

Education and Training Committee - 4 June 2015

Potential improvements to the Registration process

Executive summary and recommendations

Introduction

The Executive has been working to improve the way registration-related services are delivered to applicants and registrants.

The full programme of work has been split into two separate but related projects, the Registration Process and System Review Project and the Registration Implementation and Build Project.

The Registration Process and System Review Project remit is to conduct research and development, analyse requirements and, if a case is made to revise processes and build a new system, create a business case for the second project.

If the case is made that processes do need to be revised and systems need to be replaced then a new project will be developed to implement and build the new system. This project will be called the Registration Implementation and Build Project.

The Registrations Process and Systems Review Project was initiated in July 2014. The remit of the project has been to:

- Re-engineer the processes that take place within the Registrations team, to ensure streamlining where commonalities of process occur.
- Identify where the touchpoints with the system will be for applicants, registrants and HCPC Registration staff, and to identify any manual processes which could be automated.
- Write the functional and non-functional requirements, including interfaces with other systems within HCPC.

The Director of Operations is the Project Lead for the Registrations Process and Systems Review Project.

This paper seeks to inform the Committee of the outcomes from the work conducted so far.

In a future meeting, the Education and Training Committee will be formally asked to discuss and approve changes to the application and registration processes. These changes will then form part of a wider public consultation.

Decision

The Committee is invited to discuss the paper; no decision is required.

Background information

The current registration system has been serving HCPC well since July 2003. However since 2003 a range of changes have been made within the Registrations function which mean that corresponding changes to the Registration system are required.

- Registration is more than just registering, renewing and removing applicants and registrants now.
 - The current registration system was developed to support what was, in 2003, the core registration functions of registering, renewing and removing applicants and registrants from the Register.
 - The current registration system does not support functions such as Continuing Professional Development, Returners to Practice, or enhanced International Application Assessment verification, for example.
- Many additional processes have been built outside of the current registrations system due to time, complexity and cost.
 - Some of these functions and processes have been developed in the current registration system, on a case-by-case basis. Others have not because it is expensive and time-consuming to design and develop these additional features in the current registration system.
 - As a result, many processes have been built outside of the current registration system and into other information systems.
 - For example the EEA Temporary and Occasional Register is in a Lotus Notes database, the International Application assessor contact management system, individual employee performance tracking and quality assurance checks are logged in Excel spread sheets.
- Some processes embedded in the current registration system no longer reflect working practises and need to be changed.
 - For example, the financial component of the system was developed to allow Registration Advisors to quickly address transaction-level financial queries.
 - This registration-centric view of transactions is different to the requirements of the current Finance Department's Transactions team.
- Customer service expectations have changed substantially in the last ten years and the system needs to recognise and integrate this.
 - Registrants' expectations of how they transact "business" are changing and HCPC has not kept up with this change. With the rise of portable communication devices such as smart phones and tablets, and greater internet connectivity, registrants are developing a greater expectation to be able to deal with the HCPC online, in a similar way to their bank, utility company, GP surgery or local council.

This project was initiated in order to consider:

- Whether and how the current system or a new system could better reflect and support current processes, and ways of working.
- Whether and how the current system or a new system could be more flexible, adaptable and configurable to allow for changes in processes and working practises to be implemented, quickly, cheaply and efficiently.
- Whether and how those processes and systems residing outside the current registration system should be incorporated into one core system.
- How the Registration Department will keep up with the times and engage with registrants via new service delivery channels such as email, SMS, and social media networks, and whether the current registration system will still be flexible enough to keep up HCPC's evolving requirements.
- Whether a core registration system should be better integrated with the existing website, Finance, Partners, FTP and other departments' processes.

Resource implications

All resources required for Registration Process and System Review Project in 2014/15 and 2015/16 were approved by Council in the departmental workplans.

Part of the work of the Registration Process and System Review Project is to determine the resource implications for the Registration Implementation and Build Project. This will be depend on the "breadth and depth" of the changes to processes and how these processes are implemented. Further details will be provided at a future meeting when approval for consultation will be sought.

Financial implications

All costs for the Registration Process and System Review Project for 2014/15 and 2015/16 were approved by Council as part of the budget.

Part of the work of the Registration Process and System Review Project is to determine the costs for the Registration Implementation and Build Project. This will be depend on the "breadth and depth" of the changes to processes and how these processes are implemented. Further details will be provided at a future meeting when approval for consultation will be sought.

Appendices

Appendix A: Proposed changes to Registrations processes

Date of paper

22 May 2015

Appendix A: Proposed changes to Registrations processes

1. Overview

- 1.1 Over the last nine months, representatives from Registrations, Fitness to Practise, Finance, Human Resources, Business Process Improvement, Information Technology and Project Management have been attending facilitated workshops to discuss the current way registration-related activities are conducted with an aim to document a better way these services are delivered to applicants and registrants.
- 1.2 At time of writing, the workshops have created over 75 process maps and documented over 2400 lines of requirements as well as project documents that describe what and how a “new” system should function.
- 1.3 This document highlights some of the changes the Executive would like to make to the current registration-related processes. It is not a complete list as work is still ongoing. Also, any proposed changes are subject to change because some are subject to committee approval, need to go through consultation and will need to be legally scrutinised.

2. Conditional registration

2.1 Current process

Registrants who make a declaration to the HCPC outside of the renewal window are put into the formal FTP case management process. However registrants who make a declaration during the renewal window are given a yes or no answer as to whether their registration has been renewed without going through the whole FTP process.

2.2 Proposed change

Registrants who make a declaration at the time of renewal should be subject to conditional registration if investigations surpass renewal deadlines.

2.3 Benefit

The process of renewal declarations would be consistent with all FTP processes.

2.4 Rule change?

Yes – this would, in fact, entail a change to the Order.

3. Online processing

3.1 Current process

All applications are received on paper forms; renewal is the only online process.

3.2 Proposed change

Applications will be online by default; we will also have a paper application channel but it will not be readily available, take longer to process, and cost more.

3.3 Benefit

Using an online system means that the onus for data entry is placed on the applicant or registrant; rather than employing Registration Advisors to input data into our system, we can change the nature of their roles to be more inquisitive as to the data they are presented with.

3.4 Rule change?

No – already in the rules following the recent consultation.

4. ID checking

4.1 Current process

Applicants currently provide certified paper copies of photographic ID, but the legitimacy of the certification is difficult to scrutinise.

4.2 Proposed change

All applicants will need to provide certified scans of photo ID and proof of address, along with contact details of the certifier so the certifier can be contacted via sample checks.

4.3 Benefit

The Registration team can add value by randomly auditing the certifiers of documentation, providing a level of assurance that we do not currently have.

4.4 Rule change?

No – operational decision made at HCPC's discretion.

5. Character References

5.1 Current process

Applicants are required to obtain a character reference.

5.2 Proposed change

Character references will no longer be required

5.3 Benefit

Since we do contact character references directly HCPC arguably does not currently gain any value from this information; removing this step will make the application process easier for applicants.

5.4 Rule change?

Yes – character references are in the current rules.

6. Graduate Discount

6.1 Current process

Applicants joining the register within 2 years of graduation are offered a 50% discount for the first two years' of registration fees.

6.2 Proposed change

There will be no graduate discounts, instead the scrutiny fee will be waived for recent graduates.

6.3 Benefit

The discount will be materially the same for graduates, and will make HCPC's internal financial processing much more efficient.

6.4 Rule change?

Yes – graduate registration fee discounts are in the current rules.

7. Direct Debit Instalments

7.1 Current process

Registrants who pay by Direct Debit may only do so in six-monthly instalments.

7.2 Proposed change

Registrants will be able to pay monthly.

7.3 Benefit

The cost of the Registration Fee will be spread.

7.4 Rule change?

No – already in the rules following the recent consultation.

8. Free Periods

8.1 Current process

Applying to join the register part way through a registration cycle currently poses complex financial implications, resulting in some registrants paying for a full two year period when they have only been on the register for just over one year, and some registrants having a period of free registration if they join within six months of the start of a renewal cycle. In addition to this, registrants who are removed from the register for non-payment or due to non-completion of the renewal declarations are offered a period of four weeks during which they can apply to be readmitted onto the register without paying the readmission fee.

8.2 Proposed change

There will be a pro-rata fee upon joining part way through a cycle. There will be no free periods for new joiners, or for readmissions.

8.3 Benefit

This is a fair and understandable way of charging the registration and readmission fees.

8.4 Rule change?

Yes – pro rata fees need a rules change as the rules currently only allow for yearly fees.

However, free periods to readmit to the register do not require a rules change as this is an operational decision made at HCPC's discretion.

9. Ways to Pay

9.1 Current process

Applicants and registrants can pay by sending cheque or bankers draft with their application, over the phone with their credit/debit card, or in six-monthly instalments by completing a paper direct debit mandate. Online card payment is only available using the online renewal system.

9.2 Proposed change

Cheques, postal orders and bankers drafts will no longer be processed. Applicants and registrants will be able to set up direct debits online. Credit/debit card payment will be available online. Credit/debit card payment will remain available over the phone.

9.3 Benefit

Paper payment methods create a costly administrative overhead, which we will eliminate by putting the onus on applicants and registrants to pay online. Card payments will still be available on the phone, to maintain this aspect of customer service for applicants and registrants.

9.4 Rule change?

No – operational decision made at HCPC’s discretion.

10. Renewal Cycles

10.1 Current process

Registrants are invited to renew their registration every two years according to their profession. This results in periods of peak activity, some of which coincide with peaks in receipt of applications during the summer months when students graduate from their courses.

10.2 Proposed change

Renewal cycles will be reorganised to leave the Christmas and summer periods free.

10.3 Benefit

Radically changing the way registration cycles work was discussed (moving away from professional cycles, for example, and renewing on the basis of the anniversary of entering the register), but it was decided that the current method is the most appropriate solution organisation-wide.

Maintaining the two year cycles means that any increase in fees will not be realised until the completion of the two year renewal cycles, which could be up to two years after the decision is made to increase the fees.

10.4 Rule change?

Yes – dates of the registration cycles are written into the rules.

11. Temporary and Occasional Visitors to the Register

11.1 Current process

Temporary and occasional registrants visiting from European countries currently appear in a separate register, held as a PDF on the website.

11.2 Proposed change

Temporary and occasional registrants will appear on the same public register as all registrants; they will be clearly identified as visitors.

11.3 Benefit

The public will be able to find and clearly identify all people practising in the UK, and what title they are practising under – whether it is a title protected by the HCPC, or the title they use in their country of primary practice.

11.4 Rule change?

No – operational decision made at HCPC’s discretion.