

**Health Professions Council
Approvals Committee – 2 March 2006**

SET 1: LEVEL OF QUALIFICATION FOR ENTRY TO THE REGISTER

Executive Summary and Recommendations

Introduction

The Standards of Education and Training clearly outlines in *SET 1: Level of qualification for entry to the Register*, the normal threshold entry route to the Register for each profession. This allows HPC to consider any programme for approval which is above the normal threshold level detailed in SET 1 for eligibility to apply for registration with HPC.

Over the last eighteen months, HPC have approved a number of programmes which are clearly above the normal threshold entry route outlined in SET 1. For example;

- HPC have approved a Bachelor degree with honours (including the exit awards of Foundation degree and Diploma of Higher Education) for paramedics, where the normal threshold entry is the equivalent to a Certificate of Higher Education.
- HPC have approved a number of Postgraduate Diplomas and Masters degrees in occupational therapy, where the normal threshold entry is a Bachelor degree with honours.

In all these cases, the Visitors have been confident that the Standards of Proficiency can be met on completion of each programme.

At a recent Approvals visit, HPC was asked to consider a Postgraduate Diploma and a Masters degree in dietetics, where the normal threshold entry for dietetics is a Bachelor degree with honours. During the visit, concern was raised by the Visitor(s) about the appropriateness of approving the Masters programme, when all the Standards of Proficiency were clearly met within the Postgraduate Diploma. The Visitors felt that the additional elements of study (research & dissertation) 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.

To ensure consistency in the approval of programmes across and within professions and education providers, as well as clarity in the qualifications published on the Register of approved courses, there is a need to clarify that all programmes which meet the Standards of Proficiency should be considered for approval.

Education provider and students normally consider awards such as postgraduate diplomas and masters as a combined programme, with multiple exits points. It is important that applicants and/or students are not disadvantaged or influenced in their choice of final award by the appearance (of lack of) on the Register of approved courses. It is practical and sensible to consider programmes together at the same

Approvals visit and essential that a complete list of specific awards is included in the Register of approved courses.

Decision

The Committee is asked to **agree** the following;

- HPC should approve all programmes that contain the Standards of Proficiency, irrespective of the level of the final qualification award. The difference between the normal threshold entry route outlined in SET 1 and the final level of qualification is of no consequence if the Standards of Proficiency have been met.

Background information

Item 10 – Approval Committee – 17 May 2005

Resource implications

None

Financial implications

None

Appendices

None

Date of paper

14 February 2006