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MINUTES of the first meeting of the Approvals Committee of the Health Professions Council held on Monday 24 May 2004 at Park House, 184 Kennington Park Road, London SE11 4BU.

PRESENT :

Professor J. Harper (Acting Chairman)
Professor N. Brook
Mrs S. Chaudhry
Mr P. Frowen
Professor T. Hazell
Professor C. Lloyd
Mrs G. Pearson
Miss P. Sabine
Mrs B. Stuart
Miss E. Thornton
Professor. D. Waller

IN ATTENDANCE :

Miss L. Pilgrim, Secretary to the Committee
Mr M. Seale, Chief Executive and Registrar
Miss C. Savage, Education and Training Department
Mrs.U. Falk, Education and Training Department
Mr T. Berrie, Education and Training Department
Mr G. Milch, Fitness to Practice Department (to item 4)
Mr J. Bracken, Bircham, Dyson, Bell.

ITEM 1   APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1   There were no apologies.

ITEM 2   NOMINATION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN

2.1   Professor J. Harper was nominated as acting Chairman until the Chairman and Vice Chairman are formally confirmed by Council. He welcomed all members and non-members who were attending the meeting

2.1.1   The Chief Executive explained the role of the Committee Secretary, namely, that the secretary was concerned with the procedural matters affecting the Committee; points to be actioned following the Committee's discussions would be passed to the relevant director or manager to be so actioned. Directors and managers were also responsible for preparing and forwarding papers to the Committee Secretary by the deadline date for presentation to the Committee. The Secretary would check the format of the papers to ensure that they met the stipulated criteria; if they did not they would be returned to the originator to be amended as appropriate.

2.1.2   The Chief Executive confirmed that interviews for the position of Director of Education and Policy had taken place; there was one further interview due to take place in three weeks time. Following that interview a decision would be made about who the successful appointee would be. Once appointed the Director of Education and Policy would be responsible for many of the Committee's tasks which were being carried out on a temporary basis by Committee members.

2.1.3   The Chief Executive explained that the draft papers before the Committee were presented primarily with the aim of drawing out the issues for debate and stimulating discussion of such issues. In the short term, The Executive would be seconding two people from the university sector with the necessary expertise in the approvals and annual monitoring process; the secondments would be for a stipulated period. To date one secondee from the University of West of England had been appointed.

2.1.4   The Chief Executive suggested that the Committee could nominate one of its members who had an interest in a particular issue and who could provide the Executive with feedback on that issue.

ITEM 3   **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

3.1   The Committee approved the Agenda.

ITEM 4   **APPROVALS**

4.1   Draft List of Standard Letters and Documents

4.1.1   The Committee recommended that this list could be used as a checklist once the approvals process had been determined.

4.2   Draft Guidance Notes for Visitors

4.2.1 The Committee recommended that the notes could be used as a draft at this stage; they would be reconsidered once the approvals process had been finalised. The Executive would prepare a paper for the next meeting setting out the principles and process that HPC would be using in respect of new approvals of programmes.

ACTION: TB

4.2.2 The Committee recommended that curriculum guidance would have to be defined. It was emphasised that it would be guidance and would not be prescriptive. A definition of 'curriculum guidance' would have to be provided within a glossary of terms in all education and training brochures. It was agreed that Professor Brook, Miss Thornton and the secondees would prepare a paper for the next meeting setting out the definition to be used.

ACTION: NB/ET

4.2.3 The Committee would appoint an approvals panel whose remit would be to assess whether a programme had met the SETs.

4.2.4 The exact constitution of the panel had yet to be agreed, but it was envisaged that the panel would be convened by the academic staff of the education providers in line with current practice. The approvals event would be jointly arranged between HPC and the education providers. The role of the HPC visitors would be to ensure that the programme met the SETs in accordance with the Health Professions Order 2001 (HPO).

4.3 <u>Draft Format for Reports of Approval Events</u>

4.3.1 The Committee recommended that there would be two separate reports following an approval event; (a) an overall report of the event with an agreed set of outcomes; (b) from this report a visitors' report would be produced on a pro forma. The visitors' report would be published on the website.

4.3.2 The visitors' report would :
   (a)   address the issues within the Council's remit , specifically, the SETs
   (b)   set out the Council's conditions, recommendations and commendations
   (c)   stipulate that a programme would not be approved until conditions had been complied with
   (d)   contain issues and matters from the education providers perspective, such as areas of good practice

4.3.3 The Committee recommended that a member of the HPC executive would attend the event.

4.3.4 The visitors'report would be submitted to the Approvals Committee; at this stage it would note the report and any conditions to be met.

4.3.5   The education provider would respond to conditions and recommendations within an agreed time scale. The visitors' report would confirm the education provider's response and that the education provider had met any outstanding conditions.

4.3.6   The report would then be referred to the Committee for its recommendation to the Education and Training Committee (ETC) that it be approved.

4.3.7   The Committee noted that the panel would be required to give reasoned judgements as to its decisions. The Committee also noted that the visitors' report would be published and available to members of the public. This new requirement would be communicated urgently to the education providers.

    ACTION: TB

4.3.8   The content of the report would have to be carefully considered by the Committee and the format determined. The Committee recommended that the report be termed an "Event Report".

4.3.9   The Committee discussed the position of those professions whose programmes were not delivered through HEIs, for example, paramedics. Mr D. Whitmore,an HPC partner (paramedic) told the Committee that there were currently three paramedic programmes being delivered through HEIs; the other route to registration was through the paramedic award from the Institute of Health Care Development (IHCD). The Committee recommended that it approved the programmes at IHCD centres in accordance with the proposed SETs and the approvals and annual monitoring processes.

4.3.10   The interim position of the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS) was also considered. It was noted that at present the only two routes of entry for biomedical scientists on to the Register was the award of the IBMS' Certificate of Competence or via grandparenting. It was further noted that should a co-terminous biomedical science degree be developed , the education provider could seek HPC approval if the qualifications met the SETs.

4.3.11   The Committee considered that the following documents would be required for each programme as part of the approval event (a) a programme specification; (b) module descriptors; (c) a commentary document with sufficient evidence to enable the panel visitor to make a judgement that the SETs had been met. These documents would be provided to the visitors prior to the visit. In addition the education providers would have to provide evidence of support for students.

4.3.12   For the purposes of a visit the visitors' panel would require meetings with (a) senior personnel from the education provider with responsibility for resources for the programme; (b) the programme planning team; (c) students, past and present, as appropriate; (d) placement providers and educators. The visitors' panel would also require a tour of learning resources such as library resources, IT facilities and specialist teaching areas.

4.3.13   The Committee considered whether a practice placement 'had' to be visited or 'might' be visited; if the relevant evidence about a practice placement could be obtained from other

sources such as comprehensive documentary evidence and this evidence assured the panel that there were appropriate quality assurance procedures in place, this would negate the requirement for a visit.

4.3.14   It was recommended that random audits of practice placements could be made.

4.4   Current Approvals

4.4.1   The Committee recommended that programmes currently approved under CPSM process and for which benchmark statements had been available at the time of approval would continue to be so approved, subject to receipt of satisfactory annual monitoring returns. The Committee confirmed that, for nine of the professions regulated by HPC, this would apply to all programmes offered post 2001. The Committee pointed out that such approvals were subject to issues highlighted by Pre-registration Education and Training Working Group (PRETWG), Joint Validating Committees (JVCs) or Joint Quality Assurance Committees (JQACs).

4.4.2   A currently approved programme would need to be re-approved if major changes were made to the programme. The issue of what constituted a major change was an item being consulted on.

4.4.3   The Committee recommended the following strategy: (a) that the number of programmes approved from 1999- 2000 be ascertained for the next meeting on 25 June 2004 and circulated to members for reference and (b) that HPC communicate with these institutions, notifying them of the situation and giving them a time-scale for a re-approval visit. The Committee recommended that such visits be scheduled to take place within the next eighteen months.

         ACTION: TB

4.4.4   The Committee discussed and noted the position with the dietitians' practice placements, namely that ETC had agreed that practice placements continue to be approved in the current format until 1 September 2004.

4.5   New Approvals

4.5.1   The Committee considered the scheduling of new approvals. It was recommended that the Executive would confirm the numbers of new programmes requiring approval. This information would be required for discussion at the next meeting on 25 June 2004.The relevant institutions would need to be notified of the new approval process and be given sufficient time to prepare for the visit.

         ACTION: CS

4.5.2 The Committee noted that where a new programme required urgent approval due to imminent commencement, a visit would be arranged as soon as was feasible. This was very much dependant on the outcome and publication of the new proposals and the training of visitors. The Committee requested information on the number of new programmes that fell into this category so that it could be discussed at the meeting on 25 June 2004.

ACTION: CS

4.5.3 It was noted that a letter had been sent to education providers notifying them of the new approvals process and ongoing approval (subject to satisfactory annual monitoring) of programmes.

ITEM 5 ANNUAL MONITORING

5.1 Meeting with the Department of Health Quality Assurance Team

5.1.1 The Chairman of ETC reported that a third joint statement would be made in August 2004 detailing progress to date. She reiterated that HPC must be clear about what should be included in the joint statement to ensure that HPC's UK wide remit was reflected. It should also be clear about the conditions under which it would sign the joint statement.

5.1.2 The Committee did not want a completed standard template to be included in the joint statement and queried the benefit of it. The Committee recommended the inclusion of the following in the joint statement:

      I.   one annual report per programme
      II.   adoption of exceptional reporting
      III.   annual reports linked to HPC's SET's. The Committee further recommended the use of the ten HPC headings as a working model . The HPC would like to see an update from last year's report under these ten headings
      IV.   reservation of HPC's right to visit independently

5.1.3 The above reflected the conditions under which HPC would sign the joint statement and the Committee agreed to recommend to ETC signature of the joint statement on this basis.

ACTION: ET

5.2 Commencement of Annual Monitoring

5.2.1 The Committee recommended that it would work within the education providers' usual timetable. It recommended the following:

      I.   that HPC should receive one report every academic year
      II.   the report should be signed off by the education provider
      III.   once the report had been considered and completed by the education provider it should come to HPC within one month thereafter

IV. the front sheet of the report would set out how the education provider had met HPC's SETs

V. If circumstances then changed the onus was on the education provider to notify HPC at the earliest opportunity and seek advice

VI. information from the current session should be incorporated into the report

5.2.2   It was agreed that a pro forma annual monitoring report would be prepared by Professor Lloyd and Miss Thornton for the next meeting on 25 June 2004.

ACTION: CL/ET

5.2.3   The Committee felt that in accordance with its statutory right there would be audits of the reports. Discussions centred on how the audits should be conducted. There would have to be consistency in reviewing the reports.

5.2.4   It was recommended that the audit should be carried out from a profession specific perspective rather than from a generic one. Following the conclusion of the consultation as to what might constitute a major or a minor change , the Committee would then be in a position to determine which changes reported during annual monitoring might trigger an approval event.

5.2.5   The Committee would have to consider at a future meeting the engagement of visitors to conduct audits, their remuneration and any associated costs.

5.3   Draft Standard Letters

5.3.1   The Committee recommended that the drafting of these letters be left until the monitoring process had been finalised.

ACTION: **TB**

5.4   Major and Minor Changes

5.4.1   The Committee noted that education providers would have details of what they considered as major and minor changes. The issue was being consulted on. The Committee decided it would consider these at its next meeting on 25 June 2004.

ACTION: LP

ITEM 6   VISITOR TRAINING

6.1   The Committee noted that letters had been sent to visitors inviting them to attend an induction and training session on the SETs, the new approvals process and annual monitoring; these sessions were scheduled to take place in July 2004.

6.2   The Committee fully appreciated the need for the training of visitors to begin as soon as possible but was concerned that the training should be comprehensive and reflect the new guidelines and proposals.

6.3   The Committee felt that the time-scales between the conclusion of the consultation period (31 May 2004), analysing the feedback and publishing the new guidelines and proposals was too short to allow a comprehensive training programme to be delivered to visitors.

6.4   With this in mind the Committee recommended that the training schedule for July 2004 be postponed. Instead, it recommended that experienced visitors attend a one day training session in early September 2004. At this session visitors would be informed of the new processes and procedures supported by reference documents. It was recommended that these visitors would undertake the first wave of approval events due to take place between September and December 2004. The Executive would identify the programmes that required approval between September and December 2004.

ACTION: CS

6.5   All other visitors would be invited to attend a full two day training session between September and December 2004.

ACTION: TB

ITEM 7   INFORMATION FOR THE HPC WEBSITE

7.1   The Committee confirmed the use of the term 'programmes' in preference to "courses" in all relevant communications, publications and the website.

ACTION: CM

ITEM 8   PARTNERSHIP QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK FOR HELATH CARE IN ENGLAND - A CONSULTATION

8.1   The Chairman of the ETC reported that HPC could not give a detailed response as its own document was part of the consultation; it could, however, give its observations. She confirmed that she and Professor Brook would be attending a meeting at Skipton House on 13 July 2004. It was anticipated that one of the HPC secondees would also be asked to attend. The Chairman of ETC would forward details of the meeting to the Committee for information

ACTION: ET

ITEM 9   THE APPROVALS AND STANDARDS OF EDUCATION AND TRAINGING CONSULTATION PROCESS

9.1   The Committee noted the layout of the draft 'Decision and Feedback' document; there was no content at this stage.

9.2   The Committee suggested that a completed document be put before it but agreed that the ETC was the appropriate forum in which the full document should be considered.

ACTION: CS

ITEM 10   CO-TERMINOUS DEGREES - BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE

10.1   The Committee noted the tabled paper. It recommended that a meeting with the IBMS be arranged to discuss the matter. It was suggested that Professor Brook, the Chief Executive, Mr G. Sutehall and Mr N. Willis attend. The purpose of the meeting would be to move the agenda forward regarding the instigation of co-terminous degrees which would permit registration upon graduation

ACTION: CS

ITEM 11   PARAMEDIC TRAINING COURSES

11.1   The Committee had been asked to consider the appropriate minimum level of programmes that would lead to registration as a paramedic and also to consider the development of such programmes.

11.2   Professor Harper said that it was not for the HPC to dictate what the paramedic award should be but that such programmes would have to meet the HPC's SETs and Standards of Proficiency (SOPs)

11.3   Professor Brook responded that it was for the professional or other relevant body to develop what they considered to be the appropriate standard.

ITEM 12   ANY OTHER BUSINESS

12.1   Mr. Bracken raised the issue of approval of operating department practice programmes. Ms Helen Booth, Education Officer for the Association of Operating Department Practitioners reported to the Committee that several of the twenty eight centres currently running approved ODP programmes were concerned as to whether or not these programmes would need to be approved once the profession became regulated by the HPC.

12.2   The Committee recommended that an AODP qualification that was acceptable by the HPC for registration on transferral of the ODP voluntary register would be considered as approved.

12.3   It was recommended that all ODP programmes would need to be approved by HPC within five years of their previous approval within the regular scheme of programme approvals.

ACTION: CS

ITEM 13   DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

13.1   The next meeting would be held on Friday 25 June 2004 at 11 a.m .

13.2   Further meetings would be held on the following dates:
          Monday 12 July 2004 11 a.m
          Tuesday 7 September 2004 11 a.m
          Thursday 18 November 2004 11 a.m
          Wednesday 2 February 2005 11 a.m

                                                    CHAIRMAN