Ag Rialáil Gairmithe Sláinte agus Cúraim Shóisialaigh

Regulating Health
Social Care Professionals

Social Care Workers Registration Board

Standards of Proficiency for Social Care Workers

Bord Clárchúcháin na nOibrithe Cúraim Shóisialta
Social Care Workers Registration Board

About this Document

CORU is a multi-profession regulator. The role of CORU is to protect the public by promoting high standards of professional conduct, education, training and competence through statutory registration of health and social care professionals.

CORU was set up under the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 (as amended). It is made up of the Health and Social Care Professionals Council and the Registration Boards, one for each profession named in our Act.

This document sets out the Social Care Workers Registration Board's standards of proficiency.

This document should be considered in conjunction with the following documentation:

> Criteria for Education and Training Programmes

> Programme Approval and Monitoring Processes. Information for Education Providers.

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Introduction

The Health and Social Care Professionals Act, 2005 (HSCP Act 2005) provides for the establishment of Registration Boards, to establish and maintain registers for a range of health and social care professions. Entry onto to the register allows a person to use the title of that profession. This system of statutory registration is fundamental to the delivery of quality and accountability in the provision of professional services. The objective of the statutory registration system is to protect, guide and inform the public by ensuring that health and social care professionals are properly regulated and qualified for the job whether they work in the public or private sectors or are self-employed.

The objective of the Registration Board is to protect the public by fostering high standards of professional conduct and professional education, training and competence among registrants of that profession (HSCP Act, 2005: Section 27(1)(as amended)). To this end the Act makes provision for:

> the **approval** of education and training programmes (Section 48) – this allows a Registration Board to determine if it is satisfied that a programme is suitable for the education and training of candidates for registration in its register.

> **monitoring** of approved programmes (Section 49) – this process allows a Registration Board to satisfy itself as to the continuing suitability of the education, training, assessment and examination and clinical training and experience provided by any education and training programme approved by the Board.

Regulatory approval of a programme by a Registration Board is distinct from academic accreditation. Regulatory approval is a judgment as to whether a programme associated with a given qualification consistently and effectively prepares graduate for entry into register of that profession. To receive approval a programme must demonstrate that it meets the requirements of the Social Care Workers Registration Board.

There are two types of requirements:

> **standards of proficiency** are the threshold standards set by a Registration Board for entry to the register. The standards of proficiency provide detail on the knowledge and skills that all graduates must possess at entry to the register.

> **criteria for education and training programmes** are the requirements set by the Registration Board related to how a professional education and training programme is designed and managed. The criteria are used to ensure that a programme has a system in place to consistently and effectively produce graduates who meet the standards of proficiency for the profession.

Standards of Proficiency

The standards of proficiency detail the skills and abilities that individuals must possess in order to enter the register. They are the threshold standards deemed necessary by the registration board at the level of entry to practice. They are not standards for practice after entry to the register. Rather they offer a snapshot of the standards at entry to the register.

This document sets out the standards of proficiency for Social Care Workers under five domains:

1. Professional Autonomy and Accountability
2. Communication, Collaborative Practice and Teamworking
3. Safety and Quality
4. Professional Development
5. Professional Knowledge and Skills

Criteria for Education and Training Programmes

The criteria for education and training programmes are used to ensure that a programme has a system in place to consistently and effectively produce graduates who meet the standards of proficiency for entry to the register. These criteria form the Registration Board's requirements for the way education and training programmes are designed, organised and managed. The critieria are detailed in a separate document called the Social Care Workers Registration Board Criteria for Educaiton and Training Programmes.

Approval and Monitoring of Programmes

Approved programmes are those which meet all of the Social Care Workers Registration Board's criteria and ensure that all students who successfully complete the programme meet all of the required standards of proficiency.

A programme which meets the required criteria and standards of proficiency for entry to the register is granted approval and the qualification associated with the programme is listed on the Approved Qualifications Bye-Law as one of the entry criteria to the register. Graduates possessing an approved qualification are eligible to apply for entry to the social care workers register. The programme will then be subject to monitoring.

If a programme is not approved, the associated qualification will not be listed on the Approved Qualifications Bye-Law.

Monitoring is a requirement of all approved programmes and is conducted not less than once every five years. Qualifications may be removed from the Approved Qualifications Bye-Law if the associated programme does not meet the Board's requirements under monitoring. Students graduating from a programme not listed on the Approved Qualifications Bye-Law are not eligible to apply for entry to the social care workers register.

1. Professional Autonomy and Accountability

Graduates will:

1. Be able to practise safely and effectively within the legal, ethical and practice boundaries of the profession

2. Be able to identify the limits of their practice and know when to seek advice and additional expertise or refer to another professional

3. Be able to act in the best interest of service users at all times with due regard to their will and preference

4. Be aware of current guidelines and legislation relating to candour and disclosure

5. Respect and uphold the rights, dignity and autonomy of every service user including their role in the diagnostic, therapeutic and social care process

6. Be able to exercise a professional duty of care

7. Understand what is required of them by the Registration Board and be familiar with the provisions of the current Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for the profession issued by the Registration Board

8. Recognise the importance of practising in a non-discriminatory, culturally sensitive way and acknowledge and respect the differences in beliefs and cultural practices of individuals or groups

9. Understand the role of policies and systems to protect the health, safety, welfare, equality and dignity of service users, staff and volunteers

10. Understand and respect the confidentiality of service users and use information only for the purpose for which it was given

11. Understand confidentiality in the context of the team setting

12. Understand and be able to apply the limits of the concept of confidentiality particularly in relation to child protection, vulnerable adults and elder abuse

13. Be aware of current data protection, freedom of information and other legislation relevant to the profession and be able to access new and emerging legislation

14. Be able to recognise and manage the potential conflict that can arise between confidentiality and whistle-blowing

15. Be able to gain informed consent to carry out assessments or provide interventions and document evidence that consent has been obtained

16. Be aware of current legislation and guidelines related to informed consent for individuals with lack of capacity

17. Recognise personal responsibility and professional accountability for one's actions and be able to justify professional decisions made

18. Be able to take responsibility for managing one's own workload as appropriate

19. Understand the principles of professional decision-making and be able to make informed decisions within the context of competing demands including those relating to ethical conflicts and available resources

20. Be aware of and be able to take responsibility for managing one's own health and wellbeing

21. Be able to maintain professional boundaries with service users within a variety of social care settings and be able to identify and manage any associated challenges

22. Be able to evaluate the effect of their own characteristics, values and practice on interactions with service users and be able to critically reflect on this to improve practice

23. Be able to see the world as others see it; be able to practice in a non judgemental manner and be able to understand another's feelings and be able to communicate that understanding

2. Communication, Collaborative Practice and Teamworking

Graduates will:

1. Be able to communicate diagnosis/assessment and/or treatment/management options in a way that can be understood by the service user

2. Be able to modify and adapt communication methods and styles, including verbal and non-verbal methods to suit the individual service users considering issues of language, culture, beliefs and health and/or social care needs

3. Recognise service users as active participants in their health and social care and be able to support service users in communicating their health and/or social care needs, choices and concerns

4. Understand the need to empower service users to manage their well-being where possible and recognise the need to provide advice to the service user on self-treatment, where appropriate

5. Be able to recognise when the services of a professional translator are required

6. Be able to produce clear, concise, accurate and objective documentation

7. Be able to apply digital literacy skills and communication technologies appropriate to the profession

8. Be aware of and comply with local/national documentation standards including, for example, terminology, signature requirements

9. Be able to express professional, informed and considered opinions to service users, health professionals and others e.g. carers, relatives in varied practice settings and contexts and within the boundaries of confidentiality

10. Understand and be able to recognise the impact of effective leadership and management on practice

11. Understand and be able to discuss the principles of effective conflict management

12. Understand the need to work in partnership with service users, their relatives/carers (if appropriate) and other professionals in planning and evaluating goals and interventions, as part of care planning and be aware of the concepts of power and authority in relationships with service users

13. Understand the need to build and sustain professional relationships as both an independent practitioner and collaboratively as a member of a team

14. Understand the role and impact of effective interdisciplinary team working in meeting service user needs and be able to effectively contribute to decision-making within a team setting

15. Understand the role of relationships with professional colleagues and other workers in service delivery and the need to create professional relationships based on mutual respect and trust

16. Understand the principles and dynamics of group work in a range of settings and be aware of the role of different facilitation techniques to improve outcomes and enhance the participation of service users in care

17. Be able to recognise all behaviour, including challenging behaviour, as a form of communication and demonstrate an understanding of the underlying causes in order to apply appropriate strategies

3. Safety and Quality

Graduates will:

1. Be able to gather all appropriate background information relevant to the service user's health and social care needs

2. Be able to justify the selection of and implement appropriate assessment techniques and be able to undertake and record a thorough, sensitive and detailed assessment

3. Be able to determine the appropriate tests/assessments required and undertake/arrange these tests

4. Be able to analyse and critically evaluate the information collected in the assessment process

5. Be able to demonstrate sound logical reasoning and problem solving skills to determine appropriate problem lists, action plans and goals

6. Be able to demonstrate an evidence-informed approach to professional decision-making, adapting practice to the needs of the service user and draw on appropriate knowledge and skills in order to make professional judgments

7. Be able to prioritise and maintain the safety of both service users and those involved in their care

8. Be able to evaluate intervention plans using appropriate tools and recognised performance/ outcome measures along with service user responses to the interventions. Revise the plans as necessary and where appropriate, in conjunction with the service user

9. Understand the need to monitor, evaluate and/or audit the quality of practice and be able to critically evaluate one's own practice against evidence-based standards and implement improvements based on the findings of these audits and reviews

10. Be able to recognise important risk factors and implement risk management strategies; be able to make reasoned decisions and/or provide guidance to others to initiate, continue, modify or cease interventions, techniques or courses of action and record decisions and concerns

11. Understand the principles of quality assurance and quality improvement

12. Be able to carry out and document a risk analysis and implement effective risk management controls and strategies; be able to clearly communicate any identified risk, adverse events or near misses in line with current legislation/guidelines

13. Be able to comply with relevant and current health and safety legislation and guidelines and be able to access recommendations and findings of inquiries, investigations and associated reports relevant to social care

14. Be able to establish safe environments for practice which minimises risks to service users, those treating them and others, including the use of infection prevention and control strategies

15. Be able to identify and document the unmet needs of individual service users and demonstrate an ability to select the appropriate escalation route working with colleagues and the service user to resolve the gap in care

4. Professional Development

Graduates will:

1. Be able to engage in and take responsibility for professional development

2. Understand the need to demonstrate evidence of ongoing continuing professional development and education, be aware of professional regulation requirements and understand the benefits of continuing professional development to professional practice

3. Be able to evaluate and reflect critically on own professional practice to identify learning and development needs; be able to select appropriate learning activities to achieve professional development goals and be able to integrate new knowledge and skills into professional practice

4. Understand and recognise the impact of personal values and life experience on professional practice and be able to manage this impact appropriately

5. Understand the importance of and be able to seek professional development, supervision, feedback and peer review opportunities in order to continuously improve practice

6. Understand the importance of participation in performance management activities for effective service delivery

5. Professional Knowledge and Skills

Graduates will:

1. Know, understand and apply the key concepts of the domains of knowledge which are relevant to the profession

2. Understand and be able to apply principles of social justice in one's work including being able to challenge negative discrimination and unjust policies and practices; demonstrate an understanding of cultural competence; and work towards social inclusion

3. Understand and apply a human rights based approach (HRBA) to one's work including the promotion of the service user's participation in their own care; ensure clear accountability; apply principles of non-discrimination; support other staff members to empower service users to realise their rights; be aware of the legality of actions within a service including the need to comply with any relevant legislative requirements including adhering to human rights obligations

4. Demonstrate a critical understanding of relevant biological sciences, human development, social and behavioural sciences and other related sciences, together with a knowledge of health and wellbeing, disease, disorder and dysfunction relevant to the role of social care worker

5. Know and understand the principles and applications of scientific enquiry, including the evaluation of intervention efficacy, the research process and evidence-informed practice

6. Demonstrate skills in evidence-informed practice, including an understanding of competing theories, concepts and frameworks underpinning social care work and demonstrate an ability to apply the appropriate method in professional practice

7. Demonstrate an understanding of the theories of individual and social development across the lifespan and contexts and within different cultures including the knowledge required to work with individuals, children, vulnerable adults, families and marginalised groups

8. Understand the role and purpose of building and maintaining relationships as a tool in the delivery of social care across the lifespan in a variety of contexts

9. Have a critical understanding of the dynamics of relationships between social care workers and service users and the concepts of transference and counter-transference

10. Be able to identify, interpret, record and respond appropriately to patterns of behaviours displayed by service users in a variety of settings

11. Be able to analyse activity and adapt environments to enhance participation and engagement in meaningful life experiences and positively influence the health, well-being and function of individuals, families, groups and communities in their everyday activities, roles and lives

12. Demonstrate safe and effective implementation of a range of practical, technical and professional practice skills relating to the specific needs of the service user in a range of social care settings

13. Be able to integrate self-awareness, communication, working in partnership and professional judgement into professional practice to meet the need of the service user and empower them to meet their full potential

14. Be able to identify and understand the impact of social care history, organisational, community and societal structures, systems and culture on social care provision

15. Recognise the role of advocacy in promoting the needs and interests of service users, and understand the influence of system-level change to improve outcomes, access to care, and delivery of services, particularly for marginalised groups

16. Understand the role of, and be able to demonstrate skills in the use of creative and recreational interventions in social care work to meet the needs of the service user in a variety of contexts

17. Demonstrate ability to participate in or lead clinical, academic or practice-based research

18. Know the basic principles of effective teaching and learning, mentoring and supervision

19. Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of one's own personal growth and development in order to engage in effective professional practice whilst developing the personal skills of self care and self-awareness in the role