

Health Professions Council – 11 September 2008

Modernising Scientific Careers – HPC Position Paper

Executive summary and recommendations

Introduction

A presentation was made to the HPC's Education and Training Committee on 26 March 2008 by Professor Sue Hill, who is the Department of Health (DH) Chief Scientific Officer.

The presentation outlined the DH Modernising Scientific Careers project. The project's Oversight Board has now met for the first time. The terms of reference of the Board are attached for reference.

Since then a number of organisations have contacted the HPC seeking to ascertain our position on a range of issues connected to the project.

A draft Position Paper has been prepared. The Council is requested to approve the Position Paper.

Decision

The Council is asked to approve the Position Paper.

Background information

Oversight Board Terms of Reference

Resource implications

None

Financial implications

None

Appendices

Draft Position Paper

Date of paper

29 August 2008

Date	Ver.	Dept/Cmte	Doc Type	Title	Status	Int. Aud.
2008-07-23	b	CER	PPR	Modernising Scientific Careers	Final	Public
					DD: None	RD: None

Modernising Scientific Careers - Oversight Board

Terms of Reference

1. To oversee and provide the governance of the development of UK strategy for modernising scientific careers in health.
2. To ensure that the Modernising Scientific Careers (MSC) programme is developed within the overall UK health departments and policy framework for modernising the healthcare workforce.
3. To have oversight of the development and roll-out of the programme, including the establishment of short-lived working groups.
4. To ensure that the products from the programme meet the requirements of patients, the service and the profession.
5. To ensure that risks in introducing the programme are identified proactively and managed before further escalation is required.
6. To ensure that there is active engagement of all stakeholders across the four countries in the development and implementation of the programme.
7. To ensure that funding and workforce planning arrangements yield value for money whilst ensuring high quality scientific services for health.
8. To ensure that partner organisations responsible for the delivery of key elements of the programme are fully engaged with the MSC programme.
9. To ensure that there is a timely and robust communications strategy that is far reaching and comprehensive.

Modernising Scientific Careers

Draft Position Paper

September 2008

Introduction

The following Position Paper aims to set out from the perspective of the Health Professions Council (HPC) the key issues that need to be taken into consideration so that recommendations that will arise in due course from the Department of Health's Modernising Scientific Careers can be implemented in a timely and economic fashion.

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Devolution

- The statutory regulation of a new profession such as Health Care Scientists by the Health Professions Council (HPC) must be approved by the Westminster Parliament, the Scottish Parliament and the Northern Ireland Assembly.
- Any recommendations must not hinder the development of any existing or future alternative models of health care delivery system in the four home countries.
- An early indication of their public support will be vital to the success of the project.
- This support should preferably be in writing.

Education Providers

- The overt public support from existing and future providers of Education and Training programmes throughout the four home countries should be sought.
- A clear practical timetable for the commencement of new programmes, including details of number of prospective registrants and year of graduation should be made available.
- Migration from the existing to new programmes should not disadvantage current student progress.
- The funding intentions of existing and future commissioner of Education and Training programmes should be sought and made available.
- The HPC should not inhibit flexible education routes on to the register.

Health Care Scientists

- The initial briefing by the UK Department of Health strongly indicates that Health Care Scientists are not covered by an existing Standard of Proficiency or Standard of Education.
- Health Care Scientists will be considered to be a new profession or “aspirant group” by the HPC.

MSC and Aspirant Groups

- The HPC has made a number of recommendations to the Secretary of State for Health that various healthcare professionals should be regulated.

They include:

- i Clinical Perfusion Scientists
- ii Clinical Physiologists
- iii Clinical Technologists
- iv Medical Illustrators
- v Maxillofacial Prosthetists and Technologists

- The HPC as a regulator whose main objective is to protect the public, wishes to ensure that there is no further unreasonable delay in regulating these five groups.
- An untoward incident relating to the five aspirant groups would generate adverse publicity.
- There are no reasons why the statutory regulation of the five aspirant groups cannot proceed in parallel with the MSC project given the flexibility of the structure of the HPC register.

Post Registration Qualifications

- Article 19(6) of the Health Professions Order 2001 allows the HPC to establish Standards of Education and Training.

Professional Bodies

- An early indication of the public support of all relevant professional bodies affected by the MSC project will be vital to the success of the project.
- This support should preferably be in writing.

Protected Titles

- Public protection will be enhanced if as few as possible protected titles are created or retained.

Register (HPC)

- Article 6(3)(d), (e) and (f) of the Health Professions Order 2001 allows for great flexibility to the structure of the register.

Role of the HPC

- The role of the HPC in relation to the Modernising Scientific Careers Project is set out in Article 3 (5) (b) (i) – (v) and Article 3 (17).
- It is not the role of a statutory regulator of healthcare professionals such as the HPC to either support or inhibit the establishment of a new profession.
- The role of the HPC is to act as a facilitator/catalyst and we will therefore give the project any assistance that is required and we can provide under our legislation, the Health Professions Order 2001.
- The HPC will seek to ensure that any issues connected to professional statutory regulation will be brought to the attention of the MSC Project team.
- Article 3(5) of the Health Professions Order 2001 places clear responsibilities on the HPC to take account of key stakeholder interests and to cooperate with them wherever reasonably practicable.

Standards

- The HPC sets the Standards of Education and Training and the Standards of Proficiency for a new profession.
- Article 3(14) of the Health Professions Order 2001 requires the HPC to consult before establishing any standards.

Timetable

- A realistic project timetable should be made available by the MSC Project Team.
- The timetable should include details of the legislative timetable.