

PHECC Education and Standards Committee

Meeting Minutes

15/10/13, PHECC Office, Naas

Present:

Valerie Small (Chair)
Maeve Donnelly
Shane Knox
Dave Hick
Sarah Cain
Paul Lambert
Roisin McGuire

Apologies:

Martin McNamara
Glenna Woods
Ray Lacey
Mick Dineen
Shane Mooney
Mick Molloy

In attendance:

Pauline Dempsey
Brian Power
Deirdre Borland
Jacqueline Egan

1. Chairs business:

1.1 Introductions

The Chair welcomed the members and introductions followed. Apologies were noted. Some background was provided by the Chair on the outgoing Accreditation committee and the new terms of reference and membership was discussed. As Council's expert education and standards group the committee will consider and develop specific agenda items, as per the terms of reference, and recommend that Council approve when appropriate. PHECC's organisational map was tabled to illustrate the various committees and working groups of Council and the Executive. A memo included in the papers regarding the *Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies* was read and noted by all present. An email received by Glenna Woods was noted by the Chair.

1.2 Priorities/deliverables from the PHECC Business Plan 2013

The Chair outlined the priorities and deliverables for the Educational and Standards Committee extracted from the 2013 Business plan approved by Council.

2. Education and Training Standards leading to PHECC awards:

2.1 Overview of current "recognised courses"

An overview of the current suite of PHECC courses was given by Pauline Dempsey, programme development officer.

2.2 Emergency Care

A draft *Emergency Care standard* and feedback received from a consultation exercise earlier in 2012 was included in the meeting papers. The following points were discussed:

- Instructor requirements
- Course duration

- The potential for ‘special circumstance’ modules to be added-on to the EC course
- The similarities/differences to the OFA course
- Recertification frequency for provider and instructors
- The development of CPGs and exam material.

There was support in principle for the draft standard. Roisin McGuire and Paul Lambert offered to assist Ms Dempsey with development of the standard which will be further considered at the February meeting.

2.3 Oxygen administration for OFA divers

An overview of a draft *Oxygen administration for OFA diver’s standard* and feedback received from consultation earlier in 2013 was included in the meeting papers. This standard was developed at the request of the Health and Safety Authority to assist with the implementation of the new Code of Practice for diving to accompany the proposed Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Diving) Regulations. The following points were discussed:

- Teaching faculty requirements
- Course/Module duration and assessment

There was support in principle for the draft and it was agreed that it would be further developed in consultation with the HSA and considered at the next meeting.

2.4 Military First Response

An overview of a draft *Military First Response standard* was included in the meeting papers. This standard was drafted by Paul Allan, facilitator, on behalf of the Defence Forces. It is designed to be an add-on to the existing EFR standard. The add-ons are military medical learning outcomes. The following points were discussed:

- The potential interest from other groups such as ERU, NGOs overseas and security teams
- Revision of certain phraseology from the standard to keep it in line with other standards; the modules *accident procedures* and *practical military scenarios* would be removed
- Renaming the standard “Tactical First Response” or “EFR and Basic tactical care” or “other”
- The additional skill set above EFR e.g. NPA, pelvic splints, tourniquet and haemostatic dressings
- Pre-requisite entry CFR community or CFR Advanced

Ms Dempsey agreed to undertake a revision based on input from the members present and to prepare for a public consultation exercise via the website before years end. The standard and feedback will be further considered at the February meeting.

3. Recognition of Institutions and exams:

3.1 Overview of current “recognised institutions” and Council Policy and Rules

An overview of the current recognised institutions and Council policy and Rules was given by Ms Dempsey with reference to the PHECC website.

3.2 Monitoring/maintenance of institutions – 2012 Annual report - for information

The Annual Report to Council 2012 was noted, in particular, the areas for improvement listed from the quality evaluation reports (QERs).

3.3 Examination of Invalid CFR Instructor certificates

Ms Dempsey gave an account about the discovery of an RI that had issued seven CFR instructor certs without PHECC approval to do so. She confirmed that when the RI was contacted by the office they took immediate steps to recover and destroy the certs and is satisfied that the error will not be repeated. The committee requested that PHECC write to the institution to notify that the matter was discussed and noted.

3.4 Update on a targeted information request

The document titled “*Report on targeted information request.....*” was tabled and Ms Dempsey sought advice from members. Mr Paul Lambert absented himself from the meeting room. Recognised institution (RI) number 4 was discussed in some detail and the following was noted:

- that for an 18 month period 127 from 217 (or 58%) NQEMT-EMT students attended non-approved clinical placement/internship sites. This was considered a serious violation of current Council Rules;
- that 4 months passed before the RI gave a written reassurance that this practice had stopped;
- that the RI have requested a large number of exam places for 2014;
- and that the RI have now applied for approval for 2 ‘new’ clinical placement/internship sites.

After some discussion by members it was agreed that the best course of action would be as follows:

Pertinent to RI number 4: That a meeting between PHECC representatives, the company Director, facilitator and medical advisor would be scheduled to outline the committee’s concerns regarding their management of clinical placements/internship sites and the quality of learning experiences for NQEMT –EMT students.

Secondly: The observations made about the RIs in general listed a)- d) on the report were noted.

Thirdly: Ms Dempsey explained that current Council Rules followed a continuous quality improvement model where RIs would self-evaluate, monitor performance and prepare quality improvement plans etc. The lack of sanctions for serious violations/non-compliance was noted. A

solution proposed was to expedite a revision of Council Rules to enable enforcement (including monitoring inspections) in line with good public service governance. It was acknowledged that enforcement should be risk based and proportionate.

Finally: The committee unanimously agreed to recommend to Council to prioritise the preparatory work necessary to enable the inspections of recognised institutions. It was acknowledged that this was a substantial body of work and should be adequately resourced. This may require outsourced services including external consultancy/expertise. The possibility of convening a ‘facilitator panel’ to assist with this and other functions was discussed and there was support in general.

The institutions were de-identified throughout to protect commercially sensitive information and possible confidentiality issues arising. This prompted a question around publication of inspection reports at some future date and releases under FOI. The balance of publication versus the overriding public interest concerns must be carefully considered. It was agreed that this would be examined and legal advice sought as needed.

3.5 Addendum to Council Rules for BSc programmes

Ms Dempsey introduced the addendum to Council Rules included in the meeting papers and explained it was needed to accommodate applications from higher education authorities for the proposed 4-year Paramedic (Hons) degree programme. The Committee discussed the matter in some detail and agreed the addendum would be applied only when such an application was received.

Resolution: That the Education and Standards Committee recommends that Council approve the proposed addendum to current Council Rules.

Proposed: Shane Knox

Seconded: Sarah Cain

3.6 NQEMT Exam update – for information

Jacqueline Egan, programme development officer, provided an update on the status of the NQEMT examinations based on the paper included in the meeting papers. There was some discussion regarding the advantages/disadvantages of OSCE devolvement to Recognised Institutions but Ms Egan confirmed this has already been agreed and was confirmed in Council’s Business Plan for 2013.

The matter of inspecting NQEMT students’ Learning Portfolios (log books) as an additional quality measure was discussed. It was agreed that this would be further examined and would now not commence for MCQ candidates, at EMT level, in January 2014.

4. Recognition of professional qualifications and Competent Authority status :

4.1 Overview of policy/procedures in place – for information

An overview of Council policy and application procedures for those seeking recognition of professional qualifications obtained outside the State was given by Ms Dempsey with reference to

the PHECC website. It was noted that current policy was approved by Council in January 2013 after significant review and input by PHECC's legal advisors. Recent appeals were also acknowledged.

4.2 Annual Report - for information

The *Report to Council on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications -2012* was noted by members. Although the numbers of applications annually remains small everyone is considered on a case-by-case basis and the assessment and administrative burden was considerable.

5. Continuous Professional Competency:

Barry O'Sullivan, Deputy Director and Registrar, gave a presentation on the development and future roadmap of practitioner's CPC. A document titled "Continuous Professional Competence -A guide for Emergency Medical Technicians ..." was tabled and the work of Shane Knox was acknowledged.

Roisin McGuire asked that Recognised Institutions are kept informed so they can best manage queries from practitioners. Dave Hick raised a concern about specifying a minimum number of patient contacts. Mr O'Sullivan confirmed that there was a 3-year period to meet the CPC requirements and that PHECC will actively review all aspects of CPC while in progress. The advice of the committee was sought regarding the start date of CPC for EMTs and the 31st October 2013 was agreed. It was noted that a similar framework/standard for paramedics and APs would follow. It was noted that the Quality and Safety Committee will have a more substantial role in implementation.

Resolution: That the Education and Standards Committee recommends that Council approve the CPC Standard for registered EMTs and the start date of 31st October 2013.

Proposed: Dave Hick Seconded: Paul Lambert

6. Other appropriate tasks and functions; and Appeals:

An overview of Council's Appeals policy and procedures was provided by Ms Dempsey with reference to the PHECC website. It was noted that current policy was approved by Council in March 2013 after significant review and input by PHECC's legal advisors.

For NQEMT EMT exam candidates the appeals versus "View and Recheck" options were discussed. The chair agreed that this item would be discussed again at the next meeting.

7. AOB

Ms Dempsey informed members that the office had received a number of queries about an “International Paramedic Programme” on offer from the Emergency Service Training Institute (ESTI), a PHECC Recognised Institution. She confirmed PHECC’s position that the programme is not PHECC recognised and no reciprocity exists. Should a graduate from the programme apply for registration they will first have to apply for recognition of their qualifications obtained outside the State (as per Council policy). This position has been made clear to ESTI and the partner college in the USA; furthermore PHECC has requested that this position be made known to all current and prospective students.

The PHECC (BLN005) *Minimum duration and essential requirements of PHECC recognised practitioner level courses leading to registration*, available on the website was noted.

Dave Hick sought clarification about the rotational representation of RI’s at EMT level on the Committee. The Chair confirmed that Council approved the committees terms of reference including membership in June 2013.

Meeting dates for next year’s committee meetings were agreed for: February 4th 2014, May 27th 2014 and October 21st 2014 at the earlier time of 10:00 in the PHECC office Naas.

Approved by Chair: 

Date: 4th Feb 2014