

Assessment Strategy - Herbal Medicine

Note: This Generic Assessment Strategy is to be used with the National Professional Standards for Herbal Medicine developed by the traditions of Western, Chinese and Tibetan herbal medicine and approved by the European Herbal Practitioners Association [on 22 September 2003].

1. Introduction

The practice of herbal medicine can be considered as comprising three high level activities:

- § Provide professional services to clients to improve and maintain their health
- § Develop knowledge and skills in relation to herbal medicine
- § Promote, manage and develop the herbal practice

There will be some herbal practitioners who will need to be attested competent in all of these areas and others who will need to demonstrate competence in some of the units associated with the three areas, dependent on the work they do.

This assessment strategy is based upon the following principles:

- 1.1 There must be an agreed set of standards as the basis for assessment .
- 1.2 Assessment must be based in a substantial part on performance in clinical practice in contact with clients in the working environment - supported by essential knowledge.
- 1.3 The assessment process must be consistent across different practice settings and organisations.
- 1.4 The procedure for carrying out and recording the outcomes of assessment must be such as to facilitate internal and external verification.
- 1.5 The assessment process should respect that there may be more than one acceptable way of carrying out a task, yet be robust enough to reject any unacceptable activities .
- 1.6 The evidence of competence, collected by the herbal practitioner and reviewed by assessment must be:
 - (i) *Sufficient*: covering all the knowledge and performance requirements of the defined standards
 - (ii) *Current*: usually not more than two years old
 - (iii) *Valid*: relevant to the standard being addressed
 - (iv) *Authentic*: demonstrably produced by the practitioner
 - (v) *Consistent*: competent performance all the time

2. The Generic Assessment Strategy

There are a number of fundamental principles relating to assessment for herbal practitioners.

These are:

- 2.1 National Professional Standards establish the herbal profession's benchmark of competent performance.
- 2.2 National Professional Standards, together with clear evidence of competence requirements and guidance to assessors on certain aspects of the standards, provide the basis for consistent assessment practices.
- 2.3 The assessment of a practitioner's competence should be fair, rigorous, efficient and cost effective using approaches that have the support of professional associations, the Accreditation Board, any validating university or institution of Higher Education and other sector interest groups.
- 2.4 Assessment must be conducted by suitably qualified individuals who demonstrably maintain their competence.
- 2.5 Assessment should be carried out over a period of time.
- 2.6 Assessments should be carried out in the clinic wherever practical. This can include the use of simulation to increase access to assessment in certain defined areas. However, a substantial part of the assessment (at least 50%) must be in direct proximity to clients.
- 2.7 The assessment process should be tailored to meet individual needs taking account, where relevant, of prior learning and achievement and special needs.
- 2.8 There should be open access to assessment for all who can provide evidence of the ability to perform to the National Professional Standards.

3. National Professional Standards

- 3.1 National Professional Standards set out the workplace activities in which herbal practitioners may be involved. They identify the performance criteria i.e. what practitioners must be able to do and the essential underpinning knowledge and understanding i.e. what practitioners must know.
- 3.2 National Professional Standards are useful to many different people and organisations. They must form the basis of qualifications, they should inform the development of education and training courses and

training materials, they can assist with the development of job descriptions and with organisation development and they can be used as the basis for staff appraisals. The National Professional Standards for herbal medicine can be applied to all areas of herbal practice, sometimes with minor tailoring which does not change in any way the value of the standards. However, all tailoring must be approved by the Standards Setting Body in consultation with the appropriate professional regulatory body(ies).

4. Awarding Body

4.1 The Awarding Body(ies) for herbal medicine qualifications must demonstrate that they:

- a) will assist the Standards Setting Body in consultation with the appropriate professional regulatory body(ies) in the development and refinement of technical and occupational criteria for the appointment of examiners, assessors and verifiers.
- b) have robust systems for the appointment and training of internal or external examiners, assessors and verifiers.
- c) will deploy external examiners or verifiers according to their technical expertise.
- d) will provide the opportunity for external examiners or verifiers to participate in sector specific reviews and appropriate training events for continuous professional development on a regular basis.
- e) will consult the Standards Setting Body in consultation with the appropriate professional regulatory body(ies) on the acceptability of any qualifications submitted by examiners or assessors as proof of their occupational competence other than any qualifications that can be approved at the launch of the qualification.

4.2 It is expected that the Awarding Body(ies) will ensure:

- § that assessment instruments do not directly or indirectly discriminate against any particular group of people
- § that arrangements are put in place for assessments to be carried out at a time to meet individual needs and rate of progress, within the constraints of validating institutions
- § where necessary, suitable arrangements are in place for re-assessment of those areas where candidates have been shown to be not yet competent
- § that the qualifications and occupational expertise requirements of all involved in the assessment process will be regularly monitored and recorded

§ cross-centre consistency of interpretation and assessment against the National Professional Standards through the establishment of effective systems such as subject benchmarking, internal and external moderation and standardisation events.

5. Expertise of Examiners and Assessors

- 5.1 Examiners and Assessors, for the qualifications and National Professional Standards, must be professionally competent in the area in which they are carrying out assessments.
- 5.2. There must be appropriate arrangements in place to secure independence in assessment between examiners and assessors, and those involved on teaching and clinical training.
- 5.3 Examiners and Assessors must have a full understanding of the National Professional Standards and requirements of any qualification being assessed; they must also have an understanding of the Awarding Body policies and procedures.
- 5.4 Examiners and Assessors must only assess in their acknowledged area of professional competence.
- 5.5 Examiners and Assessors must be appropriately qualified for the role of examiner/assessor and be accountable to the awarding body for their assessment practice.
- 5.6 There must be secure processes in place to ensure that examiners and assessors continue to have relevant experience, and partake in appropriate continuing professional development.
- 5.7 Awarding bodies must demonstrate robust systems of quality assurance, to include as appropriate, the use of appropriately trained external examiners or internal and external verifiers.

6. Methods of Assessment

- 6.1 A variety of assessment methods is acceptable to include (but not limited to): observation of clinical practice, examination, case studies, reflective journals, competence logs, clinical supervisor assessment and viva voce interview.
- 6.2 A range of evidence sources is acceptable which includes; observations of performance, questioning, witness testimony, personal statements and the review of products of performance e.g. case histories, case files, case notes and other documentary evidence. This documentary evidence is a rich source of evidence of competence in a profession where there is a requirement to keep complete, accurate and contemporaneous notes of all activities.

- 6.3 Risk assessment approaches should be used to identify and evaluate the likely risks that assessment decisions may be unsound, so that prompt and effective actions can be taken to achieve reliable, valid and consistent assessment.
- 6.4 There should be a balance of assessment forms across the units that make up a full award.
- 6.5 As a principle, the evidence of competence used by assessors must be accessible for external moderation or verification.

7 Knowledge and Understanding

- 7.1 It is vital to ensure that the essential underpinning knowledge and understanding is demonstrated by Candidates to support the Performance Criteria defined by the National Professional Standards.
- 7.2 It is for Awarding Bodies, and others involved in the assessment process, to develop and deliver a procedure to effectively assess the essential knowledge and understanding relevant to the particular units of the award. This may involve the successful completion of a knowledge-based examination. The Awarding Body will be expected to offer a full rationale for assessment when applying for accreditation.

8. External Quality Control of Assessment

- 8.1 The external quality control over assessment will be a part of the accreditation process for a particular award, and will be in line with the processes of the appropriate regulatory body(ies). This will include sampling of students' work and an examination of the reports of external examiners, verifiers or moderators, over an extended period of time.