

## COUNCIL

### Education Strategic Review (ESR): consultation analysis and next steps

---

**Meeting:** 9 May 2018

**Status:** For decision

**Project Sponsor:** Alistair Bridge (Director of Strategy)

**Project Director and paper author:** Claire Herbert

**Council Champions:** Clare Minchington, David Parkins and Selina Ullah

**Project Board:** SMT

#### Purpose

---

1. The purpose of the paper is to inform Council of the Education Strategic Review (ESR) Principles and Concepts Consultation feedback and to consider time-bound next steps towards implementation of the recommendations of the Education Strategic Review.
2. The paper also explains how the ESR is aligned with our work to develop our system of Continuing Education and Training (CET). Recognising that both projects are contributing to the same strategic objective of supporting the learning and development of optical professionals and the close links between the proposals that we have been developing through the two projects, we are intending to carry out a single consultation from June to July 2018. This will also cover the changes that we are proposing to make to our education quality assurance process, which will be of benefit in the short-term and also support the effective implementation of the ESR.

#### Recommendations

---

3. Council is asked to:
  - 3.1 **consider** and **agree** the indicative implementation timeline at paragraph 21, subject to operational and legal readiness testing; and
  - 3.2 **agree** to consulting stakeholders on draft new Education Standards and Learning Outcomes from June – July 2018.
  - 3.3 **agree** that final approval of the draft education standards and learning outcomes for consultation is delegated to the Chair and Chief Executive and Registrar.

#### Strategic objective

---

4. The objective of the project is to 'deliver a strategic review of optical education and training and implement changes to ensure that optical professionals are equipped for future roles'. This will form part of delivering our strategic objective of supporting the learning and development of optical professionals.

## Risks

---

5. Failure to conduct the ESR in a timely and thorough way could render the current education system unfit for purpose, given the changing needs of patients, the changing roles of optical professionals and the wider changes in the delivery of healthcare that are taking place.
6. To mitigate this risk, we have committed to undertaking an evidence-based approach. We have already undertake a call for evidence consultation and commissioned mixed methods research into patterns and trends in health professional education in the UK and internationally which was published in December 2017. We are currently conducting a study into newly qualified practitioners (since 2012) and employers into perceptions of current education and training requirements (see below).
7. Delays in modifying the GOC's 'business as usual' approach to education could mean we fail to optimise the opportunities for more efficiently and effectively making a transition to a new education approach. In parallel we are delivering a business improvement plan that will pave the way to the full implementation of the Education Strategic Review.

## Background

---

8. The ESR Call for Evidence was conducted from December 2016 to March 2017. The Council received the findings of the Call in May 2017 that can be found [here](#).
9. The Council agreed an ESR project plan for the Review in July 2017 which can be found [here](#). The project continues to be delivered to schedule in accordance with the project plan and we have achieved all the milestones to date: the concepts and principles consultation was launched in December 2017, and was informed by the Call for Evidence (2016-17); wide ranging stakeholder engagement and international research (May - Dec 2017); and preliminary policy analysis (May – December 2017). Progress in project delivery is closely monitored by the internal Education Reviews Programme Board which takes place fortnightly.
10. A research project is currently underway with newly qualified registrants and employers about their perceptions of current education requirements and future needs. This is being delivered by Enventure Research Ltd on behalf of the GOC will be completed by mid-May 2018. This will inform the continued policy development within the Education Strategic Review and has also been structured to provide a benchmarking survey of registrants that could be replicated as part of a post-ESR implementation evaluation.

11. The Council has also indicated its appetite for moving at pace to introduce new education requirements. Building on the significant progress already made, and the positive engagement from many of our stakeholders, we have identified opportunities to do this through a phased approach to implementation (see below). We believe this can be achieved without resource requirements additional to those already budgeted for, that it would not affect the quality and impact of the Review, and that it would realise earlier benefits for the GOC and the whole sector.

## Analysis

---

### ***Principles and Concepts Consultation***

12. The Public Consultation ran from 13 December 2017 to 16 March 2018. We received 36 responses, comprising 10 individuals and 26 organisations.
13. As part of consultation engagement we held a series of bilateral engagement meetings with education providers; met collectively with providers of optometry programmes through the Optometry Schools Council; with Ophthalmic Dispensing programme leads; and held a series of small student discussion groups, with approximately 85 students in total from seven academic institutions.
14. We also held an open invitation Consultation Information event on 7 February 2018 where around 60-70 delegates participated, including professional associations, patient organisations, education providers, employer organisations.
15. The independent report analysing the consultation responses has been published on the ESR pages of the GOC website [here](#).

### ***Policy Development***

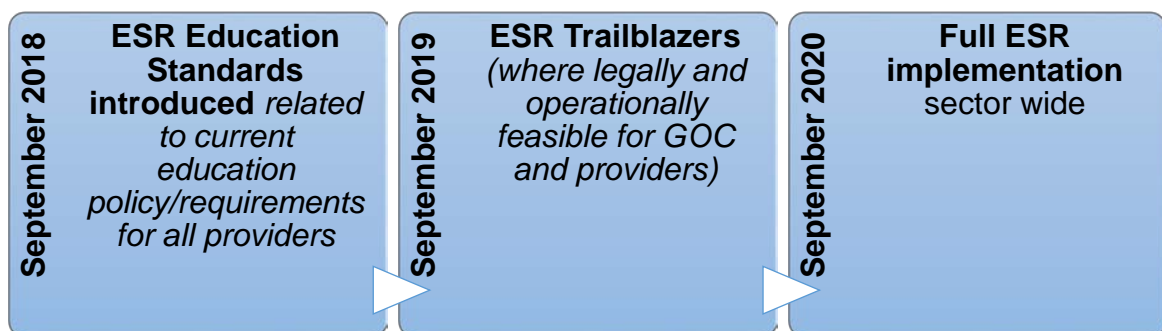
16. The policy development undertaken to date has been informed by a range of data, information and engagement as part of an evidence-based approach – including the recent concepts and principles consultation. We are developing new draft Education Standards, in the context of the significant support for this approach shown by the consultation responses, and accompanying draft Learning Outcomes for optometry, ophthalmic dispensing, contact lens dispensing and independent prescribing. These have been developed in conjunction with the ESR Expert Advisory Group and the CET Reference Group and have been well received to date. We plan to undertake engagement and consultation on these drafts from June - July 2018 and this would be a pre-requisite for any implementation of the Education Standards (see below).
17. The draft Education Standards are structured around the following themes:  
Standard 1: Patient safety and professionalism

- Standard 2: Safe and accessible learning
- Standard 3: Access to early, frequent and varied clinical experience
- Standard 4: Developing and delivering curricula
- Standard 5: Delivering value for students, patients and employers

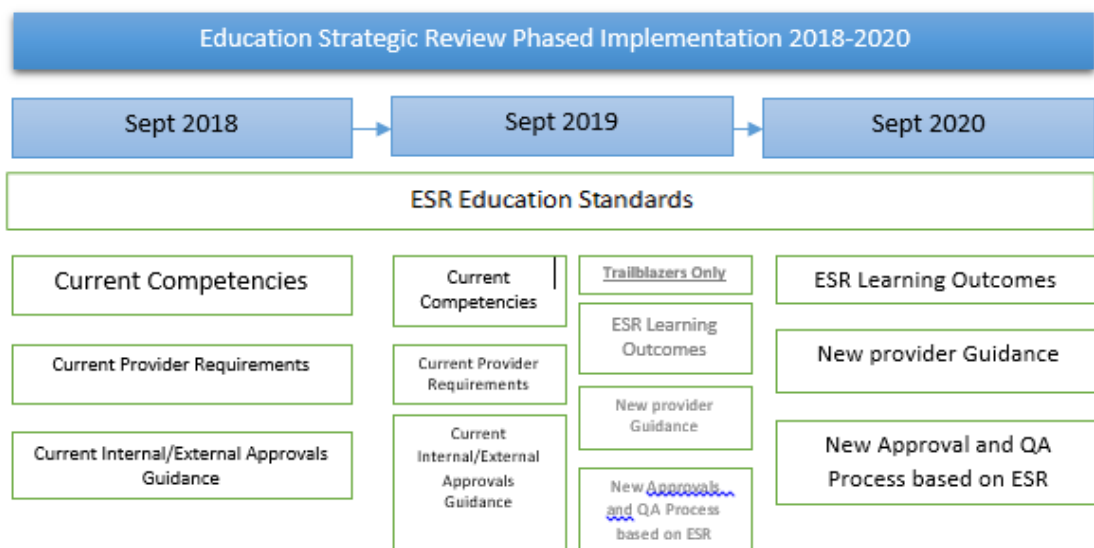
18. The draft learning outcomes, which express the competencies that individuals would be required to attain by virtue of their education and training and which education providers would be required to deliver, are embedded within the standards and cover the four domains of:
1. A knowledgeable and skilful clinician and scientist;
  2. A trusted eye health and vision professional;
  3. A safe and confident practitioner; and
  4. A collaborative and effective colleague and manager.

**Next Steps**

19. In addition to the Council's desire to move forward at pace in implementing recommendations from the Education Strategic Review, the Executive has identified some appetite, as indicated by the consultation responses and from some education providers and employers, for new education requirements to be introduced at the earliest feasible opportunity. This could enable the impact of the ESR to be achieved more immediately by the optical sector, in the context of changing patient needs and new and evolving service delivery models. In considering this, the current ESR timeline has been taken into account, as agreed by the Council last July.
20. The Executive believes it may be feasible, both from the perspective of the GOC's policy implementation and operationalisation, and from the perspective of education providers, to disaggregate the Education Strategic Review outputs and potentially introduce them within our regulatory requirements incrementally from September 2018 onwards.
21. This could be realised by the following approach to implementing the Education Strategic Review outputs:



22. This approach could enable the new Education Standards developed within the Education Strategic Review to be introduced in September 2018, to overarch the current requirements for education providers and current education competencies. Where the ESR Education Standards go beyond current requirements these would be encouraged as voluntary elements and would not be mandatory for GOC approval. This would be subject to the separate business improvement activity that is currently underway and which is due to be completed by the end of May. The draft new education standards provide a clear reframing and new context for all education providers for the achievement of the present requirements, as well as building in and clearly encouraging aspirational development towards the full ESR approach which has been broadly supported through the recent consultation.
23. This would have the consequence of the following policy and guidance being in force:



24. In due course, a further step change would be to replace the current requirements and competencies with the ESR developed learning outcomes, the principle of which has received support in the recent concepts and principles consultation. Further to this, where it is operationally feasible and legally sound, we would explore enabling some individual education providers, who have expressed an interest in doing so, to move forward with a full new system potentially from September 2019 as 'Trailblazers'.
25. At present, we are also developing, and will shortly be implementing, a business improvement process relating to the GOC's current policy and procedures for education. This is a separate project to the ESR and relates to continuous improvement and efficiency measures for the current education requirement and supporting quality assurance operations.

26. Since the outset of the Education Strategic Review, we have committed to making incremental changes where feasible, in the context of the review and business as usual continuous improvement. This approach would enable us to move forward with elements of whole system change, and move progressively into full system-wide change.
27. We have also made reference to the current link between the current education competencies and the Continuing Education and Training (CET) requirements throughout the ESR. It remains the case that any replacement of the current education competencies will have a direct impact on CET because CET is 'pegged' to the same current education competencies. We are proposing that the new education learning outcomes would apply to undergraduate and postgraduate education leading to specialist registration with us and through the CET Review we will be exploring the feasibility of using the same learning outcomes for CET.
28. Given the overlap between the two planned consultations on ESR and the CET review, particularly in relation to the learning outcomes that we envisage will support both student education and CET, we are intending to carry out a single consultation from June to July 2018, with continued engagement with stakeholders in parallel. This consultation will also cover the changes that we are proposing to make to our education quality assurance process, which will be of benefit in the short-term and also support the effective implementation of the ESR.
29. Carrying out a single consultation will enable us to show clearly how the ESR and CET Review form part of a coherent and joined-up approach to fulfilling our strategic objective of supporting the learning and development of optical professionals. We envisage that presenting our ESR and CET proposals in a single consultation will also make them more accessible to stakeholders and reduce the burden involved in responding. Also, consulting on the planned improvements to our approach to education quality assurance at the same time will show that we recognise the need for changes to the system of education of training to be accompanied by changes to the way in which the GOC carries out its role, with this need for change being reinforced by the feedback we have received from stakeholders through our recent Concepts and Principles consultation.
30. If the Council is supportive we would re-publish the ESR timeline in accordance with this approach. We recognise that introducing new requirements requires a step change for the GOC and for education providers and we must ensure there is readiness by all relevant parties for any new elements we introduce.

## Impacts

---

31. The following impacts have been identified:
- 31.1 Reserves – the project is being funded from reserves;
  - 31.2 Budget – a dedicated project budget of £331,388 has been allocated and approved for 2018/19;
  - 31.3 Legislation – any recommendations arising from the review that have a consequential change for the structure of the registers or on the statutory functions of the GOC would require legislative amendment. We will assess the impact of this, where it applies, as the project develops. We do not currently anticipate any legislative change arising from the proposals to date;
  - 31.4 Resources – the project has dedicated resource through a fixed term Project Director, and other members of the GOC contribute through the Education Reviews Programme Board;
  - 31.5 Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) – the EDI impact of any review proposals will be assessed as part of a wider impact assessment at the point when we are consulting on specific policy proposals. EDI considerations will also be considered in developing proposals;
  - 31.6 Human Rights Act – to be considered in developing proposals; and
  - 31.7 Sustainability – to be considered in developing proposals.

## Devolved nations

---

32. The project recognises that the arrangements for funding and delivery of community and hospital eye services differs across the UK and this may have a bearing on future expectations of eye health professionals. This is being taken into account in the project delivery.
33. In addition, contact has already been made with the relevant statutory bodies in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to ensure they are represented in our ongoing work and that any future recommendations arising from the review are equally fit for purpose in all four countries of the UK.

## Communications

---

34. An Education Strategic review communication and engagement strategy was agreed by Council in July 2017.

## Timeline for future work

---

35. A high-level project timeline was agreed by Council in July 2017, reflective of the Council's 2017-2020 Strategy.

## Attachments

---

None