

Education and Standards Committee

Meeting Minutes

4th September 2019

PHECC Offices, Naas @ 10:00am

Present:

Shane Knox (Chair)
Paul Lambert (Vice Chair)
Gareth Elbell
Peter McDaid
Ray Lacey
Ben Heron
Róisín McGuire (agenda items 8 & 12)

Apologies:

Tom Brady
Niamh O'Leary
Frank Keane
Chris O'Connor

In Attendance:

Richard Lodge, PHECC Director (absent for agenda items 8 & 12)
Kathleen Walsh, PHECC PDO
Margaret Bracken, PHECC Committee Officer

Absent:

Adrian Murphy
Tess O'Donovan

1. Chair's Business

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted. Condolences were expressed to Ricky Ellis, PHECC Programme Development Officer, on the death of his brother, and to John Lally, PHECC ICT Manager, on the death of his father in-law.

2. Draft Minutes from 24th July 2019

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 24th July 2019 were reviewed. Following discussion some amendments were highlighted and agreed by the members.

Agenda item 4.4 NQEMT Exams Report 2018

- Resolution; add full stop after 'is not published' and delete 'pending a review of the current database functionality'.

Resolution: That the Education and Standards Committee recommend to Council that the NQEMT Examination 2018 results data, as presented to the Committee, is not published.

- The sentence 'Ms Egan is to follow up with the examinations coordinator with regard to the RIs receiving candidate results following release of results to the candidates, as per the previous Education and Standards Committee resolution' is to be replaced with; 'It was agreed as per the previous Education and Standards Committee resolution that following release of results to the candidates the RIs will be informed simultaneously'.

Agenda item 4.5 Examiner Training

The following was not captured in the draft minutes and is to be included;

‘The Committee agreed that a meeting of the Exam Quality Panel be convened to nominate a Chair of the Exam Quality Panel and to select criteria for extending the Panel, with nomination and selection criteria to be presented to the Education and Standards Committee for ratification’.

Resolution: That the Education & Standards Committee approve the minutes of the meeting held on 24th July 2019 subject to agreed amendments.

**Proposed: Paul Lambert
Carried without dissent**

Seconded: Peter McDaid

2.1 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

3. Examinations

In the absence of Jacqueline Egan, PHECC Programme Development Officer for Examinations, Kathleen Walsh updated the Committee.

3.1 Paramedic Examination Standard

At the July Committee meeting members spoke about the need to modify the specifications for the expression of interest (EOI) seeking an educationalist to review the draft paramedic NQEMT examination standard and then recirculate the request for tender to a wider pool of people. An EOI is being progressed currently. There are two enquiries and no submission to date. The closing date for submissions is Friday 6th September. The working group will be convened to review submissions the week of 9th September and the tender will be awarded by 13th September. A report will be submitted within eight weeks. To allow for this timeframe, Ms Walsh requested that the next scheduled Committee meeting of 6th November be changed to 20th November, as the report should be available to present to the Committee. A provisional meeting date of 20th November was agreed and will be confirmed by Ms Walsh following the closing date for tender submissions.

3.2 Exam Quality Panel

The Chair noted his concern that the selection criteria for nomination of Chairperson and new members to the Exam Quality Panel was not submitted to the Education and Standards Committee for approval prior to the selection process. Paul Lambert clarified the selection process to the members advising that the selection criteria was agreed following an intensive discussion by the Panel members. Following discussion the Committee agreed that a robust selection process was applied by the Exam Quality Panel and accepted the selection criteria retrospectively.

3.2.1 Selection and nomination of Chair

A paper poll which included names of all Exam Quality Panel members was circulated to the Exam Quality Panel. Following a secret paper ballot, the scores were counted by the Examinations Support Officer and confirmed by Jacqueline Egan. The result of the ballot was by a unanimous majority and Exam Quality Panel members chose David Sherwin as Chairperson of the Panel. David Sherwin accepted

the nomination. A policy document on management of Examiner Panel in cases where examiner issues may arise will be presented to the Education and Standards Committee for consideration in due course.

There was unanimous agreement from the Committee members to the nomination of David Sherwin as Chairperson of the Exam Quality Panel. It was agreed that the timespan of this term will be for the duration of the current Education and Standards Committee.

Resolution: That the Education & Standards Committee agree the nomination of David Sherwin as Chair to the Exam Quality Panel for the duration of the current Education and Standards Committee.

Proposed: Ben Heron Seconded: Gareth Elbell
Carried without dissent

3.2.2 New Members

The Exam Quality Panel members met and reviewed a document which included the existing 74 PHECC examiners. Members were allocated time to choose ten names from the existing list. The selection criteria was agreed as; a) professionalism; b) consistently demonstrated a high level of examination process experience; c) consistently demonstrated a high standard in examining skills; d) communication skills. There was a requirement to also include EMTs in the nominations. The scoring was collected electronically on an excel matrix.

It was agreed to expand the Panel by six new members based on current demands, availability, and the requirements of PHECC examinations going forward. Following a very thorough selection process, six examiners, three Advanced Paramedics, two Paramedics and one EMT, met all of the criteria and had the highest scores. Following appointment by the Education and Standards Committee the six examiners selected will be invited to join the Exam Quality Panel. All new nominees will attend examiner training in October and will be shadowed for a period at OSCE exams until deemed as having reached a suitably high examining standard.

Paul Lambert imparted that the Panel selected the new members based on their experience, skills and professionalism as PHECC examiners. The Chair suggested consideration be given to including more EMTs on the Panel. It was remarked that currently there is a small number of EMT PHECC Examiners.

Following discussion the Committee agreed to ratify the selection criteria process for the Exam Quality Panel membership and approved the six new members to the Exam Quality Panel.

Resolution: That the Education & Standards Committee ratify the selection criteria process for the Exam Quality Panel membership and as such accept the nominations from the Exam Quality Panel.

Proposed: Gareth Elbell Seconded: Paul Lambert
Carried without dissent

3.3 Audio Visual (AV) Policy for Paramedic Examination

At the AV working group meeting on 24th July a report on recording and/or videoing examination candidates as part of a formal examination/assessment process was presented by Jacqueline Egan and reviewed by the group. The report consisted of a summary of the outcome of recent correspondence with

academic institutions and PHECC recognised institutions in addition to a desk top review. Jacqueline Egan was requested to draft a policy and present to the Education and Standards Committee seeking recommendation for approval by Council. Ms Egan presented a summary from the AV working group to the PHECC Director and the Executive Management Team and was directed to seek clarification from the Committee on concerns raised. A summary of the meeting of the working group and a report of the concerns of the Executive was included in the meeting papers. Kathleen Walsh provided a summary powerpoint presentation to the members on areas for agreement by the Committee prior to consideration by Council.

There was a robust discussion. The Chair stated that the AV working group decided the rationale and proposals for recording and/or videoing examinations and any concerns from the Executive should be considered by the working group. The Director stated that AV is being used by academic institutions for training purposes and he questioned why no other Irish academic institutions use AV for professional registration exams. He stated that currently there are no policies and no evidence for recording examinations that he is aware of. The Chair stated that there is no doubt about the validity of AV for examinations. He advised that the National Ambulance Service College have been using AV for all of their examinations for a number of years, since the devolvement of the AP and Paramedic OSCEs to the RIs, and that this practice had been endorsed by PHECC.

The purpose of video recordings was discussed and it was advised that recordings will provide an element of protection to candidates, PHECC examiners and Quality members, that is not currently available, and can also be used for the purpose of appeals. It was noted that presently candidates cannot appeal an OSCE and the Chair remarked that this is an unfair process. Paul Lambert noted that on the day of the OSCE the Quality member notes and acts on any concerns reported by candidates. Kathleen Walsh relayed that the Examinations Handbook is currently being revised and suggested that concerns raised regarding appealing OSCEs could be considered as part of this review.

Paul Lambert cautioned, if introducing an AV pilot, to keep in mind the pass and failure rate at EMT level, the quality of equipment, costs, and extra resources required, including additional staff. He suggested the use of a national exam centre with AV already prefixed. The Director advised that cost may be an issue. It was noted that the cost of AV equipment is very low and that quality is the most important factor.

The Chair stated that we should not wait for other academic institutions to introduce AV of examinations and PHECC should take the initiative on this. He noted that the AV pilot will identify any issues. The Director stated that he supported AV recording of examinations in principle but before a proposal for a pilot can be made to Council all of the concerns regarding the ownership and use of the recordings need to be addressed. The Committee agreed that AV for paramedic examinations was referred to the AV working group and therefore, any suggestions or the additional points for consideration as discussed by the Committee should be referred to the working group, and their recommendations reported back to the Committee.

3.4 CPC Simulation

As directed by Education and Standards Committee the CPC simulation working group and Exam Quality Panel completed their work on the EMT CPC assessment sheets. Following presentation of the outcome of the work to the PHECC Director and Executive Management Team, Jacqueline Egan was directed to seek clarification from the Committee on concerns raised. A report of the Executive's concerns was included in the meeting papers. Kathleen Walsh provided a summary powerpoint presentation to the members on

areas for agreement by the Committee prior to consideration by Council.

The Chair remarked that the concerns of the Executive related to queries regarding the introduction of EMT CPC which has already been introduced and is on the PHECC website. He proposed that these concerns be referred to the CPC subcommittee for their recommendations, that the PHECC website be amended. Gareth Elbell remarked that simulation is an assessment educational tool for EMTs and should not result in a pass or a fail which is unfair to candidates. Members were requested to submit any concerns or additional issues to Ms Walsh for presenting to the CPC subcommittee.

The Committee agreed that the issues raised by the Executive and any other issues from the members are to be referred to the CPC subcommittee and their recommendations are to be presented to the Committee.

4. Recognised Institution/Approved Training Institution Report

A summary of current RI/ATI status and course approvals was provided in the meeting papers.

4.1 Outcome Reports

Ms Walsh referred to the outcome report for renewal status for a recognised institution for Medical Emergency Medical Training. The members reviewed the report.

Resolution: That the Education & Standards Committee approve the outcome report for Medical Emergency Training for RI renewal status.

Proposer: Ben Heron

Seconded: Ray Lacey

Carried without dissent

5. FAR Overview/Status

Kathleen Walsh provided an overview. She noted that PHECC Executive regularly meet with the Executive of the Health and Safety Authority with the last meeting held on the 19th July. Topics of discussion included QQI deactivation of the OFA course, certification activity, duration of the FAR recertification course, the scope of practice for FAR, monitoring of FAR provision by instructors re the issue of non-approved providers advertising PHECC courses. PHECC Council discussed its Schedule of Fees at its April meeting with consideration of FAR certification fee changes to be submitted to the Minister for Health for his decision. At the RI and ATI engagement event held this past April, the Director informed attendees that the FAR certificate fee along with other PHECC fees was under review.

The increase of the schedule of fees has generated significant social media attention particularly amongst FAR instructors that are affiliated or subcontracting with a PHECC RI or ATI. Recently the Director received a formal letter sent to the Minister for Health by over 30 instructors expressing their concerns. The Director issued a response to these individuals and the Director liaised with Department of Health representatives regarding the status of FAR (including certification issues) to inform any potential future communications by the Minister. Copy correspondence was included in the meeting papers.

The Chair questioned how many instructors were registered for occupational first aid instruction previously with HSA, and its governance for instructors. Ms Walsh indicated that there were over 700 instructors registered with OFAAA which was responsible for managing the OFA process for HSA. She noted there are 51 PHECC ATIs/RIs providing FAR courses and the number of instructors they have recertified from OFA to FAR is

not known. Gareth Elbell queried if FAR instructors are listed as faculty in cases where they are affiliated or subcontracting with a PHECC RI/ATI and who is monitoring this. Kathleen Walsh advised that the QRF process including onsite reviews should gather this information.

The Chair referred to the transition from the HSA/OFAAA to PHECC for first aid training standard, noting that a very short timeframe was provided to expect PHECC to take over. He noted that there is criticism about the FAR process and a review of the process is urgently required.

Kathleen Walsh referred to a tabled document of correspondence from the Chairman of the Association of First Aid Trainers Ireland (AFATI) which was circulated to the members. The correspondence raised concerns about the language/terminology for the FAR course and acknowledged the importance of students' learning capabilities across the spectrum of services and workplaces.

Paul Lambert suggested that the AFATI should relay their concerns to the Medical Advisory Committee regarding the use of language terminology used in the responder CPGs. It was noted that responder CPGs are more extensive now and the FAR standard and CPGs should be reviewed using more simple terminology. The increase in fees and the cost of recertification for FAR certificates was discussed. The members discussed the issue of quality assurance of FAR instructors. The Chair stated that evidence of quality assurance needs to be provided and site visits by PHECC should be carried out. Paul Lambert stated that there should be a policy and a robust process in place to monitor instructors on a regular basis, and he suggested that sign-in sheets be requested and evidence of examinations provided. The Chair stated that the QRF process is complicated for quality assuring FAR instructors and a more simplified process is required. He noted that individuals are producing responder certificates that are not PHECC certs and non PHECC approved FAR instructors cannot be monitored. The Director advised that unauthorised use of the PHECC logo is being examined at present.

The Chair stated that the AFATI have a valuable contribution to make to the review process and he suggested the formation of a responder course subcommittee, recommended by the Director, with representation from the AFATI. The Director suggested that representatives from the AFATI be invited to present their concerns to the Committee. He relayed that he has invited the AFATI to formally meet PHECC.

The Director was requested by the Committee to extend an invitation to two members of the AFATI to present to the Education & Standards Committee at the November Committee meeting on issues relating to the content of the FAR course and any other education concerns. Kathleen Walsh requested members to forward feedback to her to share with the HSA. The Chair suggested to request from the HSA when its regulations/legislation will be changed for assuring that PHECC FAR course/certification is the accepted certificate for the workplace and what steps are PHECC taking now to assure governance of FAR course/certifications. A change from current certification process for on line completion was also suggested.

6. Review/Revision of Practitioner Education and Training Standards – Crowe Summary

A project update report from Crowe on the Education and Training Standards Review and Revision was included in the meeting papers. Kathleen Walsh relayed that Crowe are conducting stakeholder interviews at present and are on target with the project which is progressing well. The members were requested to forward feedback to Ms Walsh for Crowe.

7. Evaluation of AP Programme - update

Kathleen Walsh provided an update. Following on from Council's resolution for an evaluation of the AP Programme conducted by UCD CEMS an expression of interest was conducted for a supplier. There was no suitable candidate from the initial request conducted in July. Based on comments received from some of the respondents the specifications were subsequently revised to provide more direction and clarity. The document was recirculated earlier this month and a successful tenderer is due to be confirmed in the coming week. It is anticipated that the project will commence early next month with a final report to be provided by the end of November 2019. Evaluation of AP Programme will be discussed at the Council meeting on 12th September and a further update will be available thereafter.

8. Teaching Faculty Framework (TFF) Working Group progress

Róisín McGuire provided an update on the progress of the TFF working group.

Members of the Teaching Faculty Framework Working Group met on 22nd August. The focus of the meeting was to progress the development of Draft Instructor Standards. Proposal and appendices were included in the meeting papers for discussion by the Committee. A survey was circulated in mid-August to all PHECC facilitators for their review and critique of the Educational Award Nomination Form and Renewal Form. There were fifteen EA Application Form Responses and eleven EA Renewal Form Responses. The survey feedback is currently being analysed to inform the revision of these forms and for the development of additional guidance and direction for completion by applicants.

Ms McGuire advised that the learning outcomes need to be as simple as possible. The Chair advised that individuals on current programmes will be under the current standard of certification. Kathleen Walsh stated that there is more work to be done on the TFF and this is a work in progress. The introduction of a grandfathering process was discussed and Ms McGuire advised that a policy document for recognition of prior learning will need to be designed which will identify any gaps. Gareth Elbell sought clarification on whether tutor awards will be phased out and be replaced by educator awards. Ms McGuire noted that the group was seeking to align the TFF learning outcomes for future instructor standards with QQI standards for its various levels of the National Framework of Qualifications. Ms McGuire asked the members for any additions to the draft instructor standards and any recommendations or suggestions for the working group. She stated that the group was also developing criteria for subject matter experts utilised in the delivery of PHECC courses.

The Chair acknowledged the extensive work carried out by Ms McGuire and the working group. The Committee thanked Ms McGuire on a very informative update.

9. Quality Review Framework Cycle 2 - Status

QRF Panel Formation

Kathleen Walsh provided an overview of the status of the QRF implementation. Quality Review Panel members received initial training in July for their roles as assessors. The first cycle of onsite reviews is being planned for the 3rd week of October extending to the week of 14th November. Twelve site reviews are proposed to include approved training institutions and recognised institutions (EMT level). Confirmation is pending from the identified sites.

Eight new panel members selected for this first stage of reviews are to be supported by the previous QRF chair and panel member for every review and onsite meeting. The objective of such intensive guidance is to prepare this initial cohort to act as lead reviewers/assessors within the composition of the QRF panel. It is

anticipated that QRF composite reports providing the findings of the desktop review involving the RI/ATI Self-Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan along with the onsite review findings will be readied for the Education and Standards Committee in early Q1 2020.

10. Recognition of Qualifications – Stats

A summary of recent activities in the area of recognition of overseas qualifications was presented. Kathleen Walsh relayed that currently there are two completed applications and six files in various stages of progression. Brexit preparation meeting with the Department of Health and other healthcare regulators has yet to be confirmed for early September. The UK will be considered a third country following Brexit for the assessment of applications.

11. CPC portfolios guidance to registrants

Kathleen Walsh provided an overview. At the July meeting it was agreed that Ms Walsh and Committee members who are CPC assessors would link with the EMT CPC Coordinator to consider the issues for further guidance and look at what other regulators provide for guidance on such matters. Draft document 'Guidance for registrants when completing their Continuous Professional Competence Portfolio with respect to the Data Protection Act 2018 (General Data Protection Regulations)' was included in the meeting papers. This document was developed to ensure clarity for registrants' compliance with the Data Protection Act of 2018. With the introduction of e-portfolio on the horizon, PHECC are issuing a reminder to all registrants on their obligations in relation to Data Protection when completing both paper and e-portfolios. It was shared that previous assessments for CPC some registrants had been keeping personal data of patients they met beyond what is required by PHECC for completion of their personal CPC portfolio.

A robust discussion followed. The Chair sought clarification on who determined 'No GDPR risk' where stated throughout the draft document and whether legal advice had been sought. He stated that the Committee previously requested that legal opinion be sought and stressed that approval cannot be given by the Committee without proper legal advice. Kathleen Walsh confirmed that previous general legal advice was received and it is a joint document drafted by the CPC Coordinator and Ms Walsh/PHECC and reviewed by the CPC assessors. She advised that this is a draft document and direction is being sought from the Committee as to its content.

Evidence of 12 patient contacts as set out under section 2 - compulsory requirements was discussed. The Chair questioned the data protection implications of recording ACR/PCR dates and incident numbers as this data is identifiable. He cautioned that data is not anonymised if identifiers are provided and this constitutes a data protection breach. Gareth Elbell cautioned that dates and incident numbers may be fabricated and ACRs/PCRs can only be verified if the CPC assessors are provided with access. The Committee requested Ms Walsh to seek legal advice with regard to recording dates and incident numbers from ACRs/PCRs.

A tabled document with amended guidance from the CPC Coordinator was circulated based on further information received regarding issues arising from CPC portfolios and fitness to practice. Gareth Elbell stated that concerns identified by CPC assessors are reported to the CPC Coordinator who then reports to PHECC for investigation. He stated that CPC is there to support and encourage registrants. Paul Lambert stated that this is good guidance for registrants who should be made aware of the issues that may arise. The Chair stated that we need to reengage with registrants and provide reassurance and clear guidance. Gareth Elbell noted that CPC roadshows are currently being organised.

Also contained in the meeting papers was 'Draft GDPR Policy for Assessors' which will form part of the EMT CPC assessor's manual for 2019 which is presently being prepared. PHECC's policy for dealing with these breaches is currently being prepared but will be dependent on advice from the Data Commissioner and legal advice. The Director questioned if there is a requirement for two separate guidance documents for registrants and CPC assessors as the guidance is similar. Kathleen Walsh suggested that the information in the draft guidance documents will be incorporated into the EMT CPC information booklet incorporating the role of the CPC assessor. She will consult further with the CPC Coordinator on this and a further update will be provided to the Committee.

12. AOB

12.1 Gareth Elbell relayed a query from Chris O'Connor (who was not in attendance at the meeting);
Should the use of spinal boards be taught at EFR level?

The Committee noted there is no reference to long board within the EFR Education and Training Standard. The members also reviewed the EFR trauma CPGs and skills assessment sheets. Following discussion the Committee agreed that cervical collar application/securing patient to long board is not a relevant skill for EFR level and the reference to the skills assessment sheet needs to be removed as it does not correlate to the relevant EFR Trauma CPG. The assessment sheet is to be reviewed by the Test Item Writing Group on recommendation from the Committee.

Resolution: That the Education & Standards Committee agree that EFR OSCE skills assessment sheet cervical collar application/securing patient to long board needs to be removed.


Proposed: Gareth Elbell
Carried without dissent

Seconded: Róisín McGuire

12.2 As previously discussed and agreed under agenda item 3.1 a provisional meeting date of 20th November was agreed for the next Committee meeting and will be confirmed by Ms Walsh following the closing date for tender submissions for review of the draft paramedic NQEMT examination standard.

There being no other business the meeting concluded at 14:30pm approximately.

The Chair thanked all present for their attendance.

Signed: 
Chair

Date: 6th / 11th / 2019