Optical Registration Board

Standards of Proficiency
for Optometrists

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 graduates 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

Standards of Proficiency

The standards of proficiency detail the skills and abilities that individuals must possess in order to enter the register. They are the threshold standards deemed necessary by the registration board at the level of entry to practice. They are not standards for practice after entry to the register. Rather they offer a snapshot of the standards at entry to the register.

This document sets out the standards of proficiency for Optometrists under five domains:

1. Professional Autonomy and Accountability
2. Communication, Collaborative Practice and Teamworking
3. Safety and Quality
4. Professional Development
5. Professional Knowledge and Skills

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. 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.

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.

Supporting CORU documentation

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

> Profession Specific Criteria for Education and Training Programmes

> Profession Specific Criteria for Education and Training Programmes for your profession - 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

1. Professional Autonomy and Accountability

Graduates will:

1. Be able to practise safely and effectively within the legal, ethical and practice boundaries of the profession.

2. Be able to identify the limits of their practice and know when to seek advice and additional expertise or refer to another professional.

3. Be able to act in the best interest of service users at all times with due regard to their will and preference.

4. Be aware of current guidelines and legislation relating to candour and disclosure.

5. Respect and uphold the rights, dignity and autonomy of every service user including their role in the diagnostic, therapeutic and social care process.

6. Be able to exercise a professional duty of care.

7. Understand what is required of them by the Registration Board and be familiar with the provisions of the current Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for the profession issued by the Registration Board.

8. Recognise the importance of practising in a non-discriminatory, culturally sensitive way and acknowledge and respect the differences in beliefs and cultural practices of individuals or groups.

9. Understand the role of policies and systems to protect the health, safety, welfare, equality and dignity of service users, staff and volunteers .

10. Understand and respect the confidentiality of service users and use information only for the purpose for which it was given.

11. Understand confidentiality in the context of the team setting.

12. Understand and be able to apply the limits of the concept of confidentiality particularly in relation to child protection, vulnerable adults and elder abuse.

13. Be aware of current data protection, freedom of information and other legislation relevant to the profession and be able to access new and emerging legislation

14. Be able to recognise and manage the potential conflict that can arise between confidentiality and whistle-blowing.

15. Be able to gain informed consent to carry out assessments or provide treatment/interventions and document evidence that consent has been obtained.

16. Be aware of current legislation and guidelines related to informed consent for individuals with lack of capacity.

17. Recognise personal responsibility and professional accountability for one's actions and be able to justify professional decisions made.

18. Be able to take responsibility for managing one's own workload as appropriate.

19. Understand the principles of professional decision-making and be able to make informed decisions within the context of competing demands including those relating to ethical conflicts and available resources.

20. Be aware of and be able to take responsibility for managing one's own health and wellbeing .

2. Communication, Collaborative Practice and Teamworking

Graduates will:

1. Be able to communicate diagnosis/assessment and/or treatment/management options in a way that can be understood by the service user

2. Be able to modify and adapt communication methods and styles, including verbal and non-verbal methods to suit the individual service users considering issues of language, culture, beliefs and health and/or social care needs

3. Recognise service users as active participants in their health and social care and be able to support service users in communicating their health and/or social care needs, choices and concerns

4. Understand the need to empower service users to manage their well-being where possible and recognise the need to provide advice to the service user on self-treatment, where appropriate

5. Be able to recognise when the services of a professional translator are required

6. Be able to produce clear, concise, accurate and objective documentation

7. Be able to apply digital literacy skills and communication technologies appropriate to the profession

8. Be aware of and comply with local/national documentation standards including, for example, terminology, signature requirements

9. Be able to express professional, informed and considered opinions to service users, health professionals and others e.g. carers, relatives in varied practice settings and contexts and within the boundaries of confidentiality

10. Understand and be able to recognise the impact of effective leadership and management on practice

11. Understand and be able to discuss the principles of effective conflict management

12. Understand the need to work in partnership with service users, their relatives/carers and other professionals in planning and evaluating goals, treatments and interventions and be aware of the concepts of power and authority in relationships with service users

13. Understand the need to build and sustain professional relationships as both an independent practitioner and collaboratively as a member of a team

14. Understand the role and impact of effective interdisciplinary team working in meeting service user needs and be able to effectively contribute to decision-making within a team setting

15. Understand the role of relationships with professional colleagues and other workers in service delivery and the need to create professional relationships based on mutual respect and trust

3. Safety and Quality

Graduates will:

1. Be able to gather all appropriate background information relevant to the service user's health and social care needs

2. Be able to justify the selection of and implement appropriate assessment techniques and be able to undertake and record a thorough, sensitive and detailed assessment

3. Be able to determine the appropriate tests/assessments required and undertake/arrange these tests

4. Be able to analyse and critically evaluate the information collected in the assessment process

5. Be able to demonstrate sound logical reasoning and problem solving skills to determine appropriate problem lists, action plans and goals

6. Be able to demonstrate an evidence-informed approach to professional decision-making, adapting practice to the needs of the service user and draw on appropriate knowledge and skills in order to make professional judgments

7. Be able to prioritise and maintain the safety of both service users and those involved in their care

8. Be able to evaluate intervention plans using appropriate tools and recognised performance/outcome measures along with service user responses to the interventions. Revise the plans as necessary and where appropriate, in conjunction with the service user

9. Understand the need to monitor, evaluate and/or audit the quality of practice and be able to critically evaluate one's own practice against evidence-based standards and implement improvements based on the findings of these audits and reviews

10. Be able to recognise important risk factors and implement risk management strategies; be able to make reasoned decisions and/or provide guidance to others to initiate, continue, modify or cease interventions, techniques or courses of action and record decisions and concerns

11. Understand the principles of quality assurance and quality improvement

12. Be able to carry out and document a risk analysis and implement effective risk management controls and strategies; be able to clearly communicate any identified risk, adverse events or near misses in line with current legislation/guidelines

13. Be able to comply with relevant and current health and safety legislation and guidelines

14. Be able to establish safe environments for practice which minimises risks to service users, those treating them and others, including the use of infection prevention and control strategies

4. Professional Development

Graduates will:

1. Be able to engage in and take responsibility for professional development

2. Understand the need to demonstrate evidence of ongoing continuing professional development and education, be aware of professional regulation requirements and understand the benefits of continuing professional development to professional practice

3. Be able to evaluate and reflect critically on own professional practice to identify learning and development needs; be able to select appropriate learning activities to achieve professional development goals and be able to integrate new knowledge and skills into professional practice

4. Understand and recognise the impact of personal values and life experience on professional practice and be able to manage this impact appropriately

5. Understand the importance of and be able to seek professional development, supervision, feedback and peer review opportunities in order to continuously improve practice

6. Understand the importance of participation in performance management activities for effective service delivery

5. Professional Knowledge and Skills

Graduates will:

1. Know, understand and apply the key concepts of the domains of knowledge which are relevant to the profession

2. Demonstrate a critical understanding of relevant physical and biological sciences, human development, social and behavioural sciences and other related sciences, together with a knowledge of health and wellbeing, disease, disorder and dysfunction relevant to the profession of optometry

3. Know and understand the theoretical and applied principles of the anatomical, physiological and perceptual aspects of the visual system

4. Know and understand the structural and functional anomalies of the visual system, understand their investigation and of their correction and/or management; be able to recognise the need for investigations and be able to appropriately refer for these

5. Demonstrate an understanding of the normal development of the human visual system

6. Demonstrate an understanding of the disruptive effects of congenital and infantile abnormalities on normal development of the visual system

7. Be able to diagnose and manage visual conditions such as ametropia, heterophoria, heteroptropia and other anomalies of binocular vision

8. Understand ocular and systemic disease

9. Be able to distinguish morbid ocular and visual conditions from normal variations and be able to manage this clinical distinction appropriately

10. Understand common systemic diseases which may have ocular manifestations; be familiar with common systemic medications; and be able to recognise and report ocular adverse reactions that may be caused by medical management

11. Understand the principles of optical appliances and of widely used ophthalmic instruments and be able to use these appropriately in practice

12. Understand the safe and appropriate use of a wide range of optical appliances and be able to safely and appropriately dispense these to service users

13. Understand the pharmacological principles underlying the use of drugs that facilitate ocular examination and the diagnosis and treatment of ocular disease; be able to recommend suitable over the counter drug products and be able to administer relevant drug products when indicated

14. Understand anterior segment physiology and pathology and be able to recognise and manage changes associated with contact lens wear

15. Know and understand occupational visual standards and be able to provide appropriate advise to service users

16. Be able to provide appropriate advice to service users on occupational, sporting and protective ophthalmic applicants and be able to dispense the appropriate appliance to the required standards

17. Understand surgical and other methods for the correction of refractive error which involved altering the dimensions of the eye

18. Know and understand the principles and applications of scientific enquiry, including the evaluation of treatment/intervention efficacy, the research process and evidence-informed practice

19. Demonstrate skills in evidence-informed practice, including translation of theory, concepts and methods to clinical/professional practice

20. Be able to identify and understand the impact of organisational, community and societal structures, systems and culture on health and social care provision

21. Demonstrate safe and effective implementation of practical, technical and clinical skills

22. Demonstrate ability to participate in or lead clinical, academic or practice-based research

23. Know the basic principles of effective teaching and learning, mentoring and supervision

24. Recognise the role of advocacy in promoting the needs and interests of service users

25. Understand the role of professional indemnity insurance in the practice of optometry

26. Understand public health issues and understand the role of the optometrist in safeguarding public health.