Standards of proficiency for applied psychologists
Professional Liaison Group (PLG)
12 October 2007

Generic standards of proficiency

Executive summary and recommendations

Introduction

At the last meeting, the group discussed whether some of the existing generic standards of proficiency were not applicable to all of the applied psychology disciplines to be regulated.

This brief paper explains the background to the existing generic standards, summarises some of these concerns, and details a way forward.

Decision

This paper is to note. No decision is required.

Background information

None

Resource implications

None

Financial implications

None

Appendices

None

Date of paper

2 October 2007

Generic standards

Background
The standards of proficiency were first published in 2003 for the first 12 professions regulated by HPC. The standards were reviewed from October 2005 by a Professional Liaison Group (PLG). Following consultation, revised standards were agreed by the Council in May 2007. These standards become effective for the first 12 professions on 1 November 2007 and will apply to any new professions regulated in the future.

When the standards were reviewed by the PLG, the group were keen to ensure that the generic standards were as applicable as possible to the variety of professions regulated. A number of changes were made to the existing standards to ensure, in the view of the group at that time, that the terminology was appropriate.

Comments on the generic standards
At the last meeting, some concern was expressed about the applicability of some of the generic standards, particularly around some of the terminology used. In summary, comments made about the existing generic standards at the meeting (and emailed to me subsequently) have included:

- Comments that some applied psychologists do not work in contexts that they would easily describe as 'health and social care', as described in the descriptors for 2a and 2b.

- Comments that reference to treatments, diagnostic tools and interventions in 1b would not be appropriate to all applied psychologists, such as occupational psychologists.

- Comments that standard 2b.4 ('be able to conduct appropriate diagnostic or monitoring procedures, treatment, therapy or other actions safely and skilfully') assumes a healthcare context inappropriate for many applied psychologists.

- With reference to 2c.1 ('be able to monitor and review ongoing effectiveness of planned activity and monitor it accordingly'), a suggestion that outcome measures may not be applicable to occupational psychology.

- With reference to 3a.1, it is argued that this also assumes a healthcare context, particularly in relation to references to 'health and disease'.

A way forward
At the last meeting the group discussed ways in which the concerns about the generic standards might be accounted for. These included adding a paragraph to the introduction and use of footnotes. Some of those present also asked when the generic standards might be reviewed in future.

In December 2006 the Council agreed a workplan which established a timetable for ongoing and periodic review of the standards. The Council agreed a five year rolling programme of periodic standards review – the next periodic review of the standards of proficiency is planned to begin in the 2010/11 financial year.

In response the concerns expressed by some at the last meeting, a paper will be taken to Education and Training Committee at their meeting in December. The Committee will be asked to consider an appropriate way forward. This paper will include any subsequent comments or suggestions about the generic standards the group may wish to put forward.