

Annual Review of Education 2014-16

Purpose of paper	To present the final draft of the Annual Review of Education 2014-16.
Status	Public
Action	For decision
Corporate Strategy 2016-19	Professionals Objective 2: To help ensure that dental professionals are properly trained in the skills necessary to practise dentistry safely from the outset.
Business Plan 2017	Priority 3: Develop and deliver an effective Education and Quality Assurance policy
Decision Trail	<p>October 2014: Council approved revisions to the <i>Standards for Education and Preparing for Practice</i>, to apply to programmes quality assured from the 2015/16 academic year onwards.</p> <p>November 2015: Council noted the second Annual Review of Education.</p>
Next stage	<p>If approved, the Annual Review of Education will be published on the GDC website and circulated to stakeholders</p> <p>A discussion paper will be considered by the Policy and Research Board 5 April 2017 reviewing past publications and how we can improve the document in the future</p>
Recommendations	The Council is asked to: Approve the Annual Review of Education for publication.
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1. Executive summary

- 1.1. This paper presents the GDC's third Annual Review of Education, relating to dental education and training for the 2014/15 and 2015/16 academic years.
- 1.2. The Annual Review contains a summary of findings during inspections and through the annual monitoring exercise, including areas of good practice, areas for development and learning points. The review includes comparison of data across the four years that the *Standards for Education* have been used as the GDC's regulatory tool for the quality assurance of education programmes. Progress on policy development work and stakeholder engagement is also provided.
- 1.3. The review incorporates coverage of the proposals in the *Shifting the Balance* discussion and we will use the data we collect to help inform the development of risk-based quality assurance system, as proposed in *Shifting the Balance*.
- 1.4. Some notable findings within the review are:
 - Programmes for certain specific professions performed better than others, notably those leading to dentistry and dental hygiene and dental therapy awards;
 - Overall, programmes meet more requirements related to patient protection issues than other areas;
 - Where programmes required a re-inspection, there is an average 50% improvement in meeting individual requirements of the *Standards for Education*;
 - Ensuring access to enough patients requiring a range of treatments remains a challenge for many programmes;
 - Providers find it challenging to obtain and use feedback from patients to inform student assessment and development.
- 1.5. The Annual Review will, subject to Council approval, be published on the GDC website and disseminated to key stakeholders.
- 1.6. We hope that the review will stimulate debate within the sector and encourage a collaborative approach to sharing effective practice and developing solutions to common challenges. The views of education and training providers and the GDC's Policy and Research Board will be sought to inform the content of future reviews.

2. Introduction and background

- 2.1. The GDC published the *Standards for Education* in November 2012. The Standards are the regulatory tool used by the GDC to ensure that a programme is fit for purpose. These standards (patient protection; quality evaluation and review; and student assessment) are central to the GDC's quality assurance process. To meet the Standards, education providers must be able to demonstrate that upon qualification, students have demonstrated achievement across the range of the required learning outcomes. These are set out in the document *Preparing for Practice*.
- 2.2. Both the *Standards for Education* and *Preparing for Practice* were revised in 2015, consolidating the number of requirements in the Standards that providers must meet from 29 to 21. The changes to the Standards were intended to clarify and strengthen our requirements of education providers while reducing duplication. These revised versions were used in our quality assurance activity from the 2015/16 academic year.
- 2.3. This extended Annual Review covers two academic years, as the period for report was changed from the calendar year to the academic year. Future reviews will cover single academic years.

- 2.4. At the end of 2016, 85 individual programmes from 52 education and training providers were subject to GDC quality assurance.
- 2.5. In the 2014/15 academic year, the GDC undertook inspections of 14 programmes. These were assessed against the 2012 edition of the Standards, which contained 29 requirements across four standards. In the 2015/16 academic year, the GDC undertook inspections of 12 programmes, assessed against the 2015 edition of the Standards, containing 21 requirements across three standards.
- 2.6. Across both academic years, the majority of inspections were of DCP programmes, with two BDS re-inspections in 2014/15 and one in 2015/16. We also inspected three dental technology programmes offering the same award, and for the purposes of this report we have counted this as one programme.
- 2.7. The process following inspections is that the GDC drafts reports of those visits and allows time for the providers to make factual corrections and observations on those reports. Once that process is concluded, the GDC Registrar will decide, on behalf of Council, whether to approve the programme qualification for the purposes of registration with the GDC.

3. Digest and key findings

- 3.1. The Annual Review contains data relating to QA activity, in addition to a summary of inspection findings. The review is intended to share good practice and learning from GDC inspections and other QA activity. It also provides an update to all stakeholders regarding the work of the GDC in education and is intended to stimulate debate in the education and training sector and encourage a collaborative approach to sharing effective practice and developing solutions to common challenges.
- 3.2. Key findings of the review include:
 - Dentistry (BDS) and hygiene and therapy programmes have tended to meet more of the requirements of the *Standards for Education* than programmes offering qualifications for other dental care professional (DCP) groups;
 - Programmes in general have found it difficult to meet Requirement 17 of the Standards, which requires that assessment utilises feedback from a variety of sources, including patients and customers. Whilst many programmes have mechanisms in place to collect feedback, getting meaningful feedback and using it to inform student development has proved challenging;
 - Requirements relating to patient protection matters were more likely to be met than other requirements across the Standards. It is reassuring to see that patient protection issues are a focus for providers, and our inspections highlighted many instances of good practice;
 - There is wide variation in the rigour of arrangements for the quality management of programmes. Many providers have only informal procedures in place, and some DCP programmes tend to rely on their small student and staff size being conducive to trusting relationships;
 - Many providers continue to have major issues with ensuring students have access to an adequate number of patients from different ages and backgrounds, and with different treatment needs;
 - As has been noted in previous Annual Reviews, many providers are not presenting a full and coherent mapping of the programme against the GDC's learning outcomes

and, coupled with this, there is evidence of the need for more detailed and thorough blueprinting of assessments for many providers;

- Over the past four years, 21% of programmes inspected have required a re-inspection. Following a re-inspection, programmes have demonstrated significant improvement: average improving in 50% of requirements;
- The quantity and quality of information returned by providers in the annual monitoring exercise varied widely. This continues a pattern from previous years, although for some questions the data supplied was less this year. This information will be analysed to inform the development of risk profiles of programmes in the work we do creating a risk-based quality assurance system outlined in *Shifting the Balance*.

3.3. The majority of recommendations for the GDC from the 2013/14 report have been implemented. Where they have not been implemented, progress is being made.

4. Risks and considerations

<p>Communications</p> <p>We propose that the Annual Review will be published on the GDC website and circulated to education stakeholders in late March or early April 2017.</p> <p>Following publication, we will also seek opportunities to promote and pursue the conclusions of this work with key stakeholders. This will include workshops with training providers across the professions, continuing from the successful Hygiene and Therapy provider workshops held in 2016.</p>
<p>Equality and Diversity</p> <p>An equality impact assessment is not required.</p>
<p>Legal</p> <p>The paper relates to the GDC's role in quality assuring education and training programmes leading to registration as a dentist or DCP. The remit of the GDC in undertaking this statutory function is outlined in the Dentists Act 1984.</p>
<p>Policy</p> <p>The findings contained within this report will be taken forward as a key element of the Shifting the Balance agenda.</p>
<p>Resources</p> <p>There are no direct resource implications for the GDC arising from this paper or the Annual Review. However, several of the actions for the GDC contained within the Review are linked to development work, which is part of the <i>Shifting the Balance</i> agenda, and will have costs and/or efficiencies attached. These will be considered as the work programme is developed.</p>
<p>National</p> <p>The Annual Review covers education and training programmes across all the four nations of the UK.</p>

5. Next steps

- 5.1. Discussion with the Policy and Research Board in April will inform the date and format of the next Annual Review.
- 5.2. We will invite the Policy and Research Board and other stakeholders to consider the Annual Reviews published to date, and discuss how future Annual Reviews might develop.

6. **Recommendation**

6.1. The Council is asked to:

Approve the Annual Review of Education 2014-2016 for publication.