



Irish Society of Homeopaths

The Irish Society of Homeopaths

Education Policy

Issued March 2010

CONTENTS

Aims and Context of this Policy.....	2
Introduction.....	4
Accreditation.....	6
Registration.....	8
Mentoring.....	9
Supervision.....	10
Continuing Professional Development.....	11
Research.....	12
Education of the Public.....	13
Conclusion.....	14
References.....	15

Aims and Context of this Policy

This policy is intended to form the basis for the ongoing work of the Irish Society of Homeopaths (hereafter referred to as the 'Society') in the field of education. It lays out the framework for the current and future direction for homeopathic education in Ireland. It is an inclusive document and is aimed at members, students, course providers and the general public.

Current Context

The Society is dedicated to ensuring high standards of education and practice. Whilst a lot of work has been done in this area, there is a need to set down an Education Policy which will be used as a benchmark and template for the development of all aspects of homeopathic education and research.

Historical Context

The Society was established in 1990 and has published a register of professional homeopaths since 1995. Since then, there have been three registration processes – traditional route to registration, reflective registration and our current route to registration through CPD.

As a founding member of the ECCH Working Group on Education, the Society has been involved in the development of international standards for homeopathic education. The ECCH guidelines were published in 2000 and have been used as the basis for all recognised training programmes in Europe.

In 2004 the Society established an Accreditation Board which consulted widely in order to establish an accreditation process which both incorporated best international educational practice in higher education and also reflected the unique requirements of homeopathic students.

Throughout the Society's history it has fostered a very good working relationship with course providers in order to develop an inclusive accreditation process which caters to the needs of all stakeholders. Working together they have established an ongoing consultative process which ensures the provision of the highest quality in homeopathic education.

Standards

Several strands weave together to define the standards for homeopathic education laid out in this document.

Partnership with course providers

The Society and the accredited course providers' work together, to identify and develop high standards in every aspect of homeopathic education and practitioner development.

Diversity within clear principles and Code of Ethics and Practice

The Society supports the existence of a wide variety of approaches to the practice and teaching of homeopathy. The diverse approaches are made possible by the fact that homeopathic education is truly international with many different philosophical and cultural influences. This approach is incorporated in the ECCH guidelines on education and expressed in the variety of courses world wide. Underpinning this diversity is a commitment to clear and coherent philosophical principles and adherence to the Code of Ethics and Practice of the Society.

Core Criteria

The Core Criteria for Homeopathic Practice are intended to be used in conjunction with the Code of Ethics and Practice and Occupational performance Standards infusing its particular approach with the general ethical and professional skills required of a health practitioner.

Code of Ethics

The Society's Code of Ethics and Practice, by which all registered members are bound, is in place to ensure protection of the patient and also of the practitioner. They provide clearly defined guidelines for professional practice and as such are a reference point for the development of educational, supervisory and CPD programmes.

Occupational Performance Standards *

These standards represent what is expected of a competent and effective practitioner, and demonstrate the parameters within which diversity is supported.

** The OPS are currently being reviewed as they were taken from the Society of Homeopaths in England and have no legal bearing in Ireland.*

Introduction

The Society sets and maintains standards for homeopathic practice and is the organisation representing Professional Homeopaths in Ireland. The Society has a coherent policy for the lifelong educational development of homeopaths. The education policy of the Society defines its commitment to all aspects of the homeopath's education and provides a guideline for its future growth.

Homeopathic education occurs generally in the field of higher education. It therefore adopts the ideals set forward in the ECCH Guidelines for Homeopathic Education and fosters the further aim of developing a culture of life-long learning as set out in the Bologna Policy for higher education in the EU. These educational values constitute an exceptionally rich and diverse cultural and scientific asset for both individuals and society.

The Irish Society of Homeopaths commitment to Education:

- The Society has an ongoing commitment to maintaining high standards of efficacy, safety, and ethics in Homeopathy
- The Society recognises that the education of professional homeopaths is essential for the development of practitioners who are safe, competent and ethical
- The Society's remit regarding education extends to all members irrespective of membership status.

The purpose and vision of the Education Policy:

- To define, develop and maintain uniformly high standards of professional education and to encourage diversity of content and delivery, through a process of ongoing consultation with all participating stakeholders
- To provide an independent accreditation system for all providers of accredited courses and other interested parties
- To support and develop a profession that can flourish in changing contexts of health care and national and international legislation
- To provide support and opportunities for development of our registered members
- To provide support and development for all members engaged in the provision of education on behalf of the Society
- To provide a forum for discussion of educational issues
- To maintain an overview in all matters pertaining to homeopathic education.

Elements common to all educational procedures within the Irish Society of Homeopaths:

The Society will ensure the quality of homeopathic education by establishing structures, which will act as benchmarks for the profession as a whole. These will all have the following elements in common:

- They will be useful - empowering the homeopath with knowledge, skills and expertise
- They will give consideration to the expressed needs of the I.S.H. membership
- They will be person-centred, with appreciation of the individual participant's needs and abilities
- They will develop, based on experience, feedback and new ideas and techniques
- They will integrate theory with practice
- They will all have feedback mechanisms
- They will have a clearly defined complaints and appeals procedures
- They will be in line with ECCH guidelines.

Documentation relating to each process will:

- Be transparent
- Have a clear specific description of each process
- Will clearly define the roles and responsibilities of all participants
- Will outline clear feedback, complaints and appeals procedures.

Education and the Irish Society of Homeopaths

The Society has a two-tiered approach to the Education of homeopaths:

1. Pre Graduation By providing a well structured accreditation process, it supports course providers in delivering a high standard of homeopathic education
2. Post Graduation By providing comprehensive registration and continuing professional development programmes, it supports registered members in their professional development.

Accreditation

The Accreditation of Homeopathic courses provides clear guidelines and assessment criteria for course providers who wish to have their professional training courses accredited.

This process is overseen by an Accreditation Board made up of peers from within the profession and also independent members chosen for their expertise in education at higher level. The ECCH Education Guidelines are used in conjunction with the accreditation requirements of the Society to ensure that the highest standards are maintained.

Accreditation ensures the maintenance and development of course standards through an on-going process of self-evaluation, supported by regular reviews by the Accreditation Board.

Accreditation:

- Independently guarantees the quality of professional educational courses
- Supports the development of a learning programme that is in keeping with the ethos of the Society
- Provides objectively verifiable criteria for assessment of courses.

The Accreditation Board requires that Professional Education be:

- Holistic and integrate theory, practice, clinical training and personal development which should be reflected in the curriculum
- Student-centred and encourage reflection and autonomy in its students
- Enable students to become safe and competent practitioners
- Be dynamic and aimed at continuous quality improvement
- Prepare students for registration with the Society by giving them a firm base of practical and theoretical knowledge on which to build their practice
- Practical and ensuring that graduates leaving courses have the skills and knowledge necessary to work as independent autonomous homeopaths
- Flexible while requiring course providers to notify the board of any proposed changes to the accredited course
- Ethical and reflect the standards of the Code of Ethics and Practice of the Society.

The Irish Society of Homeopaths commitment to Accreditation:

- To review this process regularly, using cycles of reflection and action, and incorporating feedback from course providers and assessors
- To require the Accreditation Board to review accredited courses at regular intervals and to ensure that any recommendations have been implemented
- To consult widely with all stakeholders before making changes to the accreditation procedure and/or policy.

Registration

Being a registered member of the Society indicates that a member has satisfied the Society's educational and professional requirements. All registered members agree to practise in accordance with the Society's Code of Ethics and Practice and Core Criteria for Homeopathic Practice. They must have full professional and indemnity insurance and be responsible for continuing their personal and professional development.

Registration Programme

The registration programme is open to graduates from accredited courses. The purpose of the Society's registration programme is to maintain professional standards and provide individual support to its members. Registration is undertaken in addition to their basic qualifications and participants commit to a two year registration process. It offers a structured mentor based CPD programme where each registrant can design a programme which best meets their individual needs. It also offers the opportunity to work towards a thriving practice, supporting themselves and their patients, networking with other practitioners and establishing them in a culture of life-long learning while receiving affirmation of their achievements.

Registered Members

All registered members commit to supervision and continuing professional development during their professional life.

The Irish Society of Homeopaths commitment to the Registration Programme and Registered Members

The Society is committed to regular review and development of the following areas:

- Mentoring
- Supervision
- CPD Educational Seminars

Mentoring

The mentor's role is primarily seen as an interface between the Society and the practitioner with the focus on the welfare of the mentoree. Within the Society's two year registration programme, registrants are assigned a Mentor.

The Irish Society of Homeopaths commitment to Mentoring:

- To ensure Mentors undergo continuous training/up-skilling
- To regularly review the Mentoring programme
- To have clear and transparent guidelines regarding complaints and appeals procedures.

Supervision

The Supervisor's role is to give attention to the therapeutic relationship between the homeopath and the patient and to support the supervisee to attain their own understanding of the dilemmas presented. It is task-based while being person-centered. This provides a forum for the homeopath to examine and solve the dilemmas of day to day practice in a safe, supportive environment. The Society has a network of Supervisors working throughout Ireland.

The Irish Society of Homeopaths commitment to supervision:

- To provide a proper framework to select and recruit members onto the Society's Supervisor panel
- To ensure Supervisors undergo regular training/up-skilling
- To regularly review the Supervisory process
- To have clear and transparent guidelines regarding complaints and appeals procedures.

Continuing Professional Development

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is crucial to the development of professional practitioners. The Society fosters the participation of all registered homeopaths in a CPD environment where workshops and seminars are designed to inform, educate and train homeopaths to be more effective practitioners in a dynamic and changing healthcare culture.

Workshops will be in response to the stated needs of its members and also in line with international developments. Based on feedback from participants, each workshop will be considered in the review of and planning of future CPD programmes.

The CPD programme is designed to cater for the needs of all members, from newly registered members undergoing the registration programme to practitioners of many years standing.

The Irish Society of Homeopaths commitment to CPD:

- To provide workshops/seminars that give consideration to the expressed needs of the Society membership
- To provide workshops/seminars that are useful and will empower the homeopath with knowledge, skills and expertise to be more effective in an ever-changing healthcare environment
- To provide workshops/seminars that are person-centred, with appreciation being given to individual participants' needs and abilities
- To develop the CPD Workshop programme in line with experience, feedback and new ideas and techniques
- To provide workshops that will integrate theory with practice
- To provide appropriate feedback mechanisms for workshop attendees and facilitators and proper review of same
- To provide CPD workshops that are in line with ECCH guidelines
- To regularly review of the overall CPD workshop programme
- To provide clear guidelines regarding complaints about workshops/seminars.

Research

Research is vital to the development of homeopathy. Research provides a context for dialogue within the homeopathic community and with the wider community. Research is an organised and systematic way of finding answers to questions and it is important that these skills are developed in every homeopath.

Using established protocols we aim to increase the knowledge and information available both within the profession and also for the benefit of the community as a whole. An introduction to research in its various forms should be an important part of a professional homeopathic education and these skills should be integrated into a homeopath's professional life. Additionally, in the specific context of homeopathic education, an understanding of the procedures and ethics of provings should form part of students' skills.

The Irish Society of Homeopaths commitment to Research:

- To foster a culture of research informed practitioners within the Society
- To provide information and training to members who wish to undertake research
- To recognise that the field of homeopathic research is broad and diverse and not limited to homeopathic provings
- To publish findings of research on behalf of members both on the Society's website and in homeopathic journals
- To establish a forum for those who wish to engage in research to help stimulate new ideas and ways of understanding homeopathy

Education of the Public

The Society recognises that the Society is the first point of contact for members of the public regarding homeopathy. As such we have a responsibility to present all information for the general public in an educational and inclusive way.

The Irish Society of Homeopaths commitment to the education of the general public:

- To provide information that explains the role of the Society in a simple and easily accessible way
- To provide information leaflets about various aspects of homeopathic healthcare
- To provide a regularly updated website with up to date information on registered homeopaths, courses and news items for the benefit of the general public
- To keep the media informed of homeopathic matters
- To provide a point of contact where members of the public can address questions regarding homeopathy
- To provide information on homeopathic practice and treatment
- To make the Code of Ethics and Practice easily accessible to members of the public.

Conclusion

- The Education Policy Document demonstrates our commitment to homeopathic education
- At each step it describes what the Society aims to provide in order to be a worldwide leader in this field
- It is an open and inclusive policy and will be reviewed every five years in line with international best practice
- It is hoped that it will provide a framework for the further development of homeopathic education at all levels and will help fulfill the Society's aim of setting and maintaining standards for professional homeopaths in Ireland.

References

Irish Society of Homeopaths documentation:

- ≡ Accreditation of College Courses Policy Document, 2005
- ≡ Registration with the ISH, 2009
- ≡ Mentor Handbook, *First Edition, 2009*
- ≡ Mentoree Handbook, *First Edition, 2009*
- ≡ Supervisors Handbook
- ≡ Code of Ethics and Practice
- ≡ Occupational Performance Standards
- ≡ Core Criteria for Homeopathic Practice

European Guidelines for Homeopathic Education, *Second Edition, June 2000 (Currently under revision)*

Bologna Policy Forum Statement

http://www.eua.be/fileadmin/user_upload/files/Newsletter_new/Bologna_Policy_Forum_Statement_29April2009.pdf

Acknowledgements

This document has been prepared by the Education Working Group of the Irish Society of Homeopaths. The Education Working Group was established by the ISH Committee (2008/09) and its members are Gerry Murphy, Ray Nolan, Declan Mohan, Anne Connolly and Lynda Boxwell. A draft Education Policy document (June 2009) was prepared prior to this by members of the Accreditation Board, Anne Irwin, Angela Kearney and Lelia Doolin.