

Good afternoon,

I welcome the opportunity to comment on the proposed designation of the professions of counsellor and psychotherapist. I agree that in order to protect the public there is a need for these professions to be regulated however this will be an extremely difficult challenge for CORU because of the lack of standardisation across this sector. When CORU was established in 2007 the original aim was to regulate 12 allied health professions. Nearly a decade later only 7 of those original professions have registration boards in place. Already, the opticians have come under the designation of the HSCPA before many of the original professions listed. Therefore there are just 8 professions with their respective registration boards in place at this time. There is an urgent need to move to open the registration boards for the remaining, originally listed, professions. These professions should not be pushed down the line if the professions of counsellor and psychotherapists are to come under the designation of the HSCPA. CORU set out with an original remit and this remit should be completed BEFORE further professions are added.

The B.Sc. Podiatry programme commenced at NUI Galway in 2008, this was a cross government initiative from the DoH and DoE. We were asked to train podiatrists to the standard of those trained in the UK. We have achieved this, yet due to lack of regulation for the profession we are unable to make legislative amendments in this country to allow podiatrists to access and administer a restricted list of prescription only medicines. Therefore our Irish graduates are unable to practice within their full scope of practice in this country. This restriction is placing unnecessary burdens on part of the health service where podiatrists could be managing patients they were trained to do when over-worked medical staff have to take up this 'slack' They can fully practice in other jurisdictions. We have just registered our 9th cohort of students and despite bringing this issue to the attention of various Ministers and the professional regulation unit we are no further forward. I would be very concerned if the professions of counsellor and psychotherapist were to be the next designated profession to open their registration board as the sheer complexity of this will massively delay the opening of the other registers.

Best wishes,

Nigel Roberts