

THE HEALTH PROFESSIONS COUNCIL

Chief Executive and Registrar: Mr Marc Seale

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MINUTES of the tenth meeting of the Approvals Committee held on **Thursday 2 March 2006** at Park House, 184 Kennington Park Road, London, SE11 4BU.

PRESENT: Professor J Harper (Chairman)
 Mrs S Chaudhry
 Ms H Davis
 Professor T Hazell
 Mr A Mount
 Miss G Pearson
 Miss E Thornton
 Ms A Turner
 Professor D Waller

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr C Bendall, Secretary to the Committee
 Ms N Borg, Education Officer
 Professor N Brook, President
 Ms A Creighton, Education Manager
 Mr G Ross-Sampson, Director of Operations

Item 1.06/1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Mr M Woolcock.
- 1.2 The Committee welcomed the President, who was observing the meeting and Ms Creighton, who had been appointed as the Education Manager.

Item 2.06/2 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- 2.1 The Committee approved the agenda.

Item 3.06/3 MINUTES OF THE APPROVALS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 22 NOVEMBER 2005

- 3.1 It was agreed that the minutes of the ninth meeting of the Approvals Committee should be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendments:-

Item 17.2: Proposed Arrangements for Consideration of Visitors' Reports

The Committee had agreed that "...an Approvals Panel should meet on a monthly basis to consider Visitors' reports, annual monitoring reports and major and minor changes to programmes."

Item 4.06/4 MATTERS ARISING

- 4.1 The Committee noted the actions list as agreed at the last meeting.
- 4.2 The Committee noted that three actions were ongoing: implementation of revised approvals flowchart (action point 1), implementation of policy on deferral of approvals visits (action point 5) and arranging visits to Operating Department Practitioner programmes (action point 8).
- 4.3.1 Item 11.5 - Major and Minor Changes: Forms and Guidance
The Committee noted that the President, the Chief Executive and Miss Thornton had attended a meeting about the Ongoing Quality Monitoring and Enhancement Process (OQME). The Committee noted that the OQME had devised a system under which standards were grouped into "domains" which could be mapped against the HPC's Standards of Education and Training. The Committee noted that Miss Thornton, as Chairman of the Education and Training Committee, had responded to confirm that the HPC would continue to work independently using its own standards, processes and monitoring procedures.
- 4.3.2 The Committee noted that the President had attended a meeting of the Skills for Health Quality Group on 16 February which had been attended by a wide range of stakeholders including Strategic Health Authorities, Higher Education Institutions, the Council of Deans and Universities UK. The meeting had been constructive and the HPC would continue to be involved in discussions.
- 4.4 The Committee noted that it had made a number of amendments to the conditions in a Visitors' report considered at the previous meeting. The Committee agreed that these judgements should be used to form a body of case history against which future Panel conditions can be informed.

Item 5.06/5 EDUCATION MANAGER REPORT

- 5.1 The Committee received a report on the current work of the Approvals and Annual Monitoring Department.
- 5.2 The Committee agreed that the report was a very helpful summary of the Department's work and planned visits. The Committee suggested that the calendar of future approval visits in appendix 1 of the paper

could be displayed more prominently on the HPC's website and could be used to indicate to education providers the dates when visits might take place.

- 5.3 The Committee noted that the HPC had written to education providers in February 2005 about programmes which had been validated under the Quality Assurance Agency benchmarks. The Committee agreed that the HPC should not write to education providers to confirm the position, as all providers had been contacted in connection with the HPC's annual monitoring process.

Item 6.06/6 STRATEGIC INTENT

- 6.1 The Committee received a paper for discussion/approval from the Executive.
- 6.2 The Committee noted that the draft updated Strategic Intent document had been presented to the Council on 6 December and subsequently considered by all other Committees. In addition, individual Council members had made comments. A revised Strategic Intent had been presented to the Council on 1 March.
- 6.3 The Committee agreed that references to approval of programmes should be amended to refer to approval of programmes and annual monitoring, as the latter was a substantial activity for the HPC.

Action: MJS (by 17 May 2006)

Item 7.06/7 STANDARD OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING 1: LEVEL OF QUALIFICATION FOR ENTRY TO THE REGISTER

- 7.1 The Committee received a paper for discussion/approval from the Executive.
- 7.2 The Committee noted that, over the last eighteen months, the HPC had approved a number of programmes which were above the normal threshold entry route outlined in Standard of Education and Training 1. In all cases, the Visitors had been confident that the Standards of Proficiency could be met on completion of each programme.
- 7.3 The Committee noted that, at a recent approvals visit, the HPC had been asked to consider a Postgraduate Diploma and a Masters degree in dietetics, where the normal threshold entry for the subject was a Bachelor degree with honours. During the visit, the Visitors had expressed concern about the appropriateness of approving the Masters programme when all the Standards of Proficiency were clearly met within the Postgraduate Diploma. The Visitors had felt that the additional elements of study involved in a Masters programme did not affect a student's ability to meet the Standards of Proficiency and

therefore approval should be given to the first exit qualification (i.e. the Postgraduate Diploma only).

- 7.4 The Committee noted that education providers and students normally considered awards such as Postgraduate Diplomas and Masters as a combined programme, with multiple exit points. It was important that applicants and students were not disadvantaged or influenced in their choice of final award by the inclusion (or lack of inclusion) of approved programmes on the register. It was practical and sensible to consider programmes together at the same Approvals visit and essential that a complete list of awards was included in the register of approved programmes.
- 7.5 The Committee noted that there was a need to ensure consistency in approval of programmes across and within professions and education providers. The Committee noted that there was also a need to ensure clarity in the qualifications published on the register of approved programmes and to clarify that all programmes which met the Standards of Proficiency should be considered for approval. The Committee noted that this would apply in programmes where PgDip and MSc qualifications were linked.
- 7.6 The Committee agreed that the HPC should approve all programmes that contained the Standards of Proficiency, irrespective of the level of the final qualification award.

Action: AC (Ongoing)

Item 8.06/8 EXTERNAL EXAMINERS FOR SUPPLEMENTARY PRESCRIBING PROGRAMMES

- 8.1 The Committee received a paper for discussion/approval from the Executive.
- 8.2 The Committee noted that, over the last academic year, when considering Supplementary Prescribing programmes, there had been issues regarding the interpretation of Standard of Education and Training 6.7.5, which concerned the role of external examiners in the quality assurance of programme assessments. The standard provided that "Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for the appointment of at least one external examiner from the relevant part of the register."
- 8.3 The Committee noted that, where Supplementary Prescribing programmes contained students from more than one profession, education providers had found it difficult and impractical to recruit external examiners to represent each profession. The HPC visiting panels had discussed the recruitment and cost implications for

education providers and felt that it would be appropriate for education providers to provide an external examiner from one of the professions.

- 8.4 The Committee did not agree with the recommendation in the paper that the external examiner should be from one of the professions. The Committee felt that it would be more appropriate to ensure that the external examiner was a registered professional (not necessarily registered with the HPC) with an academic background which was acceptable to the education provider. The Committee agreed that the paper should be amended and reconsidered at the meeting on 17 May.

Action: AC (by 17 May 2006)

- 8.5 The Committee agreed that the wording of SET 6.7.5 should be reviewed in due course as it felt that this requirement would be difficult to meet in some instances (e.g. in Biomedical Science and Clinical Science programmes).

Item 9.06/9 MAJOR AND MINOR CHANGES - UPDATE

- 7.1 The Committee received a paper to note from the Executive.
- 7.2 The Committee noted that "Major/Minor Change: Supplementary Information for Education Providers" had been published on the HPC website and sent to all education providers' quality assurance offices and programme leaders.
- 7.3 The Committee agreed that the document was well-presented and clearly written.

Item 10.06/10 ANNUAL MONITORING UPDATE

- 10.1 The Committee received a paper for to note from the Executive.
- 10.2 The Committee noted that "Annual Monitoring: Supplementary Information for Education Providers" had been published on the HPC website and sent to education providers' quality assurance offices and programme leaders. The Committee noted the lists of education providers had been divided into two groups, one of which was required to complete an annual monitoring declaration form by 31 March. The second group was required to complete an annual monitoring audit form by 31 March. The Committee noted that the HPC would send reminder letters to any education providers who had not provided the necessary information.
- 10.3 The Committee noted that it was intended that a number of annual monitoring assessment days were planned for May and June and that each day would be attended by approximately 16 Visitors from a mixture of professions. The Committee noted that this would provide

an opportunity for Visitors from different professions to learn from each other.

- 10.3 The Committee noted that the Chairman of the Education and Training Committee was due to attend the assessment day on 3 May. The Committee agreed that its members could observe the meetings on 12 May, 16 May, 23 May and 2 June, as a learning activity.

Action: NB (by 1 May 2006)

Item 11.06/11 MINUTES OF THE APPROVALS PANEL HELD ON 12 JANUARY 2006

- 11.1 The Committee received a paper to note from the Executive.
- 11.2 The Committee noted the minutes of the Approvals Panel held on 12 January.

Item 12.06/12 UNCONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE APPROVALS PANEL HELD ON 2 FEBRUARY 2006

- 12.1 The Committee received a paper to note from the Executive.
- 12.2 The Committee noted the unconfirmed minutes of the Approvals Panel held on 2 February.
- 12.3 The Committee noted that, to date, a small proportion of education providers had made observations on conditions. The Committee agreed that, as the number of reports increased, this would build up a body of casework which would inform the approvals process and the preparation of subsequent reports. The Committee agreed that the Executive should consider how to ensure that Visitors' Reports were of a high quality and to ensure that appropriate and consistent conditions were being set.

Action: AC (by 17 May 2006)

- 12.4 The Committee discussed whether it would be appropriate to continue holding the Approvals Panel meetings. The Committee agreed that the Panels should continue for the time being, particularly in the light of the expected number of visits and returns from the annual monitoring process.

Item 13.06/13 REVISED STANDING ORDERS

- 13.1 The Committee received a paper to note from the Executive.
- 13.2 The Committee noted that, at its meeting on 22 November, it had agreed that an approvals panel should meet on a monthly basis to

consider visitors' reports, annual monitoring reports and minor changes to programmes. The Panel would comprise three members of the Committee on a rotating basis, one of whom should act as the Panel Chairman. The Committee would continue to meet four times a year to discuss policy and procedural issues.

- 13.2 The Committee noted that, at the meeting of the Education and Training Committee on 15 December, it had been agreed that the standing orders of the Approvals Committee should be amended to take account of the decision to hold panel meetings. An email had been sent to Council members to seek electronic ratification of the proposed amendments and ratification had been granted.
- 13.3 The Committee noted that the provision in standing order 14(2) required a quorum of not less than three members of the Committee at a meeting of a Panel. The Committee noted that it was the current practice to invite only three members to a Panel meeting.
- 13.4 The Committee noted that the standing orders required that, if a quorum was not present within 15 minutes of the time appointed for a meeting to commence, all business which should have been transacted at that meeting should stand over until the next Ordinary Meeting and take precedence over the business of that meeting, unless a Special Meeting had been called in the meantime for the transaction of that business. The Committee noted that this provision was common to the Standing Orders of all of the HPC's Committees and agreed that the Executive should reflect on this provision.

Action: CB (by 17 May 2006)

- 13.5 The Committee noted the revised standing orders attached to the paper.

Item 14.06/14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 14.1 There was no other business.

Item 15.06/15 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

- 15.1 The next meeting of the Committee would be held on Wednesday 17 May 2006 at 11.00am.
- 15.2 Subsequent meetings of the Approvals Committee would be held at 11.00 am on:-

Tuesday 5 September 2006

Thursday 2 November 2006

Thursday 8 March 2006

Wednesday 9 May 2007

CHAIRMAN

DATE