

Education and Training Committee, 11 June 2009

Guidance on conduct and ethics for students – key decisions

Executive summary and recommendations

Introduction

We consulted for three months between 30 January 2009 and 30 April 2009 on draft guidance on conduct and ethics for students.

We sent a copy of the consultation document to key stakeholders including professional bodies, all education providers and also to the student unions attached to each education programme.

We also consulted on guidance on our health and character process. We will be revising the health and character guidance following the comments we received and bringing the revised guidance to ETC in September.

Decision

The Committee is invited to:

- discuss the consultation responses document and recommend its publication on the website;
- discuss the revised guidance on conduct and ethics; and
- recommend the text of the consultation responses document and guidance to Council (subject to minor editing changes and legal scrutiny).

Background information

The Committee has considered a number of papers on student fitness to practise. The most recent of these papers was that considered by the Committee on 2 December 2008:

http://www.hpc-uk.org/assets/documents/1000258Aeducation_and_training_committee_20081202_enclosure08.pdf

The proposed timetable for publication is below.

Revised guidance to Council	6 July 2009
Publication process	August – October 2009
Launch of revised guidance	1 November 2009

Resource implications

The resource implications are incorporated within the Policy and Standards workplan for 2009-10.

Financial implications

The financial implications are those for the public consultation on the guidance and its publication. The Policy and Standards budget incorporates the financial implications of the consultation and publication.

Appendices

- Key decisions document
- Guidance on conduct and ethics for students.

Date of paper

1 June 2009

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Introduction

We consulted for three months between 30 January 2009 and 30 April 2009 on draft guidance on conduct and ethics for students.

We sent a copy of the consultation document to key stakeholders including professional bodies. We sent the document to all education providers and also to the student unions attached to each education and training programme. The consultation document was also available to download from our website and we sent out copies of the document on request.

In this document, we first consider comments made about the guidance as a whole, including comments on the introduction, language and function of the guidance. We then consider comments made about each individual chapter in the guidance document. After each section, we then outline the decisions that we have taken following your comments.

We would like to thank all those who took the time to respond to the consultation.

You can download a copy of the consultation document from our website:
www.hpc-uk.org/aboutus/consultation

Analysing your responses

Now that the consultation has ended, we have analysed all the responses we received.

We considered carefully each suggestion we received, taking account whether similar comments were made by other respondents.

General comments about the guidance

Many respondents, including students and lecturers, welcomed the publication of the guidance and commented that they believed it would be useful to students. The British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) commented that they ‘...strongly support the engagement with students as a way to encourage professional responsibility at an early stage’. The British Psychological Society (BPS) commented that the guidance addresses ‘...in a balanced and appropriate way some of the often contentious issues, such as courtesy and appearance’.

Several respondents, including Play Therapy UK (PTUK), the University of Bradford and the College of Occupational Therapy (COT) commented that the guidance would help to support education providers in teaching students about conduct and ethics. The Association for Clinical Biochemistry (ACB) said that at present some of the teaching in this area can be informal so the guidance helped to support a more formal approach. Other respondents commented that the guidance would help to support education providers when making decisions about student misconduct during the programme. The Association of Independent Hearing Healthcare Professionals commented that the document would also be useful to placement providers because it contained guidance on how to behave whilst on placement, which they welcomed.

However, the School of Health and Social Care Oxford Brookes University commented that the function of this document was ‘...not entirely clear as there were already Standards of conduct, performance and ethics for registrants’. They suggested that it might be more useful for students to be reminded of the existing standards with the guidance providing further information as necessary. Oxford Brookes also commented that there was overlap between ‘conduct and ethics’ and ‘character’ and suggested that the terminology should be reviewed.

A small number of respondents commented on how the guidance would be used by education providers. North Wales NHS Trust asked whether the guidance would be embedded in undergraduate and postgraduate training. One respondent commented that the guidance did not include information on how education providers will incorporate the guidance, including offering advice on sanctions that could be used when handling misconduct. Fife NHS Board asked whether the guidance also applied to students who train overseas but come to the UK for practice placements.

The United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP) asked that the guidance within the document should be linked to ‘...on-going analysis of data and information that shows their impact on complaints’. They suggested that where the guidance does not have a significant impact the requirements should be changed or dropped.

Our comments

We are pleased that many respondents welcomed the guidance and found it useful. We produced the guidance following a recommendation in the recent White Paper 'Trust, Assurance and Safety – the regulation of health professionals in the 21st Century' that regulators should engage more with students and trainees before they apply to join the Register.¹

The guidance on conduct and ethics for students is based upon the Standards of conduct, performance and ethics (SCPE). The SCPE applies to both registrants and prospective registrants. Prospective registrants includes applicants and students. Although we do not regulate students, we believe that it is important to engage with students whilst they are completing their education and training programme.

As the SCPE applies to prospective registrants, we wanted to encourage education providers to teach students about these standards. We set standards of education and training (SETs) which we use to make decisions about whether to approve a programme or not. We have recently agreed amendments to the SETs following public consultation. One of the amendments is a new SET which says: 'The curriculum must make sure that students understand the implications of the HPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics'. The revised SETs will come into force on 1 September 2009.

We publish guidance on the SETs alongside the SETs themselves, which provides examples of how education providers can meet the SETs. The guidance on this SET suggests that education providers may want to use the guidance for students on conduct and ethics to help students to understand the implications of the SCPE. We believe that this will help to support education providers in teaching students about the SCPE.

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http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_065946

Language

A number of respondents raised comments about the language used in the guidance.

Several respondents, including Anglia Ruskin University, commented that the statements in the guidance should say 'must' rather than 'should'. The College of Operating Department Practice (CODP) commented that the guidance should be '...a standard rather than a guidance document. This would then allow some of the wording to be more assertive.' One individual suggested that where there was '...a principle of duty to be adhered to' the statements should be 'must'.

Two respondents commented on the use of 'service user' within the document. NHS Lanarkshire asked whether practice educators and staff members should be included within the definition of service user as they are also members of the public. The Society and College of Radiographers commented that 'service users' featured within the definition of service users and suggested that the term should be redefined for clarity.

Two respondents commented on the use of 'treatment' within the document. The UKCP commented that 'treatment' would exclude many forms of psychotherapy and suggested that its meaning needed to be widened to include notions or '...intervention, facilitation, approach, dialogue, co-creation etc'. The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP) commented that 'treatment' was not applicable to all health professionals. They also suggested that focusing on behaviour whilst providing treatment might also mislead students of the importance on considering their conduct '...in all aspects of their activity'.

Two respondents commented on the use of 'health' within the document. The British Association of Dramatherapists (BADth) commented that references to health should '...specify physical, mental and psychological health'. NHS Lanarkshire commented that a definition of health would be useful as it can also include the consequences of social issues, for example bereavement.

UKCP commented that the phrase 'health professional' within the document excluded psychotherapists who did not consider themselves to be health professionals. They suggested that 'Allied Health Professional' might be a more acceptable term.

One respondent commented on the word 'character', suggesting that it had a '...slightly patronising and old-fashioned quality' and suggested we consider whether there might be an alternative. UKCP said that the guidance should refer consistently to '...high standards of professional conduct and ethics' rather than to 'character' or 'conduct and ethics'. This was important because they felt a crucial aspect of training was learning to distinguish between personal and professional activities.

Our comments

When we write our standards, we use the word 'must' because registrants must comply with the standards in order to join the Register or remain on the Register.

However, we do not set standards for students as they are not registered with us and therefore can not use the word 'must'. We use 'should' within the guidance as we can not make students comply with the guidance but we believe that it establishes useful principles that they may want to follow.

We have reviewed the comments we received about the use of 'treatment' within the document. We recognise that this is not terminology that might be used by all the professions that we regulate currently or may regulate in the future. After careful consideration, we will replace references to 'treatment' with 'intervention'. We will also explain that by 'intervention' we mean actions undertaken for, to, on or with the service user.

We have considered the comments we received about the definition of 'service users'. We will remove the reference to 'service users' within the definition and include a reference to colleagues.

We will remove all references to 'health professional' within the document and replace them with 'professional' or 'registrant' as appropriate.

We have looked at the comments we received about our use of the word character. 'Character' and 'conduct and ethics' are phrases taken from the Health Professions Order and are used in other documents produced by us.

Alongside the guidance on conduct and ethics for students we also consulted on guidance on the health and character process. The health and character process is used to make decisions about information that applicants and registrants provide about their health and character. We will look at these comments alongside those we received about the guidance on health and character. We will ensure that for consistency, any changes that we make to the guidance on health and character will also be made to this document as well.

We understand the comments we received about the importance of professional conduct, which we support. However, it is important to recognise that sometimes behaviour in a registrant's personal life can have an impact upon their registration. This can include serious convictions for actions which took place outside the registrant's professional life but which raise concerns about public protection.

Specific comments

In this part of the key decisions document we consider comments relating to each specific section within the guidance document.

Section one: Introduction

We received a small number of comments about the introduction to the guidance. The introduction provides information about us, our role in approving education and training programmes and the process for applying for registration.

Two respondents suggested additional statements within this section. Keele University suggested that it would be helpful to have a statement within this section on the importance of conduct and ethics for any healthcare professional. This statement would emphasise the importance of the document and also support teaching provided by education providers. Unison Health Care suggested that there should be a sentence on the less punitive role of HPC in overseeing Continuing Professional Development which would raise awareness of HPC's wider role.

Three respondents commented on the section about applying for registration, which explained the types of information that applicants had to submit to HPC. One individual respondent commented that we should say that students also have to tell us about 'cautions, fixed penalties, ASBOs or any occasions when they were investigated for an offence'. Both the CODP and Keele University asked whether students had to declare disciplinary action taken by an education provider as well as disciplinary action taken by another regulator.

Our comments

We have looked at the proposed suggestions to this section. We believe that the importance of conduct and ethics is already stressed within the subsection 'Conduct outside your programme' in section 2 of the guidance document and will not add additional information to this introduction. We will however, add a reference to continuing professional development (CPD) to the introduction as students will have to undertake CPD once they are registered with us.

The professions we regulate are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, which means that applicants have to declare convictions, even if they are considered 'spent'. This does not extend however, to ASBOs or fixed penalties.

We have considered carefully the suggestion that students should also have to declare any disciplinary action taken by an education provider. We also received these comments in response to another document we have produced on the process we use to look at information about an applicant's character. As part of our review of the SETs, we have added a new SET saying that education providers must have a process in place throughout the programme for dealing with concerns about students' profession-related conduct.

The requirements that we make must be proportionate and appropriate to the situation. We believe that the new SET will support education providers and

ensure that concerns about profession-related conduct will be addressed during the programme. Where education providers have serious concerns about student misconduct and remove a student, they can tell us so that the information can be considered if the student ever made an application for registration. Alternatively, an education provider could award a student with a qualification which does not lead to eligibility for registration.

As such, we will not make the requirement that students should declare disciplinary action undertaken by an education provider. However, we will keep this decision under review.

Section two: About this guidance

This section of the guidance is made up of three subsections. The first explains the role of the guidance, the second part explains the language used in the guidance and the third part explains the potential impact of misconduct outside a programme on registration.

About the guidance

Comments about the role of the guidance are included within the 'General comments' section above.

We received one comment about the first part of this section. The BACP suggested that it should be made clearer that the responsibility for ensuring students' fitness to practice '...rests with the HEI or training organisation and not with the HPC'. They suggested that the following should be added to the guidance: 'You should ensure that you follow the relevant advice, guidance, policies or procedures regarding conduct and ethics of your HEI or training organisation since the HPC is not responsible for ensuring students' fitness to practise.'

Conduct outside your programme

A significant number of respondents commented on the part of this section about a student's conduct outside their programme.

Both the CSP and one individual commented that the impact of behaviour or conduct was not sufficiently emphasised within the document. The individual respondent commented that the majority of students would not be aware of the importance of all personal conduct because they would not be familiar with the requirements of professional registration.

Heart of England Foundation Trust and NHS Birmingham East and North, both suggested that the guidance should remind students that CRB checks are required for entry to undergraduate courses and that students should tell their education providers about any changes.

The BPS suggested that the guidance could be enhanced by including the statement in the guidance on health and character that details of concerns can be kept on file against any subsequent attempt for registration.

One individual commented that the statement that very few convictions affected an application for registration was very helpful '...as many students fear being rejected for minor or juvenile misdemeanours'.

The CSP suggested that it was important to highlight '...issues relating to character that are additional to convictions, conditional discharges and cautions' and suggested that we should include a reference to the Independent Safeguarding Authority. Keele University agreed and suggested that the guidance could include types of behaviour which might also be considered inappropriate. NHS Lanarkshire asked whether HPC were interested only in

convictions and cautions when looking at character or whether there should be reference to broader attitudes and behaviours.

The CSP said that instead of making reference to 'spent convictions' the guidance should make it clear that when working with children and vulnerable adults, no conviction or caution is ever thought to be 'spent'. They also stressed that the guidance should stress the importance of disclosing information about convictions or cautions to HPC and that the failure to disclose is a criminal offense.

UKCP raised concerns that the HPC's emphasis on convictions and cautions could exclude individuals, particularly individuals from minority communities and less affluent communities as those individuals are more likely to have accepted cautions or received convictions. UKCP said that HPC '...overly relies on convictions and cautions to evaluate potential risks an individual may pose as a practitioner to clients / patients or to public confidence in the register'. UKCP added that HPC should inform students that accepting a caution could put their future registration at risk.

A number of respondents commented that the guidance needed additional information on the types of character information that should be declared. The Association for Perioperative Practice suggested that this section needed clarity on the convictions or cautions that should be declared as other documents stated that parking fines and fixed penalty notices did not need to be declared. The Council of Deans of Health asked whether the reference to convictions and cautions also included reprimands or final warnings. ACB suggested that the guidance should include some examples of types of offences that would probably lead to a failure to register, taken from the guidance on health and character.

Our comments

We have looked at the suggestions we received about this section. When we drafted this section, we felt that it was important to balance the need to keep high standards of professional conduct with the recognition that this document was for students who are learning and developing. Part of the process of learning includes developing an understanding of the importance of professional conduct.

We will revise the section to expand on other types of character information which might affect registration so that the guidance is not limited to convictions and cautions.

We understand the concerns expressed by respondents about the declaration of all convictions and cautions and the impact that this may have on registration. It is important to emphasise that, although applicants do have to declare this information, it is very rare that this affects an application for registration. We will revise the guidance to take account of this.

Section three: Guidance on conduct and ethics

This section covers the comments we received in response to the guidance itself. The headings of each section are listed below alongside any comments we received.

1. You should always act in the best interests of service users.

- You should always respect your service user's right to be treated by a health professional and not a student if they want.
- You should not exploit or abuse the relationship between yourself and your service user.
- You should not discriminate against a service user on the basis of their age, gender, sexual orientation, religion or beliefs, race, ethnic background, lifestyle or social or economic status.
- You should not do anything that you believe will endanger the service user.
- If you have concerns about any situation which might put a service user at risk, you should share these concerns with a member of the placement team or your education provider

A number of respondents commented on this section of the guidance.

The British Academy of Western Medical Acupuncture (BAWMA) proposed that in the first bullet point 'wish' should replace 'want'. The British and Irish Orthoptic Society (BIOS) suggested that the first bullet point should have the words 'registered or qualified' added before 'health professional'.

Anglia Ruskin University commented that the third bullet point on discrimination needed clarification as discrimination could be seen in a negative sense or '...in the sense of judgment of the potential value of interventions'. Anglia Ruskin used the example of smokers not being accepted for cardiac surgery in order to maximise the health gains for the population.

The BACP suggested that the bullet point 'you should not do anything that you believe will endanger the service user' should be amended to say 'you should not do anything that you believe will harm the service user – either physically or psychologically'. Another respondent commented that 'endanger the service user' does not consider the potential that an action '...performed for the good of the person also carries a risk of harm'.

Several respondents commented on the last bullet point within the section. One individual suggested that students 'must' rather than 'should' share concerns. The CODP suggested that the guidance should say that students should share concerns with a 'senior' member of the placement team, whilst BADth suggested that the concerns should also be shared with the student's education provider. The Association of Child Psychotherapists (ACP) commented that there should be more specific guidance on '...safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, especially on the statutory duty in cases of child protection and the limits to confidentiality in such cases'.

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman suggested that the guidance should incorporate ‘...some reference to the importance of dealing with complaints properly and of knowing what to do if any complaint is received or implied, including a requirement that the complaint is brought to the attention of the education provider’.

UKCP commented that the guidance in this section should acknowledge the possibility for conflicts of interest arising between the service users in the students care and the education provider or placement provider.

One individual respondent suggested that the guidance should make reference to personal relationships with service users, academic staff or practice placement educators or supervisors. They added that whilst the relationship might not necessarily be problematic, it may have an impact on responsibility for the student within the placement or education provider.

The University of Bradford commented that some students felt the guidance should include some information on what students could do if they felt they were being discriminated against.

Our comments

We have looked carefully at the suggestions we received proposing amendments to this section.

We use ‘discriminate’ to cover treating service users differently because of their religion, or ethnicity etc. It is not intended to cover decisions made within the healthcare settings about whether or not it is appropriate to carry out a particular intervention with an individual, based upon their lifestyle.

We understand the comments from respondents about concerns that students may have about situations that might put a service user at risk. This is an area where placement providers or education providers may have their own policies which the students should follow. As a result, we will not amend this statement.

We have considered the suggestions that there should be guidance on conflicts of interest. We understand that this is an area of concern for some students and organisations. We believe that the principle of conflicts of interest is implicit within a number of statements within the guidance, including statement one and statement twelve. Statement one states that students should always act in the best interests of their service users. Statement twelve states that potential financial rewards should not play a part in any advice or recommendations of services that students provide to service users. In addition, it would be difficult to produce guidance on conflict of interest situations which remains relevant to all students. We have carefully considered the comments we received and have decided to make no additions to this section of the standard.

The SETs require that an education provider has equality and diversity policies (2.7) and a complaints process (3.13). It is not the purpose of the guidance to offer advice to students on the action that they could take if they are being

discriminated against. However, the section 'More information' may be useful in highlighting other sources of support.

2. You should respect the confidentiality of service users

- You should treat information about service users as confidential and use it only for the purpose for which it was given unless the information raises concerns about a situation where a service user may be at risk.
- You should not knowingly release any personal or confidential information to anyone who is not entitled to access it.
- You should try to anonymise any confidential information that you use for your assessments.
- You should obtain written consent from your service user if you want to use identifiable information for your assessments.
- You should follow local policies or guidelines on confidentiality produced by your education provider or placement provider.

Three respondents commented on the first statement about treating information as confidential except where it raises concerns about situations where service users may be at risk. Respondents commented on the occasions where confidentiality can be breached because of potential harm to the service user or to others. The BPS suggested that the statement should have the phrase 'or others' added to it after service user to recognise that the risk may not be to the service user but to other people.

Three respondents made suggestions about the second statement on releasing confidential information only to those who are entitled to it. Both NHS Lanarkshire and the Council of Deans of Health suggested that there could be additional guidance in this statement on cyber communication or IT use. NHS Lanarkshire commented that this would be useful because '...e-learning and e-health are important aspects of the development of students'. The Centre for Advancement of Interprofessional Learning commented that the bullet point 'you should not knowingly release any personal or confidential information to anyone who is not entitled to it' should also make reference to working with other professions.

A number of respondents, including Anglia Ruskin, The CODP, BIOS, The CSP and several individuals commented that the guidance 'you should try to anonymise confidential information that you use for your assessments' should be changed to 'you must anonymise confidential information'. The University of Bradford commented that the phrase 'try to' was '...inappropriate and should be removed as any confidential information must be anonymous'.

Several respondents commented on the fourth statement on obtaining written consent for using identifiable information in assessments that are submitted. The CODP and the CSP both commented that this statement contradicted the previous statement and should be removed.

Four respondents proposed changes to the language within the fourth statement. The COT commented that if written consent could not be obtained ‘...an alternative method of consent should be utilised’. The ACP commented that reference to ‘assessments’ could potentially create confusion in whether this was meant to mean treatment or written submissions. PTUK suggested that the phrase ‘or those legally responsible in the case of children’ should be added after the word ‘service user’. Finally, the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS) suggested that the phrase ‘if local policy or guidelines permit you to use identifiable information...’ should be added to the bullet.

Our comments

We have looked carefully at the comments we received and will make a number of amendments to this section of the guidance. We will change the first bullet point to make reference to risks to other people, as well as the service user themselves. We will amend the third bullet point to say that students should anonymise confidential information that they use for their assessments.

We will amend the fourth bullet point to state that students should follow local policies or guidelines if they want to use identifiable information within their assessments. We believe that this amendment takes into considerations the variety of methods that could be used for obtaining consent and clarifies that this may not always be allowed.

3. You should keep high standards of personal conduct

- You should be aware that conduct outside your programme may affect your ability to complete your programme.
- You should behave with courtesy towards your service users, colleagues and programme team.
- You should submit complete and submit your assessment work on time.
- You should make sure that your personal appearance is appropriate for your placement environment.

A number of respondents made comments about the guidance within this section.

Several respondents commented on the first statement around the potential impact of a student’s conduct outside the programme on their ability to complete the programme. The CSP commented that this statement was potentially unhelpful as it did not seem to reflect the potential seriousness of misconduct which may also affect an individual’s ability to be registered, even if they have completed their programme.

Four respondents proposed changes to the language of the first statement to make it clearer. BAWMA suggested that the first bullet point should have the word ‘educational’ added before programme for clarity. The BACP suggested that the phrase ‘ability to complete your programme’ removed and replaced with

'whether or not you are allowed to complete your programme'. They suggested this amendment because they felt that the amended text reflects more accurately '...the responsibility of the training organisation/HEI to ensure students' fitness to practise. The physiotherapy department at Royal Gwent Hospital suggested adding '...and achieve registration' at the end of the first bullet point. Finally, NHS Lanarkshire suggested that the first bullet point should be changed to say: 'You should be aware that conduct WITHIN AND [original emphasis retained] outside of your programme may affect your ability to complete your programme.'

The University of Bradford commented on the second bullet statement about behaving with courtesy. They said that some '... contributors found the term courtesy a little condescending'. They suggested that this section should also have a reference to cultural sensitivity.

We received a number of comments about the guidance on completing and submitting assessment work on time. Anglia Ruskin commented that this suggests that '...assignments must be submitted on time but pays no regard to University regulations regarding extensions and mitigation'. ACB commented that this '...is an issue between the education and training scheme providers and any qualification awarding body and the student' and therefore was not relevant to HPC's concern for '...the conduct and ethical standards exercised by the student in their interactions with the service user' and should therefore be removed.

Two respondents commented on the last statement about personal appearance. The Union of UEA students commented that there could be more specific guidance as to who ascertains whether personal appearance is appropriate. They asked whether responsibility lies with '...the university, the placement provider or the individual educator on the placement'. The Society of Sports Therapists (SST) suggested that the phrase 'and hygiene' should be added to the last bullet point as it was also important that hygiene was appropriate to the placement environment.

Our comments

We will amend the first statement within this section to clarify the impact of misconduct outside a programme. The revised statement will say:

'You should be aware that your conduct outside your programme may affect whether or not you are allowed to complete your programme or become registered with the HPC'.

We have looked at the suggestions regarding the statement on submitting assessment work. We have decided to remove this statement from the guidance.

Having considered the comments we received, we will make no further amendments to this section.

4. You should provide any important information about your conduct, competence or health to your education provider

- You should tell your education provider about any changes to your health which may put your service users at risk.
- You should tell your education provider if you are convicted of, or cautioned for, any offence.

We received a number of comments about this statement, particularly around the requirement to tell education providers about changes to a student's health.

Several respondents, including the Union of UEA students, commented that this section needed more guidance on what the phrase 'important information' meant so that students could be more aware of the information they needed to provide. The SST and The COT both suggested that this section could include examples of changes in health that would be appropriate for students to tell their education provider about. The CSP suggested that this statement could be supported by reference to other documents produced by the HPC, including 'A disabled person's guide to becoming a health professional' and the guidance on the health and character process.

A number of respondents commented on the importance of telling education providers about changes in an individual's health. One individual commented that this standard needed more information to reflect the '...responsibility for sharing health problems/changes' with the necessary parties. The British Association of Art Therapists (BAAT) said it was also important that students tell their education provider about any existing health conditions prior to undertaking their programme as well as passing on information about any changes in their health once on the programme. Royal Gwent Hospital suggested that this section needed more emphasis on the duty of the student to notify the employer of any health issues, even those which recur after initial occupational health assessment.

Several respondents commented on the types of information that the students should tell their education provider about. The BACP suggested that the bullet point should also mention 'any other personal circumstances' which could put a service user at risk. NHS Lanarkshire commented that students should also be expected to disclose changes in their health or their social circumstances which might affect their '...performance or safety whilst undertaking the programme' and gave the example of allergies or bereavement. PTUK suggested that 'physical or mental' should be added before health. The CODP commented that the guidance should also mention that changes to an individual's health can also put that individual at risk.

Three respondents (BADth, BIOS and NHS Lanarkshire) all suggested that students should also tell their placement providers about any changes to their health which may put their service users at risk. BADth commented that this was important because practice placement educators were '...responsible for the safety of clients during the placement'.

Two respondents commented on the second bullet point. BACP commented that enhanced criminal record bureau checks included information on warnings and reprimands as well as convictions and cautions. As a result, education providers should also be told when students receive warnings and reprimands. One individual suggested that students should also tell their education provider immediately if they are ‘...being charged and or investigated for any criminal offence and or any investigation related to POVA or POVC’.

Our comments

We have carefully considered the suggestion that this section should contain more guidance. When drafting the document, we wanted to do so in a way which made it applicable to all the professions that we regulate. As such, we recognise that information about a student’s health might be considered differently by different professions. For this reason, we have not defined important information. However, students can obtain further information about health within the publications listed in the ‘More information’ section of the guidance.

We have looked at the suggestions about the statement on changes to a student’s health. The SETs require that education providers should have admissions procedures with selection and entry criteria, including compliance with any health requirements. As such, students may already have declared any existing health conditions. We will however, amend the guidance to say that students should tell their education provider about existing health conditions, where those health conditions may put service users or others at risk.

We recognise that providing information to placement staff can allow them to arrange any necessary support or adjustments that students may need so that they can continue to learn and develop. We will amend the first statement to say that students should tell their practice placement providers about changes to their health. The statement will now say:

‘You should tell your education provider and placement provider about any existing health conditions or changes to your health which may put service users or yourself at risk.’

We have considered the suggested amendments to the second statement but will make no changes to this statement.

5. You should keep your professional knowledge and skills up to date

- You are responsible for your own learning.
- You should reflect on and respond constructively to feedback you are given.
- You should follow your education provider's or placement provider's policy on attendance.

We received a small number of comments about the guidance in this section. The IMBS said that the first bullet point should read 'You should recognise where you are responsible for your own learning'.

The University of Bradford commented that this section should contain guidance on students' obligations to attend '...lectures and tutorials on subjects which might have direct implications for patient care'. They commented that this was important because poor attendance might affect the students' level of knowledge and skills.

NHS Lanarkshire commented that the third bullet point would be more appropriately placed under the third heading 'You should keep high standards of personal conduct'.

Our comments

We have carefully considered the comments we received about this section. We will move the last bullet point to the third section but will make no other changes.

6. You should act within the limits of your knowledge and skills

- You should only undertake a task if you feel that you have the appropriate knowledge and skills.
- You should ensure that you are appropriately supervised for any task that you are asked to undertake.
- You should ask for help when necessary.
- You should make sure that you do not misrepresent your knowledge and skills.

A number of respondents made comments about this section.

Several respondents made comments about the first bullet point. BIOS commented that the practice educator bears the responsibility for the decision about whether the student is competent to undertake the task and may sometimes ask students to undertake tasks outside their 'comfort zone' to improve competency. They suggested that the guidance should be amended to: 'You should only undertake *an unsupervised* [original emphasis retained] task if you feel that you have the appropriate knowledge and skills.' The IBMS

commented that the phrase ‘...and without risk to yourself, service user or to any other individual’ should be added to the first bullet point.

Two respondents commented on the third bullet point. The Centre for Advancement of Interprofessional Learning suggested that this section could have additional guidance about interprofessional learning. They suggested that the third bullet point could make reference to working with a member of another profession whose skills compliment the student’s or asking for help from a member of the student’s profession or different profession. The COT suggested that this bullet point could include the phrase ‘and know when you are potentially working outside your knowledge and skills’.

We received a number of comments about the last bullet point within this section. The CODP commented that this bullet point was unclear and required further clarification. The physiotherapy department at Royal Gwent Hospital suggested that the last bullet point should have ‘...within current scope of practice’ and a reference to HPC standards.

Two respondents suggested additional guidance for this section. The Union of UEA students asked whether there would be further guidance for students on what ‘...they should do if they do not feel the placement provider is offering them appropriate supervision... or if they are being asked to carry out tasks they do not think they should be doing’. The CSP commented that it was ‘...essential that students do not misrepresent their status (particularly to any actual or prospective service user)’. They commented that additional guidance would reflect the principle of protected titles and support students’ understanding of this.

Our comments

We recognise the importance of balancing opportunities for students to learn and develop their skills with ensuring that they are aware of the importance of acting within the limits of their knowledge and skills. We have looked carefully at the comments we received about the first bullet point and will amend it to say:

‘You should only undertake an unsupervised task if you feel that you have the appropriate knowledge and skills.’

We have considered the comments we received about the third bullet point. We believe that students could seek help from members of other professions but do not feel it is necessary to prescribe this within the guidance. We believe that there are already references to acting within a student’s knowledge and skills and so will not make this amendment to the bullet point.

Statement eight within the guidance states that students should ensure that their service user is aware that the individual they are being treated by is a student. As such, we will not amend the guidance to include a reference about students misrepresenting their status.

7. You should maintain proper and effective communications with service users, practitioners and educators

- You should take all reasonable steps to make sure that you can communicate properly and effectively with your service users and their families.
- You should communicate effectively and co-operate with other practitioners for the benefit of your service users.
- You should communicate effectively and co-operate with the programme and placement team.
- Where appropriate, you should share your knowledge with colleagues.

We received a small number of comments from respondents about this section. The Centre for the Advancement of Interprofessional Learning commented that interprofessional learning could be reinforced by expanding upon 'colleagues' to include members of other professions.

The University of Bradford commented that the fourth bullet point was not unclear and asked whether it referred to teaching or patient information. They suggested that there could be clarification of this point.

BIOS suggested that there should be an additional bullet point about treating the patient with empathy.

Our comments

We have considered the comments we received in response to this section. We recognise the importance of interprofessional learning but believe that 'colleagues' are already included within the definition of service users and therefore will not amend the section.

We have considered the other proposed amendments. We do not feel it is appropriate to add an additional bullet point about treating a patient with empathy as that is not within the remit of the guidance.

8. You should get informed consent to give treatment except in emergencies

- You should make sure that your service users are aware that you are a student before you provide treatment.
- You should make sure that your service users have given their consent to be treated by a student.
- You should explain the treatment you are planning to carry out to your service user.
- You should explain any risks of the treatment you are planning on carrying out.
- You should follow your education provider's or placement provider's policy on consent.

We received a number of comments about the guidance in this section. The ACB raised concerns about the definition of 'treatment' and the guidance within this section. They commented that trainee clinical scientists and biomedical scientists undertake many types of diagnostic and monitoring procedures but it is rare that the trainee would come into contact with the service user. As a result, obtaining informed consent would not be 'practicable'. The ACB suggested rewording the definition of treatment to say '...that the actions are directly on (or to) the service user'.

The therapy department within North Wales NHS Trust asked for clarification about the guidance in the second bullet point. The department asked whether the consent needed to be verbal or written and whether it should be provided in advance of a clinic as students may run clinics without supervision. Royal Gwent Hospital suggested that in addition to obtaining consent, the first bullet point should also have the phrase "...and that you are fully supervised as a student" added to it.

Two respondents commented about the third bullet point. PTUK commented that, where therapeutic work was being undertaken with children, they would prefer the phrase 'You should explain the intervention that you will be using with your children' instead of the third bullet point. They commented that they felt this was 'less prescriptive and more suitable for non-directive, child led therapy'. BIOS commented that the phrase 'you should discuss and agree all treatments plans with your clinical supervisor/tutor before explaining the treatment you are planning to carry out to your service user'.

One individual respondent commented that the fourth bullet point about explaining the risks of treatment should be reworded as it was slightly confusing.

Our comments

We have revised our definition of 'treatment' in line with the comments we received in this section and also about its use in the guidance as a whole.

We believe that it is important that service users are aware that the individual providing services to them is a student and also that service users have consented. However, we think that decisions about how and when the consent is obtained are best made by the education provider or placement provider, taking into consideration local policies and protocols. As a result, we will not add additional guidance specifying whether the consent should be verbal or written.

We will revise the fourth bullet point to make the statement clearer but will make no other amendments to the guidance.

9. You should keep accurate service user records

- You should ensure that any information you enter in service user records is accurate and legible.
- You should protect information in records from being lost, damaged or accessed by someone without appropriate authority or tampered with.

We received only two comments about this section. Both Royal Gwent Hospital and NHS Lanarkshire suggested that entries made by students in the notes should be signed by a designated staff member or practice educator.

Our comments

We have carefully considered the comments we received around ensuring that entries made by students are countersigned. We believe that deciding whether or not notes made by students should be signed is a decision made best at a local level by the practice placement provider.

We removed the requirement that registrants should countersign notes made by students under their supervision from the Standards of conduct, performance and ethics following a review of the standards in 2007. To ensure consistency between the standards and this guidance, we will not make this amendment.

10. You must deal fairly and safely with the risks of infection

- You should ensure that you take appropriate steps to deal with the risks of infection.

Several respondents commented on this section of the guidance. Royal Gwent Hospital suggested that first bullet point about taking appropriate steps to deal with the risks of infection should have ‘...in line with local policies where you are working’ added to it. NHS Lanarkshire suggested that the first bullet point should be rewritten to say ‘You should take all steps to prevent the risk of infection’.

Both the British Dietetic Association (BDA) and BIOS suggested that there should be an additional point highlighting the need to follow local policies on infection control.

The University of Bradford suggested that this section should also state the importance of personal hygiene and of keeping up to date with vaccinations. They commented that both of these areas had implications ‘...for the health and welfare of the student as well as the patient, carers and colleagues’.

Our comments

We have considered the comments we received in response to this section. In line with other areas of the guidance, we will add a point about following local policies on infection control. We have considered the other suggestions but will make no other amendments.

11. You should limit your work or stop practising if your performance or judgement is affected by your health

- You should seek help from doctors, or an occupational health professional, or your GP, if you have concerns about your health.
- You should be aware that you may put your service users at risk if you are ill.

We received a number of comments about this section of the guidance. The CSP suggested that the wording of this section around ‘work’ and ‘stop practising’ did not relate to students and could ‘...give confusing messages about what individuals do, and are allowed to do, as health professions students’. The Council of Deans of Health suggested that ‘and follow any recommended course of action or treatment to address your health needs’ should be added to the title of this section.

Several respondents commented on the links between this section and section 4 (‘you should provide any important information about your conduct, competence or health to your education provider’). The BACP suggested that this section should be placed after section 4 to improve the continuity of the document whilst the CSP suggested that the HPC should review the separation of this section from section 4.

The CODP suggested that the second bullet point ‘you should be aware that you may put your service users at risk if you are ill’ should also include a reference to the possibility that a student may also put themselves at risk if they are ill.

Two respondents suggested additional bullet points for this section. The CODP suggested that there should be an additional bullet point that asks students to inform their HEI and placement provider of ‘...any health concerns that may affect their performance’. The Council of Deans of Health suggested that there could be an additional bullet point so that students ‘...recognise/acknowledge/accept that they have a health need’.

Our comments

We will make a number of amendments to this section following comments from respondents. We will revise the language to remove references to 'work', which students may not find relevant. We will move this statement to after section 4: 'You should provide any important information about your conduct, competence or health to your education provider'.

We will amend the second bullet point to make reference to the possibility that students may also put themselves at risk if they are ill. We have considered the suggestions that this section should include a statement that students should tell their education provider of any health concerns. However, we believe that this is already incorporated within section 4 and will not add an additional statement.

12. You should behave with integrity and honesty

- You should try not to pass off other people's work as your own.
- You should ensure that you reference other people's work appropriately.
- You should make sure that you complete any application forms truthfully and accurately.
- You should not let any potential financial reward play a part in the advice or recommendations of products and services you give.
- You should follow your education provider's policies on ethics when undertaking research.

We received a number of comments about this section.

Four respondents commented on the third bullet point about completing application forms truthfully and accurately. BACP suggested that the third bullet point should be amended to say: 'You should make sure that your cv is honest and a true representation of qualification, personal qualities and experience and that you complete any application forms truthfully and accurately.' PTUK suggested that the phrase 'CVs, resumes and biographies' should be added after application forms. The IBMS suggested that 'and fully' should be added at the end of the bullet point. NHS Lanarkshire suggested that the bullet point should be rewritten to say: 'You should make sure that you complete any DOCUMENTATION [original emphasis retained] truthfully & accurately.'

Royal Gwent Hospital suggested '...and local service users' should be added to the last bullet point about following an education provider's policies on ethics when undertaking research.

Our comments

We have considered the suggestions we received around the third bullet point. We will amend the standard to incorporate all documentation so that it will say:

'You should make sure that you complete any documentation truthfully and accurately'.

We will make no other amendments to this statement.

13. You should make sure that your behaviour does not damage public confidence in you or your profession

- You should be aware that your behaviour may affect the trust that the public has in health professionals.
- You should not do anything that might affect the trust that the public has in health professionals.

A number of respondents, including the University of Bradford, the BDA, The Union of UEA students, commented that the guidance in this section should make reference to social networking sites. They suggested that the guidance was necessary because students were unsure about what constituted appropriate behaviour on these sites and because of concerns about defamatory remarks being made or possible breaches of confidentiality. One individual respondent commented that if social networking sites were explicitly mentioned by the regulator ‘...then there will be further thought provoking by the student’.

Our comments

We have carefully considered the suggestion that we should make specific reference to social networking sites. We recognise the concerns expressed by respondents. However, we believe that the general guidance around confidentiality and keeping high standards of personal conduct is sufficient and will make no amendments to this statement.

Section four: More information

A number of respondents, including IBMS, The Association of Heads of Psychology Departments, the COT and BAAT suggested that the guidance should make reference to the codes of conduct and ethics of their professional bodies. The BPS suggested that a reference to these codes would be useful because it would ‘...provide a means of better contextualising the guidance without falling into the trap of becoming overprescriptive on detail’.

Our comments

We recognise the valuable role professional bodies play in representing and promoting the interests of their members. This often includes providing guidance and advice about good practice and how to meet the standards set by us. We acknowledge that not all professional bodies offer student membership. However, we will add a broad statement to this section suggesting that students may also want to contact their professional body for further guidance.

Respondents

Below is a list of those who responded to the consultation. Where a response has been given on behalf of an organisation, we have given the name of the organisation in the text. Where the response comes from an individual, we have not. We received 41 responses from individuals and 13 responses from organisations.

Anglia Ruskin University, Allied Health Department
Association for Clinical Biochemistry (joint response with Federation of Clinical Scientists)
Association of Child Psychotherapists
Association of Heads of Psychology Departments
Association of Independent Hearing Healthcare Professionals
Association for Perioperative Practice
British Academy of Western Medical Acupuncture
British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy
The British Association of Art Therapists
The British Association of Dramatherapists
The British Dietetic Association
British and Irish Orthoptic Society
The British Psychological Society
Centre for the Advancement of Interprofessional Learning
The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy
The College of Occupational Therapists
College of Operating Department Practitioners
The Council of Deans of Health
Fife NHS Board
Heart of England Foundation Trust, Allied Health Professionals
Institute of Biomedical Science
Institute of Chiropractors and Podiatrists
Joint Royal Colleges Ambulance Committee
Keele University, Faculty of Health
NHS Birmingham East and North, Allied Health Professionals
NHS Dumfries and Galloway
NHS Lanarkshire
North Wales NHS Trust, Therapy Service
Oxford Brookes University, School of Health and Social Care
Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman
Play Therapy UK
Royal Gwent Hospital, Physiotherapy Department
Scottish Ambulance Service
The Society and College of Radiographers
The Society of Sports Therapists
Unison Health Care
United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy
University of Bradford
University of East Anglia, Student Union
University of Ulster, School of Biomedical Science
Welsh Nursing and Midwifery Council

Guidance on conduct and ethics for students

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About this document

We are the Health Professions Council (HPC). We have written this document to give students on education and training programmes some guidance on issues about conduct and ethics. We hope that the guidance will be useful to students both during their training and once they are working.

You may find this document useful if you are:

- a **student** who is studying to be a member of a profession regulated by us or a practitioner in training;
- a member of **academic staff** who is teaching students about ethics and professional conduct; or
- a **practice placement educator** or **supervisor**.

This is not a complete list of audiences but it should help to give you an idea of whether this document will help you.

About the structure of this document

This document is broken down into four sections.

- Section 1 is the **Introduction** and contains information about us and what we do.
- Section 2 is called **About the guidance** and contains information about the guidance, including information on language and how the guidance applies to students.
- Section 3 is called **Guidance on conduct and ethics for students**.
- Section 4 is called **More information** and has information about other useful publications and also includes our contact details.

Throughout this document, 'we' or 'us' refers to the Health Professions Council. 'You' refers to the student on an education and training programme.

Introduction

About us (the HPC)

We are the Health Professions Council. We are a regulator, 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, behaviour and health.

Professionals on our Register are called 'registrants'. We currently regulate 14 professions.

- Arts therapists
- Biomedical scientists
- Chiropodists / podiatrists
- Clinical scientists
- Dietitians
- Occupational therapists
- Operating department practitioners
- Orthoptists
- Paramedics
- Physiotherapists
- Practitioner psychologists
- Prosthetists / orthotists
- Radiographers
- Speech and language therapists

We may regulate other professions in the future. For an up to date list of the professions we regulate, please see our website at www.hpc-uk.org

Each of these professions has one or more 'protected titles' (protected titles include titles like 'physiotherapist' and 'dietitian'). Anyone who uses one of these titles must be on our Register. Anyone who uses a protected title who is not registered with us is breaking the law and could be prosecuted.

Our Register is available on our website for anyone to search, so that they can check that their professional is registered.

Another important part of our role is to consider any complaints we receive about registrants. We look at every complaint we receive, to decide whether we need to take action or not. We may hold a hearing to get all the information we need to decide whether someone is fit to practise.

When we say that someone is 'fit to practise', we mean that they have the skills, knowledge, character and health to practise safely and effectively.

We also set standards for continuing professional development, which support professionals in their learning and development once they are registered.

How we are run

We were created by a piece of legislation called the 'Health Professions Order' 2001, 'the Order'. This sets out the things that we must do, and it gives us our legal power. We have a council which is made up of registrants, and members of the public. The Council sets our strategy and policy, and makes sure that we are fulfilling our duties under the Order.

Professionals must register with us before they can use a protected title for their profession. This means that even if you have completed a course in, for example, physiotherapy, you will still not be able to call yourself a 'physiotherapist' unless you are registered with us.

The Standards of conduct, performance and ethics

We set Standards of conduct, performance and ethics which apply to the professionals we register. You will learn about these standards on your programme.

The standards also apply to people who are applying to become registered with us. If you are applying to be registered, you will be asked to sign a declaration to confirm that you have read and will keep to the standards once you are registered.

The standards play an important role in helping us make decisions about the character of the people who apply to join our Register, and also in cases where we decide whether someone is fit to practise.

We have based this guidance on the Standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

Approving education and training programmes

Our role includes assessing education and training programmes against the standards that we set. These standards are the Standards of education and training. If a programme meets our standards we 'approve' it and students who successfully complete the programme are eligible to apply for registration with us.

About registration

Registration shows that the professional meets our standards for their profession.

Registration exists to show the public that professionals are fit to practise, and that they are entitled to use the protected title for their profession. It shows that the people on our Register are part of a profession with nationally recognised standards set by law.

Applying for registration

Completing an approved course does not 'guarantee' that you will become registered. But it does show us that you meet our professional standards and so are eligible to apply for registration. We need more information from you to be able to register you.

When you first apply for registration, as part of your application, you need to send us information which includes a health reference, a character reference, a photograph and copies of relevant identification. You will also need to let us know if you have any criminal convictions, and if you have ever been disciplined by another regulator or professional body or employer.

All of the information that we need from you helps us to make sure that:

- you are who you say you are;
- you meet our standards; and
- we can contact you if we need to.

You can find out more about the application process on our website at www.hpc-uk.org.

About this guidance

This guidance is based on the Standards of conduct, performance and ethics as these standards apply to both registrants and those applying to be registered. We hope that the guidance will build familiarity with these standards.

The headings we use in this document are taken from the Standards of conduct, performance and ethics. Under each heading we have provided bullet points which give further guidance on how the standards relate to you. The guidance does not provide answers to every situation you may face. However, we hope that the broad principles within the guidance will help you and encourage you to ask for additional guidance from your education provider where appropriate.

Education providers and placement providers often have their own policies and procedures which you should follow.

Language

This guidance has been written in broad terms and applies to all students as far as possible. We have tried to use terms which are as broad as possible and which everyone can understand. However, we understand that some of the standards may not apply to students on particular programmes.

We have used the term 'student' throughout this document. We use this to mean anyone studying on a education and training programme which leads to eligibility to join our Register. The term includes trainees or practitioners in training. We use the term 'programme' to mean these education and training programmes.

Throughout this guidance we have used the term 'service users'. By this we mean your patients or clients their carers or relatives and anyone affected by your registration, such as colleagues.

We have used the word 'intervention' in this document to describe a number of actions that you may undertake. We use it to mean actions undertaken to, for, on or with the service user and it can include diagnostic or monitoring procedures, therapy or advice.

We have included a glossary at the end of this document which explains some of the terms we have used.

Conduct outside your programme

On your programme you have the opportunity to develop the skills and knowledge you need to become a professional in an environment which protects your service users. You also have the opportunity to learn about the conduct and behaviour that the public expects from professionals.

As a student studying to become a professional in a regulated profession, you have certain responsibilities. On your programme you will be expected to meet high standards of conduct and ethics.

You should be aware that in very serious circumstances, your conduct may affect your ability to complete your programme or gain the final qualification or become registered with us.

We have recently consulted on changes to the standards that we use to approve education and training programmes. One of these changes is that programmes must have processes for dealing with concerns about a student's profession-related conduct. This means that misconduct may affect your ability to complete your programme.

When you apply to join the Register, we ask for a number of pieces of information as part of a declaration that you are of 'good character'. This includes whether you have any convictions or cautions, whether you have been disciplined by a professional body or regulator or employer and whether you have had any civil proceedings against you.

The professions we regulate are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, which means that you must declare all convictions and cautions including those that are considered 'spent'. Usually the convictions or cautions which might affect your registration are those for more serious offences.

It is important that you disclose any information about your character which falls within the declaration. Information that you disclose will be looked at to see if it may affect your suitability for registration. In most cases, information that you declare about your character will not affect your registration. However, some very serious information can cause concern.

We have produced more guidance about how we consider health and character information in a publication called 'Guidance on the health and character process'. You can download this from our website at www.hpc-uk.org.

Guidance on conduct and ethics

1. You should always act in the best interests of your service users.
 - You should respect your service user's right to be treated by a professional and not a student if they want.
 - You should not exploit or abuse the relationship between yourself and your service user.
 - You should not discriminate against your service user on the basis of their age, gender, sexual orientation, religion or beliefs, race, ethnic background, lifestyle or social or economic status.
 - You should not do anything that you believe will endanger your service user or others.
 - If you have concerns about any situation which might put a service user at risk, you should share these concerns with a member of the placement team or your education provider.

2. You should respect the confidentiality of your service users.
 - You should treat information about service users as confidential and use it only for the purpose for which it was given unless the information raises concerns about a situation where a service user or others may be at risk.
 - You should not knowingly release any personal or confidential information to anyone who is not entitled to access it.
 - You should anonymise any confidential information that you use for your assessments.
 - You should follow local policies or guidelines if you want to use identifiable information for your assessments.
 - You should follow local policies or guidelines on confidentiality produced by your education provider or placement provider.

3. You should keep high standards of personal conduct.
 - You should be aware that conduct outside of your programme may affect whether or not you are allowed to complete your programme or become registered with the HPC.
 - You should behave with courtesy towards your service users, colleagues and programme team.
 - You should make sure that your personal appearance is appropriate for your placement environment.
 - You should follow your education provider's or placement provider's policy on attendance.

4. You should provide any important information about your conduct, competence or health to your education provider.
 - You should tell your education provider and placement provider about any existing health conditions or changes to your health which may put your service users or yourself at risk.
 - You should tell your education provider if you are convicted of, or cautioned for, any offence.
5. You should limit your study or stop studying if your performance or judgement is affected by your health.
 - You should seek help from doctors, or an occupational health professional, if you have concerns about your health.
 - You should be aware that you may put your service users or yourself at risk if your performance or judgement is affected by your health.
6. You should keep your professional knowledge and skills up to date.
 - You are responsible for your own learning.
 - You should reflect on and respond constructively to feedback you are given.
7. You should act within the limits of your knowledge and skills.
 - You should only undertake an unsupervised task if you feel that you have the appropriate knowledge and skills.
 - You should ensure that you are appropriately supervised for any task that you are asked to undertake.
 - You should ask for help when necessary.
 - You should make sure that you do not misrepresent your knowledge and skills.
8. You should maintain proper and effective communications with your service users, education provider and placement providers.
 - You should take all reasonable steps to make sure that you can communicate properly and effectively with your service users and their families.
 - You should communicate effectively and co-operate with other colleagues for the benefit of your service users.
 - You should communicate effectively and co-operate with the programme and placement team.
 - Where appropriate, you should share your knowledge with colleagues.

9. You should get informed consent to carry out an intervention except in emergencies.

Except in emergencies:

- You should make sure that your service users are aware that you are a student before you carry out an intervention.
- You should make sure that your service users have given their consent to be treated by a student.
- You should explain the intervention you are planning to carry out to your service user.
- Before carrying out an intervention, you should explain any risks associated with that intervention.
- You should follow your education provider's or placement provider's policy on consent.

10. You should keep accurate service user records.

- You should ensure that any information you enter in service user records is accurate and legible.
- You should protect information in records from being lost, damaged, accessed by someone without appropriate authority or tampered with.

11. You should deal fairly and safely with the risks of infection.

- You should ensure that you take appropriate steps to deal with the risks of infection.
- You should follow your education provider's or placement provider's policy on managing the risks of infection.

12. You should behave with integrity and honesty.

- You should not try to pass off other people's work as your own.
- You should ensure that you reference other people's work appropriately.
- You should make sure that you complete any documentation truthfully and accurately.
- You should not let any potential financial reward play a part in the advice or recommendations of products and services you give.
- You should follow your education provider's policies on ethics when undertaking research.

13. You should make sure that your behaviour does not damage public confidence in your profession.

- You should be aware that your behaviour may affect the trust that the public has in your profession.

- You should not do anything which might affect the trust that the public has in your professions.

More information

Other useful publications

We have produced several publications which you may also want to look at. These include:

- Guidance on health and character;
- A disabled person's guide to becoming a health professional;
- Confidentiality – guidance for registrants;
- Standards of conduct, performance and ethics; and
- Standards of proficiency.

The first publication provides guidance on how we handle information about either an applicant's or registrant's health or character. This includes guidance on how we consider convictions and cautions.

You can download copies of these documents from our website or request hard copies by writing to us at the address below.

You may also want to contact your professional body for further advice.

Contacting us

You can find out more information about us and our processes on our website at **www.hpc-uk.org**

Here we publish information about how we work, including the standards that we produce, all of our forms, news releases and much more.

You can also contact us at the following address:

The Health Professions Council
Park House
184 Kennington Park Road
London
SE11 4BU.

Tel: +44 (0)20 7582 0866

Fax: +44 (0)20 7820 9684

Glossary

Anonymised information

The removal of any information that could identify a service user, including their name, gender, date of birth or age.

Fit to practise

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

Informed consent

When a service user has all the necessary information in a format they can understand so that they can make an informed decision about whether they want to have a particular intervention.

Intervention

We use it to mean actions undertaken to, for, on or with the service user. It can include diagnostic or monitoring procedures, therapy or advice.

Professional body

An organisation which carries out work which may include promoting a profession, representing members, producing curriculum frameworks, overseeing post-registration education and training and running continuing professional development programmes.

Register

A published list of professionals who meet our standards. The Register is available on our website at www.hpc-uk.org.

Registrant

A professional who appears on our Register.

Regulator

An organisation that protects the public by making sure people keep to certain laws or requirements.

Service user

Anyone who uses or is affected by the practices of registrants. This includes patients or clients, their carers or relatives and others who may be affected by your practice, such as colleagues.

Standards of conduct, performance and ethics

Standards of behaviour that we expect from professionals who are registered with us.