

To Programme Leaders
of AfN accredited programmes

08 April 2020

Dear colleagues

Following up on the [statement](#) we published in March regarding the impact of coronavirus measures on accredited programmes, we would like to thank you for the efforts which we know all of you are making to redesign your programme delivery and assessments and put in place arrangements to support your students during these difficult times. At this point we felt it may be helpful to write to you again about our position, as the regulating body, with regard to our expectations for programmes and students.

As a regulator we understand that we are working in partnership with academic institutions to ensure appropriate education and professional training which equips students to practice their profession after graduation. We recognise the expertise of education providers in this, especially with regard to educational standards, and we know that you as programme leaders are using your expertise to put appropriate arrangements in place at this time.

Institutional arrangements for meeting academic standards at this time vary, with a range of no detriment, progression and alternative assessment arrangements being put in place. QAA have published guidance on the integrity of academic assessments, and we do not believe it is appropriate for us to comment on arrangements for maintaining academic standards. QAA guidance can be accessed on the QAA website (<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/news-events/support-and-guidance-covid-19>). Our primary concern is the professional standards which our accreditation criteria assess.

It is not necessary for programme leaders to seek approval from us for temporary changes to the way you are delivering and assessing parts of the programme at this time. It is fair to say that all of us are rapidly learning how to operate under the coronavirus measures and programmes are coming up with a variety of ways to meet the challenges presented.

Our expectation remains that students will have passed all of the assessments required to meet our competencies when they graduate. We understand that programmes will find a range of innovative ways to deliver teaching and assessment to achieve this. Each programme will have a mapping document completed at the time of your accreditation, which maps competencies to your programme's modular delivery and assessment. Reference to this will enable you to easily identify which competencies are affected by any changes and to decide if there is a risk to students not having demonstrated these competencies by the end of the programme. It may be helpful to review this for each cohort of students when determining what arrangements you may need to put in place. Where there are individual students who may have been at risk of not passing certain

modules under normal circumstances it may be appropriate to put in place remedial measures to support them.

Regarding the professional competencies, if you are concerned that a student or group of students is at risk of graduating without having met all of them then we ask you to support them in meeting any such outstanding competencies as soon as possible. For students in their early years of study, this should be achievable before they graduate. For some final year students, or those on MSc programmes, this may be more difficult, and you may need to provide additional support after graduation. As long as they have met the academic standards required by your institution such students should graduate, but they should only be included on the pass list you send to AfN once you are confident that they have met any outstanding professional competences. This might mean you need to send us more than one pass list. Our expectation is that any such students should have met the outstanding competences within three years of graduating, and we expect that you will inform them promptly of any risk(s) you identify and work with them to achieve the outstanding competencies in a timely way.

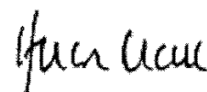
When we conduct annual monitoring later this year we will ask you to tell us about the changes you have made as a result of the coronavirus restrictions. At that time we will ask you if you have identified any risk to your students missing some of the core competencies and, if so, what remedial action you have put in place to address this. We would emphasise again that we recognise your expertise in doing so, and we will be as flexible and pragmatic in our approach as possible whilst maintaining appropriate professional standards.

Finally, we understand that students are particularly anxious at this time and some will have questions about the accreditation status of their programme. We would like to reassure all students that they remain on an accredited degree programme and, provided their name is on the pass list submitted to us by the programme, they will be eligible for registration as an Associate Registered Nutritionist by the Direct Entry Route.

Yours sincerely



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