



Monitoring the Quality of Programmes of
Vision Rehabilitation/Habilitation training in the UK

January 2023

Introduction

In 2019 RWPN established its professional register of Vision Rehabilitation and Habilitation Specialists. In 2022 RWPN's registers were accredited by the Professional Standards Authority.

All registrants with RWPN must provide proof of their qualification from a recognised and approved training provider of vision rehabilitation or habilitation. However, until this point, and in the absence of a professional body until 2013 to provide guidance, there has been no published criteria for how a course will meet our registration requirements or, having met them, continues to do so.

Purpose of this Document

The purpose of this document is to set out the initial mechanism for how RWPN will monitor the quality standards of courses leading to qualification, either through the Trailblazer Apprenticeship Standard (England only) or university-based academic programmes. This document sets out how we will work with the existing training providers and course delivery centres. It outlines how we raise concerns, provide support and advice and publish our findings.

Initially RWPN's role will be to monitor the standards of course delivery and outcomes. In the longer term we aspire to become the national accrediting body for all courses and curricula in the field of vision rehabilitation and habilitation studies in the UK.

The term "student" is used throughout this document and may also be used to refer to an apprentice.

Criteria for standards monitoring

The purpose of the monitoring process is to assess how the programmes produce Vision Rehabilitation or Habilitation Specialists who are fit for purpose in line with the competencies expected of the role and acceptance to the professional register. RWPN recognises the published Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours described within the Trailblazer Apprenticeship Standard as the basis for the curriculum to qualify as a Vision Rehabilitation Specialist across all nations. This is set at, as a minimum, QCF level 5 (SCQF 8). RWPN recognises the published Quality Standards for Habilitation as the basis to qualify as a Vision Habilitation Specialist. This is set at QCF level 6 (SCQF 9). Our

purpose is also to monitor the steps taken by the course provider to support effective work-based learning and support the employer. We believe that it is vital that the employer/placement provider, student and mentor(s) have a clear understanding of expectations in advance, and so can plan ahead. We also believe that providers should provide a clear mechanism for assessing student progress and for taking action to support the student where necessary.

The overarching areas to be monitored are:

- How the programme content meets occupational requirements
- How the programme is delivered and assessed
- What qualifications, experience and professional registration is held by course teachers and practice mentors/supervisors
- The availability of suitable resources to deliver on-course teaching
- What resources and assessment mechanisms are required in work-based placements to ensure that a) students can gain the wide variety of the skills required under the mentorship of someone with at least two year's experience prior to the start of the work placement. b) those responsible for the direct supervision and support of students have sufficient information about what is expected of their students and a clear timeline about when their student can execute independent practice in core skills
- What mechanisms there are to gather student feedback on the course and how it is acted upon

Stages of the monitoring process

Stage 1 Selection of Monitoring group

The RWPN Registration and Professional Standards committee will meet to assign the team involved in monitoring of the programmes selected. The committee currently meets four times a year so it will be decided and allocated as part of the committee cycle.

The head of the proposed monitoring group will then liaise with the chair of RWPN's management committee to contact the course provider to notify them of the monitoring process and arrange the dates for the start of the work.

Stage 2 Document Submission

The course director will be requested to submit a range of documentary evidence specified by RWPN. This would include:

1. Sufficient information about the course that illustrates: how the course content maps to occupational standards (e.g. Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours in the Trailblazer Apprenticeship standard); breakdown of module content and credit value (where appropriate); the number of timetabled contact teaching hours students have directly with teachers and a rationale to the way the balance is struck between face-to-face and on-line teaching in this practical profession; what initial information and guidance is provided to workplace mentors prior to the student starting the work placement; how the student course workbook is shared to enable mentors and managers to support their student and understand their progress; what mechanisms are in place to identify where a student is struggling to meet the required practice standard; what minimum level of experience is required from the Vision Rehabilitation/Habilitation Specialist who is responsible for signing off skills in the workplace; a description of the type of assessment (e.g. summative or formative) and frequency of assessment is used during the course and the options for resits (where appropriate);
2. The qualifications and experience of those academic/vocational staff & mentors who have substantive involvement in the delivery of the programme including their professional registration on RWPN or Habilitation VI UK's register or the register of a relevant statutory provider. (Registration requirements apply where staff are involved specifically in delivery/supervision of Orientation & Mobility, low vision, functional assessment of visual impairment and home-based rehabilitation skills);
3. The names of the workplace setting and the designated mentor(s) where students are currently on practice;
4. Description of what mechanisms there are in place to gather student and workplace feedback specific to the content of the course and to the work placement; description of how such feedback will feed into future delivery.

Stage 3 Documentation Audit

On receipt of the documentation, the monitoring group will meet to audit the documentation, check that all required information has been received and request more information where appropriate. After all documentation has been received, the monitoring group will compile a report for consideration by the full Registration and Professional Standards committee.

Outcome of audit

The monitoring group will have three options for approval: 1) approval with no conditions or recommendations, 2) approved with recommendations or 3) approved **pending** actions.

Actions will be required if RWPN decides it is not able to approve the course, or specified elements of the course, until a plan for such actions is submitted. An action will be specified where the concern is of such gravity that RWPN believes that students will not attain the required occupational and educational standard to be eligible to join RWPN's professional register. A date by which these actions should be completed will be given.

Recommendations are proposed where RWPN feels improvement is needed but where it would not withhold approval.

Once agreed by the committee the report will be submitted, in writing, to the course director with any **actions** or **recommendations**. The course director will be given the opportunity to comment, in writing, on the findings and seek or offer clarification. Once this discussion has concluded RWPN's findings will be published on its website.

Inspection & monitoring Cycles

RWPN will adopt an annual self-reporting process and a four yearly audit. The self-reporting process will provide the training provider the opportunity to notify RWPN of any changes that the course provider has had to instigate to the programme content, the delivery method or staffing in the interim period. It will also provide an opportunity to seek student and employer feedback on their levels of satisfaction with their learning and work-readiness.

The four yearly audit will take the form and depth of the initial monitoring process.

Fees

RWPN is not yet an accreditation body. At present it remains under review whether a charge will be levied for our monitoring process.