

COUNCIL

Education Strategic Review (ESR): draft concepts and principles consultation

Meeting: 15 November 2017

Status: For decision

Project Sponsor: Alistair Bridge (Director of Strategy)

Project Director and paper author: Claire Herbert

Council Champions: Clare Minchington, David Parkins and Selina Ullah

Project Board: SMT

Project team members: Alistair Bridge, Claire Herbert, Roz Platt, Cathy Williams, Marcus Dye and David Rowland.

Purpose

1. To introduce a draft high level concepts and principles consultation as part of the Education Strategic Review (ESR).

Recommendations

2. Council are asked to **consider** and **agree** to consult on the concepts set out in **annex one** and **delegate authority** to the Chief Executive and Registrar and Chair to approve the consultation.

Strategic objective

3. The objective is to 'deliver a strategic review of optical education and training and implement changes to ensure that optical professionals are equipped for future roles'.

Risks

4. Failure to conduct the ESR in a timely and thorough way could render the current education system unfit for purpose, given the changing needs of patients, the changing roles of optical professionals and the wider changes in the delivery of healthcare that are taking place.
5. We have committed to undertaking an evidence-based approach. We have already undertake a call for evidence consultation and commissioned mixed methods research into educational patterns and trends in health professional education which is due to be completed by end November 2017.

6. It will be important to ensure progress and direction remains on track and we have established a staff project team and have set up an ESR expert advisory group. This group - which is not a representative body and operates as a sounding board only - is made up the following members: Gareth Hadley (Chair), David Parkins, Clare Minchington, Selina Ullah, Hilary Tomsett, Alicia Thompson, Nicholas Rumney, Dharmesh Patel, Gill Robinson, Janet Pooley and Barbara Ryan.

Background

7. The ESR Call for Evidence was conducted from December 2016 to March 2017. The Council received the findings of the Call, which generated 55 thorough responses, in May 2016 by way of an independent summary of responses report prepared by Collaborate Research that can be found here: <https://www.optical.org/en/Education/education-strategic-review/our-progress-so-far.cfm>. The Call for Evidence has provided a rich foundation for work to date on the Review.
8. The Council agreed an ESR project plan for the Review in July 2017 which can be found here: www.optical.org/en/Education/education-strategic-review/next-steps.cfm. The plan sets out the project's sequential and interlocking phases: Call for Evidence; Policy Development; Decision and Readiness. It also agreed a Communication and Engagement Strategy and in line with this strategy we have carried out around 30 bilateral stakeholder engagement meetings since May 2017 and will continue this engagement.
9. The project is currently addressing the agreed first elements of project development relating to 'professional boundaries and career paths', and 'educational principles and approach'.
10. As part of this a rapid evidence review of educational patterns and trends in health professional education has been commissioned from Collaborative Research are due to report their findings by the end of November 2017. This work is intended to contribute to the evidence-based approach to the ESR.
11. In addition, and as part of clarifying how optical services are developing across the UK in the context of the wider health systems, we held a health systems leaders round table 'summit-style' meeting on 10 November 2017. This was chaired by the Chair of Council and brought together a range of senior representatives from the optical sector and the health systems in each of the four countries of the UK. The organisations represented are set out at **annex two**.

12. In July, the Council also agreed to hold a public consultation in late 2016. We are not consulting on specific proposals at this stage of the review. The purpose of the consultation is to highlight the themes that have emerged from our work to date and seek stakeholders' view on a range of concepts prior to developing more detailed policy proposals in 2018. The themes and concepts set out in the consultation build strongly on those indicated to us by the Call for Evidence and our ongoing stakeholder engagement.

Analysis

13. The consultation will set out a series of concepts for potential further exploration in 2018 as the ESR progresses. The key themes of the consultation are:
- Standards for Education Providers
 - Education Standards and Professionalism
 - Learning Outcomes
 - Links to Continuing Education and Training
 - Educational Content
 - Clinical experience for students
 - National registration examination
 - Multi-disciplinary education
 - Duration of education and training programmes
 - UK educational routes to registration
 - GOC Education Quality Assurance
14. The consultation is informed by what we heard from stakeholders in the Call for Evidence, as well as our ongoing stakeholder engagement (**annex two**) which includes understanding the experiences of other UK health professional regulators, as well as our emerging research findings to date. It has also been reviewed by the Council Champions. In the full consultation we have included direct references to the Call for Evidence Summary Report prepared by Collaborate Research to show how we are building on the previous consultation. Council members can review the full document on request.
15. It is proposed the consultation will run from Monday 4 December 2017 to Friday 16 March 2018 (15 weeks).

Impacts

16. The following impacts have been identified:
- 16.1 Reserves – the project is being funded from reserves;
 - 16.2 Budget – a dedicated project budget has been allocated for 2017/18 and for the following two financial years;

- 16.3 Legislation – any recommendations arising from the review that have a consequential change for the structure of the registers or on the statutory functions of the GOC would require legislative amendment. We will assess the impact of this, where it applies, as the project develops;
- 16.4 Resources – the project has dedicated resource through a fixed term Project Director, we are recruiting a new fixed term Project Manager and intending to recruit additional resource to support policy development across this project and our review of Continuing Education and Training;
- 16.5 Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) – the EDI impact of any review proposals will be assessed as part of a wider impact assessment at the point when we are consulting on specific policy proposals. EDI considerations will also be considered in developing proposals;
- 16.6 Human Rights Act – to be considered in developing proposals; and
- 16.7 Sustainability – to be considered in developing proposals.

Devolved nations

- 17. The project recognises that the arrangements for funding and delivery of community and hospital eye services differs across the UK and this may have a bearing on future expectations of eye health professionals. This is being taken into account in the project delivery.
- 18. In addition, contact has already been made with the relevant statutory bodies in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to ensure they are represented in our ongoing work and that any future recommendations arising from the review are equally fit for purpose in all four countries of the UK.

Communications

- 19. A communication and engagement strategy was agreed by Council in July 2017.

Timeline for future work

A high-level project timeline was agreed by Council in July 2017, reflective of the Council's 2017-2020 Strategy. The Council will also be invited to consider developments at its future meetings. In particular, the findings of the proposed public consultation at the Council's May 2018 meeting. And in the meantime, we will continue to engage with and gain input from the Council Champions. The stakeholder engagement for the ESR will have a particular focus on current students and newly qualified practitioners and on patients in early 2018.

Attachments

Annex one – Concepts to be explored in the proposed consultation
Annex two – ESR Stakeholder engagement May – November 2017

Concepts and Principles for Consultation

<p>Concept 1: Standards for Education Providers</p> <p>We are exploring the concept of introducing a new single set of high-level Education Standards for all education and training providers that deliver qualifications for optometrists and dispensing opticians, leading to professional registration with us.</p>	<p>We are considering requiring all education and training providers to meet and maintain new Education Standards, in order to be approved and continue to deliver programmes that lead to registration with the GOC.</p>
<p>Concept 2: Education Standards and Professionalism</p> <p>We are considering linking any new Education Standards directly to our Standards of Professional Practice.</p>	<p>We would seek to ensure our professional practice standards inform and permeate the education and training that student optometrists and dispensing opticians receive. This is so as to ensure the professional standards and values, central to optical practice, are also at and remain at the heart of the education and training.</p>
<p>Concept 3: Learning Outcomes</p> <p>We are considering introducing education learning outcomes which all optometry and dispensing optician education providers would be required to deliver.</p>	<p>We are exploring the extent to which it would be appropriate and effective to describe the educational and training competencies, which we in future would require of newly qualified optometrists and dispensing opticians, in the form of learning outcomes.</p>
<p>Concept 4: Links to Continuing Education and Training</p> <p>We are considering the implications of our Education Strategic Review on Continuing Education and Training (CET) including whether any change to the education competency-based approach would enable us to focus the CET scheme on our Standards for Optical Professionals rather than the current education competencies.</p>	<p>At present our CET scheme is linked to the current education competencies for optometry and dispensing optician programmes. If we were to move away from the education competencies currently in place, it would have a direct consequence for the way in which we define and approve CET.</p>

<p>Concept 5: Educational Content</p> <p>We are considering reviewing the content of education and training leading to professional registration with us.</p>	<p>We have heard repeatedly about the range of technological developments shaping contemporary optical practice, how patient need is changing and how there are a variety of new services being designed, developed and delivered in some parts of the UK. We plan to engage with our stakeholders further about education programme content in 2018.</p>
<p>Concept 6: Enhanced clinical experience for students</p> <p>We are exploring the implications of introducing a hybrid approach to all education programmes leading to professional registration with us, that combines academic study with clinical experience from the start.</p>	<p>We are considering enabling clinical experience to be embedded throughout the whole educational journey, starting from year 1 and progressively increasing to the end of the programme. A consequence would be to remove the notion of the 'pre-registration year', where that applies, and that education providers would take on responsibility for the entirety of the student journey.</p>
<p>Concept 7: National registration examination</p> <p>We are exploring whether we should retain the principle of a national standardised examination or assessment as a requirement, together with other elements, for UK trained practitioners to enter the GOC's professional register.</p>	<p>We are considering retaining the concept of a standardised assessment as a requirement for registration with us. This could be in the form of national registration examination for optometrists and for dispensing opticians, which the GOC would accredit and quality assure.</p>
<p>Concept 8: Multi-disciplinary education</p> <p>We are considering the concept of embedding a multi-disciplinary ethos into education programmes.</p>	<p>A multi-disciplinary approach within our future education standards and requirements could help to prepare students to practise effectively alongside and together with other health professionals.</p>
<p>Concept 9: Duration of education and training programmes</p> <p>We are considering whether or not to retain the current minimum duration of training and education for optometrists and dispensing opticians.</p>	<p>Retaining the current minimum durations would mean the awarding of academic qualifications would take place at the end of the final year for optometrists (e.g. year 4) and at the end of the final year for dispensing opticians (e.g. year 3).</p>

<p>Concept 10: UK educational routes to registration</p> <p>We are considering how the structure and content of courses delivered in the UK that lead to professional registration with the GOC could enable effective career progression and transference into and between different optical roles.</p>	<p>We are considering how our future approach can avoid any unnecessary constraints on the ability for individuals with the right aptitudes, attitudes and interests to move into and between optical roles where they wish.</p>
<p>Concept 11: Proportionate quality assurance</p> <p>We will in due course be considering how we develop a proportionate approach to our approval and quality assurance mechanisms for education providers in the context of the future recommendations of the Education Strategic Review.</p>	<p>At this stage, we are considering how we can ensure the processes underpinning our quality assurance are and remain effective and proportionate for education and training providers and the GOC.</p>
<p>Equality and Diversity</p> <p>We must ensure that we recognise the impact of any future proposals from the Education Strategic Review on all our stakeholders.</p>	<p>We need to fully understand the implications of the concepts we are considering on all stakeholders, including those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.</p>

Stakeholder Engagement – May to October 2017

May 2017: Association of Optometrists, Optometry Schools Council
AOP Council, Scottish Government, General Pharmaceutical Council

June 2017: College of Optometrists, Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Board,
College of Optometrists Council, Royal College of Ophthalmologists, General
Medical Council, CET Approvers

July 2017: LOCSU, Specsavers, QAA, AOP

August 2017: Association of Independent Optometrists, College of Optometrists
Royal College of Ophthalmologists x2, Scottish Government, Optometry Schools
Council, Nursing and Midwifery Council, NHS England, HEFCE, Department of
Health, Wales Government, LOCSU, ABDO, Kings Fund, General Dental Council,
Wales Optometry Council

September 2017: FODO, See Ability, NHS England, NHS Clinical Commissioners,
Specsavers, All Party Parliamentary Group on Eye Health Secretariat, Boots
Opticians, Wales Government

October 2017: Moorfields Eye Hospital, College of Optometrists, ABDO, Education
Providers Forum, Optical Confederation, NHS Clinical Commissioners Primary Care
Stakeholder Group

**Organisations due to be represented at the Round Table Event: Professional
roles and boundaries in UK eye health services, Friday 10 November 2017**

Royal College of Ophthalmologists, NHS England, Health and Social Care Board,
Northern Ireland, Clinical Council for Eye Health Commissioning, SeeAbility,
Optometry Schools Council, FODO, Higher Education Funding Council for England,
GIRFT Programme (Get it Right First Time programme, NHS), Welsh Government,
Scottish Government, College of Optometrists, ABDO College, Vision UK, LOCSU,
AOP, Macular Society