

unconfirmed

THE HEALTH PROFESSIONS COUNCIL

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MINUTES of the eleventh meeting of the Approvals Committee held on **Wednesday 17 May 2006** at Park House, 184 Kennington Park Road, London, SE11 4BU.

PRESENT: Professor J Harper (Chairman)
Mrs S Chaudhry
Ms H Davis
Miss G Pearson
Professor D Waller
Mr M Woolcock

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr O Ammar, Team Administrator, Education - Approvals and Monitoring Department
Mr C Bendall, Secretary to the Committee
Ms N Borg, Education Officer
Ms A Creighton, Education Manager
Mr G Ross-Sampson, Director of Operations

Item 1.06/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Professor T Hazell, Professor J Lucas, Mr A Mount, Miss E Thornton and Ms A Turner.

Item 2.06/22 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- 2.1 The Committee approved the agenda, subject to the inclusion of the following items under Any Other Business:-
- (i) Progress report on annual monitoring assessment days;
 - (ii) Impact of conditions in Visitors' Reports on other programmes and education provider;
 - (iii) Impact of industrial action in higher education on approved programmes.

Item 3.06/23 MINUTES OF THE APPROVALS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 2 MARCH 2006

- 3.1 It was agreed that the minutes of the tenth meeting of the Approvals Committee should be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

Item 4.06/24 MATTERS ARISING

- 4.1 The Committee received a paper to note from the Executive.
- 4.2 The Committee noted the actions list as agreed at the last meeting.
- 4.3 The Committee noted that its members could observe the annual monitoring assessment days in May and June.

Item 5.06/25 EDUCATION MANAGER REPORT

- 5.1 The Committee received a report on the work of the Education - Approvals and Monitoring Department.
- 5.2 The Committee noted that the Department was now in its peak period for approval visits. The Committee noted that a further four visits had been postponed by education providers. The Committee noted that the Executive would monitor whether there were any patterns in the postponement of visits.
- 5.3 The Committee noted that the standard submission date for the year's annual monitoring process had been 31 March. The Department had received the majority of submissions from education providers and was in the process of following up the outstanding submissions.

Item 6.06/26 EXTERNAL EXAMINERS FOR SUPPLEMENTARY PRESCRIBING PROGRAMMES

- 6.1 The Committee received a paper for discussion/approval from the Executive.
- 6.2 The Committee noted that, at its last meeting, it had been reported that education providers had experienced difficulties in meeting Standard of Education and Training (SET) 6.7.5, which required that there should be at least one external examiner from the relevant part of the HPC's Register. Education providers running supplementary prescribing programmes had found it difficult to recruit examiners to represent each of the professions in the student cohort. The Committee had felt that it would be appropriate to ensure that the external examiner was a registered professional (not necessarily registered with the HPC) with an academic background which was acceptable to the education provider.
- 6.3 The Committee noted that, following the preparation of the paper, the HPC's Solicitor and Parliamentary Agent had advised that it would not be possible for the HPC to accept an appropriately qualified and registered health professional (who was not registered with the HPC) as the external examiner. This was because the HPC was not involved in the maintenance of other regulators' registers.

- 6.4 The Committee agreed that, in order to protect the public, external examiners should have experience in supplementary prescribing. The Committee noted that it was likely that the HPC's Register did not include sufficient numbers of registrants with the necessary experience. As a result, education providers would be able to meet the SET by appointing an external examiner from the relevant part of the Register, but there was no guarantee that the chosen individual would have the relevant experience in supplementary prescribing. In this instance, the Committee felt that it was more important in terms of protecting the public that the appointed external examiner had relevant experience in supplementary prescribing than meeting the SET and having profession experience only.
- 6.5 The Committee noted that the Executive intended to prepare a consultation document on SET 6.7.5, proposing that it should be amended to require that examiners were "appropriately qualified and experienced". The Committee noted that, as a minimum, it would take several months to implement an amendment to the standard.
- 6.6 The Committee agreed that the Executive should reflect on how to proceed and agreed that, in light of the need to resolve the situation, a resolution could be circulated electronically to members for approval prior to the next meeting of the Committee.

Action: GR-S/AC/CB (by 1 June 2006)

Item 7.06/27 ARRANGEMENTS FOR APPROVALS PANEL MEETINGS

- 7.1 The Committee received a paper for discussion/approval from the Executive.
- 7.2 The Committee agreed that the arrangements for Approvals Panel meetings should be reviewed by the Committee at its meeting on 2 November 2006. The Committee agreed that the Executive should prepare a paper for that meeting, reviewing the experience of operating the Panels during 2006, setting out the corporate governance implications of any changes to the arrangements and the commitments which the HPC has made in respect of the Approvals Committee's role.

Action: CB (by 2 November 2006)

Item 8.06/28 ANNUAL REVIEW OF ACTIONS TAKEN FROM 11 JULY 2005 - 7 JULY 2006

- 8.1 The Committee received a paper to note from the Executive.
- 8.2 The Committee noted the actions that had been taken in the period 11 July 2005 - 7 July 2006.

Item 9.06/29 APPROVALS COMMITTEE STANDING ORDERS

- 9.1 The Committee received a paper to note from the Executive.
- 9.2 The Committee noted that, at its meeting on 2 March, it had asked the Executive to reflect on the provision in the Standing Orders that meetings should not proceed if a quorum was not present within 15 minutes of the start time of the meeting.
- 9.3 The Committee noted that the Standing Orders provided that a standing order could be suspended with the consent of the Committee and that there was a similar provision in the Standing Orders of the HPC's other Committees.

Item 10.06/30 MINUTES OF THE APPROVALS PANEL HELD ON 2 MARCH 2006

- 10.1 The Committee received the minutes of the Approvals Panel held on 2 March 2006.

Item 11.06/31 UNCONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE APPROVALS PANEL HELD ON 6 APRIL 2006

- 11.1 The Committee received the unconfirmed minutes of the Approvals Panel held on 6 April 2006.
- 11.2 The Committee noted that Panel members were asked to electronically confirm that minutes of Panel meetings were accurate and those confirmations were reported to the next Panel meeting.

Item 12.05/32 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 12.1 The Committee noted that three annual monitoring assessment days had been held to date, each attended by 16 Visitors from a mixture of professions. The Committee noted that the days had been successful and had enabled Visitors to compare programmes across the professions. The Committee noted that the Executive intended to revise the annual monitoring process and operational procedures in the light of experience of operating the process and feedback from the assessment days.
- 12.2 The Committee noted that conditions imposed in individual programmes could have implications for other approved programmes, either at the same education provider or across providers and professions. The Committee agreed that the template for the Visitors' report should be amended to ask Visitors to indicate whether conditions had implications for other programmes. The Committee agreed that the Executive should then seek a response from the relevant education provider(s) and, once the response was received, the issue should be considered by an

Approvals Panel. The Approvals Panel could instruct the Executive on how to proceed or could refer the issue to a full meeting of the Approvals Committee.

Action: AC (Ongoing)

- 12.3 The Committee noted that members of several trade unions in higher education were currently taking industrial action, which included refusing to set or mark examination papers. The Committee agreed that the Executive should write to all education providers running approved programmes, requesting confirmation that students would still be assessed against the HPC's Standards of Proficiency.

Action: AC (by 1 June 2006)

- 12.4 The Committee agreed that there was no need to go into private session to consider the minutes of the private part of the tenth meeting of the Approvals Committee held on 2 March. The Committee agreed that the minutes should be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendment:

The list of members present should be amended to remove Mr Woolcock's name, as he had given his apologies for absence.

- 12.5 The Chairman thanked the Executive for their work and for preparing the Committee papers to a high standard.

Item 13.06/33 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

- 13.1 The next meeting of the Committee would be held on Tuesday 5 September 2006 at 11.00 am.
- 13.2 Subsequent meetings of the Committee would be held at 11.00 am on:
- Thursday 2 November 2006
- Thursday 8 March 2007
- Wednesday 9 May 2007

CHAIRMAN

DATE