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MINUTES of the tenth meeting of the Registration Committee of the Health Professions Council held on Wednesday 30 April 2003 at The Evangelical Alliance, 186 Kennington Park Road, London SE11 4BT.

PRESENT :

Prof. R. Klem (Chairman)
Miss M. Crawford
Mr R. Jones
Miss P. Sabine
Miss E. Thornton
Dr A. Van der Gaag
Prof. N. Brook (ex-officio)
Mr C. Lea (ex-officio)
Mr G. Sutehall (ex-officio)

IN ATTENDANCE :

Miss L. Pilgrim, Director, Secretary to the Committee
Mr M. Seale, Chief Executive and Registrar
Dr P. Burley, Director of Education and Policy
Mr G. Milch, Director
Mr R. Dunn, Interim Manager, International Registration
Miss S. Dawson, Grandparenting Manager
Mr J. Bracken, Bircham, Dyson, Bell
Mr S. Hill, Newchurch

INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

Prof. Klem welcomed members of the public to the meeting.

ITEM 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from :- Miss C. Harkin, Mr I. Massey, and Prof. D. Waller.

ITEM 2 APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The Committee confirmed its agreement to the Agenda.

ITEM 3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6 MARCH 2003

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2003 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

ITEM 4 MATTERS ARISING

(1) Certification of HPC Registrants competent to obtain, supply and administer drugs

A paper had been prepared by Mr Seale and tabled at the meeting. The paper set out the background to this matter and suggested that a two-stage process be adopted. A prospective Registrant would acquire confirmation from a relevant body that they were competent to obtain, supply and administer prescription drugs and that subsequently this information would be sent to the HPC.

An entry would appear on the HPC Register, indicating that that the individual was competent to obtain, supply and administer prescription drugs.

The HPC Registration Certificate, issued every 2 years, would indicate the Registrant's competence.

Mr Bracken clarified that the entry in the Register would fall under Part III, S (2) (c) (ii) of the Order "for the making of any additional entry in the register". It would be dealt with by Rules made by the Privy Council and no additional procedures would be needed from either the Registration or Education and Training Committees.

The Committee discussed the paper and **AGREED** the following :

- (i) that the process as detailed in the tabled paper be accepted. A report to this effect would be made to the Education and Training Committee.
- (ii) This decision would be communicated to (a) the Department of Health (DH), (b) the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain (RPSGB), (c) Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), (d) Registrants, (e) the Medicines Control Agency.
- (iii) The HPC Executive would draft an article for the Society of Chiropractors & Podiatrists to put in its magazine.
- (iv) The information would be put on the HPC website.
- (v) Any prospective student graduating before the HPC Rules came into force and seeking Registration before that date would use the existing system inherited from the CPSM.

Miss Thornton suggested that once the Rules were finalised the HPC should send a letter to all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) setting out all recent and prospective new systems and changes. It was **AGREED** that this letter would be circulated to the Committee.

ACTION : LP / PB.

(2) **Grandparenting Criteria**

The Committee had seen these previously. The wording of the criteria had been amended slightly without changing the substance. Mr. Bracken reiterated that Article 13 of the Health Professions Order (HPO) required the HPC to publish these criteria so that applicants had some idea of how the HPC would assess their application. The Committee discussed the document and **AGREED** to recommend it to Council. This decision would be reported to the Education and Training Committee (ETC).

Mr Seale explained that the criteria would be put on the website as a consultation document and for comments. The criteria would also go out to the Professional Bodies and to the Allied Health Professions Forum (AHPF).

ACTION : LP / JT.

ITEM 5 CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT AGAINST STANDARDS OF PROFICIENCY

The Committee noted that working groups from each of the professions had begun the process of identifying the criteria and the tests of competence. Some members of these working groups had attended a meeting on 15 April 2003 to discuss finalising the Standards of Proficiency (SoPs). Mr Hill reported that following that meeting some changes would be made to the SoPs. These changes would be checked by Mr Bracken. Mr Hill said he would then collate the information and the SoPs would be circulated again to Council members and to those who had worked on creating the SoPs. Mr Hill said that the latest updated version of the SoPs would be ready by mid-May.

Although it was acknowledged that the assessment criteria and Tests of Competence could not be completed until the SoPs were finalised, it was agreed that work could continue in parallel in the interim. It was noted that the profession-specific SoPs were less likely to change than the generic SoPs. Subsequent changes to the SoPs would then need to be reflected through amendments to the criteria and test.

The criteria would be circulated to those involved in drawing them up and to Council members. They should be marked "Private & Confidential" because, while the process and broad criteria must be transparent, specific fine detail of the criteria, which would be used by assessors, should be confidential.

The Committee considered the paper (Enclosure 2) and accepted the process outlined. However, the Chairman noted that for accuracy the paper should clarify that the working groups were drawn from each of the professions, rather than "representing" the professions.

The Committee noted and accepted the paper.

ACTION : LP / SH.

ITEM 6 REQUIREMENTS FOR RE-ADMISSION TO THE REGISTER

In response to a question raised in the paper (Enclosure 3) Miss Crawford suggested that the requirements should apply equally to those who were self-employed. The Committee noted that the HPC had no list of approved programmes for those returning to practice. Prof. Klem felt that a more flexible approach would be for returners to practice to undertake a programme of education, training or experience. Mr Bracken clarified that there could be no individual assessment of those returning to practice; the way the Order was drafted meant that there had to be a blanket assessment of returners; so that for example all those who had not practised for between 2 – 4 years would be assessed as a class; standards would apply generically, not individually.

The Committee agreed that it should be made clearer that these requirements would apply also to those who had qualified but who had never practised. The document before the Committee should be amended to specifically include this category of applicant and then forwarded to Council together with the latest version of the Standards of Proficiency (SoPs).

A working group of the Registration Committee would be formed to work on the requirements. This would comprise Prof. Brook, Prof. Klem, Dr Van der Gaag, Miss Sabine, Miss Crawford and Mr Sutehall.

The Secretary would organise a meeting of the group.

ACTION : LP / SH.

ITEM 7 APPLICANT APPEALS PROCESS

Mr Bracken advised that this paper should be titled “ Review Process ” rather than “ Appeals Process ”. Article 37 of the Health Professions Order (HPO) detailed how appeals against registration could be made; (a) to the Council and (b) to the County Court. The process being looked at by the Committee was an internal review process. Applicants should be notified that there was an internal review process and it should be pointed out to them that this did not prejudice their rights to appeal under Article 37 of the HPO.

The Committee discussed the best way to implement the internal review process. Prof. Brook felt that where an applicant appealed against a joint decision of the two assessors, a third professional or lead assessor should be asked to review that decision.

Miss Thornton said that she would let the Committee have details of the process her University used when students appealed against their results.

The Committee **AGREED** that Mr Dunn and Mr Bracken would liaise on the review process. It was noted that the process would not be a wholesale re-assessment of the entire application.

ACTION : RD / JB.

ITEM 8 INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE TESTING SYSTEM (IELTS)

Mr Bracken advised that there could be no requirement in the Rules for an EEA applicant to be English Language tested. However, the Standards of Proficiency would include a clear requirement that a registrant be able to demonstrate effective communication.

This issue of the IELTS levels to be adopted by the HPC had been referred again to the Committee for further discussion and review. The Committee had before it information on the test format of IELTS and interpretation of the test results from Bands 0 – 9.

The required level for Speech & Language Therapists was 8. The Committee had to determine the level for the other 11 professions that the HPC regulated.

The English language skills required of health care professionals in dealing with a range of patients/clients were discussed in light of the information provided about IELTS. The Committee **AGREED** to recommend to the Education and Training Committee (ETC) IELTS Level 8 (or equivalent) for Speech and Language Therapy and Level 7 (or equivalent) for the other professions.

ACTION : LP.

ITEM 9 LETTER OF GOOD STANDING

This letter was requested by registrants who wanted to practise overseas or by those who wanted to return to their home country. The letter provided the following information :

- (1) the registrant's registration status;
- (2) the part or subsection of the register in which the registrant is registered;
- (3) details of any orders (or interim orders) that are in force against the registrant.

The Committee considered this letter and **AGREED** to recommend it to the Education and Training Committee (ETC). The HPC would not make a charge for the issue of the Letter of Good Standing. The letter would be signed by the Chief Executive.

ACTION : LP.

ITEM 10 CRIMINAL RECORDS BUREAU

Miss Dawson reported that she would be meeting with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) shortly.

Miss Thornton commented that applicants would go through the CRB check when they applied for registration and then again when they applied for a job with the NHS. She wondered whether the duplication of effort could be avoided. Dr Burley said it would be better to have separate CRB checks, as there may be different levels of disclosure for various types of jobs.

The Committee considered and discussed the document which detailed how the HPC would operate the CRB process. Miss Thornton noted that applicants would have to apply for a CRB check in advance of making their application to the HPC for registration. The difficulty for those who would be graduating in the near future was highlighted. It was agreed that the HPC would write to the Higher Education Institutions notifying them that, once the Register was open, applicants would need to include a completed CRB check with their application or send it in whilst their application was in progress.

The Committee **AGREED** that the check would be a “ standard check ” and should be dated within the preceding two months of the HPC application.

The Committee also **AGREED** the following points as detailed in the document before it :

- (i) UK, EU, International and Grandparenting applicants would have to apply for CRB checks in advance of making their application to the HPC. They would have to apply to either the CRB or SCRO for a disclosure of criminal offences.
- (ii) The check could be included with the application to the HPC or could be sent to the HPC whilst the application was in progress.
- (iii) An applicant would not be approved for registration until this information had been provided.
- (iv) Overseas applicants would have to include information from their own country, if it was available.
- (v) CRB disclosure would be required for all overseas applicants from the following countries :
 1. Denmark
 2. France
 3. Germany
 4. Irish Republic
 5. Netherlands
 6. Spain
 7. Sweden
 8. Poland
 9. Canada

10. Jamaica
11. South Africa
12. Malaysia
13. Philippines
14. Australia
15. New Zealand.

ACTION : CH / PB.

ITEM 11 REGISTRATION / READMISSION FORM AND GUIDANCE NOTES

The Committee received the latest versions of these forms and guidance notes.

Miss Dawson said that the forms would have to be checked for compliance with the Registration Rules once they had been approved by the Privy Council and the guidance notes would have to be compatible with the Registration / Readmission forms. She said that a Clinical Reference form had been added to the overseas documentation as it would be helpful to those assessing such applications.

The Committee discussed the documents and suggested various changes. It was **AGREED** that changes would be e-mailed to Miss Dawson by 6 May. This was urgent because the Registration / Readmission form was part of the Rules which had to be approved by the Privy Council.

The Committee **AGREED** that the Chairman could take Chairman's action to approve changes to the forms and notes. They would then go to Council for approval prior to submission to the Privy Council.

ITEM 12 MINUTES OF THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 26 MARCH 2003

The Committee noted these.

ITEM 13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Miss Thornton raised the issue of the recently-held partner interviews, She sought clarification as to whether or not such registrant interviewees needed to be "practising". The Committee considered that interviewees should be practising, at least within the last 6 months prior to interview. Mr Seale said that he would let the Human Resources Director know this.

Miss Thornton and Dr Van der Gaag asked whether those who had carried out interviews could obtain and discuss feedback from the process. It was suggested that this should be done in order to learn from the experiences gained by those involved in the process to facilitate continued improvement in the process for the future.

ITEM 14 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on Tuesday, 15 July 2003 at 10.00 a.m.

CHAIRMAN

HPC\Minutes\Minutes of 10th Meeting of HPC Registration Committee, 15 April 2003