

Education and Standards Committee

Meeting Minutes

6th May 2020

Video Conference and PHECC Offices, Naas @ 10:00am

Present:

Shane Knox (Chair)

Video Conference:

Paul Lambert (Vice Chair)
Peter McDaid (present for
agenda items 10 & 11)
Tom Brady
Frank Keane
Chris O'Connor
Róisín McGuire
Ray Lacey

Apologies:

Ben Heron
Gareth Elbell
Niamh O'Leary

Absent:

Adrian Murphy
Tess O'Donovan

In Attendance:

Brendan Cawley, PHECC Programme Manager
Jacqueline Egan, PHECC Programme Manager
Ricky Ellis, PHECC Programme Manager (VC)
Margaret Bracken, PHECC Committee Officer

1. Chair's Business

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, noting apologies received, and extended his appreciation to members attending via video conference, given the current COVID-19 situation.

2. Draft Minutes from 4th March 2020

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 4th March 2020 were reviewed and amendments were agreed.

Agenda item 6.1 EMT CPC simulation and patient contacts - Recommendation 2;

Paragraph 1: Following 'Chris O'Connor stated' add 'in accordance with their minutes'

Amend last sentence to 'He stated that the Quality and Safety Committee representatives acknowledged their lack of understanding of how simulation works and the group agreed that there is no reason why simulation cannot be used in every CPC cycle.'

Paragraph 4: Following 'It was stated that a pass or redemption will be required' add 'for remediation'.

Agenda item 6.3 AV recording of Paramedic Megacode/OSCE

Amend 'Chris O'Connor stated that UL have cameras that they use in their assessments' to 'Chris O'Connor stated that he has cameras that he has used for assessments'

Resolution: That the Education and Standards Committee approve the minutes of the meeting held on 4th March 2020 subject to agreed amendments.

Proposed: Róisín McGuire

Seconded: Paul Lambert

Carried without dissent

2.1 Matters Arising

It was questioned if the level of detail which is recorded in meeting minutes is necessary. It was suggested that a brief overview of discussions, a list of action items and resolutions be recorded. A member expressed that a high level of details is required as discussions are very technical and resolutions need to be agreed. The Chair advised that the Committee over the years have requested that more detail be recorded in the minutes and it is difficult to find a balance.

3. Examinations

Jacqueline Egan, PHECC Programme Manager for Examinations, updated the Committee.

3.1 Update

On the recommendation of the Education and Standards Committee, Council recently approved the resolution to share NQEMT Exam candidate results data with the related RI in a GDPR compliant manner. Legal opinion was sought which advised that successful candidate data can be shared with the RI subject to the candidate selecting an opt-in to share box on the exam application form. All paramedic students who commence a course in any paramedic level RI after 20th April are required to complete the revised application form. The paramedic application form has been revised, circulated to RIs and posted on the PHECC website. Associated correspondence and revised application form were included in the meeting papers. As the Committee was informed at the March meeting, the process of paramedic candidate results sharing will be assessed following implementation, for a period of three months, and the sharing of EMT successful candidate results will follow.

A schedule of NQEMT Examinations for the period May to July 2020 inclusive was included in the meeting papers for information. Ms Egan informed the members that Council will be updated at their 7th May meeting regarding the schedule of NQEMT examinations and a decision will be sought as to whether exams scheduled for this period can proceed due to the current COVID-19 situation. It was stated that the UL venue can accommodate candidates for the May short written answers exam with adequate social distancing in place. The NASC Ballinasloe paramedic short written answers exam is scheduled to proceed unless otherwise advised by Council. The Chair advised that the NASC MCQ and OSCEs which were scheduled for two classes in June will not take place and will be rescheduled to later in the year. An updated schedule will be circulated to Committee members.

3.2 AV Trial of Paramedic OSCEs

At their March meeting Council considered the Education and Standards Committee resolution *'that the Education and Standards Committee wish to advise Council that a trial of AV recording of Paramedic OSCEs will be commenced for the purpose of dealing with candidate viewings, rechecks and appeals.'* Following discussion, Council accepted that a vast amount of work has been done to date and requested that the Education and Standards Committee provide Council with a full business case to allow them to make a better-informed decision. The Chair stated that writing a business case is the function of the Executive, not the Committee, and that the business case should be developed by the Executive and presented to Council.

'Draft Council Policy on Audio Visual Technology in NQEMT Summative OSCEs at Paramedic Level' was included in the meeting papers. Also included in the meeting papers was 'A Critical Review of the PHECC Paramedic NQEMT Exam Standard' and presented as Agenda item 3.4.

The members discussed and the Committee noted their disappointment that the Critical Review of the Paramedic Exam Standard Recommendations Report does not support AV recording of paramedic OSCEs. The Chair stated that as this Committee has been trying to get AV recording introduced now for some time, to provide a process for QA, review and examination integrity, and it has not progressed, he was happy not to try and progress it any further until further researched evidence is provided. However, it was stated that there is evidence available to support AV recording of exams and it is widely used and the Chair welcomed the fact that Frank Keane volunteered to carry out further research to gather evidence in support of AV recording of paramedic OSCEs for discussion at the next Committee meeting in June. The evidence will be presented to Council thereafter and approval sought to implement AV recording of paramedic OSCEs.

3.3 Return to Practice Framework

Revised 'Draft Return to Practice Framework' was included in the meeting papers for discussion. The framework was developed by the Quality and Safety Committee and revised by the subgroup, which comprised of three members of the Quality and Safety Committee and three members of the Education and Standards Committee, convened by Jacqueline Egan and chaired by Chris O'Connor, to discuss Return to Practice Framework. EMT Simulation and patient contacts were also included on the agenda for the subgroup meeting. The members agreed that international evidence from other healthcare regulators would inform that discussion, development, and publication of a policy for consultation before returning to Council.

Brendan Cawley provided an update. The Registrar requests that the Education and Standards Committee consider the practical implications for education and training in addition to the implications for safe and competent practice. The outcome of the deliberations should guide the design and implementation of appropriate routes for registrants to return to safe and competent practice, standard, curriculum, RI implications, certification, capacity, costs, etc.

A discussion ensued. The Chair questioned why this Committee is being asked to consider a return to practice framework as it is not included in the terms of reference of the Education and Standards Committee. He stated that it is within the remit of the Quality and Safety Committee and registration and clear direction is required from the Director and Council regarding this. It was stated that there is a paramedic education standard and an additional requirement for a return to practice standard was questioned. The Committee were of the opinion that it was the responsibility of inactive paramedics or those whose registration has lapsed, to acquire the level of education expected to meet the standard in order to re-register.

It was advised that there is an educational component which requires input from the Education and Standards Committee and the operational component is the expertise of the Quality and Safety Committee.. It was stated that there should be a space on the PHECC register for individuals returning to practice. It was noted that temporary registration and an RPL process should be included in the return to practice framework. A suggestion was made to consult with the RIs and ask for their feedback.

Following discussion it was agreed that clarification should be sought from the Director regarding this Committee's role in developing a return to practice framework. It was agreed to convene the cross-committee subgroup for further review of the framework and submit thereafter to the Education and Standards Committee for further consideration. Clarification is to be requested from Council as to what Committee is responsible for return to practice.

3.4 Critical Review of the PHECC Paramedic NQEMT Exam Standard

Critical Review Report of the Paramedic NQEMT Exam Standard Recommendations Report was included in the meeting papers. Due to the large volume of information included in the Report it was agreed that more time is required to review it. The Committee agreed to defer to a later date for further review and discussion.

4. Recognised Institution / Approved Training Institution Report

Current RI/ATI status and course approvals were provided in the meeting papers.

4.1 RI Outcome Reports – Renewals and Practitioner Course Applications

Mr Cawley referred to the Order of Malta Ireland RI renewal application included in the meeting papers. The members reviewed the report and the following resolution was passed.

Resolution: That the Education and Standards Committee approve the Order of Malta Ireland RI renewal application.

Proposed: Chris O'Connor

Seconded: Róisín McGuire

Carried without dissent

5. Quality Review Framework (QRF) – status

RI/ATI QRF composite reports were included in the meeting papers. Brendan Cawley provided an overview. The volume of information and detail in the reports and the number of reports for review was noted. The members concurred that more time is required to review all of the reports. It was suggested that an overview with a conclusion and outcome may be sufficient going forward. For those which are problematic more detail could be provided.

The Chair sought clarification on issues which were raised at the March meeting regarding the QRF process and assessors. Mr Cawley advised that due to the current COVID-19 situation it has not been possible to carry out site visits but it is his intention to do so. An update was sought on an engagement event for RIs/ATIs to enable them to provide feedback on the QRF process. Mr Cawley advised that due to the current crises it is anticipated that an event will be planned for early next year and an online engagement event is being considered in the meantime. As stated at the March meeting, members reiterated the importance of the feedback process being facilitated by non-PHECC personnel to ensure that meaningful feedback is received.

Subsequent to discussion the following recommendation to Council was agreed.

Resolution: That the Education & Standards Committee approve the Quality Review Framework Composite Reports as included in the meeting papers.

Proposed: Róisín McGuire

Seconded: Ray Lacey

Carried without dissent

6. Blended/Online Learning

Brendan Cawley provided an overview. PHECC has received a number of queries and clarifications requests on the application processes and delivery of blended/online learning for PHECC programmes. Blended/online learning is a modern, innovative, and interactive approach to instruction and learning. A blended/online/flipped approach will allow the learning experience to be delivered through a combination of online instruction,

activities, assessment, and classroom-based learning. During the current situation and beyond, it is a flexible way of engaging with a PHECC programme and allows for an accessible, modern learning style. In order to comply with PHECC's approval process, and our commitment to comply with Education & Training standards, RIs/ATIs may be required to provide clear evidence of course review and updated learning methodologies. It is proposed to engage experts in the relevant areas, engage with Institutions currently delivering courses in a similar format, conduct a pilot and develop assessment procedures for this method of delivery. Mr Cawley sought guidance from the Committee on putting a structure in place for blended/online learning.

The Committee also agreed that developing on-line learning, blended learning resources etc. is the sole function of the applicant RI/ATI and not the role of PHECC, as agreed previously by Council.

A discussion ensued. The members expressed their support for blended/online learning noting that the Education and Training Standards reference that PHECC support blended/online learning and the expertise is already there for this. Caution was noted with regard to the practical element being done in this format with respect to ensuring that the required equipment is available. It was advised that a structure for blended/online learning will need to be well designed and the importance of engagement and interaction with RIs/ATIs at consultation stage and throughout the process was noted.

Subsequent to discussion the Committee agreed the following.

Resolution: That the Education & Standards Committee agree to progress blended online learning applications from RIs/ATIs as an approach to deliver PHECC recognised courses.

Proposed: Chris O'Connor **Seconded:** Paul Lambert

Carried without dissent

7. Practitioner Education and Training Standards Review - Crowe

Draft Reports 'Review of Education and Training Standards and Competency Framework Development' carried out by Crowe were included in the meeting papers for information. A discussion ensued. The members concurred that the volume and level of detail in the draft reports is quite substantial and more time is required to review them before feedback can be provided. Brendan Cawley informed that Crowe will be presenting the reports to the Committee at their June meeting.

It was agreed, in preparation for the June meeting, that a meeting for the purpose of review and discussion of the Crowe reports will be held on 27th May. Mr Cawley will circulate a feedback form to the members and questions for Crowe will be collated prior to the 27th May meeting. Mr Cawley was requested to recirculate the specifications documents which were provided to Crowe for the purpose of carrying out the Education and Training Standards review and competency framework.

8. Teaching Faculty Framework (TFF)

Brendan Cawley provided an update.

8.1 Working Group – update

Members of the Teaching Faculty Framework Working Group met on 4th March 2020 following the Education and Standards Committee meeting. Significant work was progressed and it was identified at the meeting that in order to further progress the work in establishing learning outcomes for Instructor, Assistant Tutor,

Tutor and Facilitator standard, that a meeting with QQI would be beneficial. Members of the TFF Working Group had an online meeting with representatives from QQI on 23rd April to discuss alignment of Instructor, Assistant Tutor, Tutor and Facilitator levels with the National Framework of Qualifications. It is envisaged that a PHECC qualification should match a nationally recognised qualification. TFFWG work is ongoing in this area.

Roisin McGuire informed the group that QQI would prefer that we use an existing further education course that meets PHECC requirements and standards. Ms McGuire reminded the Committee that, as previously agreed, current applications for Instructor, Assistant Tutor, Tutor, Facilitators, and courses which have commenced for these levels, must be for review under the current standard and accepted pending the approval by Council of new standards for assessment of such applications. She proposed that education programmes currently available be identified that meet PHECC standards and that a PHECC course module be developed.

A discussion followed. The Chair advised that it was agreed at a previous Committee meeting and circulated to RIs/ATIs that courses which have already commenced would be honoured. It was stated that there are various education programmes available and we should be encouraging people to take up these courses and it is not necessary to develop a new course. It was stated that the Teaching Council of Ireland recognise many further education programmes and that further education award holders should be recognised and accepted by PHECC going forward.

It was agreed that the TFF working group will compile a list of existing programmes available for Instructor, Assistant Tutor, Tutor and Facilitator, for review and consideration of the Committee.

8.2 EA Assessment

PHECC made the decision to facilitate the utilisation of the current Education Award applicants in the capacity of Tutor and Assistant Tutor on a COVID-19 temporary recognition basis until 30th June. A panel of Facilitators was established through an expression of interest process to assess current applications and supporting documentation at Assistant Tutor and Tutor levels. This assessors panel met on 1st April to discuss and review current applications. Applications review training was provided by Brian Power and Ricky Ellis, PHECC Programme Managers. The group agreed on a uniform process of assessment for current applications and supporting documentation. The current applications and portfolios at Assistant Tutor and Tutor levels are currently being formally verified and assessed for completeness during this temporary period. If successful, the applicant will then be converted to full recognition on an individual basis. It is envisaged that all the current applications would be fully reviewed during the period of temporary recognition. A uniform portfolio template is also being developed to streamline the assessment process for future applications.

A discussion ensued. The Chair sought clarification on the decision to facilitate the utilisation of the current EA applicants on a COVID-19 temporary recognition basis stating that the idea of a temporary tutor is not appropriate. Mr Cawley identified that this was a temporary provision to support the Institution reacting to the COVID-19 situation. The Chair stated that the process utilised since the inception of the framework, was to review the application forwarded by a Facilitator, and that this was a straightforward review, feedback and approve/not approve process, which typically took less than one month, and asked why this had now changed, without the agreement of the Committee.

The EA assessment process and current applications was discussed. Mr Cawley clarified that PHECC review applications and supporting documentation submitted by facilitators. The facilitator identifies any gaps

before submitting to PHECC, however Mr Cawley advised that there are gaps and irregularities with some current applications and supporting documentation. Applications are being assessed and successful applicants will be notified, further information will be sought elsewhere if necessary. The Chair made reference to a 28 day turnaround period however Mr Cawley was unaware of a 28 day process but will look into this. The Chair asked for the group to revert to the former turnaround times and that any changes to the application process should be considered first by this Committee.

It was suggested that a quality assurance process be put in place to quality assure facilitators and ensure that the requirements have been met. Mr Cawley requested that PHECC devise a standard portfolio template, the Committee agreed that this would streamline and fast track future applications.

The Chair questioned whether RIs/ATIs have been informed that the EA application process has reopened as agreed by the Committee at their November 2019 meeting. It was clarified that RIs/ATIs have not been informed. The Committee agreed that RIs/ATIs are to be informed that the application process for EA awards has reopened.

Mr Cawley will feedback to the Committee.

9. Recognition of Professional Qualifications – stats and update

A summary of recent activities in the area of recognition of overseas qualifications was presented. Brendan Cawley provided an update. There are 5 applications for recognition of professional qualifications currently being assessed.

Given the current COVID-19 situation, there has also been a notable increase in the number of full Recognition of Overseas Qualifications applications. An Expression of Interest was released to extend the panel of assessors. The closing date for this was Monday 4th May. PHECC Registration have developed a pathway to facilitate practitioners who are seeking to return from abroad to also assist with the COVID-19 response, both previous PHECC registrants and new registrants. This is a COVID-19 Special Division and is enacted until 31st July 2020. There are currently 16 overseas applicants on the COVID-19 special division register. The Chair sought clarification on the practitioner levels of these temporary registrants and asked that this be included in future papers. Mr Cawley will revert with that information.

10. CPC

Brendan Cawley provided an update.

10.1 Update

At the March Education and Standards Committee meeting the Committee agreed to accept the alternative CPC Programme implementation as the best current option available as per PHECC Director's proposal and that CPC for paramedics and advanced paramedics be implemented forthwith. A summary of the proposed alternative implementation document and Committee resolution was provided to Council. The Committee requested Council to reconsider their October 2019 resolution which states that CPC for paramedics & advanced paramedics is on hold as there are not adequate resources in place to support the project. Council await the 2020 Letter of Determination from the DoH. After consideration Council recommend acceptance of the alternative implementation initiative for the CPC Programme for advanced paramedics and paramedics, pending receipt of DoH letter of determination.

10.2 Simulation

At the March Committee meeting Paul Lambert relayed that he had produced a document with his thoughts on CPC simulation which could form the basis of a guidance document. It was proposed that a guidance document be developed within the next few weeks and that simulation be introduced into CPC at all levels without delay. Guidance document submitted by Mr Lambert was included in the meeting papers for review. The Chair thanked Mr Lambert for a very informative guidance document which will be very beneficial to the RIs who will be implementing simulation. The Chair suggested that he submit the guidance document, together with the CPC document, which was produced by the CPC subgroup in 2017, to Council and request what additional information they require. Mr Lambert consented to presentation of the guidance document to Council.

It was highlighted that voluntary EMTs may not be in a position to collect the required 12 patient contacts due to the current COVID-19 situation. The majority of their duties are patient transport and may not involve direct contact with patients. The Committee advised that this issue needs to be brought to the attention of Council as a matter of urgency. It was stated that this as an opportune time to introduce EMT simulation.

Subsequent to discussion the following recommendation to Council was agreed.

Resolution: That the Education & Standards Committee highlight the urgency of the need for introducing CPC simulation, given the lack of patient contact opportunities for the majority of volunteer EMTs, and that consideration will be given to recognising EMTs for COVID-19 related duties as part of CPC.

Proposed: Roisin McGuire

Seconded: Peter McDaid

Carried without dissent

11. AOB

There being no other business the meeting concluded at 13:45pm approximately.

The Chair thanked all for their attendance.

The next meeting of the Education and Standards Committee will be held on 17th June 2020.

A meeting to review the Crowe Draft Reports 'Review of Education and Training Standards and Competency Framework Development' will be held on 27th May.

Signed: _____

Chair

Date: _____

17/June/2020