

THE HEALTH PROFESSIONS COUNCIL

Chief Executive and Registrar: Mr Marc Seale

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MINUTES of the eighth meeting of the Approvals Committee held on **Friday 9 September 2005** at Park House, 184 Kennington Park Road, London SE11 4BU.

PRESENT: Professor J Harper (Chairman)
Ms H Davis
Mr A Mount
Miss G Pearson
Ms F Taylor
Miss E Thornton
Ms A Turner
Professor D Waller

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr C Bendall, Secretary to the Committee
Ms N Borg, Education Officer
Mr E Crowe, Education Officer
Ms J Kemp, Education Officer
Ms L McKell, Partner Manager
Ms N O'Sullivan, Secretary to Council
Ms K Scott, Manager - Aspirant Groups & CPD
Mr M Seale, Chief Executive and Registrar
Ms R Tripp, Policy Manager

Item 1.05/51 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN

- 1.1 The Secretary to the Committee acted as Chairman for the first part of this item. The Secretary requested nominations for the position of Chairman. Professor Harper was proposed by Miss Thornton and seconded by Professor Waller. There were no other nominations and Professor Harper was elected as Chairman unopposed.
- 1.2 The Chairman requested nominations for the position of Vice-Chairman. Miss Pearson was proposed by Miss Thornton and seconded by Ms Davis. There were no other nominations and Miss Pearson was elected as Vice-Chairman unopposed.

Action: NO'S

			2005-09-09	a	APV	APV
Approvals committee public minutes September 2005	Final DD: None	Public RD: None				

Item 2.05/52 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2.1 Apologies were received from Professor T Hazell and Mr M Woolcock.

Item 3.05/53 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

3.1 The Committee approved the Agenda.

Item 4.05/54 MINUTES OF THE APPROVALS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 17 MAY 2005

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

Item 11.3 - Annual Monitoring

The sentence "It was agreed that monitoring visits should take place biannually." should be deleted.

Item 5.05/55 MATTERS ARISING

5.1 Item 6.3 - Summary of amendments submitted by education providers

5.1.1 The Committee noted that its view had been that the HPC should not make a judgement on the number of retrievals students were allowed for each module of the programme, provided that the Standards of Proficiency were met. However, the Committee wished to have further information on the level of support.

5.2 Item 10.4 - Arts Therapy Programmes - PgDip and MA

5.2.1 The Committee agreed that it should be made clear that, once the MA programme had been approved by HPC, the PgDip would cease to be an entry qualification to the HPC register with effect from a specified year of graduation.

Item 6.05/56 ANNUAL MONITORING DRAFT PROCESS

6.1 The Committee received a report from the Executive for discussion/approval.

6.2 The Committee noted that the purpose of monitoring was to ensure that the HPC approved programmes continued to meet the Standards of Education and Training, thereby ensuring that graduates would meet the Standards of Proficiency. The proposed monitoring process had been detailed in the publication "Key decisions from our consultation on Standards of Education and Training and the Approvals Process".

Approvals committee public minutes September 2005	Final DD: None	Public RD: None	2005-09-09	a	APV	APV
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- 6.3 The Committee noted that it was proposed that the monitoring report would be normally considered by one Visitor. If the first Visitor was unsure, or if they considered that the programme had undergone a major change, the report would be sent to a second Visitor for consideration.
- 6.4 The Committee agreed that the draft monitoring form attached to the paper should be amended. The Committee felt that Section 2 (Student Intake and General Comments) was superfluous and should be merged with Section 4 (Details of the institution's internal quality report). The Committee agreed that the revised form should be used to provide a summary of changes and further detail could be provided in extant documents provided with the form (e.g. the external examiner's report and the internal quality review for the programme), if necessary supplemented by further documentation from the education provider. The Committee agreed that the revised form should be sent to members for their comments.

Action: NB

- 6.5 The Committee agreed that the monitoring cycle should take place over two years, with approximately 50% of institutions monitored in the first year and 50% in the second year. The Committee agreed that the schedule of institutions to be monitored in the first year should take into account those which had recently been approved by HPC and those which were scheduled for Major Review. The Committee agreed that HPC should notify all education providers accordingly. The Committee agreed that the HPC should emphasise that the monitoring process was evolving and would in future draw heavily on universities' existing documentation, removing the need for regular visits.

Action: MJS

- 6.6 The Committee noted that registration assessors had recently held a meeting to assess grandparenting applications from paramedics and this had produced more efficient, collaborative working. The Committee agreed that this approach should be considered for the preparation of visitors' reports.

Item 7.05/57 MAJOR AND MINOR CHANGES

- 7.1 The Committee received a report from the Executive for discussion/approval.
- 7.2 The Committee noted that, over the past 12 months, the Education Department had undertaken approvals visits to a range of institutions throughout the UK. This meant that a large number of programmes had been approved on an open-ended basis and thus moved into the monitoring process. In conjunction with monitoring, there was a process to recognise major changes which impacted on provision. The report included a draft process which had been designed to ensure that the tracking of cumulative

			2005-09-09	a	APV	APV
Approvals committee public minutes September 2005	Final DD: None	Public RD: None				

minor amendments and changes, as well as notification of major change, was complimentary with the approvals and monitoring processes.

7.3 The Committee noted that minor and major changes needed to be defined more clearly and felt that major changes should be defined as any changes which changed the means of satisfying the Standards of Education and Training and therefore the Standards of Proficiency.

7.4 The Committee agreed that, subject to internal operational review, legal advice and budget requirements:-

(i) the draft process attached to the paper was in accordance with the initial "Key decisions from our consultation on the Standards of Education and Training and the Approvals Process" and continued to meet the original aims and objectives of the HPC's major/minor change process;

(ii) the draft process was that to be used when determining major and minor changes to educational programmes approved by the HPC; and

(iii) that draft documentation was to be sent to two visitors.

Action: KS

Item 8.05/58 EDUCATION PROVIDERS' OBSERVATIONS ON VISITOR'S REPORTS

8.1 The Committee received a report from the Executive for discussion/approval.

8.2 The Committee noted that the visit to the MSc Speech and Language Therapy programme at the University of Essex had taken place on 13-14 June and that, due to the number of conditions in the report, the education provider had deferred commencement of the programme until January 2006.

8.3 The education provider had made observations on the conditions that there should be an action plan to cover the appointment of qualified and experienced staff, including staff with experience of delivering a SLT programme in higher education; that an identified person and procedure should be in place to facilitate access to, and security of, the clinical test resources; and that a subscription to the Patient Assessment Training System (PATSy) should be in place.

8.4 The Committee agreed that the Visitors' Report could not impose particular requirements for staff experience. Whilst the appointment of staff experienced in higher education was desirable, the condition could only state that the education provider should demonstrate how expertise would be made available to deliver and manage the programme and how members of

			2005-09-09	a	APV	APV
Approvals committee public minutes September 2005	Final DD: None	Public RD: None				

staff would be supported. The Committee agreed that the education provider should only be required to facilitate access to the clinical test resources and there should be no requirement for an identified person. The Committee agreed that the proposed subscription to PATSy (or a similar teaching tool, if available) should be a recommendation rather than a condition. The Committee agreed that the education provider and the Visitors should be notified of its decision.

Action: NB

- 8.5 The Committee noted that the visit to the BSc Physiotherapy programme at Coventry University had taken place on 9-13 June and that the education provider wished to commence the programme.
- 8.6 The education provider did not consider that conflicting or confusing information had been presented and felt that evidence had been provided during the Visit, but not necessarily in the documentation itself.
- 8.7 The Committee agreed that, if the Visitors felt that they had been presented with conflicting information, the Visitors' view should be accepted. The Committee agreed that, if part of a programme was provided under a partnership agreement on another site, delivery of that part should be properly documented. The Committee agreed with the Visitors' view that documentary evidence was required to meet the conditions and felt that such evidence was needed to establish an audit trail and for future reference. The Committee agreed that the education provider and the Visitors should be notified of its decision. Once the documentary evidence was produced it would be sent to a third party to review.

Action: NB

- 8.8 The Committee noted that article 16(12) of the Health Professions Order 2001 required that the Council should publish the reports together with, on the request of the institution concerned, the response of the institution to the report. It was agreed that Mr Jonathan Bracken, HPC's solicitor at Bircham Dyson Bell, should be invited to a meeting of the Education and Training Committee to offer advice about the HPC's legal obligations.

Action: MJS

- 8.9 The Committee commended staff in the Education Department for their work on approvals to date. The Committee agreed that a short questionnaire should be sent to all education providers and Visitors, asking them for their opinion on the quality of communication and guidance from HPC and whether they had any suggestions for improvements to the approvals process. It was agreed that the draft questionnaire should be presented to the next meeting of the Committee.

			2005-09-09	a	APV	APV
Approvals committee public minutes September 2005	Final DD: None	Public RD: None				

Action: Education Department

- 8.10 The Committee agreed that the Education Department should carry out an analysis of Visitors' reports, to identify any recurrent issues in individual disciplines and institutions and to identify possible criteria for a re-visit.

Action: Education Department

- 8.11 The Committee noted that the Executive was developing an electronic newsletter on the HPC's work, which could include information about the work of the Education Department. The Committee noted that the Executive intended to introduce a series of roadshow events which would visit education providers.

The Committee agreed to note the following items:-

Item 9.05/59 APPROVALS COMMITTEE STANDING ORDERS

Item 10.05/60 SCHEME OF DELEGATION

Item 11.05/61 REPORT OF MAJOR AND MINOR AMENDMENTS

Item 12.05/62 FORWARD PROGRAMME OF APPROVALS VISITS

Item 13.05/63 VISITORS TRAINING AND GUIDANCE

Item 14.05/64 VISITORS RECRUITMENT UPDATE

- 14.1 The Committee received a paper to note from the Executive.
- 14.2 The Committee noted that seven Arts Therapists, eight ODPs, 14 Paramedics and eight Biomedical Scientists had been identified as prospective Registrant Partners to fulfil the role of Visitor. Details of the appointees would be submitted to the Council meeting on 13 September for ratification.
- 14.3 The Committee noted that concern had been expressed at a recent biomedical science conference that unregistered biomedical scientists were not being utilised as Visitors. The Committee noted that unregistered professionals could be recruited as lay visitors, although lay visitors had a different role.

Action: LM

			2005-09-09	a	APV	APV
Approvals committee public minutes September 2005	Final DD: None	Public RD: None				

Item 15.05/65 PROGRAMME APPROVALS: CHAIRMAN'S ACTION

- 15.1 The Committee received a paper to note from the Executive.
- 15.2 The Committee noted details of programmes which had been approved by the Chairman of the Education and Training Committee.
- 15.3 The Committee noted that programme titles only needed to make a distinction between pre-registration and post-registration programmes when an education provider offered both types of programme. The Committee noted that it was intended that the issue of post-registration training and qualifications would be considered by the Council at its meeting on 5 October.

Item 16.05/66 VISITORS REPORTS

- 16.1 The Committee received a paper to note from the Executive.
- 16.2 The Committee noted the visitors' reports for programmes which had been approved by the Chairman of the Education and Training Committee and the reports for programmes which were currently meeting conditions set by HPC.

Item 17.05/67 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 17.1 The Committee noted that education providers could advertise programmes which had not yet been approved by the HPC, but the HPC had advised that this was at the provider's risk. Any such advertising should make it clear that the programme was subject to approval by HPC.

Item 18.05/68 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

- 18.1 The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 22 November 2005 at 11.00 a.m.

CHAIRMAN

Approvals committee public minutes September 2005	Final DD: None	Public RD: None	2005-09-09	a	APV	APV
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