

**Towards a competent and confident professional workforce: an
interprofessional partnership between ALPS, employer representatives and
Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies**

**Thursday 21 May 2009
University of Leeds**

This report provides a summary of the day, including presentations and discussion points from the seminar. The suggestions and proposed actions from the afternoon session will be fed back to various ALPS work streams and will inform their work for the final twelve months of the programme.

Welcome

Professor Trudie Roberts, ALPS Director

Trudie welcomed everyone to the third seminar hosted by ALPS in consultation with the Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs). As well as PSRB representatives, delegates were present from employer organisations, the Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence, Skills for Health, and the five ALPS partner universities. Trudie talked about the aims of the seminar and then explained the programme for the day:

- Update and action on feedback from last PSRB seminar in 2007
- Rotation around three workshops which provide interactive engagement with the progress of ALPS
- Afternoon group discussions followed by a feedback and action plan session

ALPS Update

Janet Hargreaves (ALPS University of Huddersfield)

Janet gave a general update on the progress of the ALPS programme, including the Common Competency Maps, the rollout of paper and mobile assessment tools and issues around data security and encryption. Janet also provided delegates with information about action taken on feedback from the last PSRB seminar. This included service user and carer involvement, guidance on using mobile technology and the potential for a new model of consultation.

Janet Hargreaves' presentation - <http://www.alps-cetl.ac.uk/Presentations/JHargreaves.pdf>

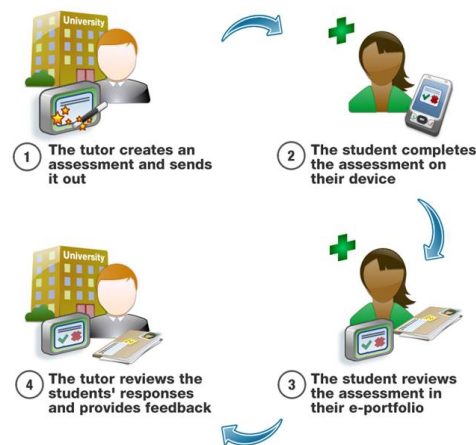
Morning Workshops

'Access on Placement' - workshop 1

Catherine Coates (ALPS Leeds Metropolitan University) gave a short presentation which provided delegates with an overview of the ALPS Common Competency Map for Communication (<http://www.alps-cetl.ac.uk/Maps/communications.html>) and the ALPS Assessment Cycle. Delegates then spent ten minutes on two different tables.

Catherine Coates' presentation - <http://www.alps-cetl.ac.uk/Presentations/CCoates.pdf>

Delegates took part in various activities which were designed to showcase different aspects of the ALPS Assessment Cycle. First, each delegate was given an ALPS mobile device and encouraged to browse through the 'Gaining Consent' assessment tool. By actively using the devices, delegates were able to view the different types of questions and explore various features (e.g. audio recording). Delegates were then shown the ALPS system from a tutor's point of view (including the potential for electronic dialogue between student and tutor, the feedback process and blog feature).



The ALPS Assessment Cycle

Delegates raised the following key points/questions:

- Benefits of the audio recording feature available to students
- Concern about the authenticity of assessor feedback – these were somewhat (though not entirely) allayed by learning more about the signature verification feature
- Delegates enthusiasm about an 'extra layer' of contact for students with their tutor/university which allows students to receive feedback in a more timely fashion. This is an advantage as students often complain about not receiving enough feedback in time for it to be really useful. It could be quite easy at the moment for a struggling student on a remote placement to fall through the cracks – the ALPS Assessment Suite might go some way to preventing this. It was felt important that digital contact/feedback should not replace face to face time – it should be in addition
- Interest in a web-based version of the assessment tools
- **Have devices been given to disabled students?** Yes, and a research project looking at accessibility issues has been awarded extra SHA funding to improve the accessibility of the devices. There has been positive feedback from dyslexic students who like the audio record feature which allows them to spend less time typing
- **Security issue raised – where and when can students use the devices in hospitals?** Students are told to adhere, at all times, to trust guidelines. There is also general guidance for use of devices plus encrypted data and safeguard to protect service users

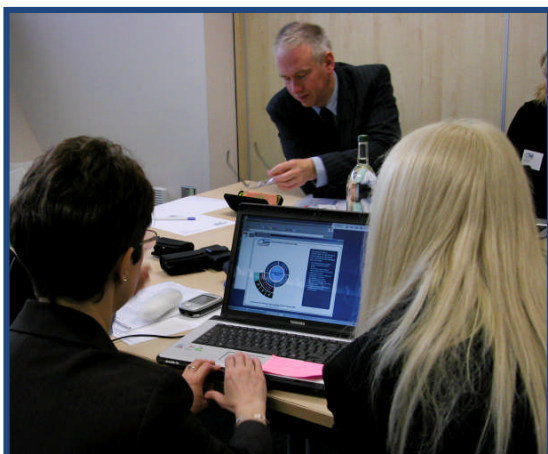
Delegates were encouraged to explore the Communication Map on laptops, and were then each given a mobile device on which to view a Dietetics quiz (as an example of a reusable learning object [RLO] which can be sent out to a mobile device).

Delegates raised the following key points/questions:

- Value of using RLOs on devices at distance and where PC/internet is hard to access
- **Can the tools be used on other devices or in other ways?** There is a paper version of the tools. However at present the tools can only be used on the ALPS mobile devices. It was acknowledged that students may not want to use these particular devices – ALPS is currently exploring the use of tools on other devices
- Potential for the Common Competency Maps to be used in different ways by different professions plus interprofessional learning (IPL) strands of education
- Common Competency Maps are helping to define what professionalism is
- Useful tools for continuing professional development (CPD)
- The ALPS Assessment Suite is currently being used for formative assessment – potential is there for summative assessment also
- Advantages of sharing RLOs through repositories

'Partnerships' - workshop 2

Delegates were introduced to the partnerships across ALPS (including those within and across partners, students, service users, practice colleagues and commercial organisations etc). Delegates were also shown the Team Working Common Competency Map (<http://www.alpscetl.ac.uk/Corework/teamwork.html>) and the way in which it has been integrated into the assessment tools. Delegates were then asked to discuss how they could see the assessment tools and Common Competency Maps being used in their profession and to explore opportunities for interprofessional assessment.



Delegates raised the following key points/questions:

- Acknowledgement of the robustness of the tools and Common Competency Maps because of the way in which they were created (i.e. in consultation with professions, collaboratively between different universities etc)
- Impact on student, tutor and practice assessor workloads. ALPS assessments need to be a replacement of existing assessments, not something extra
- Central role of service users and carers and the challenges involved in establishing and sustaining a true collaboration with them
- Benefits of being able to track progression via an e-portfolio – IPL is expanding in university-based teaching
- Potential for more Common Competency Maps in the future (e.g. safeguarding patients)

'Working Ethically' - workshop 3

At the last PSRB seminar in 2007, the Ethical Practice Common Competency Map (<http://www.alps-cetl.ac.uk/Maps/ethicalpractice.html>) was in the early stages of development and at that seminar, PSRBs contributed content and ideas to the Map. During the third workshop, delegates were given an update on the completed Map by the ALPS Teaching Fellow at the University of Leeds, Julie Laxton. Isabel Winslow from Leeds Metropolitan University then gave a presentation showing examples of the Map being applied in Speech and Language Therapy practice.

Isabel Winslow's presentation - <http://www.alps-cetl.ac.uk/Presentations/IWinslow.pdf>

Discussion was encouraged around the ethical implications of using mobile devices for assessment (confidentiality, security etc), the opportunities for integrating the Maps and assessment tools into undergraduate programmes, and the potential for interprofessional assessment.

Delegates raised the following key points/questions:

- **What security measures are in place to prevent unauthorised access to the mobile devices?** Robert Campbell, from mobile software specialist ecommnet, explained there are two layers of security – username and password alarm feature, plus encrypted data on the device and memory card. If the device is not in use for a short while it will lock, and any lost devices can be locked remotely
- It was agreed that it was a positive outcome that the introduction of ALPS devices has prompted some trusts to consider their policies (or lack of) on the security of mobile devices, including laptops, and infection control etc
- Interprofessional assessment will help students to recognise the value of interacting with other professions
- No one element of the Map is compulsory for every profession – the idea is that different professions can choose to use the Maps and assessment tools in different ways
- Potential for improving the standard of patient care – Ethical Practice Common Competency Map should be framed as curriculum development

Afternoon Discussion Groups

Taking ALPS forward

Informed by the morning's demonstrations, delegates discussed the following questions:

1. *How can ALPS' assessments be used beyond registration?*
2. *What evidence or research might be important to the PSRBs?*
3. *How can ALPS work be used in supporting learning and assessment for other health & social care workers?*
4. *Which agencies have which roles in taking the work forward after 2010?*

The discussion raised key points and ALPS agreed to identify which areas of work were possible given the remit and time available for the remainder of the programme. The following points recognise the potential for ALPS' reach beyond 2010, and suggest actions and ways in which ALPS can further influence the health and social care agenda.

1. How can ALPS' assessments be used beyond registration?

- In order to link ALPS e-portfolio with the PSRBs' guidance on Continuing Professional Development e-portfolios, ALPS has adopted the LEAP2A¹ technical standards which ensure that similar systems are interoperable. This will mean that students and professionals will be able to "carry" their CPD portfolio with them as they move between and through different organisations.
- Delegates identified use of the Common Competency Maps and ALPS Assessment Tools beyond students, eg. for existing professionals in terms of preceptorship and for underperforming practitioners. ALPS will continue to disseminate programme outputs to those in a position to influence, eg. regulators, and to employers, particularly for use in cases of underperformance.
- Extending the Common Competency Maps and ALPS assessment tools beyond the 16 professions involved in ALPS was seen as a real possibility as new types of health and social care roles are being developed. For example those healthcare professions, not part of the ALPS programme eg paramedics, pharmacists, clinical psychologists, forensic medicine and nursery nurses and, in addition, those professions who regularly work closely with health and social care professions in a variety of circumstances eg education, police, legal profession including the Crown Prosecution Service. ALPS can see the potential for the Common Competency Maps to become important for flexible working, particularly in the redesign of patient pathways.
- The possibility of mapping competences to postgraduate programmes was seen as officially outside ALPS' remit but ALPS confirmed that there were courses which were directly affected by ALPS' work, eg. MSc programmes (Physiotherapy at Leeds Metropolitan) and ALPS would continue to look for further opportunities particularly after the research programme is delivered. Wider dissemination extending to postgraduate agencies, eg. Yorkshire Deans, will continue.

2. What evidence or research might be important to the PSRBs?

- The reliability and validity research and evaluation of the educational impact will form the evidence of ALPS tools being robust. Similarly, security of the data to ensure service user confidentiality and infection control of the mobile devices were all seen as essential elements if ALPS is to demonstrate both safeguarding and quality assurance. The ALPS research and evaluation programme encompass these workstreams and will report by the programme end.
- Experiences and perspectives of the assessors (both practice-based and service users) will be provided as part of the research and evaluation programme and will be made available for PSRBs to build on beyond 2010.

3. How can ALPS' work be used in supporting learning and assessment for other health and social care workers?

- Discussion included enabling students to rate themselves against other students in their professional area. Whilst this is outside the ALPS' remit and current capacity of ALPS, we do support students in self-rating their confidence through the use of the ALPS CIPA tool (Competency in Practice Assessment).
- ALPS Common Competency Maps and assessment tools have value for lone practitioners of any profession. These can be used for self-assessment as well as being used by tutors to provide feedback on these occasions.
- Dissemination opportunities, such as the Yorkshire Deans' meeting, could be used to extend the reach of ALPS beyond the existing 16 ALPS professions.

¹<http://www.cen-ltso.net/main.aspx?put=1014>

4. Which agencies have which roles in taking the work forward after 2010?

Over the next 12 months ALPS will work to influence:

- Government strategy concerning the health and social care workforce education, for example, the recent consultation on modernising scientific careers.
- Front line operational decisions through the networks which ALPS has established.

Finally, delegates and the ALPS team agreed to have a final seminar to be held in summer 2010 in which ALPS will provide information on further progress and programme completion.