RCN Quality Assurance Standards for Development of RCN Accredited Programmes

Revised: 01 October 2012
Review date: 31 March 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard statement</th>
<th>Criteria\textsuperscript{ii}: These will help determine if each standard has been met</th>
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| 1. Programmes are consistent with RCN policy, strategy and development             | These criteria consider whether the programme supports RCN Strategic Plan;  
1.1 Content of the programme is of direct relevance to nursing and fits with national nursing policy and development in UK Four Countries; including government, regulators and professional nursing bodies  
1.2 Content of the programme is of direct relevance to nursing and fits with national nursing policy and development in Europe/Internationally; including government, regulators and professional nursing bodies  
1.3 Programmes are consistent with the values contained within RCN Principles of Nursing Practice  
1.4 Programmes adhere to the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) Code of Practice (2008)  
1.6 Any conflict of interest is acknowledged and associated risks are mitigated                                                                 |
| 2. Programmes are evidence-based                                                    | These criteria consider whether the programme has rigorously searched, used, monitored and evaluated evidence;  
2.1 Content of the programme is supported by an appropriate evidence-base  
2.2 Relevance of the evidence-base is clearly described  
2.3 Process of analysing and synthesising evidence is rigorous  
2.4 Harvard system of referencing has been applied                                                                 |
| 3. Programmes have an explicit statement about Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) and copyright issues | These criteria demonstrate how copyright and intellectual property rights of the programme have been agreed;  
3.1 Copyright owner and authorship of the programme is specified  
3.2 Permission has been granted for the right to use material/resources for an agreed purpose\textsuperscript{ii}                                                                 |
| 4. Programmes have been considered for United Kingdom, European and international applicability | These criteria appraise whether the programme can be applied in the UK, Europe and Internationally;  
4.1 UK Four Country involvement has been considered in the programme design and implementation process  
4.2 European/International involvement has been considered in the design and implementation process  
4.3 UK Four Country involvement has been considered in ongoing evaluation and quality assurance  
4.4 European/International involvement has been considered in ongoing evaluation and quality assurance  
4.5 Content of the programme embraces the development/support of nursing in UK Four Countries  
4.6 Content of the programme embraces the development/support of nursing in Europe/Internationally |
5. **Programmes are developed and evaluated using the expertise and experience of relevant internal and external stakeholders**

These criteria appraise how stakeholder expertise has been used in the development, implementation and evaluation of the programme;

5.1 Internal/external stakeholders have relevant professional and/or educational qualifications and clinical/work experience

5.2 Stakeholders are considered for involvement in the planning of programmes

5.3 Other key stakeholder views and expertise are included in the development process and ongoing quality assurance process

5.4 User* experiences are incorporated in monitoring and evaluation activity where relevant

6. **Programmes are fit for purpose and fit for practice**

These criteria measure how far the programme is fit for purpose and fit for practice (‘Fit for purpose’ means that the programme should be suitable for the intended purpose. ‘Fit for purpose’ is one of two key principles underpinning quality assurance);

**Value**

6.1 Programmes provide value for money

6.2 Programmes support individual/organisational change/development

6.3 Other relevant professional standards in existence that add value to the programme have been identified and met

6.4 Programmes meet customer/service requirements

**Target Audience**

6.5 Target audience is clearly described

6.6 Market analysis of the target audience has been undertaken (where appropriate)

6.7 Content of the programme is relevant and appropriate to the target audience

**Aims and learning outcomes**

6.8 Aims reflects the overall purpose of the programme

6.9 Aims of learning and development activity are clearly described

6.10 Learning content is appropriate

6.11 Learning outcomes are explicit

6.12 Learning outcomes are measurable (where appropriate)

**Assessment of learning:**

6.13 Assessment criteria is provided where appropriate

6.14 Assessment reflects the content of the programme

**Online programmes** should:

6.15 Be free of error, technical ‘bugs’ and broken links

6.16 Operate on hardware and software systems and technologies appropriate for the target audience

6.17 Operate without error at the minimum supported specification

**Online learning guidance** includes:

6.18 Minimum display screen equipment (DSE) requirements, peripheral equipment requirements, log-in and course navigation instructions

**Online learning access and usage** ensures:

6.19 Access compatibility criteria for web products are W3C\textsuperscript{vi} and triple A compliant

6.20 Online graphics and media are of appropriate quality and support course content

6.21 Time to load online resource is reasonable on minimum system requirements

6.22 Opportunity for interactivity is provided and interactivity elements are meaningful, support course content and allow users to reflect, review and apply new learning

6.23 A mechanism is in place to provide online user feedback
### 7. Programmes have been considered in relation to equality, diversity and human rights for all target groups

These criteria measure the programme’s compliance with equality, diversity and human rights legislation/best practice;

- 7.1 Products/services are compliant with the requirements of the Equality Act (2010) and anti-discrimination legislation (Northern Ireland)
- 7.2 Approaches to enable equality of opportunity and access have been maximised
- 7.3 Approaches to support the implementation of human rights have been maximised
- 7.4 Innovative approaches to assure equality, diversity and human rights are developed and benchmarked

### 8. Programmes have been considered in relation to health and safety

These criteria appraise how the programme meets health and safety legislation/best practice requirements;

- 8.1 A risk owner has been identified, and understands their responsibility for management of programme risks
- 8.2 Programmes are compliant with appropriate health and safety legislation
- 8.3 There is an effective mechanism in place for raising concerns

### 9. Programmes have been considered in relation to risk management

These criteria appraise whether there is an appropriate risk management process in place;

- 9.1 A risk management process is in place
- 9.2 Mitigation of risks is evident in the development, implementation and evaluation of the programme
- 9.3 An explicit route for users to provide feedback on the programme is in place

### 10. Programmes are reviewed in relation to their life-cycle

These criteria appraise whether there is an appropriate monitoring, review and evaluation process in place. Monitoring and review is undertaken as a shared stakeholder responsibility.

- 10.1 A named person is designated to co-ordinate/project-manage the development and ongoing review of each programme across its life-cycle
- 10.2 A review date is identified for each programme
- 10.3 A system is in place for ensuring quality assurance, monitoring and review
- 10.4 A system is in place for recording/managing associated outcomes and recommendations
- 10.5 Mitigation of risks is evident in the ongoing evaluation of the programme

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**N.B:** Please be aware that all criteria within standard number 1 must be met at a minimum of level 2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Level 1 Unplanned</th>
<th>Assessment Level 2 Managed</th>
<th>Assessment Level 3 Defined</th>
<th>Assessment Level 4 Integrated</th>
<th>Assessment Level 5 Optimised</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accreditation standards are applied poorly or inconsistently</td>
<td>Accreditation standards are applied and addressed with some skill</td>
<td>Accreditation standards are skilfully applied</td>
<td>Accreditation standards are embedded and seen as adding real value</td>
<td>Application of accreditation standards demonstrates strategies for continuous improvement</td>
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1. For the purposes of the Quality Assurance Standards document, “Accredited Programme” refers to the: (i) event (including conferences, meetings, seminars, presentations and workshops); (ii) professional programme (including programmes provided by NHS Trusts or other training providers) and longer programmes; (iii) credit-bearing degree programme (including certificates, diplomas, undergraduate and postgraduate programmes of study); (iv) hard-copy learning and development resources (including training packs, handbooks, DVDs/USB sticks, PowerPoint presentations, articles, books); (v) e-learning (including online courses and modules); or (vi) guidelines, standards and competency frameworks (including resources for use in the workplace and for professional development).

2. These criteria have been adapted from the AGREE Appraisal Instrument (2001) (www.agreecollaboration.org). Although it was developed to quality assure guidelines, it has the potential to be used for other evidence-based products, services and programmes. The domains include structure and process and use a five-point response score (1 - unplanned, 2 - managed 3 - defined, 4 - integrated, 5 - optimised). The scoring system gives clear indication of the areas that do not meet the standard which will enable the developers to address specific concerns.

3. Legal advice/support may be sought for guidance.

4. Users may be members, activists, patients or others for whom the programme was intended.

5. There are likely to be additional criteria related to this standard that would be specific to individual departments. These may be locally agreed.

6. World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) is working to make the Web accessible to all users (despite differences in culture, education, ability, resources, and physical limitations).