

THE HEALTH PROFESSIONS COUNCIL

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PROFESSIONAL LIAISON GROUP FOR STANDARDS OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING: GUIDANCE FOR EDUCATION PROVIDERS

MINUTES of the first meeting of the Professional Liaison Group for Standards of Education and Training: Guidance for Education Providers held at **11 a.m. on Friday 11 March 2005** at Park House, 184 Kennington Park Road, London, SE11 4BU.

PRESENT:

Miss E Thornton (Chairman)
 Ms H Davis
 Ms C Farrell
 Professor C Lloyd
 Miss G Pearson
 Mr G Sutehall
 Dr A van der Gaag
 Professor D Waller
 Mr D Whitmore

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr C Bendall, Secretary to the PLG for Standards of Education and Training: Guidance for Education Providers
 Ms R Tripp, Policy Manager
 Ms S Woolf, Education Manager

Item 1.05/1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Dr G Beastall, Mr A Mount, Mr N Willis (Mr Sutehall attending) and Miss P Sabine. Professor R Klem had regrettably withdrawn from the group due to work commitments.

Item 2.05/2 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- 2.1 The Group approved the agenda.

Item 3.05/3 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 The Chairman welcomed all members to the first meeting of the Group.
- 3.2 She explained that it was intended that the Group would look at issues arising out of the approvals process. The HPC had drafted Visitors' guidance and had also drafted the Approvals Handbook. The Group's work would need to relate to both of these documents.

Item 4.05/5 OUR COMMITMENTS

- 4.1 The Professional Liaison Group received a paper for discussion from the Policy Manager.
- 4.2 The Policy Manager explained that the HPC, in the document "Key Decisions from our Consultation on Standards of Education and Training and the Approvals Process", had made a number of commitments about the further guidance and information which the HPC would publish. These included making it easy for readers to cross-refer between the HPC's guidance to education providers and the Standards of Education and Training; providing further detail on issues including admissions assessment, programme management, resource standards and curriculum standards; further guidance on detailed issues such as responsibility for maintaining and monitoring standards; and further detail on the approvals process. It was thought that the guidance would be reviewed every three years.
- 4.3 The Group noted felt that the term "curriculum guidance" could lead to misunderstandings about the HPC's objectives. The Group noted that professional bodies had a long-standing record of contributing to the development of curricula. As the Group's role extended beyond curriculum guidance, it was decided that it should be re-named as the Professional Liaison Group for Standards of Education and Training: Guidance for Education Providers.
- 4.4 In discussion, the Group felt that it should not be responsible for providing further detail on the approvals process, which would be addressed in a separate document. The Group noted that the Standards of Proficiency included some material on Standards of Education and Training. The guidance prepared by the Group would need to fit within, and make cross references to, the existing framework of documentation issued by the HPC, professional bodies and the Quality Assurance Agency.

- 4.5 The Group requested clarification on the process which had been used to develop the draft Visitors' handbook. The Chairman explained that the document had gone through a development process, including a Visitors' training day and workshop groups. A total of approximately 150 Visitors had used the draft handbook across courses for most, but not all of, the professions, as visits had been prioritised for those professions where courses needed to be inspected urgently.
- 4.6 A member asked if there was anything in the Health Professions Order which prevented the HPC from providing this kind of guidance. The Policy Manager explained that, under the Order, the HPC could establish standards and give guidance.

Item 5.05/5 COMPARISON OF EXISTING DOCUMENTATION

- 5.1 The Professional Liaison Group received a paper for discussion from the Policy Manager.
- 5.2 The Policy Manager explained that in the summer of 2004, Helen Best, an HPC Visitor, had compiled a summary of existing documentation which was currently used or had been used for programme approvals. Documentation had not been located for courses for biomedical scientists, chiropody or speech and language therapy. Some documents addressed Standards of Proficiency and Standards of Education and Training. Large professions such as occupational therapy, physiotherapy and radiography took a similar approach and covered issues such as accommodation, resourcing, curriculum issues, and staff/student ratios.
- 5.3 In discussion, the Group agreed that the professional bodies should be asked to indicate how their existing documentation related to the Standards of Education and Training. It was intended that, eventually, the HPC's guidance would indicate that further information could be found in documentation prepared by the professional bodies, rather than attempting to substitute new information prepared by the HPC. The Group felt that it was important that professional bodies were reassured that the HPC recognised the value of their work and acknowledged the difference between the role of a regulator and the role of a professional body.

Item 6.05/6 EXISTING DOCUMENTATION

- 6.1 In discussion, members made reference to documentation which existed for speech and language therapists and radiographers. It was noted that biomedical scientists had very thorough clinical training for each modality. The Group noted that the Orthoptists' professional body was considering the issue of curriculum guidance and curriculum guidance for paramedic courses was being prepared by the profession. It was expected that this would be issued for consultation in April.

- 6.2 The Group felt that it would be useful to ask the professional bodies to complete a standard table to indicate how their existing documentation addressed different requirements. The Group agreed that the request for information should be carefully communicated to the professional bodies, to ensure that the HPC made clear that it respected existing documents and hoped to draw professional bodies into the discussion.

Action: RT

- 6.3 It was noted that professional bodies were the guardian of a body of knowledge which was then distributed to education providers. The Group felt that it was desirable for HPC guidance to providers to make general statements and refer stakeholders to documents which had been issued by the professional bodies. The HPC should not seek to be prescriptive, e.g. it should not seek to impose requirements for time spent on courses or staff/student ratios.

Item 7.05/7 PARAMETERS OF THE PLG'S WORK

- 7.1 The Chairman summarised the discussion – the Group would produce guidance on Standards of Education and Training for education providers, but this guidance should refer to existing documentation prepared by the HPC and publications issued by the professional bodies.
- 7.2 In addition, the HPC should not take a prescriptive role and it would be more appropriate for the professional bodies to continue their role of encouraging development and innovation in courses.

Item 8.05/8 PLANNING FOR THE MEETING ON 24TH MARCH 2005

- 8.1 The Chairman invited the Group to discuss how the day should be organised and the objectives. It was agreed that there should be a series of small discussion groups which would compare the Standards of Education and Training with existing documentation. The groups would each make a presentation, indicating how the documentation met the Standards and how the guidance issued in the Standards needed to be revised.
- 8.2 The Group noted that the HPC should aim to produce guidance to education providers before the end of the current academic year. It was suggested that once the guidance had been drafted, it could initially be circulated to the professional bodies who were invited to the meeting on 24th March, prior to a wider round of consultation. It was agreed that a timetable for progress by the HPC should be made available to attendees at the meeting. The professional bodies would attend from 10.30am to 2.30pm, with a meeting of the Group until 3.30pm to

discuss the responses made. It was hoped that the Group could complete its work after a third meeting (date and venue to be arranged).

- 8.3 In preparation for the next meeting, the Group felt that it would be helpful for members to see the draft version of the Approvals Handbook and the draft version of the Visitors Guidance for Approvals. It was agreed that copies would be circulated to members.

Action: CB

Item 9.05/9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 9.1 There was no other business.

Item 10.05/10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 10.1 The next meeting would be held on Thursday 24 March 2005 at 10.30am, with professional bodies contributing until 2.30pm and discussion by the Group until 3.30pm. The venue would be identified shortly.