Approvals Committee
9 September 2005

Department of Education
Major and Minor Changes

Executive Summary and Recommendations

1. Introduction
Over the past 12 months, the Education department has been undertaking approvals visits to a range of institutions throughout the UK. This means that a large number of programmes are now open-endedly approved and thus move into the annual monitoring process.

Operating in conjunction with annual monitoring, is the process of recognising exceptional change of circumstances impacting on provision. The recognition and tracking of exceptional change of circumstances (minor and major changes) is intimately linked to the annual monitoring process. Any major changes that are recognised (either in the submission of documentation or through tracking of cumulative change) are moved into the approvals process.

A draft process flowchart (Appendix 1) has been designed to ensure that the tracking of cumulative minor amendments and changes, as well as notification of major change are complimentary with the approvals and annual monitoring processes of the HPC. This draft process builds on, and provides more detail on, that contained in the 'Key Decisions from our consultation on the Standards of Education and Training and the Approvals Process'.

It is proposed that the following will apply to the process;

- The HPC executive will develop an application form and template documents for submission of change requests. These will reflect the format and content of the annual monitoring forms
- The HPC Approvals and Annual Monitoring manager will undertake an initial assessment of the paperwork and make a determination about whether the change is significant enough to be sent for further assessment ie: if the change is an amendment that does not impact in any way, the ability of the EP to meet the SETs or of the graduating students to meet the SOPs.
- At least one visitor/assessor from the same part of the register as the programme under consideration will be required to assess minor/major changes
- Where necessary, two assessors will be involved in the assessment of major/minor change submissions.
- Where possible, if the programme has been approved by the HPC, the HPC will endeavour to use the services of those partners involved in the original (or subsequent) visit to that institution.
- Where possible, if the change is major and falls into the approvals process, the HPC will endeavour to use the services of the visitors involved in the assessment.
- All assessments of minor/major change will involve the conflict of interest procedures.
- Additional information on the process for education providers will be included in the HPCs SETs guidance (currently under development).

- Develop information to assist the executive in making initial decisions about minor change and major changes. This will be included in the staff manual for Education and Policy staff.

Further, in recruiting for minor/major change assessors, the Education and Training department will work in conjunction with the HPC partner manager to;

- Set criteria by which Visitors can adequately fulfill the additional duties;
- Write to all Visitors informing them of the additional duties, the guidelines and the criteria;
- Ask all eligible Visitors to indicate if they wish to opt out of these duties; and
- Create a new IT solution to separate those who are just visitors.

2. Decision
The Committee is asked to agree that, subject to internal operational review, legal advice and budget requirements:
- The attached draft process is in accordance with the initial 'Key Decisions from our consultation on the Standards of Education and Training and the Approvals Process' and continues to meet the original aims and objectives of the HPC's major/minor change process; and,

- The attached process is that to be used when determining major and minor changes to educational programmes approved by the HPC

3. Background information
There is no further background information

4. Resource implications
Develop information for visitors
Develop standard forms and information for education providers
Recruitment of visitor partners to the new process
Development of a minor/major change tracking system

5. Financial implications
Payment of partners (as for registrations assessors)

6. Background papers
Appendix 1 – major & minor change process flowchart

7. Appendices
None