



Ag Rialáil Gairmithe Sláinte
agus Cúraim Shóisialaigh

Regulating Health +
Social Care Professionals

Medical Scientists Registration Board Profession Specific Criteria for Education and Training Programmes

Bord Clárchúcháin na nEolaithe Míochaine
Medical Scientists Registration Board

Introduction

The Health and Social Care Professionals Act, 2005 (HSCP Act 2005) provides for the establishment of Registration Boards, to establish and maintain registers for a range of health and social care professions. Entry onto to the register allows a person to use the title of that profession. This system of statutory registration is fundamental to the delivery of quality and accountability in the provision of professional services. The objective of the statutory registration system is to protect, guide and inform the public by ensuring that health and social care professionals are properly regulated and qualified for the job whether they work in the public or private sectors or are self-employed.

The objective of the Registration Board is to protect the public by fostering high standards of professional conduct and professional education, training and competence among registrants of that profession (HSCP Act, 2005: Section 27(1)(as amended)). To this end the Act makes provision for:

- › The approval of education and training programmes (HSCP Act, 2005: Section 48)
- › Monitoring the continuing suitability of education and training programmes (HSCP Act, 2005: Section 49).

Regulatory approval of a programme by a Registration Board is distinct from academic accreditation. Academic accreditation is based on the suitability of a programme for the award of a qualification. Regulatory approval is a judgment as to whether a programme associated with a given qualification consistently and effectively prepares graduate for entry into register of that profession. To receive approval a programme must demonstrate that it meets the requirements of the Registration Board. There are two types of requirements:

Criteria for education and training programmes

- › there are two sets of criteria; core and profession specific
- › the criteria specify the requirements for the design, organisation and management of a programme to ensure that it can consistently and effectively produce graduates who meet the standards of proficiency

Standards of proficiency

- › there is one set of standards; profession specific
- › the standards of proficiency specify the threshold skills and abilities required for entry to the register

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Criteria for Education and Training Programmes

The criteria for education and training programmes are used to ensure that a programme has a system in place to consistently and effectively produce graduates who meet the standards of proficiency for entry to the register. There are two sets of criteria; core and profession specific. This document outlines the profession specific criteria for education and training programmes which are set out in two sections:

1. Level of qualifications for entry to the register
2. Practice placements

The profession specific criteria are complemented by the core criteria which set out the Registration Board's requirements in relation to:

1. Programme admission
2. Programme management
3. Curriculum
4. Assessment strategy

Full details of the core criteria are outlined in the document *Core Criteria for Education and Training Programmes*. CORU also provides guidelines on these criteria in the document *Core Criteria for Education and Training Programmes - Guidelines for Programme Providers*.

Together, the core and profession specific criteria form the Registration Board's requirements for the way education and training programmes are designed, organised and managed.

Standards of Proficiency

Providers must also demonstrate that those who complete the programme submitted for approval meet the standards of proficiency. The standards of proficiency are the threshold standards deemed necessary by the Registration Board for entry to the register. In the approval and monitoring of education and training, the standards of proficiency are used to ensure that graduates of an approved programme holding an approved qualification have the required skills and abilities for entry to the register.

Approval and Monitoring of Programmes

Approved programmes are those which meet all of the Registration Board's criteria and ensure that all students who successfully complete the programme meet all of the required standards of proficiency.

A programme which meets the required criteria and standards of proficiency for entry to the register is granted approval and the qualification associated with the programme is listed on the Approved Qualifications Bye-Law as one of the entry criteria to the register. Graduates possessing an approved qualification are eligible to apply for entry to the profession's register. The programme will then be subject to monitoring.

Failure to demonstrate that the programme meets the criteria for programmes and the standards of proficiency, either during approval or subsequent monitoring, will mean that the programme is not approved. Students graduating from a non-approved programme are not eligible to apply for entry to the profession's register.

Documentation Used in the Approval Process

Mapping Document and Supporting Evidence

Providers submitting programmes for approval by the Registration Board must complete a mapping document explaining how the programme meets the criteria for education and training programmes and produces graduates who meet the standards of proficiency for the profession. The mapping document must be accompanied by supporting evidence. Supporting evidence is likely to consist of existing documentation already produced for the programme e.g. handbooks. It may also be necessary to prepare supporting evidence specifically for the approval process if this information is not already produced.

Against each criterion in the mapping document providers are required to include:

1. A narrative which explains how the programme addresses all aspects of the criterion as set out
2. A page number or reference to the location(s) in the supporting evidence which supports the narrative

This documentation and an approval visit to meet with students, staff and other stakeholder will be used to determine whether the programme meets the Registration Board's requirements for approval.

Supporting CORU documentation

This document should be considered in conjunction with the following documentation:

- > *Core Criteria for Education and Training Programmes*
- > *Core Criteria for Education and Training Programmes - Guidelines for Programme Providers*
- > *Standards of Proficiency for your profession*
- > *Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for your profession*
- > *Approval and Monitoring Guide*
- > *Programme Information Guidelines for Education/Training Providers*

Profession Specific Criteria for Education and Training Programmes

PROFESSION SPECIFIC CRITERION 1.

Level of qualifications for entry to the register

- PC1.1** The minimum level of qualification for entry to the register is Level 8 on the Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NQF) and Level 6 on the European Qualifications Framework (NFQ).

PROFESSION SPECIFIC CRITERION 2.

Practice placements

- PC2.1** Practice placements must be integral to the programme.
- PC2.2** The programme must ensure that each student completes 1000 hours of placement
- PC2.3** The number, duration and range of practice placements, and their position within the programme must reflect current practice and demands of the profession. They must be appropriate to facilitate translation of theory into practice and the achievement of the standards of proficiency.
- PC2.4** The education provider will have a set of requirements for the selection of practice placements to ensure quality learning experiences for students that reflect the normal context and environment of practice. The education provider will work in partnership with the practice placement provider and have written agreements in place that clearly set out the responsibilities of all parties in ensuring that the placement supports the achievement of the standards of proficiency.
- PC2.5** The education provider must maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring the quality of all practice placements. Students, the practice education team, placement providers and all relevant stakeholders – including service users where appropriate - must have a role in this review process including mechanisms for obtaining regular feedback.
- PC2.6** Clear communication and governance structures should be in place to facilitate ongoing communication between the placement and education providers.
- PC2.7** Student allocation to practice placements is based on the need to integrate theory and practice and to facilitate the student's progressive development of the standards of proficiency.
- PC2.8** Practice placement attendance requirements are explicit and detailed mechanisms and processes are in place to manage absence/non-attendance.
- PC2.9** Pre-placement requirements – including academic, legal, occupational health and other requirements, and procedures for non-compliance with these requirements, are clear.
- PC2.10** While on placement, appropriate support, guidance and supervision is maintained with the student by the practice education team.
- PC2.11** There must be a clear and explicit process in place for students to raise concerns in relation to their practice education and access appropriate supports.
- PC2.12** The student code of conduct - and processes for dealing with breaches of that code whilst on placement - is in place.
- PC2.13** The profile and roles of the practice education team must be described. Practice educators must also be registered with the appropriate registration board.
- PC2.14** Students, practice placement providers and practice education teams will be fully prepared and informed of the expectations of the practice placement, including the education/training provider's student fitness-to-practise requirements.
- PC2.15** Supervision policies include guidelines on how students progressively achieve independence in practice.

- PC2.16** Guidelines/procedures and supports are available for practice educators in managing students, including students who are in difficulty, throughout the placement.
- PC2.17** The education provider will make regular support and training available to the practice education team to develop their practice education skills.
- PC2.18** All stakeholders must be informed about practice education assessments, their link to the standards of proficiency and the marking criteria used. The practice education team must have access to assessment tools and be trained in completing these assessments and providing feedback during the placement.
- PC2.19** Mechanisms for the return of placement assessments to the education provider must be in place.

Glossary

Act	The Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 (as amended).
Approval process	The process that leads to a decision as to whether a programme meets the criteria set for approval of education and training programmes and produces graduates who meet the standards of proficiency.
Approved programme	A specific and coherent set of educational activities designed to achieve learning objectives over a sustained period which meets the criteria for education and training programmes and standards of proficiency set by a Registration Board and has been granted approval by the Registration Board.
Approved qualification	A document that attests to a person having achieved the standard of proficiency required for registration in a designated profession, that has been approved by bye-law of the Registration Board of the profession concerned and that relates to a qualification awarded in the State.
Approved qualifications bye-law	The Approved Qualifications Bye- Law lists the qualifications approved by the Registration Board as attesting to the standards of proficiency required for registration under Section 38 of the Health and Social Care Professionals Act, 2005 (as amended).
Core programme team	Members of the programme team who also have responsibility for aspects of the programme design and management such as curriculum, assessment and admissions. This may be the course committee or any other group who manage these elements of the programme.
Code of professional conduct and ethics	The standards of conduct, performance and ethics to which a member of that profession must adhere throughout the course of their work
Criterion/criteria	The requirements for the design, organisation and management of an education and training programme to ensure that it can consistently and effectively produce graduates who meet the standards of proficiency.
Education provider/provider	The institution that offers an education and training programme and which control key aspects of the programme including admissions, curriculum delivery, quality management, placement management and assessment.
External contributor	A person who contributes to the curriculum of a programme but who is not employed by the education provider.

Mapping document	Template document to be completed by the education provider explaining how the programme meets the criteria and standards of proficiency.
Monitoring process	The process which determines the continuing suitability of an approved programme.
Practice placement	A period of clinical or practical experience that forms part of a programme.
Practice education team	Persons who are responsible for a student's education during the period of clinical or practical placement. This includes the practice educator on site in the placement providers.
Programme director	The named person with direct responsibility for the design and integration of the profession-specific components of the programme.
Programme team	The individuals responsible for the delivery and assessment of the curriculum.
Register	A register established and maintained under Section 36 of the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 (as amended).
Registration Board	A board established under Section 26 of the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 (as amended).
Review team	A group of persons who carry out the review of programmes and prepare a report to assist a Registration Board in making decisions in relation to approval and monitoring.
Service user	Service user is the term used to describe a person who uses, requests or is affected by the services of registrants
Standards of proficiency	The threshold skills and abilities required for entry to the register

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