

# Guidelines

# For

# Accreditation

Produced by the RCCP Professional Standards and Education (PSE)  
Committee



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This document is for use by those offering programmes in the Modernising Scientific Careers (MSC) Healthcare Science Division of Physiology or other programmes leading to registration as a practitioner in the disciplines registered by RCCP. It explains the procedures by which RCCP and its representatives carry out accreditation processes.

This document provides a source of reference for:

- Universities and colleges providing or intending to provide academic programmes in clinical physiology.
- RCCP and the Professional Bodies it represents, RCCP Accreditation Panel (RCCP AP), RCCP Professional Standards and Education Committee (RCCP PSE).

## 2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### 2.1. Parent Body

Registration Council for Clinical Physiologists

### 2.2. Accrediting Body

Registration Council for Clinical Physiologists Professional Standards and Education Committee

### 2.3. Represented Professions

- Association of GI Physiology (AGIP)
- Association for Respiratory Technology & Physiology (ARTP)
- British Academy of Audiology (BAA)
- British Association for Educational Audiologists (BAEA)
- Association of Neurophysiological Scientists (ANS)
- British Society for Echocardiography (BSECHO)
- British Heart Rhythm Society (BHRS)
- British Sleep Society (BSS)

The roles and responsibilities of the RCCP PSE committee include:

- Setting, maintaining and raising professional standards.
- Prescribing of qualifications for RCCP eligibility.
- Overseeing and co-ordinating the delivery and quality assurance of professional education and training.
- Providing advice to all institutions offering qualifying programmes in clinical physiology

#### 2.4. Professional Advisor

A discipline-specific professional, nominated by the RCCP PSE committee, to provide advice to any education provider requiring advice or guidance on programme development or delivery.

### 3. FUNDING

The education provider will meet costs incurred by RCCP AP members visiting the institution to perform accreditation.

### 4. QUALITY ASSURANCE OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

The overall aim is to establish and maintain a high-quality education experience for students through assessment of the standards of the programme. The output of the educational experience will maintain the nationally recognised standards of each professional group in order to provide the general public with confidence in the areas this group serves.

#### 4.1. Objectives of Accreditation

To ensure programmes meet the requirements for registration with RCCP.

- This requires that graduates are safe and competent practitioners (**PSA Standard 1**).
- It has to inspire confidence in the Register to promote patient safety (**PSA Standard 5**).
- As such it sets standards for registrants including pre-registration standards (**PSA Standard 8**).

RCCP is not directly responsible for the curriculum or competencies as these are established by the professional bodies. However, it is responsible for ensuring that providers deliver the content and curriculum (**PSA Standard 9**). This enables the RCCP to provide an accreditation independent of MSC which is in line with recent recommendations for improvements to the regulation of healthcare.

RCCP will accredit pre-registration programmes delivering qualifying programmes based on information on the following areas:

- Appointment of an appropriate external examiner from practice (following national criteria for the appointment of external examiners) who has a responsibility to review all practice components of a programme.
- The delivery of discipline specific areas of the curriculum, ensuring the most appropriate teaching, learning and assessment of material. The RCCP PSE committee requires that appropriately qualified and registered staff are used to provide teaching, learning and assessment within pre-registration programmes. This can be demonstrated by HEIs by providing:
  - CVs of staff;
  - ensuring staff are given the opportunity to obtain HEI teaching and learning qualifications;
  - indicating the resources available to teach the discipline specific areas including clinical skills laboratory facilities, virtual and simulation resources, implementing a robust assessment process etc.
- Quality assurance processes of the practice components of the programme, ensuring appropriate teaching, learning and assessment. HEIs will need to provide information on the following:
  - A practice structure that creates a balance between theory and practice to ensure fitness for practice to promote an integration of knowledge, attitudes and skills in order to develop competence. It should aim to foster the development of interpersonal skills and practice skills by the use of experiential and problem-based learning, skills labs and access to IT as well as the opportunity to work with staff and patients in the practice environment.
  - Audit and action planning processes for practice providing details of placement facilities. This should include an assessment of:
    - Departmental resources and services
    - Service policies
    - Induction mechanisms

- Training and development opportunities and resources for students
- CPD opportunities for staff
- Opportunities for practice staff to develop clinical supervision skills and mechanisms used by the HEI to ensure staff are appropriately trained and supported in their role of supporting students.
- Mechanisms employed by the HEI to ensure reliable, repeatable and robust assessment processes of student competencies.

4.2. Re-accreditation may be required when:

- There are major changes to the programme.
- Significant issues arise from interim monitoring.
- Concerns about a course are raised with the RCCP PSE committee.

## 5. PROCEDURE FOR ACCREDITATION

It is the responsibility of the Education Provider to approach the RCCP PSE committee to arrange the accreditation visit. The RCCP PSE committee undertakes to commit to an accreditation visit within six months of a request, the date to be set between the host institution and the RCCP PSE committee.

RCCP PSE committee is responsible for accreditation. However, the relevant professional body will undertake the visit on its behalf. The RCCP PSE committee will appoint the Accreditation Panel (RCCP AP) and communicate with the professional bodies and with education provider to ensure that the accreditation process is transparent, equitable and undertaken against defined criteria.

Any new programme will be expected normally to meet the criteria detailed in:

- RCCP Guidelines for Accreditation.
- RCCP Standards of Proficiency Clinical Physiologists.
- HCPC or other regulatory guidance (if relevant).
- Any appropriate documentation to be subsequently developed.
- Modernising Scientific Careers Learning Outcomes and Indicative Content.
- Modernising Scientific Careers practice documentation.

Guidance documents are available on the RCCP website (<http://www.rccp.org.uk>).

Electronic copies of documentation should be sent to the RCCP (see website for details), who will acknowledge receipt. Documentation is required 2 months prior to the agreed accreditation visit. Membership of the RCCP AP will be provided prior to the visit.

The RCCP PSE committee will endeavour to work within local arrangements for validation/ accreditation providing adequate notice and access are given.

At the end of the accreditation visit, the RCCP AP will offer informal feedback.

Following the visit, written confirmation of the findings will be given to the HEI within 2 weeks of the following the RCCP PSE committee meeting. The report will either:

- Confirm that accreditation has been successful.
- Confirm accreditation subject to the satisfactory meeting of any conditions and/or recommendations.
- Reject accreditation.

A copy of all documentation will be held by the RCCP.

## **DEFINITIONS**

A '**Condition**' is an aspect of provision for which resolution must be implemented prior to acceptance as an accredited programme:

- Action is required before accreditation is approved and/or
- An action which is required to be completed with a given timeframe for accreditation to continue.

Whereas a '**Recommendation**' is an aspect of provision where resolution would improve the programme and is seen as a quality improvement.

Any significant amendments to the programme content should be submitted for RCCP PSE committee approval.

The RCCP PSE committee reserves the right to review the accreditation status of an education provider at any point.

## **6. PROCEDURE FOR REVIEW OF ACCREDITATION**

Education Providers will be required to provide an annual statement confirming that no major changes have been made to a programme.

A major change request may trigger a review of accreditation status, and this will be conducted with similar rigour and process to the initial accreditation. However, it is anticipated that documentation will reflect evidence accumulated over the period of delivery.

The education provider is responsible for contacting RCCP if major changes are proposed outside of the annual cycle.

## **7. APPEALS**

Appeals should be made to the RCCP PSE committee within four weeks of receipt of notification.

## **8. ACCREDITATION SCHEME**

### **8.1. DEGREE PROGRAMMES**

The programme must have a secure place in the education provider's business plan.

It must be situated within a research active HEI, thereby providing an appropriate level of academic experience into the programme.

Wherever possible academic staff will hold a recognised qualification in teaching, learning and assessment or provide evidence of equivalence.

The clinical syllabus core component of teaching must be delivered by staff who are Registered practitioners, holding the appropriate knowledge, skills and experience.

Programmes must provide evidence of governance and management procedures that involve professional and lay representation and involvement of contributory partners (e.g. commissioning bodies).

Programmes must appoint an external examiner from the relevant professional body to ensure oversight of practice components of the programme.

## 8.2. PROGRAMME REQUIREMENTS

Education providers must ensure appropriate entry level qualifications. IELTS requirements for international students applying to UK HEIs to study a programme leading to eligibility to register are set at an overall score of 6.5 with no element below:

- 5.5 for undergraduate students
- 6.5 for reading and writing and 6.0 for speaking and listening for post graduate students.

## 8.3. CLINICAL PRACTICE

Appropriately qualified and trained clinical placement staff will be involved in the development and delivery of placement learning and assessment. Involvement of clinical staff will include:

- Preparation of staff for their role in supervision and assessment e.g. supervision or mentoring training (see role descriptors).
- Support for staff in dealing with students, particularly in respect to failing students, or in matters requiring a disciplinary procedure.

Where education providers have responsibility for placement, regular audits of the placement environment must be conducted, including action plans for improvement. Where they have indirect responsibility for placement (e.g. Scientist Training Programmes), it is recommended that similar processes implemented.

Education providers must have a robust fitness to practice process in place.

## 8.4. FACILITIES

There should be appropriate and adequate access to the following facilities:

- Lecture rooms, library and IT resources.
- Clinical facilities for training to demonstrate the provision of experiential learning prior to placement.
- Research facilities.

## 8.5. ACCREDITATION PANEL REQUIREMENTS

- A guided tour of facilities. *Education providers are encouraged to maximise this opportunity to provide the RCCP AP with a comprehensive overview of the facilities available.*
- To see all programme documentation in advance.
- An opportunity to meet privately with academic, placement staff and students.

## 9. APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMMES

Apprenticeship programmes in Healthcare Science will follow the principles of the existing Practitioner Training Programme Curricula with the following additions:

- The timescale for completing the level 6 apprenticeship may be extended and students are expected to spend a specified time on campus and within the clinical environment.
- It is expected that a significant portion of the programme will be delivered through online methods so there needs to be provision made for this within the University resources.
- Mechanism to ensure the quality of clinical learning in the workplace. This includes:
  - a. A standard contract, detailing the relationship between the employer, employee and university. This contract should include information about responsibilities of all parties ensuring quality of clinical learning.
  - b. Information about the training provided for the employer ensuring placement quality
- Details regarding apprenticeship infrastructure support within the University available to the programme team.
- Information about the structure of the EPA and also if it is included in the degree programme or not.
- Standard HEI Fitness to practice procedures may require further steps as part of the contract between employee, employer and course provider. This is to ensure clarity regarding the raising of concerns about practice, as the student is also an employee.



## 10. APPENDIX

### ***ROLE DESCRIPTORS OF PROFESSIONALS INVOLVED IN PRACTICE LEARNING***

A **Placement Coordinator** is a registered clinical practitioner with appropriate professional and academic experience, who will be responsible for the overall coordination and management of placements within the work environment. They will act as the key contact for communication with the education provider and other stakeholders on all placement/clinical education issues.

A **Placement Educator** is a registered clinical practitioner with appropriate professional and academic experience, who will provide clinical education/mentoring and assessment under guidance by, and in consultation with, the Coordinator.

An **Associate Educator** is a registered clinical practitioner with appropriate professional and academic experience with at least one-year post qualification experience. They will provide clinical education/mentoring and assessment at an appropriate level under the guidance of a Placement Coordinator, Placement Educator.