



Council of Deans of Health Response to the Professional Standards Authority Performance Review of the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC)

24 March 2016

Council of Deans of Health

The Council of Deans of Health (CoDH) is the representative voice of the UK's university health faculties engaged in education and research for nursing, midwifery and the allied health professions. Further information about us can be read at:

<http://www.councilofdeans.org.uk/>.

Feedback

We have continued to have a constructive working relationship with the NMC over the past year. We had been in regular contact with the NMC on behalf of members over the introduction of revalidation for nurses and midwives, new education programme approvals and reapprovals, review of the pre-registration standards for nursing and midwifery education, Shape of Caring and midwifery education/supervision. Our members have also been in contact on an individual basis.

We have continued to meet regularly with the Chair and Chief Executive of the NMC and with the Director of Continued Practice. We have responded to consultations and engaged in some of the NMC's events, such as the Shape of Caring roundtables.

A large focus of the NMC's work over the past year has been planning and preparing for the introduction of revalidation for nurses and midwives from April 2016. We have been involved in the NMC Revalidation Advisory Group looking at this and we have been invited to be involved in the evaluation of revalidation. The NMC has developed a 'revalidation microsite' which provides comprehensive information for nurses and midwives to help them through the revalidation process. Whilst this information is useful, we decided to publish specific guidance for registrants working in universities and have run a number of workshops for our members to help them understand the process and how it can link in with current university processes. This work has been welcomed by our members and has also provided an opportunity to address some of the specific concerns of staff working within universities that have not necessarily been covered within the NMC's materials.



The NMC has embarked on a review of the pre-registration standards for nursing and midwifery education with a view to publishing new standards by the end of 2017. This is a key programme of work for our members and we welcome the NMC's early engagement with the higher education sector on the review. We recently held a joint roundtable discussion to look at the role of the future nurse and pre-registration standards and we will be involved in further discussions as this work progresses.

Whilst our experience of working with the NMC over the past year on policy has broadly been a positive one, we would like to highlight some concerns about the quality assurance (QA) process. Consistency and timeliness of information has been a particular concern this year. In the context of many members having already carried out large amounts of work on programme reapproval using the current pre-registration standards, the decision to revise the pre-registration standards was announced informally at a number of regional QA events. No clarity was given as to whether universities could continue to pursue reapproval against the current standards. We had to seek formal clarification on behalf of our members from the NMC which took several months. In this period universities were uncertain as to whether they could proceed with planned programme reapprovals, which caused significant disruption. The NMC could have anticipated concerns about the implications of the changes to the standards and could have been quicker in providing information.

The proportionality and transparency of QA remains an issue for some members. There have been two particular instances in the past year where members have raised concerns about the lack of a clear mechanism for challenging a decision made as part of the QA process. One related to changes to university governance and its implications for programme QA and the other to the application of APEL rules to students. In both cases, the universities had similar concerns that the process was unclear and resulted in a disproportionate burden, with no way to challenge the outcome. We would welcome continued efforts to reduce duplication in QA and for the NMC to develop clearer, more transparent processes.

We were also made aware of problems during the summer 2015 with the system of uploading NMC declarations, the information that HEIs are required to submit to support applications for newly qualified nurses, midwives and specialist community public health nurses to join the NMC's register once they have completed their pre-registration education programmes. Any issue which leads to a delay in providing this supporting information has the potential to delay NMC registration and could impact on start dates of employment.

Contact for further information:

Rachel Craine, Senior Policy Officer, Council of Deans of Health
Rachel.Craine@cod-health.ac.uk