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EDUCATION IN OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY IN EUROPE: WHERE HAVE WE BEEN, WHERE ARE WE NOW AND WHERE ARE WE GOING?

INTRODUCTION

At the first full conference of the European Academy of Occupational Health Psychology (Lund, 1999), the decision was ratified to organise activities around three fora. These together represented the pillars on which the European Academy had been founded that same year: education, research and professional practice. Each forum was convened by a chair person and a small group of full members; it was agreed that a forum meeting would take place at each full conference and working groups would be established to move developments forward between conferences. The forum system has proven an effective means by which to channel the energies of individual members, and the institutions that they represent, towards advancements in all three areas of activity in occupational health psychology (OHP) in Europe.

During the meeting of the education forum at the third full European Academy conference (Barcelona, 2001), the proposal was made for the establishment of a working party that would be tasked with the production of a strategy document on *The Promotion of Education in Occupational Health Psychology in Europe*. The proposal was ratified at the subsequent annual business meeting held during the same conference. The draft outline of the strategy document was published for consultation in the European Academy's e-newsletter (Vol. 3.1, 2002) and the final document presented to the meeting of the education forum at the fourth full conference (Vienna, 2002). The strategy document constituted a seminal piece of literature in so far as it provided a foundation and structure capable of guiding pan-European developments in education in OHP – developments that would ensure the sustained growth of the discipline and assure it of a long-standing embedded place in both the scholarly and professional domains. To these ends, the strategy document presented six objectives as important for the sustained

expansion and the promotion of education in the discipline in Europe. Namely, the development of:

[1] A core syllabus for education in occupational health psychology

[2] A mechanism for identifying, recognising and listing undergraduate and postgraduate modules and courses (programmes) in occupational health psychology

[3] Structures to support the extension of the current provision of education in occupational health psychology

[4] Ways of enhancing convergence of the current provision of education in occupational health psychology

[5] Ways of encouraging regional cooperation between education providers across the regions of Europe

[6] Ways of ensuring consistency with North American developments in education and promoting world wide co-operation in education

Five years has elapsed since the presentation of these laudable objectives to the meeting of the education forum in Vienna in December 2002. In that time OHP has undergone considerable growth, particularly in Europe and North America. Expansion has been reflected in the evolution of existing, and emergence of new, representative bodies for the discipline on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. As such, it might be considered timely to pause to reflect on what has been achieved in respect of each of the objectives set out in the strategy document. The current chapter examines progress on the six objectives and considers what remains to be done. This exercise is entered into not merely in order to congratulate achievements in some areas and lament slow progress in others. Rather, on the one hand it serves to highlight areas where real progress has been made with a view to the presentation of these areas as ripe for further capitalisation. On the other hand it serves to direct the attention of stakeholders (all those with a vested interest in OHP) to those key parts of the jigsaw puzzle that is the development of a self-sustaining pan-European education framework which remain to be satisfactorily addressed.

THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION IN OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY

Before entering into an examination of progress made in respect of each of the six objectives set out in the strategy document it is worthwhile taking pause to consider why education in OHP is of importance. Beyond being a topic of intrinsic interest to many, the discipline of OHP has much to offer for the promotion of the quality of working life. The contemporary world of work encompasses a host of ever-changing challenges that hold the potential to threaten occupational health (Figure 1); taken together, these challenges point to an efficacious role for OHP.

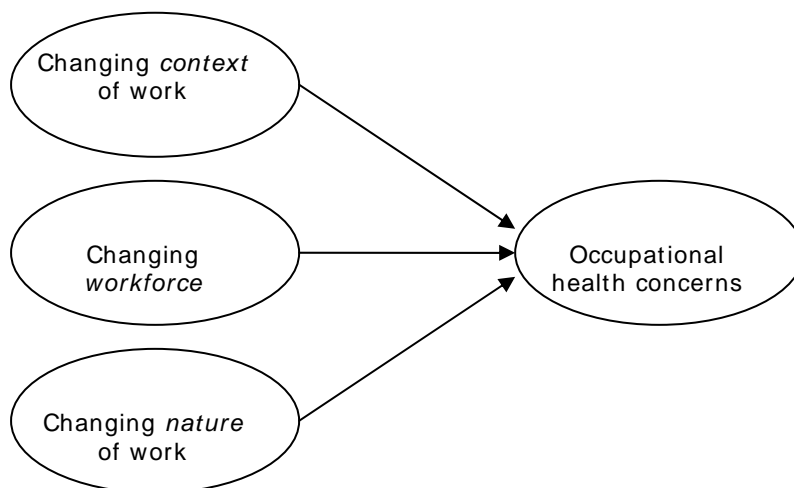


Figure 1. Contemporary challenges to occupational health (adapted from Barnes-Farrell, 2006)

According to Barnes-Farrell (2006), contemporary challenges to occupational health have emerged out of changes to the *context* of work that include technological change, faster production cycles, the global marketplace, and new sector developments such as the rise in the service sector and hi-tech companies. In addition, the *workforce* has undergone considerable transition in recent years owing to the rise in the average age of retirement, skills deficits, work-life balance expectations and diversity in the workforce. Finally, changes have become evident in the *nature* of work. In terms of work design, team work is ever more championed while the emotional labour investment required of many jobs appears to be on the increase. Work schedules have likewise developed to incorporate flexiwork and home-work. Changes are also evident in the nature of the employment relationship with temporary and contract work on the rise.

Together, these three broad categories of change, to the context of work, to the workforce and to the nature of work, combine to present a real challenge to occupational health, a challenge that is dynamic, ever-changing, contingent upon the character of the local economy and that requires the knowledge and skills of specialist professionals. Among such professionals might be included the practitioner occupational health psychologist. However, at present, no mechanisms exist to support the structured career development of OHP practitioners either at the Member State or pan-European level. If a European contingent of professional OHP practitioners is to be equipped with the knowledge and skills of the discipline, a question arises as to how, where and by what means these might be imparted and developed. Thus, the question of education and training in OHP is brought to the fore as a prerequisite for the discipline fulfilling its potential in the applied setting with a view to making a real-world difference to the quality of working life.

Having identified the nature of the contemporary challenges to occupational health, the potential role that the OHP practitioner might hold in addressing those challenges as well as the deficit of a formal route for the education, training, professional development and governance of OHP practitioners, this chapter now turns to an examination of progress made on each of the six objectives set out in the 2002 strategy document on *The Promotion of Education in Occupational Health Psychology in Europe*.

[1] A CORE SYLLABUS FOR EDUCATION IN OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY

The working group tasked with the development of the 2002 strategy document on *The Promotion of Education in Occupational Health Psychology in Europe* identified the need for a core syllabus for education in OHP as a necessary prerequisite for the development of recognised pan-European training routes and professional regulation structures. Specifically, the strategy document posited that a core syllabus would:

- Ensure the identity of the subject as a distinct and separate discipline
- Frame the provision of modules and courses in OHP
- Guide the development of new modules and courses

- Provide the basis for recognising new modules and courses and listing those approved by the Academy
- Provide the basis, in turn, for recognising the qualifications of aspirant members of the Academy.

In view of the pre-eminence given to the development of a core curriculum within the strategy document, considerable space is devoted here to a consideration of progress made in respect of its establishment.

Sinclair (2006) summarised three of the central questions that apply to attempts to develop OHP educational programmes. These he described as: [1] what knowledge, skills and abilities should OHP training focus on? [2] how should OHP programmes address the concerns of multiple stakeholders? [3] how should OHP programmes incorporate knowledge from multiple disciplines? (Figure 2). It might be suggested that the sheer magnitude and complexity of these three questions is, in part, responsible for the limited progress made towards the development of a core curriculum in OHP and the expansion of OHP education in Europe.

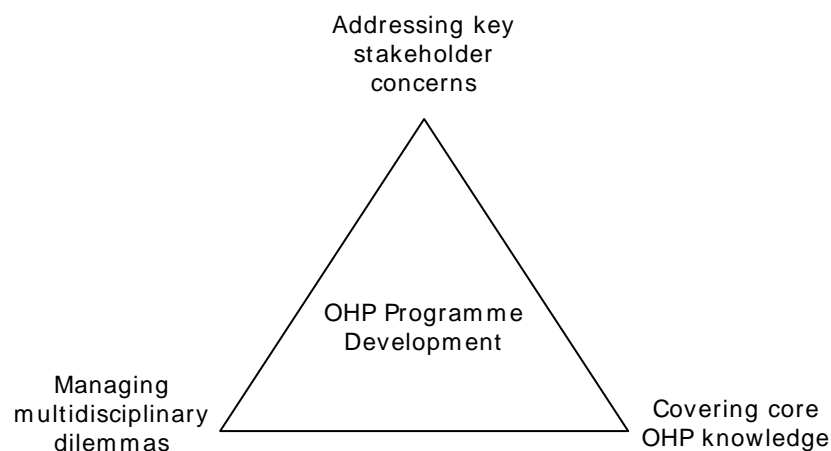


Figure 2. Challenges in OHP training programme development (adapted from Sinclair, 2006)

Within Europe some progress has been made towards the development of a core curriculum in OHP. As a starting point, Cox, Baldurrrson and Rial-Gonzalez (2000) set out a list of high-level characteristics that appear to define the discipline and that should be emphasised within a curriculum. These included acknowledgement that OHP is:

- an applied science
- evidence driven
- problem solving
- multidisciplinary
- participatory – actively involving students, participants, workers and managers
- focussed on intervention, with an emphasis on primary prevention
- operational within a legal framework of European health and safety law, employment law, law on discrimination and disability, and on mental health.

The list of high level characteristics provided by Cox et al (2000) appears consistent with the essence of the discipline and, by extension, the curriculum areas in an educational programme, as set out by Raymond, Wood and Patrick (1990) when they coined the term ‘occupational health psychology’ almost twenty years ago. In their seminal paper, Raymond et al (ibid) envisioned a discipline that would “integrate and synthesise insights, frameworks, and knowledge from a diverse number of specialities, principally health psychology, and occupational (public) health, but also preventative medicine, occupational medicine, behavioural medicine, nursing, political science, sociology and business” (p. 1159).

Within the United Kingdom the basis of a core curriculum for education in OHP has been established by the Institute of Work, Health & Organisations (I-WHO) at the University of Nottingham. Introduced in 1996, the I-WHO Masters programme in OHP encapsulated a series of topic areas that has remained largely consistent since that time and that has set something of a template within Europe for institutions that aspire to introduce their own OHP programmes. The I-WHO programme has in-built flexibility to allow for alternative learning modes including e-learning, the curriculum to which has been described in detail elsewhere (Houdmont, Leka & Cox, 2006). Here, the overall structure of the e-learning curriculum is reproduced to give readers an impression of the topic areas addressed within the I-WHO programme (Figure 3).

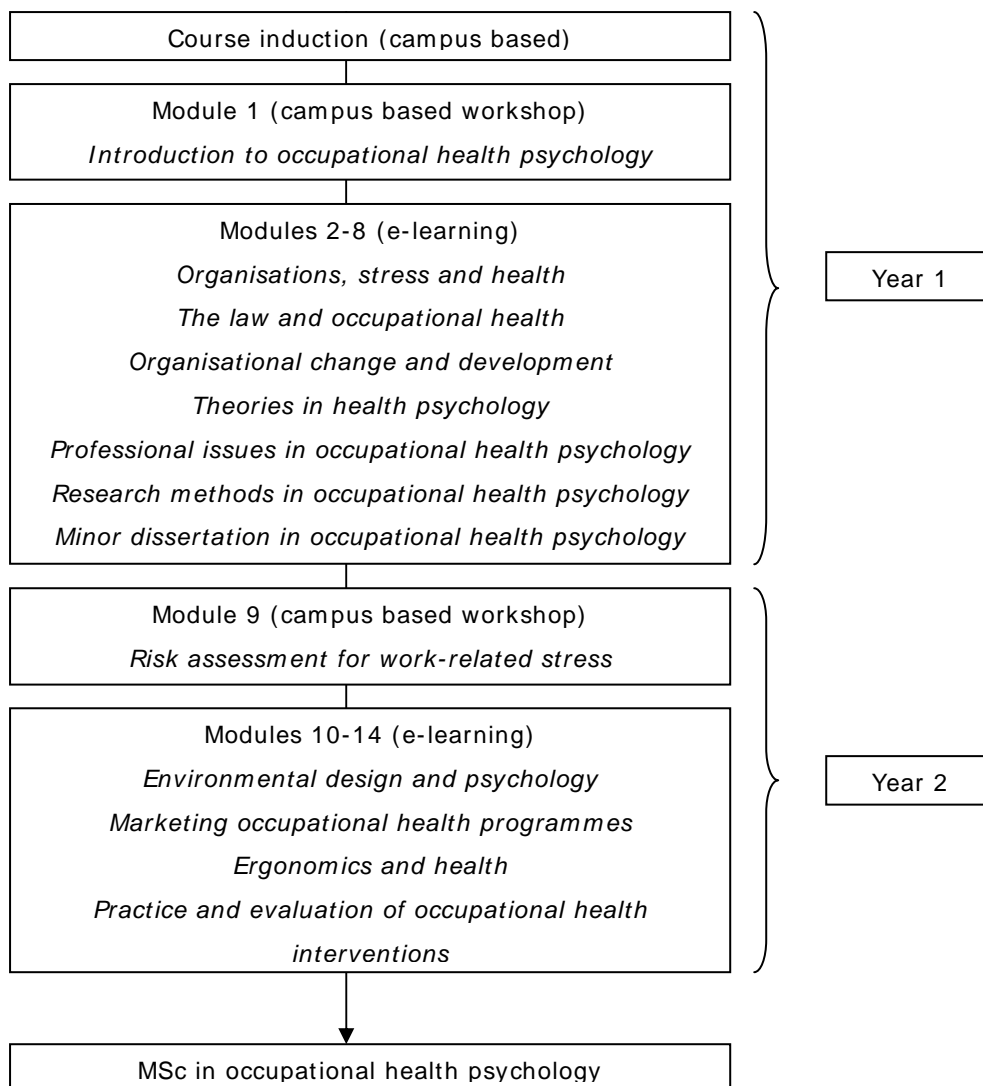


Figure 3. Curriculum to the (24 month part-time route)
I-WHO Masters degree in OHP by e-learning
(from Houdmont, Leka & Cox, 2006)

Outside of Europe, particularly in the United States, some progress has been made towards the development of a core curriculum for education in OHP. This has, in part, been prompted by the call from the US National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) for “steps..to be taken within the academic community and professional organizations to nurture and formalise the subject of organization of work and health as a distinct multidisciplinary field of study, and to provide the multidisciplinary training and to ensure that students are prepared for research on organisation of work and health” (NIOSH, 2002).

In the early 1990s, with funding from the American Psychological Association (APA) and NIOSH, eleven North American universities set out to develop and implement postgraduate OHP curricula. Although each programme had its unique characteristics that reflected the knowledge and interests of the educators as well as local employer and organisational needs, it was possible to discern a core curriculum. In reviewing the US programmes, Barnes-Farrell (2006) noted that six topic areas appeared consistently across the programmes that, taken together, might define the core content of a curriculum in OHP. These included:

- Survey (overview) of occupational safety and health
- Job stress theory
- Organisational risk factors for occupational stress, injury and illness
- Physical and psychological health implications of stressful work
- Organisational interventions for the reduction of work-related stress
- Research methods and practices in public/occupational health and epidemiology

The list of curriculum areas in US programmes presented by Barnes-Farrell (2006) appears consistent with the aforementioned I-WHO curriculum (Houdmont et al., 2006) as well as the high level defining characteristics as set out by Cox et al. (2000). Thus, although it might appear on the surface that the North American and European curricula differ in key respects, not least owing to the contrasting educational systems they are offered within, at a finer grained level of analysis broad consistency can be found.

Examination of the list of curriculum areas presented by Barnes-Farrell (2006) and the I-WHO curriculum model reveals that the study of work-related stress, its antecedents, processes, manifestations and management, appears to lie at the core of the North American and European curricula. This is perhaps appropriate for in its early years the majority of research activity in OHP concerned work-related stress and the issue remains as pertinent today as it did in 1986 when the European Academy's associated journal *Work & Stress* was established. However, it is important that work-related stress does not dominate the curriculum but, rather, exists as one key element within a range of topic areas. In so doing, a curriculum is capable of reflecting the broad focus of contemporary OHP research and professional practice that encapsulates a wide range of organisational issues as they relate to the health of the worker and the organisation (see, for example, Cox, Griffiths and Houdmont, 2003).

Examination of the list of curriculum areas presented by Barnes-Farrell (2006) and the I-WHO curriculum model further reveals some evidence that the inter-disciplinary nature of the discipline has been reflected in curricula. If a curriculum is to truly reflect the inter-disciplinary roots of the subject, it is important that it addresses a range of broad topic areas with an emphasis on interdisciplinary perspectives (Chen & Hammer, 2006).

It is also clear that a certain amount of flexibility exists across the curriculum content of OHP programmes. For example, the I-WHO campus-based and e-learning programme variants offer slightly contrasting curricula. Similarly, the North American programmes demonstrate variability in topic coverage that reflects regional, institutional and individual specialisations. Flexibility in the curriculum is important for it ensures that programme content can adequately reflect developments in the challenges to occupational health presented by the changing workforce, changing context of work and changing nature of work (as per Barnes-Farrell, 2006). Where flexibility in curriculum design is allied with skills training in the identification of new challenges to occupational health, the adaptability of graduates as regards the application of their knowledge and skills to meet those challenges combined with a premium placed on continuing professional development, a generation of OHP practitioners will emerge that is equipped to combat contemporary challenges to occupational health.

In Europe, OHP curriculum development appear to have been largely informed by the published academic literature combined with the specialisations of provider institutions. So far as the authors are aware, OHP curricula in Europe have rarely been informed by empirical studies into employer, employee and practitioner needs. However, there is some evidence that the picture appears to be changing; I-WHO has recently completed a survey of almost two thousand chartered occupational safety and health practitioners in the United Kingdom regarding their perceptions of emerging risks to occupational health and associated training needs. It is the intention that the results of that survey will inform future curriculum developments. The paucity of efforts to elicit information on appropriate curriculum content from the perspective of practitioners, employers and workers in Europe appears to be in contrast with that in the United States where various institutions have initiated research projects to these ends. The approach taken has typically involved assessment of training needs from the perspective of employers (Fullager & Hatfield, 2005; Tetrick & Ellis, 2002), trade

unions (Tetrick & Ellis, 2002) and practitioners from the allied disciplines (Schneider, Camara, Tetrick & Sternberg, 1999). The latter of these initiatives involved a survey of 1,000 practitioners, the results of which supported the need for OHP education but stopped short of defining a detailed curriculum (Tetrick & Ellis, 2002). From their analysis, Fullagar & Hatfield (2005) were able to develop a tentative job description for the practitioner occupational health psychologist that described the role as follows:

“[To] review, evaluate and analyze work environments and design programs and procedures to promote worker health and reduce occupational stress caused by psychological, organizational and social factors. Apply principles of psychology to occupational health problems. Activities may include policy planning; employee screening, training and development; and organizational development and analysis. May work with management to reorganize the work setting to improve worker health. May be employed in the public or private sector.”

Fullagar & Hatfield's (2005) job specification was, so far as the authors are aware, the first of its kind and appears consistent with Adkins' (1999) list of the core competencies in OHP practice. These included the assertions that practice should be: a) grounded in theory, b) informed by a business plan capable of predicting financial and psychological benefits, c) focused at the organisational 'systems' level that recognises the dynamic and complex transaction between people and their environment rather than focussing at the individual level of analysis, and d) open to transcending traditional boundaries and using knowledge and skills derived from a variety of domains. The development of Fullagar & Hatfield's (2005) job description was timely for it appears that in North America graduates of OHP programmes have begun to carve out a niche for themselves in the marketplace and that demand for their services is growing (APA Science Directorate, 1997). It is also of considerable importance to the development of education in OHP in that it provides guidance on the development of a core educational curriculum in terms of what an employer might seek in a graduate of such a programme. It further acts as a starting point for discussions on how the European Academy and other representative bodies might recognise and (possibly) regulate professional practice.

Summary

In Europe, some progress has been made on the development of a core curriculum for education in OHP; core thematic areas have been defined as have the higher level characteristics that ought to define a curriculum. Progress has been made largely at the level of the individual institution rather than under the aegis of the European Academy. These efforts have been matched by activity in the United States where various initiatives concerned with the definition of a curriculum in OHP have attracted governmental (NIOSH) and representative body (APA) funding. For OHP to be a self-sustaining discipline it is imperative that the curriculum remains consistent with the real-world needs of the workforce. As such, further research would be warranted to elucidate those needs from the perspective of the emerging band of self-branded OHP practitioners as well as employers and employees in Europe.

[2] A MECHANISM FOR IDENTIFYING, RECOGNISING AND LISTING UNDERGRADUATE AND POSTGRADUATE MODULES AND COURSES IN OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY

Official recognition or accreditation of OHP programmes is important for the existence of accredited programmes is a prerequisite for the development of a professional training route for OHP practitioners, the successful completion of which by an individual could result in the granting of licensed professional status that is formally regulated by a representative body for the discipline.

At the time the strategy document was drawn up, in 2002, no comprehensive system existed for accreditation of educational programme provision in OHP. The situation remains unchanged today. Now, as then, the best available information on OHP programmes exists on the websites of the discipline's representative bodies. A list of both European and non-European programmes can be found on the European Academy's website at http://www.ea-ohp.org/Education_Forum/Education_and_Training/index.asp. A counterpart list is available on the website of the Society for Occupational Health Psychology at <http://sohp.psy.uconn.edu/Grad.htm>.

Accreditation by an authoritative representative body has several benefits. Accreditation, and the attendant support and guidance provided by the accrediting body, may act as an incentive for educational institutions to consider the development of OHP programmes. It may also provide prospective students with guidance when choosing an institution at which to study. Knowledge that a

programme is accredited, by extension, provides an assurance that certain quality standards having been achieved. The risks involved in the failure to develop a system of programme accreditation are considerable. Without programme accreditation a formalised training route cannot be established, the absence of which will preclude the development of professional licensing arrangements – a necessity if the discipline is to flourish.

In view of the importance of programme accreditation to the long-term sustainability of OHP, the question arises as to why no progress has been made towards this objective in the five years following publication of the strategy document. Four possible reasons are discussed here. First, the paucity of OHP programmes in Europe that have been developed around an agreed curriculum template makes difficult the task of accreditation. At present, were programme accreditation to be introduced it is likely that only a handful of existing programmes would be suitable. Second, the development of accreditation criteria and the ongoing review of applications would no doubt be a labour intensive affair. Within an organisation such as the European Academy, where all contributors give of their time free of charge, the challenge in the creation of an accreditation committee would be considerable – but not insurmountable. Third, it is questionable whether there is value in accreditation by a representative body such as the European Academy for individuals working in those member states that enforce strict training and professional regulation procedures for applied psychologists that do not always recognise the discipline of OHP – as is the case in Great Britain. Fourth, professional licensing arrangements do not exist in all member states. For example, licensing arrangements for health psychologists exist in England, Holland and Austria, but not in Portugal, Greece or Italy (Belar, McIntyre & Matarazzo, 2003). The absence of professional licensing arrangements in some Member States, allied with cross-border inconsistencies in education and training requirements where licensing arrangements do exist, serves to emphasise the potential role for a pan-European representative body such as the European Academy in practitioner licensing and regulation and, as a prerequisite to that, educational programme accreditation.

The importance of programme accreditation is beyond doubt. The task that now faces the European Academy concerns the practical and reasonable steps that might be taken to move forwards towards its introduction. A core curriculum has been agreed and the number of applications in the early years would likely be small – it is not inconceivable therefore that an accreditation committee with a

manageable workload could be appointed by the European Academy's executive committee. If accreditation were to prove valuable to provider institutions and the workload of the accreditation committee developed beyond its capabilities it is further possible that a charge could be levied on applications and committee members recompensed for their contributions. All options must remain open for consideration.

Summary

Little progress has been made towards OHP programme accreditation in Europe in spite of the undeniable importance of accreditation and the attendant benefits for the discipline that it would bring. This is regretful but also understandable in view of the complex range of barriers that require surmounting for accreditation to be introduced. It is worth remembering that only after many decades of graft on the part of an international cohort of applied psychologists did health psychology become a recognised speciality that led to the introduction of programme accreditation procedures. In considering the possible reasons for a lack of progress options become evident for ways to move forward. Among such options exists the introduction of an accreditation committee under the auspices of the European Academy. Programme accreditation by the European Academy might not be regarded sufficient within the professional licensing arrangements for applied psychologists in all member states; it would, however, prove a valuable first step in the encouragement of the expansion of OHP programmes and student uptake of such programmes and might yet yield other unforeseen benefits.

[3] STRUCTURES TO SUPPORT THE EXTENSION OF THE CURRENT PROVISION OF EDUCATION IN OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY

The strategy document noted that it is unreasonable to expect individuals and their employing institutions to promote education in OHP in Europe. It was recommended that support in this regard becomes a central activity of the European Academy (and, in turn, a benefit of membership). This is in line with the recommendation made above for the appointment of an accreditation committee by the European Academy's executive committee.

The strategy document envisioned that support might include:

- Provision of information on the required programme content with regards the core syllabus
- Recognition of programme provision and listing on the Academy website
- Inclusion of the programme and provider institution in a European educational network
- Assistance in the marketing of new programmes through the European Academy website and ICG co-operation

The European Academy's website was comprehensively overhauled in 2004. It now contains a series of pages dedicated to the support of education in the discipline (see, http://www.ea-ohp.org/Education_Forum/default.asp). The pages contain links to postgraduate OHP programmes, a bibliography of key OHP publications, links to OHP-orientated journals and a password-protected section containing privileged materials for members. Information and links are not exclusively restricted to European activities – North American programmes and resources are given equal prominence. The highlighting of activities and developments on the opposite side of the Atlantic has been reciprocated on the website of the North American representative body for the discipline, the Society for Occupational Health Psychology (see, <http://sohp.psy.uconn.edu/Index.html>).

In recent years the European Academy has supported the marketing of new programmes through free advertising space in its quarterly e-newsletter as well as the provision of space on its website for programme designers to announce developments. A question exists, however, as to whether such initiatives offer an appropriate vehicle by which to attract students to the discipline. The current strategy is reactive – the message is disseminated to those who have an established interest in the subject. It might be the case that more proactive efforts are required to promote existing and new OHP programmes to prospective students who possess no prior knowledge of the discipline.

Summary

The strategy document highlighted the need for the provision of support by the European Academy to OHP programmes across Europe. Some progress has been made in terms of website programme listings and marketing support. However, to reach out to prospective students it is important that the European Academy and provider institutions work together to develop proactive methods of securing the attentions of the next generation of OHP students.

[4] WAYS OF ENHANCING CONVERGENCE OF THE CURRENT PROVISION OF EDUCATION IN OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY

Convergence in the structure of OHP provision across national boundaries is of value for it would facilitate the smooth exchange of students and staff as well as ensure the portability and recognition of qualifications across European member states. Acknowledgment was given in the strategy document to the fact that while harmonisation in OHP education is to be encouraged, marked differences remain in educational systems and funding arrangements across Europe that might hamper harmonisation efforts.

Some of the challenges in the harmonisation of OHP programmes across Europe might be moderated in the not too distant future by the introduction of the well documented Bologna process. The agreement has at its core, among other things, the standardisation of the structure of Masters degrees and looks set to drastically reconfigure the operation of higher education in Europe. It waits to be seen how education in OHP will be affected. What is clear at this stage is that the European Academy must be ready and prepared to support institutions during the time of immense change with advice on how to maximise the opportunity presented by the Bologna process.

One route to harmonisation that has been considered in recent times by institutions working under the auspices of the European Academy has involved the signing of bilateral European Commission Socrates agreements. These are described further in the next section. It is sufficient to note here that the Socrates agreements have facilitated convergence in the sense that they have allowed for joint-supervision of undergraduate and postgraduate applied research projects between institutions. A limited number of students from each of the institutions that have signed such agreements now have the opportunity for joint supervision in their applied research projects by a member of staff from the institution at which they are enrolled plus an expert in the topic area from one of the other involved institutions. In order to attract funding, joint supervision entails a period of residency (approximately three months) in the country at which the co-supervisor's institution is located. This arrangement facilitates the development of high quality projects, many of which have a cross-cultural focus. The Socrates agreements have also allowed for the mobility of staff between institutions. Funded trips have been made possible that involve a minimum of eight hours

teaching per visit and that have also permitted research collaborations to be fostered. Lack of harmony between educational systems across Europe in terms of overall programme duration, and the typical length of each individual course or module, has thus far prevented full programme convergence that would allow student and staff exchanges on taught (as opposed to research) programme components.

Summary

Convergence in the structure of educational provision in OHP across national boundaries is of value, not least for it would encourage a cohesive and fluid European network of practice, research and education. The European Academy has supported efforts at convergence, most notably through its endorsement of bilateral Socrates agreements between institutions. Great changes are likely afoot in terms of convergence as a result of the Bologna process and it remains to be seen how the European Academy and the institutions it represents might best respond to the challenges presented by that process.

[5] WAYS OF ENCOURAGING REGIONAL COOPERATION BETWEEN EDUCATION PROVIDERS ACROSS THE REGIONS OF EUROPE

OHP research activity in greater Europe has traditionally had its epicentre in the north western corner of the map. The concentration of activity in this region has been reflected in attendance at European Academy conferences; at the 2004 conference in Porto 67% of delegates derived from just three countries: England, Norway and Sweden. Moreover, nine EU member states were unrepresented in terms of conference delegates (McIntyre & Mendonca-McIntyre, 2004). The under-representation of central and southern European member states in terms of OHP research even more acute in the context of OHP education; the authors of the present chapter are aware of no OHP educational provision in southern or central Europe. Furthermore, in Member States where OHP education is reasonably well established, activity has tended to cluster around a small number of institutions. Using the example of Great Britain, Leka & Houdmont (2004) noted that only seven institutions offered education in what might be considered OHP (not all of the programmes were entitled as such) and only one offered a discrete Masters programme in OHP. For education in OHP to flourish across Europe it is important that existing education providers demonstrate willingness to share best practice and interact with their colleagues (and competitors) at

institutions other than their own with a view to the development of new and, in some cases, integrated programmes. There are of course barriers to this, not least academic rivalries and language differences. However, through a mature recognition that the discipline is greater than any one academic rivalry and by taking advantage of email communication that can encourage dialogue in tongues other than that with which the users are most familiar, co-operation across the regions of Europe should be possible.

The inconsistencies in educational systems that operate across Europe, allied with the youthfulness of the discipline and the attendant difficulty in predicting student uptake, may deter institutions from introducing discrete OHP programmes. The risks involved in the introduction of discreet programmes may be too great for some; where that is the case integrated programmes may be attractive. There is already evidence that integrated Masters programmes in areas related to OHP have experienced tremendous success (see, for example, the European Masters degree in Work, Organisational and Personnel Psychology operated by a consortium of institutions that include the Universities of Valencia, Barcelona, Bologna, Paris V and Coimbra at www.uv.es/erasmuswop).

Where fully integrated programmes are not feasible or desirable, alternative methods may exist by which OHP programmes might be introduced in such a way that regional co-operation and activity is encouraged. One such method is e-learning. Applied thoughtfully, e-learning can ensure that education does not exist as the preserve of those located proximally to existing campus-based programmes nor those who can afford expensive programme fees. The issue of physical proximity to programme provision has been addressed at the Institute of Work, Health & Organisations (University of Nottingham) through the introduction of an MSc/Dip. in OHP via e-learning that was supported by the European Academy. The programme structure and the experiences of the teaching team as well as those of students on the programme have been described elsewhere (Houdmont, Leka & Cox, 2006). A perhaps greater challenge than that presented by physical proximity to programme provision lies in ensuring that student exposure to education in OHP across EU member states is not restricted by monetary factors. This challenge is currently being addressed through innovative means by a consortium of European universities with the support of the European Academy. A ten-day intensive 'taster' summer school programme in OHP is in development that will be targeted at undergraduate students who might be considering postgraduate education. Through the European Commission, funding

is available for travel, accommodation and subsistence costs for up to sixty students and twenty staff members to attend such programmes. It is the intention of the consortium to hold a summer school programme once per annum, moving each year to a different location in Europe and, thus, ensuring broad exposure to education in the discipline. Further information on this venture will be available in due course on the website of the European Academy.

In recent times progress has been made in respect of co-operation between education providers in OHP through a series of bilateral European Commission Socrates agreements between Dutch (University of Groningen), Irish (University College Cork), Portuguese (Instituto Superior da Maia) and British institutions (Institute of Work, Health & Organisations, University of Nottingham). The European Academy has supported this venture. In practice, the agreements facilitate institutions in their applications for European Commission funding to study, teach, undertake placements or follow training courses in countries other than their own. In doing so, the scheme provides support for institutions to collaborate on joint teaching projects and course development. Funding is contingent upon fulfilment of two basic rules: that the envisioned programme will have a European dimension and inter-institution co-operation will be truly transnational. Both rules are entirely consistent with the fifth objective of the European Academy's strategy document and as such the Socrates agreements offer an ideal vehicle for the encouragement of regional co-operation between provider institutions.

Contingent upon the success of the initial set of Socrates agreements, more are anticipated with a view to the creation of a European web of OHP education providers for the smooth (and importantly, funded) exchange of students and staff. Interested groups are advised to contact the lead author in the capacity of Executive Officer of the EA-OHP, Jonathan Houdmont, for further information. More details on the Socrates and Erasmus Mundus schemes can be found at http://ec.europa.eu/education/index_en.html.

It is anticipated that out of the first set of Socrates agreements might develop a fully integrated European Masters degree in Occupational Health Psychology. To this end, with the support of the European Academy, the collaborating institutions have initiated preparations on an application for submission in response to the 2009 call from the European Commission for Erasmus Mundus European Masters degrees. Initiated by the European Parliament in 2003, the first round of calls

(that ended in April 2007) had an overall budget of EUR230 million for the development of co-operation and mobility programmes in higher education. That programme consisted of four 'actions', These included: [1] Erasmus Mundus Masters courses, [2] student and researcher scholarships, [3] partnerships between institutions that are in receipt of Erasmus Mundus Masters programme funding and so called 'third country' institutions and, [4] support for European co-operation projects for, among other things, the promotion of the brand image, visibility and accessibility of European higher education. It is anticipated that the European Commission will not issue a call in 2008, but that a new round featuring enhanced funding will be launched in 2009. The European Academy has demonstrated itself to be eager to support initiatives within the European Commission framework that may provide a means for the promotion of education in OHP.

The integration of OHP programmes across institutions through Socrates, Erasmus Mundus and private arrangements may represent a means by which the cross fertilisation of domain-specific knowledge and skills might be encouraged and education in the discipline expanded. It would seem inevitable that those educational institutions involved in the first integrative programmes would exert considerable influence in shaping Europe-wide developments in education in OHP that have implications far beyond the success of the immediate initiatives.

Summary

Constructive co-operation between institutions that provide education in OHP and those that aspire to do the same is essential for the evenly spread development of educational programmes across Europe. Regional clustering of provision is problematic in that it precludes study opportunities for many prospective students and can prevent employing organizations in regions of Europe where provision is not widespread from benefiting from the services of OHP graduates. The European Academy has been keen to support initiatives targeted at the encouragement of co-operation. Inter-institution and cross-border initiatives take time to develop, but there is emerging evidence, in the form of activities such as bilateral Socrates agreements, that the long-term investments made in the building of relationships have begun to pay off.

[6] WAYS OF ENSURING CONSISTENCY WITH NORTH AMERICAN DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION AND PROMOTING WORLD WIDE CO-OPERATION IN EDUCATION

In its strategy document, the working party of the education forum observed that “While a degree of friendly rivalry may spur action and innovation, it is important that the European Academy works with APA and NIOSH and other relevant bodies as they emerge..to guarantee the promotion of the discipline through education” (p. 11). That approach, characterised by friendly and constructive co-operation, appears to have dominated interactions between the European Academy and its counterparts throughout the five year period under consideration here. Indeed, in this spirit the views of the European Academy as they relate to education, research and professional practice (Cox, 2001) were presented to the meeting on Occupational Health Psychology Education in Tampa in 2001, jointly organised by NIOSH and the APA. That meeting also afforded an opportunity for presentation of a pre-publication draft of the European Academy’s strategy document on education in the discipline; feedback received at the meeting was considered by the working party when drafting the final Strategy Document.

Educational developments in OHP on both sides of the Atlantic have traditionally taken place independently of one another. Such independence does not reflect a rejection of the other’s approach; rather, it represents the disparity between the educational systems and the level at which courses have been targeted. In Europe, most courses in OHP are located at the module level within generic psychology undergraduate Bachelors degrees and postgraduate Masters programmes in applied and/or occupational (I/O) psychology. The exception to this rule is the Masters degree in OHP that has operated at the University of Nottingham since 1996 and which was augmented by an e-learning variant in 2005. Systematic consideration of education in OHP in North America is a relatively recent phenomenon (Barnes-Farrell, 2006). North American OHP courses initially operated at the post-doctoral level (at Duke and Wayne State Universities) before shifting to the doctoral level. However, the system there too appears to have evolved in recent times as evidenced by the advent of a postgraduate certificate in the discipline and e-learning opportunities.

Following the Tampa 2001 meeting, there have been several formal meetings of the EA-OHP and its North American counterparts as well as ongoing email and telephone dialogue in respect of education in the discipline. Formal meetings

initially involved representatives from NIOSH and APA and, since 2004, have encompassed the Society for Occupational Health Psychology (SOHP). The seventh full conference of the European Academy (Dublin, 2007), represented a landmark in that it presented the first opportunity for a formal meeting of the governing bodies of the European and North American representative groups for the discipline: EA-OHP and SOHP. At that meeting it was agreed that each group would, from 2009, hold a full international conference every two years. In 2008 both organisations will present a full conference (SOHP, March; EA-OHP, November) with a subsequent SOHP conference in 2009 and an EA-OHP conference in 2010 and so on. Crucially, these regular and scheduled events will provide the opportunity for the two representative bodies to develop an integrated and ongoing plan of collaborative work for the unified promotion of education in OHP.

Summary

It is clear that in recent years considerable progress has been made on both sides of the Atlantic with respect to the development of education in OHP. It is imperative that these efforts do not progress in parallel but, rather, inform one another and integrate where possible. In the long term the field of OHP will not benefit from two distinct perspectives on education in the discipline. The evidence suggests that the North American and European representative bodies have established solid professional working relationships that, it is anticipated, will lead to closer unity in educational provision between the two continents.

CONCLUSIONS

The European Academy's strategy document on the *Promotion of Education in OHP in Europe* set out a series of objectives that, if pursued in tandem, offered a blueprint for the cohesive development of not only education in the discipline in Europe but also the establishment of professional accreditation and practitioner regulation structures. Progress across the objectives has been variable. On the one hand, for example, considerable advancements have been made in respect of a core curriculum. On the other hand, little has been achieved in terms of programme accreditation. Overall, the picture that emerges is a positive one. A variety of European Academy and European Commission structures are now in place, which did not exist at the time of the strategy document's publication, for the support of initiatives associated with the development of education.

In the concluding comments to the strategy document, the authors stated: "There is an imperative for action with respect to education in occupational health psychology. The discipline is developing and without a framework for the promotion of education in Europe difficulties will arise and an opportunity will be lost" (p. 12). The statement holds true today as it did then. This chapter has demonstrated that in large part the imperative has been seized by a diverse group of educators on both sides of the Atlantic that has generated a range of initiatives. These are now beginning to bud, and out of the buds an integrated, cohesive pattern of activity for the promotion of education in the discipline can be seen to flower. It is important that educators capitalise on this foundation and use it as a platform upon which to continue to develop further initiatives for the creation of a self-sustaining discipline for, as Barnes-Farrell (2006) noted, "...the long term future of the field of OHP hinges on the preparation of new professionals who have appropriate skills to carry the field forward" (p. 425).

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