

Council meeting 12 April 2012

04.12/C/02

Public business

Revising the *Education Procedures for the Initial Education and Training of Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians* – a Memorandum of Understanding with PSNI

Purpose

To agree a revised set of education procedures, mainly to reflect agreed working relationships in education between the GPhC and the PSNI.

Recommendations

The Council is asked to agree:

- i. a revised set of education procedures defining
 - (1) collaborative working in accreditation between the GPhC and the PSNI for the initial education and training of pharmacists, and
 - (2) recognition of initial education and training for pharmacists in Northern Ireland by the GPhC, subject to appropriate safeguards.
- ii. other clarifications and minor amendments to the Procedures.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The GPhC's *Education Procedures* govern the main features of the initial education and training of pharmacists and also how courses and qualifications for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians are accredited/recognised. Essentially, they supersede Section XX (20) of the RPSGB's Byelaws.
- 1.2 The main revision to the procedures proposed is the insertion of sections about
 - (1) the joint accreditation of courses for the initial education and training of

pharmacists in Northern Ireland by the GPhC and the PSNI and (2) the GPhC's recognition of pharmacist education and training in Northern Ireland. These additions and clarifications support the aims stated in the Memorandum of Understanding between the GPhC and the PSNI (November 2011), specifically section 5.1:

- 5.1 The PSNI and GPhC continue to co-operate to secure consistent standards of professional practice, in line with the principle of mutual recognition and free movement of students, trainees and pharmacists as between Northern Ireland and Great Britain. We are developing an operational protocol, to be reviewed regularly, setting out how this is to be achieved efficiently, with each organisation retaining its own accountability for formal decisions in terms of its own legal framework, and each organisation bearing its own costs and expenses and a proportionate share of any additional costs.
- 1.3 The revisions to the procedures have been discussed fully and agreed with the PSNI's Registrar and the PSNI's Chief Executive.

- 1.4 The PSNI intends to agree a set of procedures complementary to the GPhC's.

2.0 Revisions and clarifications

- 2.1 *Section A of the Procedures: Joint accreditation of courses for the initial education and training of pharmacists in Northern Ireland by the GPhC and the PSNI.* Currently, courses in Northern Ireland are accredited jointly by two teams – one from the GPhC and one from the PSNI. The two teams comprise 10-12 people. What is proposed is that the teams are merged and the overall size is reduced to 5-6. The chair will be appointed jointly by the two regulators and there will be one PSNI-nominated member alongside other members drawn from the GPhC's Accreditation and Recognition Panel. Accreditation appeals will be heard by the GPhC Appeals Committee.
- 2.2 *Section B of the Procedures: The Pharmacist Pre-registration Scheme.* This section includes a new section, '7. Persons holding accredited degrees from Northern Ireland'. The purpose of the section is to clarify how the GPhC will recognise pharmacist education and training in NI. Mainly it clarifies existing custom and practice. This includes making it clear (a) that a trainee has to undertake pre-registration fully in one jurisdiction so that a complete set of performance standards are met and (b) a trainee has to sit a national registration assessment in the same jurisdiction as the one in which they undertake pre-registration training, and register in that jurisdiction, before being

eligible to apply to register in the other jurisdiction.

- 2.3 *Section G: EEA-qualified pharmacists wanting to register with PSNI under the EC's general system for the recognition of evidence of training [Directive 2005/36].* This section describes a current practice, which is for EEA pharmacists who do not qualify for automatic registration in Northern Ireland, to have their suitability to be registered evaluated by the GPhC on PSNI's behalf. The usual result of the evaluation is a compensation measure required before a prospective registrant can practise in Northern Ireland without restriction.
- 2.4 *Section H: Education decisions made by the previous regulator.* This additional section makes it explicit that periods of pre-registration training and sittings of the Registration Assessment/Examination from the RPSBG's time as regulator do count towards the initial education and training requirements of the GPhC's *Requirements for the Initial Registration of Pharmacists*. This clarification has been added because some trainees, who have failed the Assessment three times and cannot register, have tried to claim that RPSGB sittings are null and void and that, therefore, they have not sat the Assessment the maximum number of times allowed.
- 2.5 *Other revisions.* Other minor revisions have been made to the Procedures and are explained in notes in the revised document. The revisions are for clarity and do not alter policy.
- 3.0 **Equality and diversity implications**
- 3.1 Clarifying the recognition of education and training in Northern Ireland should enhance mobility between jurisdictions.
- 4.0 **Communications implications**
- 4.1 The revised procedures will be signposted on our website. Most of the revisions made and clarifications added to the Procedures affect a small number of atypical applicants. It is our experience that it is better to give such applicants bespoke advice rather than advertising changes too widely when they do not apply to most people.
- 5.0 **Resource implications**
- 5.1 The proposals will lower the cost of accrediting courses in Northern Ireland for providers, the GPhC and the PSNI, otherwise they are cost neutral.

6.0 Risk implications

6.1 There are no risks associated with these revisions.

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