

Education and Standards Committee

Meeting Minutes 5th September 2017

PHECC Office, Naas

Present

Shane Knox (Chair)
Peter McDaid
Róisín McGuire
Niamh O'Leary
Paul Lambert
Frank Keane
Ben Heron
Gareth Elbell
Tess O'Donovan
Adrian Murphy
Chris O'Connor
Ray Lacey

Apologies

Tom Brady

In Attendance

Kathleen Walsh, PDO
Brian Power, PDO
Jacqueline Egan, PDO
Margaret Bracken, Support Officer
Jacqueline Burke, Chair of Council
Hillery Collins, Vice Chair of Council

1. Chair's Business

The Chair welcomed everyone. Apologies were noted. The Chair noted that the previously scheduled meeting organised for July was cancelled due to PHECC office re-location during that period. Dr Knox stated the meeting agenda was extensive and some items may need to be discussed at future Committee meetings because of possible time restrictions.

1.1 New Committee members introduction

The Chair welcomed the new members to the Committee. Dr Jacqueline Burke, Council Chair, expressed her thanks to the Committee for the important work and valuable contributions to PHECC. Kathleen Walsh informed the members that the patient representative is outstanding, and was seeking to have the position filled before the next Committee meeting. Ms Walsh stated that an induction meeting for the new members was held on 28th August.

1.2 Minutes from previous meeting of 27th June 2017

The minutes of the meeting held on 27th June were reviewed.

Resolution: That the minutes of the Education and Standards Committee meeting held on 27th June 2017 be approved.

Proposed: Tess O'Donovan
Carried without dissent

Seconded: Niamh O'Leary

1.3 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

2. Working groups – Terms of reference and membership review

The terms of reference and membership of the Education and Standards Committee working groups were revised and updated by the Programme Development Officers for members' review and consideration.

Jacqueline Egan identified the changes and additions to the terms of reference and membership of the Examination Quality Group, Examiner Panel and Test Item Writing Group. The members were advised that membership is now appointed by the Education and Standards Committee and not the Director as per previous working groups. Considerable discussion and suggestions from the members followed.

2.1 Examination Quality Group

The consensus was to consider expanding the membership of the PHECC Examination Quality Group to include a representative from a higher education institution, specific to education discipline. Also, representation from all three practitioner levels was to be included. Ms Egan will revise the composition of TOR005 and a new draft will be included for the Committee's review at a future meeting.

2.2 Examiner Panel

The draft revisions were reviewed. A concern for examiners possibly being compromised by examining their own students and circumventing any perceived difficulties this may cause for candidates as a result was discussed. It was suggested that the scheduling of PHECC examiners for OSCEs should be managed by PHECC going forward, and not the recognised institutions which is the procedure at present. The general opinion among the members was to reword the membership criteria of the PHECC Examiner Panel terms of reference.

Ms Egan informed the members that a review of the current Examiner Panel will be carried out and the revised examiner roles and responsibilities will be sent out to all PHECC Examiners following approval of the terms of reference. Ms Egan will amend TOR010 and a revised draft will be presented at a future meeting.

2.3 Test Item Writing Group

It was agreed that TOR011 Test Item Writing Panel be recommended to Council for approval.

Resolution: That TOR011 Test Item Writing Panel be recommended to Council for approval.

Proposed: Paul Lambert
Carried without dissent

Seconded: Ray Lacey

2.4 Recognition of Qualifications – Assessor Panel

Ms Walsh identified the changes to TOR003 Qualification Assessor Panel. She explained the process of recognition of qualifications, the role of the assessor panel, and the current composition of the panel. Committee proposed that: Membership criterion 1 include PHECC registrant at Paramedic level and change to minimum of 5 years registration as a medical practitioner or general nurse. Point 2 criterion revision to denote level 9 qualification and not limit to MSc as currently written. The members agreed that the current Chair of the Assessor Panel should continue as Chair. Ms Walsh will amend TOR003 and a new draft will be included for review at a future Committee meeting.

3. Recognised Institution Status – current activity

3.1 RI Listing – Current Course Approval

A current RI listing and course approvals was provided for information purposes.

3.2 RI and affiliation with organisations and faculty

Ms Walsh informed the members that PHECC has received queries from RI, health and safety education and training organisations, and instructors/faculty, on the subject of affiliation. Stakeholders are seeking guidance from the regulator for affiliation as a result of the current transition from OFA/HSA to FAR/PHECC. There was considerable discussion among the members and the importance of recognised institutions adhering to Council rules is noted, also standards and monitoring arrangements must be in place and fully complied with. The Committee approved the need to maintain the status quo for affiliation relationships and faculty management as per PHECC Rules and policies. This will be submitted to Council for its approval.

3.3 UL Paramedic programme accreditation

This agenda item was not discussed however an overview document was provided to the members with key dates and activities for UL paramedic course approval, and the relevant previous Education & Standards Committee minutes and Council minutes were also included for information.

4. Proposal for Quality Review Framework evaluation

Ms Walsh briefed the members on the Quality Review Framework (QRF), PHECC's quality assurance model for recognised institutions. Dr Burke, commended the work carried out to date on the Quality Review Framework. Ms Walsh informed the Committee that after completing the first three-year cycle, there is now a requirement for an evaluation of the QRF structure process and outcome to ensure it is fit for purpose. A sub group specific to the QRF was discussed by the members. The Committee discussed the possible need to establish two levels within the QRF - requirements for those RIs providing responder programmes and those delivering practitioner level programmes. The members were in agreement that Ms Walsh and the QRF panel will proceed with the evaluation and submit the report to the Committee for consideration.

5. Paramedic Standard for Examinations

A draft NQEMT Paramedic Examination Standard was included in the meeting papers and Ms Egan gave an overview to the members. There was considerable discussion and issues raised. This included the pass mark and resit criteria. Mr Power provided the historical regulatory context for these examination elements, as represented in the draft Standard. The Committee deliberated these points and agreed to modify both the pass mark and criteria for resits. The members were in agreement with these modifications that the paramedic standard for examinations be recommended to Council for approval as an interim standard. This is to take effect until additional, evidence based research is completed and returned to the Committee, to inform the process for progressing to a national standard.

The feasibility of PHECC informing recognised institutions of their candidate's exam results following receipt of results by the candidates was discussed. A proposal is to be developed for the Committee's consideration. Additionally, in due course PHECC's policy on examinations will be updated.

Resolution: that the NQEMT Paramedic Standard for Examinations be recommended to Council by the Education & Standards Committee for approval as an interim standard.

Proposed: Frank Keane
Carried without dissent

Seconded: Ben Heron

6. Framework and governance of PHECC educational programmes and approval processes

Ms Walsh briefed the members and included a summary document of decisions delegated to the Director. Resolutions extracted from Council minutes, relating to education and training matters specific to recognised institutions, was also provided. The Committee agreed that a mechanism should be put in place

whereby the Committee reviews recognised institutions and course approval before recommending to Council for approval. This included the PDO providing a summary of the application and the criteria for decisions for approval or otherwise. A comprehensive process is to be developed for future consideration and then recommendation to Council for approval.

7. First Aid Response – Transition Project

7.1 Interim Report

A draft Interim Project Report on the transition from OFA Health and Safety Authority (HSA) training standard to PHECC First Aid Response (FAR) training standard prepared by Project Manager, Audrey Kirwan, was provided to the Committee. Ms Walsh provided an overview including the challenges involved in this transition. It is noted that although this report is targeted towards FAR it has implications for all responder levels. Ms Walsh informed the members that the RI and FAR application process changes will have linkages for the project with the Quality Review Framework.

A letter from the Construction Industry Federation addressed to the Director of PHECC was tabled for discussion. Members were informed that PHECC are addressing these concerns and arranging to meet with CIF representatives.

7.2 Priority issues identified and 7.3 Review of FAR Education and Training Standard

A list of FAR priority issues collated through communications from PHECC stakeholders was presented as part of the Committee discussion for prioritising the review of the FAR Standards for completion in Q4 of 2017. Dr Knox requested nominations for a working group. Mr Lambert and Ms McGuire kindly volunteered.

8. Continuous Professional Competency

8.1 Continuous Professional Competence Paramedic and Advanced Paramedic – Proposal

A draft proposal on CPC for Paramedic and Advanced Paramedic prepared by Ricky Ellis, PDO was provided for Committee consideration. Ms Walsh noted that she was presenting the proposal on Mr Ellis's behalf. She shared that the proposal was based on the project for EMT CPC managed by Omar Fitzell and previous research by Dr Knox. There was considerable discussion and some clarification was sought on the terminology used – CPC as opposed to CPD. Dr Burke commended the work done to date by Mr Ellis. It was determined that the Committee needed further discussion on the topic and it was premature to consider the proposal for recommendation to Council at this time. It was suggested that there should be 3 distinct processes for the various levels of registrants – EMT, Paramedic and Advanced Paramedic.

8.2 Establishing of a CPC Sub-Committee

The establishment of a CPC sub-committee was discussed to further examine the proposal and advance CPC development for the paramedic and advanced paramedics, applying the learning gained from the EMT experience. The Chair suggested that the CPC sub-committee be chaired by Mr Ellis and include Mr Fitzell as a member.

The Chair requested nominees from the Committee to join the sub-committee. Mr Lambert, Chris O'Connor, Ben Heron volunteered to serve. In addition, Hillery Collins and Dr Knox nominated themselves.

9. Recognition of Professional Qualifications – current activity

The members were provided with an update on the outcome of 4 recent applications for recognition of professional qualifications. There are currently 9 applications being processed.

10. Update on revised Field-Guide 2017

Brian Power provided an update and informed the members that the field guide is in development. However, there are resource issues and as yet no timeframe is allotted. He noted that a request has been made to NASC for assistance with manpower, however they have declined. Mr Power informed the meeting that he had however received a draft updated field guide from Greg Cooke (NASC) which has yet to be reviewed. Mr Lambert and Ray Lacey nominated themselves to assist Mr Power with the updates for the new Field Guide, should this be required.

The Committee recommended that all future CPG publications would be associated with field guide updates, in tandem with related revisions to the Education and Training Standards and examinations. The significant volume of work and the challenges involved were acknowledged by the Committee. Mr Power advised the meeting that such a strategy would add significant delays to the release of CPGs and work on the other areas could not commence until the CPGs were formally approved by Council.

11. Establishing a Research Sub-Committee

The Chair briefed the members on the key considerations in establishing a research sub-committee. It was noted as Council will be devising a new strategy for the next few years this will include Council's focus for research. Discussion took place as to how the Committee may inform the Council in this area. Dr Adrian Murphy spoke about defining the key priorities involved. He suggested a Delphi approach with the top 10 priorities being specified for pre-hospital research. A one day workshop with expert speakers was proposed to help inform the Committee and Council in this area.

12. Development of a Clinical Skills manual

Ms Walsh informed the members that a request from a PHECC registered Advanced Paramedic for PHECC to develop a Clinical Practice Procedures manual to assist practitioners was discussed by the Medical Advisory Committee at their May meeting and recommended to Council in June. Council approved the submission from Mr Matthew Bermingham (NAS) to develop a procedural manual for practitioners. A discussion ensued on the role of the Education and Standards Committee in the development of a clinical skills manual in line with the Committee's terms of reference and those of other Committees, and future collaborative work amongst PHECC Committees and supporting Programme Development Officers. It was agreed further discussion and review by the E&S Committee is warranted.

13. CFR and Medications for Listed Organisations

13.1 Revision of CPGs and Education Material Re: Naloxone and Glucagon

Ms Walsh referred to the recent revisions of these CPGs and education material for Naloxone and Glucagon in line with MAC recommendations

13.2 RI query for inclusion of Modules 4 & 5 with FAR instruction

Ms Walsh informed the members that an RI has asked about the possibility of providing the emergency medicine modules 4 & 5 (Cardiac First Response and Medications for Listed Organisations) as an add on course for crèches that have completed the FAR course as required by TUSLA. Ms Walsh stated that the CFR Community training is a module within the FAR course provision. The RI is currently approved for CFR-C, CFR and MLO Glucagon, Salbutamol and Epinephrine and will be applying for FAR provider course approval in the future. The Committee considered that it would be practical to incorporate the modules into the FAR course. Members agreed that this needed to be structured and direction given to RI seeking to deliver such courses. This work is to be developed and brought back to the Committee.

14. AOB

14.1 Registration of Educational Providers and Course Accreditation – Irish College of Paramedics (see References and Resources)

The Irish College of Paramedics document on registration of educational providers and course accreditation as a service to the profession was included for information purposes. The Committee discussed the role of a professional organisation contrasted with the regulator's role for conducting these activities and the link to CPC.

14.2 Engagement with Qualifications and Quality Ireland (QQI)

Ms Walsh suggested that representatives from QQI be invited to present at a future Committee meeting, with the aim of informing the Committee in relation to exploring a possible alignment of PHECC Education and Training Standards and the Educational Award Holders/Teaching Faculty Framework with the National Framework of Qualifications.

Frank Keane raised the issue of PHECC appeals policy with specific regard to a process for video recording of examinations with the student candidate approval. The need for review and possible revision for the exam appeals process was discussed. It was noted that the Council is to review the appeals policy and that this work would inform this area for examinations. The Committee will be informed of the Council deliberations at a future meeting.

The meeting concluded at 3:20 pm.

The next meeting of the Committee will be on Tuesday 7th November at 10am.

Signed: _____



Chair

Date: _____

