Public business

Developing professionalism in pre-registration trainee pharmacists

Purpose
To agree a policy on professional standards for pre-registration trainee pharmacists

The Council is asked to agree:

i. That pre-registration trainee pharmacists should use the Standards of conduct, ethics and performance for pharmacy professionals as their principal source of guidance on professional conduct

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Recently, Council has agreed to adopt two student/trainee documents: the Code of Conduct for Pharmacy Students and Code of Conduct for pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians. Both were documents written in the last few years and Council agreed they were fit for purpose, needing nothing more that minor alterations for them to be used as GPhC documents.

1.2 Council was to have received a third document: a code of conduct for pre-registration trainee pharmacists. The purpose of all three codes was to provide a benchmark for professional conduct with examples tailored to the needs of particular student/trainee groups. We have considered the third document and would like to propose an alternative: to require pre-registration trainee pharmacists to adhere to the Standards of conduct, ethics and performance for pharmacy professionals, as far as these are relevant in the context of pre-registration training.
2.0 Key considerations

2.1 Trainees are in a unique position in that they have already studied for at least four years on a course which has introduced and reinforced the need for professional conduct. This is not the case for either MPharm degree students or pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians (which is why separate codes of conduct are more suited to them). Also, in the pre-registration training year trainees are performing virtually all the functions of a pharmacist, albeit under supervision.

2.2 Trainees need to adjust to their new situation in pre-registration, including their new professional responsibilities. Many tutors help trainees do this extremely well, others less so. By making use of the standards for registrants in this way, the Council has a cost-effective opportunity to set clear expectations for trainees which pave the way for their taking on formal professional accountability upon registration. The Standards and supporting guidance will form a new section of the Pre-registration Training Manual from the 2011 edition onwards.

3.0 Equality and diversity implications

3.1 There are significant equality and diversity issues relating to the Standards of conduct, ethics and performance for pharmacy professionals, as previously discussed. These issues will need to be explored further in the context of the standards development programme.

4.0 Communications implications

4.1 Pre-registration trainees and prospective trainees receive several bulletins from us during the year. The Council’s expectation that they will use the standards for registrants as relevant to their pre-registration responsibilities, with some accompanying guidance, can be introduced to them in that way. The same points can be made in the pre-registration training manual, which is currently under production.

4.2 We are meeting with pre-registration training managers in mid October and can raise this issue with them. It is our experience that these meetings are effective at cascading information to tutors and trainees.

5.0 Resource implications

5.1 The proposed approach can be implemented within existing resources.
6.0  Risk implications

6.1  Additional guidance should increase enhance professional behaviour and lower the chances of unprofessional behaviour – with possible fitness to practise consequences - becoming entrenched.

Recommendations

The Council is asked to agree:

i.  That pre-registration trainee pharmacists should use *the Standards of conduct, ethics and performance for pharmacy professionals* as their principal source of guidance on professional conduct

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