



COMMUNIQUE FROM THE ADVANCED PHARMACY PRACTICE FRAMEWORK STEERING COMMITTEE

Background. The review of the competency standards for pharmacists was completed in December 2010 with copies of the new publication distributed by the Pharmacy Board of Australia to all registered pharmacists. During the review, it was agreed that recognition of advanced practice for the pharmacy profession should be progressed as a separate project commencing in 2011.

Membership and role. The Advanced Pharmacy Practice Framework Steering Committee (APPFSC) commenced work in March 2011. It is a profession-wide collaborative forum with the following individuals and nominees of organisations.

Shane Jackson (Chair)
Paul Gysslink (Association of Professional Engineers, Scientists and Managers, Australia)
Grant Martin (Australian Association of Consultant Pharmacy)
John Chapman (Australian College of Pharmacy)
Peter Halstead (Australian Pharmacy Council)
Pascale Dettwiller (Council of Pharmacy Schools: Australia and New Zealand Inc.)
Gilbert Yeates (Pharmaceutical Defence Limited)
Lisa Nissen (Pharmaceutical Society of Australia)
Stephen Marty (Pharmacy Board of Australia)
Yvonne Allinson (Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia)
Andrew Matthews (The Pharmacy Guild of Australia)
Kerry Deans (Consultant)
Kay Sorimachi (Secretariat)

In addition, the National Australian Pharmacy Students' Association is kept informed of the work of this forum as a Corresponding Member of the Steering Committee.

The main role of the Members of the APPFSC includes providing strategic leadership and guidance in progressing agreed 'projects' on behalf of the profession and acting as an advocate and conduit of information for the respective organisations.

Tasks. The APPFSC is overseeing the following tasks.

- To map the 2010 competency standards to the revised health, medicine and veterinary science (HMVS) threshold learning outcomes (TLOs) of the Learning and Teaching Academic Standards (LTAS) project.
- To articulate the contributions of pharmacy school courses and intern training programs to the subset of competency standards which apply at initial registration (ie. entry-level).
- To develop an advanced practice framework for the pharmacy profession.

KEY DISCUSSIONS AND OUTCOMES

Customised entry-level competency tool. The APPFSC received stakeholder feedback that some clarity regarding the contributions of pharmacy school (PS) courses and intern training programs (ITP) to the competency standards applicable at initial registration (ie. entry-level) was desirable. A customised competency tool has been developed where all relevant Performance Criteria were mapped to articulate the contributions of PS and/or ITP. In addition, Evidence Examples were tailored to show examples of Program Expected Outcomes.

The entry-level TLOs for healthcare disciplines (HMVS) were developed through the [Australian Learning and Teaching Council's LTAS project](#) and [published in June 2011](#). The pharmacy profession's entry-level competency standards have also been mapped to these TLOs.

Definition of advanced practice. The Introduction to the Competency Standards included the agreed definition (adapted from that developed by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society) of “advanced practice” as follows.

Advanced Practice is practice that is so significantly different from that achieved at initial registration that it warrants recognition by professional peers and the public of the expertise of the practitioner and the education, training and experience from which that capability was derived.

Advanced practice vs. specialisation. The APPFSC is aware that there is some debate within the profession over the terms “advanced practice” and “specialisation”. As outlined in the Competency Standards (p. 6), to avoid confusion the Committee prefers to describe professional practice in terms of two dimensions — **scope of practice** and **performance level**. Specialisation generally relates to the scope of practice which is narrowed or focussed and this is not necessarily associated with an enhanced level of performance. The Committee therefore uses the term ‘advanced practice’ to describe practice at a performance level which is beyond a level that is usually observed. This is also the preferred path given the use of the term ‘specialist’ is strictly controlled under the National Law (ie. the legislation affecting health practitioner registration).

Framework for advanced pharmacy practice. The APPFSC recognises that advanced level frameworks have been developed within the Australian hospital pharmacy sector based on the UK Competency Development and Evaluation Group (CoDEG) materials. The Committee has been mindful of work already undertaken as well as the need to develop a flexible framework which can be adapted to any area of pharmacy practice where recognition of advanced practice is desirable. As an initial exercise, the CoDEG standards have been mapped to the Australian Competency Standards to confirm there is a continuum. The APPFSC is now working to develop a generic advanced pharmacy practice framework in Patient Care. It is envisaged that once the draft framework is examined for robustness and appropriateness, it can be further developed for specific areas of Patient Care (eg. cancer care, cardiology, paediatrics, critical care, emergency medicine) or adapted for other areas of practice (eg. management and administration, compounding).

Recognition of advanced pharmacy practice. The APPFSC considers that formal recognition of advanced pharmacy practice in the interests of public safety (as required under the National Law) is justified on the basis of the high level of autonomy such pharmacists have, the complexity of patient care issues into which they have input, and the extent to which they are relied upon by other health professionals to guide therapeutic choices and treatment regimens. The Committee is developing a proposal for recognition of Advanced Pharmacy Practice and Pharmacist Practitioners taking into account the experiences of the Pharmacy Council of New Zealand, the work of the Pharmacy Board of Australia, and options which comply with the National Law.

NEXT STEPS

The customised entry-level competency tool is being finalised following the recent public consultation by incorporating feedback from stakeholder submissions. The mapping of the HMVS TLOs will be included as an appendix. The revised tool has been presented to APPFSC organisations for consideration of endorsement by their boards. Upon finalisation, the tool will be submitted to the Pharmacy Board of Australia and the Australian Pharmacy Council to help inform accreditation standards for Australian pharmacy schools/courses and pharmacy intern training programs.

A draft discussion paper on an *Advanced Pharmacy Practice Framework for Patient Care* and a *Proposal for Recognition of Advanced Pharmacy Practice and Pharmacist Practitioners* will be presented to APPFSC organisations in October 2011 for initial comment. Profession-wide consultation on this initiative is expected to take place in early 2012.

Shane Jackson
Chair APPFSC
11 October 2011