstances there may be other appropriate practice educators whose professional backgrounds do not match the specific profession or protected title which the programme relates to; but whose knowledge, skills and experience mean they are well suited to support and develop learners in a particular area. This could include, for example, professionals registered with a different regulator.

If you choose to use practice educators who are not registered with us, you must be able to explain your decision and how you ensure that they are appropriate to undertake this role, including how their experience, qualifications and training are relevant to the practice-based learning they are involved in.

Where practice-based learning is provided by a separate organisation, you must have processes in place to check that practice educators have the necessary knowledge, skills and experience and are appropriately registered.

| **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.** |

Guidance

This standard is about how practice educators are appropriately prepared so they can support and facilitate learning and assess learners effectively.

We expect that all new practice educators are trained, and that this is followed up with regular refresher training and support. Some of this training is likely to be generic, but must also include aspects that are specific to the programme, delivery of the learning outcomes and the individual needs of learners (who potentially will have varying levels of skill and experience).

Where practice educators are involved in assessment of learners, they should be prepared to do so through training in a way that is consistent across all practice-based learning on the programme.

We do not set specific requirements for the length, content or frequency of training for practice educators, as we feel that this level of detail is best decided by individual education providers with reference to the specific programme.

Training may take a variety of forms, including but not limited to:

– attendance at your site for training;

– training in the workplace;

– online support;

– written support; and

– peer support through workshops and meetings.

You should consider putting in place accreditation schemes offered by some professional bodies, where relevant.

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.

Guidance

This standard is about setting and communicating clear expectations to all parties regarding practice-based learning. This is necessary so that they understand their roles and what is expected and required for the practice-based learning to be safe and effective.

Information provided to learners and practice educators should include the following (where relevant):

– names and details of learners or practice educators;

– the timings and duration of practice-based learning;

– practical details such as location;

– induction materials;

– the learning outcomes to be achieved;

– any relevant risks or safety issues;

– what records need to be kept;

– the assessment methods and criteria, including the implications of, and any action to be taken in the case of, failure to progress; and

– lines of communication and responsibility.

You should also make sure that learners are aware of what to do if something goes wrong or they have a concern about their practice-based learning experience or the provision of services to service users.

It is important that this information is provided in a timely manner, to allow for any clarification or explanation before practice-based learning begins. You should also

ensure that not only is this information provided to learners and practice educators, but that it is easily available and in an appropriate format for them. You should also ensure that everyone involved has understood the information. This could be through follow-up training or opportunities for discussion, for example.

SET 6 - Assessment

Summary

This part of the SETs is about how you assess learners throughout the programme In particular you must ensure through assessment that learners achieve the following:

– meet the requirements of the programme;

– achieve the learning outcomes;

– meet our standards of proficiency; and

– demonstrate that they understand the expectations of being a regulated professional.

Assessments must be effective and fair and must enable learners to demonstrate their progression and achievement. This relates to the way you design the assessment strategy and methods; how you communicate with learners and educators about requirements for progression and achievement; and how you ensure robust review of the assessment processes with the appropriate professional input.

Detailed guidance

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.

Guidance

This standard is about ensuring that learners who complete the programme have demonstrated the threshold level of knowledge, skills and understanding to practise their profession safely and effectively.

Your assessment strategy and design must make sure that learners can meet all of the standards of proficiency in a safe and effective way, before completion. Equally, you need to make sure that learners who do not meet the standards of proficiency are not allowed to complete the programme.

We do not set rules on things like pass marks, resits/retakes or the amount of compensation allowed, but your assessment strategy and design should strike a suitable balance between the need to support learners to succeed, and the need to make sure that those who complete the programme achieve the standards of proficiency.

It is not necessary that each of the standards of proficiency maps to a particular assessment; it may be that a number of assessments cumulatively ensure that learners are able to meet one or more of the standards of proficiency.

Your assessment strategy and design should include the following, where applicable:

– prerequisites and corequisites for the programme;

– compulsory and optional module assessments;

– individual module pass marks;

– the number of resits learners are allowed (and within what period of time);

– the maximum number of resits allowed in a year for specific modules;

– compensation and condonement regulations; and

– the maximum time a learner can take to complete the programme.

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.

Guidance

This standard is about how learners are able to demonstrate that they understand the expectations associated with being a regulated professional, by the time they complete the programme.

This covers assessment in both the theory and practice-based parts of the programme.

The 'expectations of professional behaviour' include the nature of professional regulation and the responsibilities involved in being a regulated professional. In particular, we expect assessment to enable learners to demonstrate how they understand and are able to meet the HCPC standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

Other sources of HCPC guidance

HCPC, Standards of conduct, performance and ethics

HCPC, Guidance on conduct and ethics for students

6.3 Assessments must provide an objective, fair and reliable measure of learners' progression and achievement.

Guidance

This standard is about ensuring that assessments are effective at determining whether a learner is fit to practise by the end of the programme.

By 'objective' we mean that assessment requirements are clear and realistic; and that they are able to deliver a valid and accurate picture of progression and achievement. The processes you have in place to moderate marks may be relevant here.

By 'fair' we mean that assessments provide all learners with an equal opportunity to demonstrate their progression and achievement; and that they take into consideration a specific learner's needs, e.g. the needs of disabled learners or those in extenuating circumstances.

By 'reliable' we mean that assessments are consistent and sufficiently rigorous to enable learners to clearly demonstrate the extent to which they have progressed during the course of the programme and achieved the learning outcomes.

You must have appropriate processes in place to gain assurance that assessments in the programme are objective, fair and reliable. This should include processes for addressing issues or implementing improvement where necessary. We do not prescribe how you must do this, but it should involve consideration of external examiners' reports, among other sources.

6.4 Assessment policies must clearly specify requirements for progression and achievement within the programme.

Guidance

This standard is about how you ensure that learners understand what is expected of them at each stage of the programme, and that educators can apply assessment criteria consistently.

In addition to what might prevent a learner from progressing, you should also be clear about the options available to a learner who is failing or at risk of not progressing or completing the programme.

You should be able to show how these policies are clearly communicated to both learners and educators.

6.5 The assessment methods used must be appropriate to and effective at measuring the learning outcomes.

Guidance

This standard is about making sure that the methods used to assess learners enable you to determine whether the learning outcomes of the programme have been met. This in turn ensures that the standards of proficiency are met.

Assessment methods may include things like coursework, exams and presentations, and may be used to assess individuals or groups. We do not

specify the methods of assessment that should be included in the programme. However you must be able to show how your chosen methods are in line with the learning outcomes of each module or part of the programme. We need to be sure that, whatever assessment methods you use, they confirm that those learners who successfully complete the programme can practise safely and effectively in their profession.

Assessments must also be appropriately placed during the course of the programme to match a learner's expected progression.

6.6 There must be an effective process in place for learners to make academic appeals.

Guidance

This standard is about ensuring that assessment processes are applied fairly.

An 'academic appeal' means a request by a learner for a review of a decision made by the education provider or another academic body about their progression, assessment or award. You must have a process in place which enables learners to make an appeal where they feel that the process which led to such a decision has been followed incorrectly or unfairly; or when information has come to light affecting the assessment outcome which was previously unknown.

By 'effective' we mean that the process must enable the education provider to deal with an appeal in a fair and timely manner, and that it must include appropriate action by the education provider where necessary.

You should ensure that learners are not disadvantaged in any way because they have made an academic appeal. In addition, your process should enable enhancement and improvement of the assessment process or other parts of the programme through consideration of the issues raised through appeals.

Learners should have clear information about the appeals process, including how to make an appeal and how and by whom it will be determined, as well as where they can go for advice.

6.7 There must be at least one external examiner for the programme who is appropriately experienced and qualified and, unless other arrangements are agreed, on the relevant part of the Register.

Guidance

This standard is about ensuring that there is relevant professional input in the external review of the assessment process.

We do not play any part in appointing or approving external examiners, but need to be sure that the policies and processes are in place to ensure that a suitable external examiner is appointed and, when necessary, replaced.

You must ensure that at least one of your external examiners has professional experience and qualification relevant to the programme.

We would also normally expect at least one external examiner to be registered with the HCPC in the relevant part of the Register. However, we recognise that in some circumstances there may be other appropriate external examiners who are not on the relevant part of the Register. If this is not the case, you need to provide information about this decision and how you ensure that external examiners from a different professional background are suitable.

We do not set detailed requirements for how you use the advice and feedback from the external examiner. However the expectation is that the external examiner contributes to processes which ensure compliance with the SETs and achievement of the standards of proficiency.

There is guidance available on the role of external examiners from other organisations in the education sector and professional bodies. Where relevant, you should take this into account when appointing and using external examiners.

Glossary

You may not be familiar with some of the terms we use throughout this document, so we have explained them below.

Aegrotat	An award to a learner who was not able to complete the qualification due to illness.
Academic appeal	A request by a learner for review of a decision of an academic body about their progression, assessment or award. An academic appeal should not be confused with a complaint.
Annual monitoring	Our yearly process to make sure approved programmes continue to meet the standards of education and training and to deliver the standards of proficiency.
Applicant	Anyone applying to a programme you provide.
Approval	The process that leads to decisions about whether a programme meets the requirements of HCPC standards of education and training. Continuing approval depends on satisfactory monitoring.
Carer	Anyone who looks after, or provides support to, a family member, partner or friend.
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.
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 education and training. The curriculum includes the syllabus, teaching guides, an

assessment guide and necessary learning resources.

Education provider

The institution (for example, a college, university, company, or private higher education provider) which maintains overall responsibility for the delivery of the programme.

Educator

Someone involved in teaching, assessing or facilitating learning on a programme. This term can include those 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.

'Enhanced' level disclosure

A type of criminal record check that is more detailed than the 'basic' or 'standard' check.

External examiner

A person you appoint to monitor the assessment process of a programme and to make sure that it meets professional and academic standards.

Fit to practise

When someone has the skills, knowledge, character and health to do their job safely and effectively.

Governance

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

Leadership

Providing a strategy, vision or direction for the programme

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.

Management

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

Practice-based learning

The clinical or practical experience that forms an integral part of an approved

	programme. It may take place in discrete period of time or throughout a programme.
Practice educator	A person who is responsible for a learner's education during their practice-based learning and has received appropriate training for this role.
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.
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 annual monitoring purposes.
Programme leader	The person who has the overall professional responsibility for a programme.
Recognition of prior learning	The process for assessing an applicant's previous learning from experience and/or formal learning. This can lead to credit transfer or other transition arrangements into a programme, where appropriate.
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 the HCPC Register.
Service user	Anyone who uses or is affected by the services of registrants or learners.
Staff	Anyone involved in the delivery of 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 those applying for registration. They set out our expectations regarding a professional's behaviour and cover their ethics, decision-making, communication and interaction with service users, carers, colleagues and others.
Standards of proficiency (SOPs)	Standards which set out the knowledge, skills and understanding necessary to practise a profession safely and effectively. Professionals must meet these standards when they complete an approved programme in order to become registered.
Suitability	Where an applicant or learner has the appropriate character, conduct and health to train to become a health and care professional and to interact safely with service users and carers.