

## **A student's guide to the Health Professions Council**

Hello and welcome to this presentation from the Health Professions Council, the HPC. We were created to protect the public. To do this, we keep a Register of health professionals who meet our standards for their training, professional skills, behaviour and health.

This presentation has been produced for students. It will also be useful for those working in education and anyone interested in our work.

It will explain the role of the HPC, what professional regulation means, how to apply for registration and how to stay registered.

This presentation explains:

- the role of the Health Professions Council;
- what professional regulation means;
- how to apply for registration; and
- how to stay registered.

## **The role of the Health Professions Council**

This section explains who we are and what we do.

It will also cover the standards that we set and how we uphold them.

The HPC is a multi-professional regulator of health professionals. Those on our Register are called registrants. We were created by legislation called the Health Professions Order, 2001, and have a UK-wide remit. The HPC's purpose is to "safeguard the health and well being of persons using or needing the services of registrants."

The HPC:

- sets standards;
- approves courses that meet them;
- registers those who pass them; and
- holds registrants to our standards.

You can check the registration of a health professional by going to [www.hpcheck.org](http://www.hpcheck.org)

There are four sets of standards.

The standards of conduct, performance and ethics describe the behaviour and conduct expected of registrants. They also apply to students. For example, standard four says "you must provide to us and any other relevant regulators, any important information about your conduct and competence." This means that if

you are convicted of a criminal offence, receive a conditional discharge for an offence, or if you accept a police caution, you must tell us.

The standards of proficiency are the standards required of registrants and those applying for registration for the safe and effective practice of their profession. Students must be able to meet these standards when they complete their approved programme. Registrants must be able to meet those standards relevant to their scope of practice.

There are two components to the standards of proficiency; those which apply to all registrants and profession-specific standards. The three types of standards are:

- expectations of a health professional;
- skills required for the application of practice; and
- knowledge, understanding and skills.

For example, standard 1a.3 says that “registrants must understand the importance of and be able to maintain confidentiality.”

The standards of education and training are the standards which education and training providers must meet.

These standards ensure that all those completing an approved programme meet the standards of proficiency.

For example standard 6.2 says that "assessment methods (for a programme of study) must be employed that measure the learning outcomes and skills that are required to practice safely and effectively." This means we expect a programme of study to assess through coursework, examination and practical exams all students to make sure they will meet our standards of proficiency for a profession when they complete their course.

The standards for continuing professional development, CPD, must be met by all registrants. The CPD standards link registrants ongoing learning and development with their continued registration. For example, registrants must “maintain a continuous, up to date and accurate record of their CPD activities.”

As well as setting standards we ensure that these standards are met.

One of the ways in which we do this is by taking action when there are concerns about a registrant’s conduct or competence. This is undertaken by our Fitness to Practise Department.

### **Information on regulation**

The HPC was created to protect the public. We are independent of government. We are also independent of professional bodies and trade unions.

The HPC is a statutory regulator which means that you must be registered with us in order to use a protected title. Each profession we regulate has one or more protected titles which are protected by law. For example ‘physiotherapist’ and ‘physical therapist’ are the protected titles for the profession of physiotherapy.

This applies regardless of whether you work in the NHS, in private practice, in industry or in education.

In addition to registering with the HPC, you may also choose to join a professional body or trade union.

The HPC works on the principle of professional self-regulation. This means that you are responsible for meeting the standards that we set on an ongoing basis.

The HPC does not register students. However, our standards of conduct, performance and ethics apply to all prospective registrants. This means that these standards apply to you.

As a student studying to become a health professional and to work within a regulated profession, you have certain responsibilities. On your programme you will come into contact with people who will expect you to meet high standards of conduct and ethics. We have produced guidance about these standards to help you.

We have also produced a disabled person's guide to becoming a health professional. This publication provides information for prospective students and education providers.

### **How to apply for registration**

Before you are able to start working using a protected title, you will need to register with the HPC.

To register you must complete an application form. This form and guidance notes are available to download from our website. You can begin completing your application form before you finish your course. However, do not send us the form until you have received notification that you have successfully completed your programme.

Your education and training provider will send us a list of students that have successfully completed the programme. This allows us to register you.

As part of your application, we ask you to tell us about your health and character.

With your completed and signed application form, you must include:

- a health reference;
- a character reference;
- certified copies of two forms of identification; and
- your registration fee.

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Your health reference must be completed by a registered medical practitioner who has been your doctor for at least three years, or has access to your medical

records for the last three years, or who has carried out a medical examination. Your doctor may charge you for this.

For more information about the health reference please refer to our publication, Information about the health reference.

Your character reference must be completed by a person of good standing in the community who has known you for at least three years. Many students choose to ask their personal tutor or a lecturer to complete this.

Your identification documents must be certified by a person of professional standing. This means that they must be signed and dated as a true copy of the original document. Professionals that are able to certify documents for you include:

- registered health professionals;
- teachers;
- accountants;
- solicitors; and
- bank managers.

Students currently receive a fifty per cent discount on their registration fee for their first two years of registration. To benefit from this, you must apply for registration within two years of successfully completing an approved programme.

For full details for how to complete each part of the application form, please refer to the guidance notes.

To prevent delays in processing your application form please make sure that it is complete before you send it to us. If your application form is incomplete it will be returned to you. This may delay the start of your employment.

Application forms usually take between seven and ten working days to process. Once registered, your name will immediately appear on our online Register at [www.hpcheck.org](http://www.hpcheck.org). Checking online is the quickest way of verifying that you have been registered.

We will also send you a certificate and authentication card.

Your authentication card carries a code, which will allow you to change your contact details securely online. Please keep your card safe as you will need your code each time you access your online account or when you contact us.

It is vitally important that you keep your contact details up-to-date. This will help to ensure that you receive important information about your registration.

### **How to stay registered**

Once registered you will need to undertake learning activities which enable you to meet our standards of continuing professional development (CPD). We audit a random sample of professionals who have been registered for at least two years. For more information on the CPD standards and the audit process, please refer to our online CPD presentation and our guide to meeting these standards.

Every two years you must to renew your registration. This two year period is called a registration cycle. Each profession has a different date for renewing its registration. Three months before your registration ends, we will send you a registration renewal form. You must check that your contact details are correct, read and sign the declarations, check your payment method and return the form to us by the specified date. Failure to renew your registration will mean that you will not be able to practice using a protected title.

If you do not renew you must complete our readmission form to return to the register, and a fee may apply. When applying for readmission you must also supply new health and character references and certified copies of two forms of identification.

Thank you for taking the time to watch this presentation. We hope you have found it useful and now understand more about the Health Professions Council and the registration process.

For more information please see our website at [www.hpc-uk.org](http://www.hpc-uk.org)