

The Education and Standards Committee

Meeting Minutes

PHECC Office, Naas, May 27<sup>th</sup> 2014: 10:00

Present:

Valerie Small (Chair)  
Ray Lacey  
Maeve Donnolly  
Shane Mooney  
Róisín McGuire  
Mick Molloy  
Chris O' Connor  
Paul Lambert  
Brian Bruno  
Shane Knox

Apologies:

Glenna Woods  
Sarah Cain  
Michael Dineen

In Attendance

Brian Power  
Pauline Dempsey  
Jacqueline Egan  
Marian Spence

**1. Chairs business:**

1.1 Minutes and matters arising

The Chair welcomed all and acknowledged apologies. She welcomed new members including Brian Bruno who replaced Mark Dixon and Chris O' Connor as the rotational seat for private recognised institutions. Stephen Mc Mahon, the patient safety representative was not in attendance but his appointment to the committee was noted.

Pauline Dempsey reported on items 2.1 (Emergency Care) and 2.3 (EFR-BTEC) in the minutes of the previous meeting and confirmed that Emergency Care has been re-named *First Aid Response (FAR)* and both FAR the EFR-BTEC education and training standards were approved by Council at the meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> May. Associated fees will need to be decided at the July Council meeting. It is expected that PHECC will be ready to accept applications from recognised institutions and new applicant institutions soon after that. Mick Molloy raised the matter of the instructor student ratio of 1:6 which was also raised at the Council meeting and suggested it needs to be made explicit that this ratio relates only to the practical element of the FAR course.

On item 2.2 (Oxygen administration for OFA divers) she reported that any further development was on hold and the HSA were informed. Mick Molly asked that FAR be clearly distinguished from the OFA in both PHECC standards and in CPGs.

**Resolution:** That the Education and Standards Committee approve the minutes of the meeting held on the 4<sup>th</sup> February 2014.

**Proposed:** Mick Molloy

**Seconded:**

Róisín McGuire

### 1.2 Letters regards paramedic entry criteria

Correspondence from the Deputy Director to Mr Hughes in NASC UCD and reply was included in the meeting papers. The Chair reported this item was raised at Council and a resolution was agreed to the satisfaction of PHECC and NASC UCD. It was noted that the committee will revisit this item again when undertaking a review of all course approval criteria for NQEMT Paramedic course.

### 1.3 Road Safety Authority's ESDS Information booklet

The RSA booklet was distributed to members. Pauline Dempsey outlined her role on the ESDS Panel as the PHECC representative. The RSA are developing a section on their website where up-to-date information will be publically available. PHECC will engage with the 5 institutions directly to keep them informed. In general there was support from members that it was now timely for PHECC to consider delisting the PHECC driving standards. It was agreed that Council could consider an exit strategy in advance of the ESDS "Go-live" date expected in early 2015 when the RSA's ESDS is expected to be in operation.

It was noted that the ESDS was a voluntary standard and Shane Knox questioned if there will an obligation for institutions to train staff to the RSA standard. Training for new entrant paramedics is occurring but is not the norm for EMT students. Pauline stated that this would need further consideration by Council but added that every emergency service will need to develop plan for driver training for their own staff. Chris O Connor queried the RPL process in this regard; it was noted that this would be determined by the RSA.

### 1.4 Road Traffic Act No. 3 of 2014

A weblink to the new RTA was shown on the screen to inform the members how the definition of 'ambulance service' for the purposes of availing of traffic exemptions is now linked with PHECC approved/licenced CPG Providers. The impact of the legislation is yet to be determined. Members noted this item.

## **2. Education and Training Standards leading to PHECC awards:**

### 2.1 Cardiac First Response Community

### 2.2 Cardiac First Response Advanced

### 2.3 Emergency First Response

The above 3 standards were included in the meeting papers for consideration. Pauline Dempsey explained the rationale for the re-packaging of these standards which now include redrafted "course approval criteria" extracted from current Council Rules. She confirmed there were no material changes to the learning objectives to the three standards.

Mick Molloy raised the matter of PHECC's involvement with responder level courses and added it was not within the scope of the statutory instrument (SI). A short discussion ensued and it was agreed that previous Council's demonstrated support for Responders through setting education standards and CPGs in successive Strategic Plans. It was agreed that there would be merit in Council reaffirming its position for continued support for Responder level education and standards (including CPGs). PHECC

responder level standards including certification was commended by both Maeve Donnelly and Róisín McGuire who also noted the growing numbers of PHECC certificates issued in particular CFR.

**Resolutions:** The Education and Standards Committee recommends approval of the CFR Community, CFR Advanced and EFR standards incorporating course approval criteria to Council.

**Proposed:** Mick Molloy                      **Seconded:** Shane Knox

#### 2.4 EMS Call-taker and Dispatcher

Correspondence on this item from NAS and the PHECC was included. Pauline Dempsey sought opinion as to whether it was too early to undertake a comprehensive review of these standards as course completion numbers were very low. After discussion the following was recommended.

**Resolution:** That the Education & Standards Committee agreed to defer a review of the EMS Call-taker and Dispatcher standards until the next review cycle 2017/8.

**Proposed:** Mick Molloy                      **Seconded:** Shane Mooney

#### 2.5 Paramedic and Advanced Paramedic competency framework

The Paramedic and Advanced Paramedic competency framework was included. The Chair thanked Pauline Dempsey for her early work in this regard and added that such frameworks are already in place for many other healthcare professions. A discussion ensued regarding the uses and application of the framework. The sample framework which was based on PHECC's current education & training standards needed further development and she suggested an informal working group to assist. Mick Molloy, Paul Lambert and the Chair offered their assistance. There was general agreement for further development of the framework and subsequent drafts would be reviewed by the committee.

### **3. Recognition of Institutions and exams:**

#### 3.1 NQEMT exam - viewing and recheck procedures (EMT and P only)

This matter was carried over from the last meeting. Documents on this item were included. Jacqueline Egan provided the background to the development of PHECC's "viewing and recheck" QMP related to NQEMT examination as distinct from "Appeals procedures" A discussion ensued and amendments were proposed including (a) allowing candidates avail of an amalgamated viewing and recheck with one payments of €70 for both (b) in the case of a complaint being upheld that the QMP would state 'marks amended' instead of 1 mark awarded.

Róisín McGuire suggested it may be timely to review the weightings of the EMT MCQ exam. Jacqueline agreed that the exam weightings for EMT and Paramedic NQEMT exams would be included for review in line with publication of the 2014 edition of the CPG's.

Chris O' Connor suggested that during the time of a viewing the candidates could be given details on the particular question(s) to aid them to make a question specific complaint. Jacqueline confirmed that candidates were provided a coaching report during the viewing session. The report identified the questions answered incorrectly.

Shane Knox asked how examiner feedback is managed and Jacqueline as Chair of the exam quality group gave details of the current process and agreed to follow up any outstanding matters immediately.

### 3.2 Draft Council Rules for recognition of institutions

Draft rules were included in the meeting papers for consideration. Pauline Dempsey confirmed that this draft was already reviewed by our solicitors. Members were reminded that PHECC's SI states: *"...that Council shall recognise, in accordance with the rules made by Council, institutions providing education and training to persons....."*

**The goal** of the revised Rules is to enable PHECC to systematically and efficiently assess and manage institutions, not merely on application, but on an on-going basis. The new provisions are considered necessary to give Council and the public reassurance regarding the quality of PHECC certified training being delivered by institutions. New provisions are:

- the statutory declaration
- additional policies e.g.: quality assurance
- that the institution must have internal QA systems in place to systematically organise, deliver and monitor the quality of courses and PHECC awards/certificates.
- the revised 'quality review framework' incorporating site inspections (new) by a panel on behalf of Council
- possibility of sanctions
- Publication of inspection reports.

It was acknowledged that this was a large piece of work for the office. Assistance from consultants will be sought to assist with set up and implementation of the proposed Quality Review Framework i.e. selection, training and deployment of the Panel; conduct of site visits including risk assessment; and report writing. It is estimated that 20% of institutions will be visited annually both random and targeted. In conclusion, Pauline confirmed that PHECC's *Teaching Faculty Framework* was being reviewed externally and would be brought back to the committee for discussion later this year.

**Resolution:** That the Education & Standards Committee approve in principle the draft Council Rules for Recognised Institutions pending consideration by Council on legal advices.

**Proposed:** Shane Knox                      **Seconded:** Brian Bruno

### 3.3 Recognised institutions and courses – Annual Report (2013) - for noting

Pauline Dempsey confirmed the report had been considered by Council at the May meeting and items raised were:

- a) The low number of CFR Advanced certificates by the statutory services to their own staff. Letters were subsequently sent by the Deputy Director and both NAS and DFB have agreed to certify practitioners going forward.
- b) Facilitators' role and responsibilities in overall monitoring or QA of PHECC approved courses.
- c) Misinterpretation of the meaning of mentorship requirements for NQEMT courses.

It was noted that items b) and c) were best addressed by the planned review of the *Teaching Faculty Framework* and *Course Approval Criteria for NQEMT Courses* respectively.

Mick Molloy questioned about the leniency permitted to the two RIs regarding the incomplete faculty lists. In the absence of site inspections and sanctions engagement was the only route possible at the time but this would be managed differently when revised Council Rules are finalised and approved.

#### **4. AOB:**

Shane Knox again suggested there may be a requirement to increase the frequency of meetings. The Chair referred to the current workload capacity of the Executive and Pauline Dempsey. It was agreed that an additional meeting may be scheduled as required in 2014/5 as a result of Council's new Strategic Plan and other items.

Róisín McGuire suggested a workshop or similar for recognised institutions to keep them informed of new and revised rules, standards etc.

Chris O' Connor queried the "two attempts at NQEMT—EMT exams" and proposed three may be a fairer system before candidates have to repeat the full course. Pauline Dempsey confirmed that recognised institution may use their RPL policy to accommodate repeat candidates and this was already established practice.

Finally, Jacqueline confirmed that the 2013 NQEMT Examination Results Reports, published annually, are currently being compiled, will be ready for Council at their July meeting and included for information for this Committee's next meeting.

The next meeting will be held in October 21<sup>st</sup> at 10:00.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_





## Education and Standards Committee

### Meeting Minutes

**29/10/2014**

**PHECC Office Naas**

#### Present

Michael Dineen (Chair)  
Sarah Cain  
Ray Lacey  
Chris O'Connor  
Glenna Woods  
Paul Allen  
James O'Neill  
Brian Bruno  
Shane Knox  
Roisin McGuire

#### Apologies

Paul Lambert  
Mick Molloy  
Valerie Small  
Maeve Donnelly

#### In Attendance

Pauline Dempsey  
Jacqueline Egan  
Deirdre Borland  
Brian Power  
Barry O'Sullivan

### 1. Chair's Business

The vice chair, Michael Dineen who was standing in for Valerie Small welcomed group to the meeting. A minute's silence was observed in the memory of Dr Geoff King, Director of PHECC (RIP).

#### 1.1 Minutes and matters arising

Shane Knox asked that item 1.2 Letters regards paramedic entry criteria in the previous minutes be amended to state that it was said that some flexibility is permitted by recognised institutions; this statement was supported by Ray Lacey but refuted by Pauline Dempsey. Ms Dempsey read out the entry criteria direct from the paramedic education and training standard including provision for the mature student route and questioned what flexibility he was seeking. There is no change to the existing status quo.

Through the chair it was agreed to amend the minutes to reflect that this item was discussed.

**Resolution: That the minutes the Education and Standards Committee Meeting of May 27<sup>th</sup> 2014, be approved subject to the above amendment.**

**Proposed: Shane Knox  
Carried without dissent**

**Seconded: Roisin McGuire**

Pauline Dempsey spoke about item 2.5 Paramedic and AP competency framework and informed members that an RFT seeking was now live on E-tenders for research and design of a paramedic competency standard. This committee could expect to see the draft documents next year.

## 2. Education and Training Standards leading to PHECC awards:

### 2.1 Council Rules for Recognition of Institutions (V6)

Pauline Dempsey informed the committee that these rules were approved by Council at their October meeting. Shane Knox questioned the rationale for the statutory declaration and the consequences for those who sign it. Pauline Dempsey stated the declaration was in draft Council rules at the last committee meeting and no concerns were raised at that time. She stressed the importance of members reading the papers sent in advance of meetings to permit informed decision making. Further discussion was held over to AOB.

## 3. Recognition of Institutions and exams:

### 3.1 NQEMT exam - viewing and recheck policy (EMT and P only)

Jacqueline Egan informed the Committee that the Viewing and Recheck policy was drafted after input from this Committee and was approved by Council in September. Chris O'Connor expressed that offering RPL following 2 failed attempts of an NQEMT—EMT exam was difficult and failed to see how it might be accommodated. Ms Dempsey reiterated that management of RPL is the sole responsibility of faculty members of an RI. The acting director added that in some circumstances repeating the full course was the best option.

Shane Knox asked if a student can appeal the content of questions after an MCQ exam. Jacqueline Egan stated that currently the EMT candidate receives a printed score report following the MCQ exam detailing the scores received in all domains of the exam. She stressed that the appeals process does not apply to exam content as Council policy permits appeals on grounds of procedural matters and extenuating circumstances only and instead the Viewing and Recheck policy applies to exam content. A discussion ensued about candidates right to appeal exam content and clarification was sought on how an examination 'appeal' can be accommodated as a 'recheck' procedure. The committee was informed by Jacqueline Egan that in line with the quality management procedure for Viewing and Rechecks that members of the exam quality group are engaged to review exam question complaints and agree a decision for candidates.

Stephen McMahon suggested that there should be a risk framework constructed around the process to insure its integrity. The Chair sought agreement to discuss the viewing and recheck policy at a future meeting; Sarah Cain and Stephen McMahon concurred with this.

### 3.2 NQEMT Examination Results Report - 2013

EMT Exam results were included in the papers for noting.

Stephen McMahon indicated that it would be interesting to know the employment status of those qualifying with in particular EMT qualifications. Brian Power gave an overview of the Paramedic

and EMT career avenues in Ireland and it was acknowledged that many EMTs are not employed but practice on behalf of the voluntary auxiliary services or contribute to community resilience in some way.

James O'Neill asked if these results indicated 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> attempts. Jacqueline Egan informed him the future reports will show this breakdown.

#### 4. AOB

Shane Knox questioned the process relating to the Competency Standards RFT and queried the involvement of the Education and Standards committee. Barry O'Sullivan advised that procurement matters were a function reserved to the executive. He clarified that the outputs from the tender competition will be an agenda item for discussion by members in 2015 and that any subsequent tender award will be made subject to the imprimatur of Council.

Shane Knox questioned the inclusion of a statutory declaration in Council Rules for Recognition of Intuitions and stated he had grave concerns about the penalties involved and listed imprisonment and/or fines. Barry O'Sullivan outlined that the origin or rationale for this change was the absence of primary legislation and the only way to safeguard both the public and compliant RIS was through a statutory declaration process. Under the current system or status quo, PHECC's legal standing vis a vis monitoring and maintenance of RIS was weak. Following a reassessment of Council Rules for RIs, required by statute every 3 years, the legal advice given to Council was that inclusion of a statutory declaration was an appropriate mechanism to safeguard Council from legal challenges from institutions in the absence of primary legislation. Council considered the advice and approved the new rules which seek to safeguard both the public and those Institutions acting in accordance with the standards.

Barry O'Sullivan reminded the committee that this matter was an agenda item at their May meeting and no concerns or issues were raised. Shane Knox replied that he was not aware of the consequences of breaching the statutory declaration when the item was presented last May. Glenna Woods asked for an example of the concerns, but none were provided other than repeated dialogue regarding the possible penalties. For clarification Pauline Dempsey read out the requirements of the statutory declaration.

Stephen McMahon indicated his support for the declaration and that it was required to strengthen PHECC's legal standing. Sarah Cain briefed the committee that the Irish Heart Foundation require their training sites to sign a substantial legal contract.

Barry O'Sullivan sought clarification about the exact nature of the concerns/objections. He emphasised that a registered practitioner's ability to practice and administer medications is underpinned and supported by 3 legislative instruments and it was not unreasonable to expect that the operation of RIs, training these practitioners, should also be on a sound legal footing. A choice existed between the current informal arrangements and a legally supported regime. Corporate governance and best practice left the Council with no choice other than the latter including a statutory declaration. Shane Knox questioned the need for a statutory declaration and stated that he considered it to be 'heavy handed'. He also requested that these concerns and the penalties involved be brought to the attention of Council. Barry O'Sullivan through the Chair agreed to do this.

This concluded the meeting proper.



The meeting was followed by a consultation session on the draft Teaching Faculty Framework and this ended at 15:15.

Signed: 