

- Development and update of standards
- Record the Committee's thanks to the Validation Officer for her hard work and commitment.

13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**13.1 QAA/DH Prototype reviews**

Mrs Heames reported that the prototype reviews have now finished and the steering group would be meeting in November. The institutional evaluations were now awaited.

14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

14.1 It was AGREED to move the November meeting to the following week as the date clashed with the meeting of the ETC.

14.2 Noting that the next meeting would receive the final version of the standards document and the annual course monitoring reports, it was AGREED to hold the meeting for 1½ days on 3rd and 4th December to ensure that the document and reports receive full consideration. Venues outside London should also be considered.

14.3 It was AGREED that alternates to regular members be invited to attend future meetings to share the workload and ensure that the views of all members were received.

There being no further business, the Chair thanked members for their valuable contribution to the discussions and for their efforts to attend the meeting despite difficulties with transport due to industrial action by London Underground. The meeting was closed at 5.45pm

28 October 2002

DIETITIANS

PRE-REGISTRATION EDUCATION AND TRAINING WORKING GROUP

CATEGORIES OF APPROVAL & CONTINUED APPROVAL

1. Approval of New Courses under Section 4(1)(a) and (b) and Institutions under Section 4(1)(c) of the PSM Act 1960

(By the Privy Council, forwarded from the Council on the recommendation of the ETC acting on the advice of a subordinate body)

Name of Profession	Dietitians
Title of Course	MSc/Postgraduate Diploma in Dietetics
Type of Course	Full-time in Higher Education
Institution delivering the course	Chester College of Higher Education
Qualification(s) to be approved for State Registration	MSc/Postgraduate Diploma in Dietetics
Awarding Body	University of Liverpool
Length of Course	Two years
With effect from	September 2002
Date of Section 4 Visit	10 July 2002
Participants in the approval process	HPC Chester College of Higher Education University of Liverpool (The British Dietetic Association, the professional association, does not participate in the approval procedure of pre-registration courses)
Outstanding Conditions	Clarification of documentation - done Appointment of external examiners - done Refurbishment of accommodation and installation of new equipment - in hand Rectify inadequate library provision - done

Recommendation for Approval supported by: Course Documents A visitors report (or equivalent) Record of peer professional discussion and agreement to the recommendation	Submitted Visitors' report (attached) Minutes of DT PRETWG 27 May 2002 and 4 October 2002
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2. Approval of Clinical Practice Placements under Section 4(1)(c) of the PSM Act 1960

Name of Institution	
Address of Institution	
Recommendation for Approval supported by: A visitors report (or equivalent) Record of peer professional discussion and agreement to the recommendation	

3. Continued approval of a Clinical Practice Placement or Laboratory under S5

Name of Institution	
Address of Institution	
Recommendation for Approval supported by: A visitors report (or equivalent) Record of peer professional discussion and agreement to the recommendation	

HEALTH PROFESSIONS COUNCIL

Education and Training Committee

Report of visitors appointed by the Council under the transitional powers of the Education and Training Committee to Chester College of Higher Education.

Date of Visit: 10 July 2002

Visitors: Dr Susan Jebb (Convenor), Miss Morag MacKellar and Dr Jacki Bishop accompanied by Mr. Dugald MacInnes.

1 Introduction

1.1 The Health Professions Council (HPC) came into existence on 1 April 2002 as a result of the passing of the Health Profession Order 2001. The HPC replaced the Dietitians Board as the statutory regulatory body for Dietitians, but, until the Privy Council agrees the HPC's own procedures, rules and regulations in 2003 the HPC is perforce obliged to use the procedures of the former Board under the terms of the Professions Supplementary to Medicine Act 1960. The visit, therefore was undertaken by the HPC under Section 4 of the Professions Supplementary to Medicine Act 1960.

1.2 The Professions Supplementary to Medicine Act 1960

1.2.i It was the statutory responsibility of the former Dietitians Board, under Section 4 of the Act, to approve courses of training and qualifications and the institutions offering courses, or parts of courses, leading to state registration. It was also the duty of the Board, under Section 5 of the Act, to keep itself informed as to the nature of the instruction given at approved institutions to persons attending approved courses of training. It was the duty of the Board's appointed visitors to report to the Board as to the sufficiency of the instruction given to persons attending approved courses of training.

1.2.ii Under the transitional arrangements this report will be submitted to the Education and Training Committee of the HPC. The purpose of the visit was to explore learning outcomes and course delivery; confirm that the course would be delivered as per the initial approval as contained in the course document and to ensure that Chester College was properly equipped and resourced to deliver the course and maintain the standards required by the Board.

1.2.iii At its meeting on 7 February 2002 the Education Committee of the then Board had considered a submission from Chester College concerning its provision of a course leading to the award of a Pg Diploma/MSc Nutrition and Dietetics. Subsequently the Assistant Registrar wrote to the College seeking clarification of a number of issues which the Committee had identified as requiring clarification and following a reply from the

College the Dietitians pre registration education and training working group, at its meeting on 27 May 2002 resolved to approve the new course at the College for a period of five years, subject to notification of any changes in the dietetic staffing complement which may affect the concurrent course approval that up to twenty-four students may be recruited for the course.

1.2.iv The working group also noted that formal institutional approval of Chester College of Higher Education would be considered following the visit under Section 4(1)(C) of the Professions Supplementary to Medicine Act 1960.

2 Report of the Visit.

2.1 Meeting with Senior Management

2.1.i The visitors first met

Professor Tim Wheeler	Principal of the College;
Professor Sarah Andrew	Head of Biological Sciences and Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Science and Health;
Dr Fred Pender	Director of Dietetics
Mr David Stevens	College Bursar

2.1.ii The Convenor began by thanking the College for the impressive and professional documentation which the College had submitted prior to the visit. The visit itself provided the opportunity to look further and discuss in a supportive way the practical delivery of the course and the place of dietetics within the College.

2.1.ii The Principal responded that the College had made a deliberate and conscious choice to offer the course in preference to other courses which had been considered. The dietetics course would dovetail with the ethos of the College which already had a background of close working relationships with the NHS. In making the decision the College had evaluated, and committed itself to, the resource implications involved. At present the course would be located within the Department of Biological Sciences which would provide the necessary academic support but the ultimate aim would be to establish a freestanding Department of Dietetics and Nutrition within the next two and a half years. The College would be providing a budget of £200K for refurbishment to provide 4000 square metres of new space by the Summer of 2003 to develop the existing physical resources including laboratories.

2.1.iii He informed the visitors of the College's commitment to proactive academic research and the need to develop a research culture based on high standards. This would underpin the College's recruitment programme. In this context the College's relationship with the University of Liverpool and its Medical School had been, and would continue to be, extremely valuable.

2.1.iv Within the College itself the course would be able to draw on the expertise available within other departments, for example the Master's programme in Health Promotion and Psychotherapy as well as the existing MSc in Cognitive and Behavioural Therapy.

2.1.v The visitors were also satisfied following the response from Senior management that the College's recruitment procedures met HPC's requirements in regard to vetting of criminal records, the College had a pre-existing model within the School of Nursing for example. Dedicated administrative and technical support would also be available to the course but this would continue to be monitored in the light of any further needs which might materialise.

3 Meeting with Course Team

3.1.i The visitors separately met the following members of the teaching staff:-

Professor Sarah Andrew	Head of Biological Sciences, Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Science and Health;
Ms Claire Wright	Programme Leader, Senior Lecturer SRD;
Mrs Mary Cotterell	Programme Leader, BSc Food, Nutrition and Health
Ms Lesley Coates	Director of Therapy Services, SRD, Countess of Chester Hospital;
Dr Peter Cox	Senior Lecturer Sociology;
Dr Stephen Fallows	Senior Lecturer/Research Co-ordinator;
Ms Shirley Judd	Curriculum Development Officer/SRD;
Ms Penny Lamont	Programme Leader Food Technology, Reaseheath College;
Dr Paul Lattimore	Senior Lecturer, Psychology;
Dr Ian McDowall	Senior Lecturer, Biochemistry and Genetics;
Dr Fred Pender	Director of Dietetics, SRD;
Dr Kevin Sykes	Director of Centre for Exercise and Nutrition Science;
Professor Paul Trayhurn	University of Liverpool, Neuroendocrine and Obesity Biology Unit
Professor John Williams	Deputy Head of Biological Sciences, Professor of Applied Biochemistry.

3.1.ii The staff began by informing the visitors that they were keen to foster a research and multidisciplinary approach to the course where students would be encouraged to critically appraise the evidence underpinning dietetic practice. The College was fortunate that the course had been oversubscribed with applicants and they had sought to recruit students with a first degree in a highly relevant subject. At interview students were required to give a five minute presentation and final selection was based on an objective scoring method.

3.1.iii The staff expressed their commitment to fostering links with the associated professions locally, and to developing the College's links with the University of Liverpool. In this connection students already had full borrowing rights at the main University library in Liverpool, which was supplemented by a weekly minibus delivery of material as required. It was intended to involve regional dietitians and specialists fully in the delivery of the course. College staff network with dietitians from the region via attendance at Clinical Trainers meetings and a newsletter, which is sent to all dietetic departments in the North West every two months to keep them informed regarding the progress of the dietetic programmes at Chester.

3.1.iv The staff informed the visitors of the monitoring procedures that would be in place to review the progress of the course which would involve regular meetings and reports. For example the staff student liaison committee would meet three times a year. The College required an annual report on the course in March which had to address a set of headings laid down in the Quality Assurance procedures. In addition an interim post-graduate report had to be submitted every November which went first to the Head of Department, then to the Board of Studies and finally to an academic committee which would also consider any resource implications arising from the report. The Minutes of these meetings went to the Academic Board which consisted of 32 senior members of the College.

3.1.v Discussion then turned to the establishment of the course. The staff acknowledged that the time scale had been difficult and that there would be "teething problems", but the incoming cohort had been warned of these. The visitors were concerned at the lack of time available for the detailed preparation of the teaching materials etc. The Course team expressed their confidence that they would be able to deliver the planned course and felt that they were able to draw on their experience of developing new courses elsewhere in the College and had benefited from the rigours of subject review and the encouragement for staff development. Although this is a new course a number of important aspects are already in place. For example, student support services are well established within the College, including pastoral care for mature students.

3.1.vi The staff believed that the provision for teaching accommodation for the first cohort of 24 students, while not ideal, would be adequate assuming that the relocation of certain laboratories was completed over the summer period. It was recognised that their own office accommodation was at present unsatisfactory, but that this would not be fully resolved until the new building programme outlined by the College was complete.

3.1.vii Students would be provided with a personal academic tutor to meet their individual learning needs. In addition a "link tutor" was to be appointed to monitor academic progress to prepare the students for placement and to ensure students aspirations were being met and that the course satisfied the NHS Confederation requirements. The visitors requested clarification of the role of personal tutors and the link tutor with respect to the supervision of the students personal professional portfolios, since recent experience suggests this can prove to be a significant burden.

3.1.viii The placement process had been rigorously reviewed. 'A' placements would be visited only if necessary, but all students would be visited in 'B' and 'C' placements. The staff believed that trainers had been prepared for what was expected of them and that they had been given practical and realistic information as part of that process. In developing the course the College had welcomed the positive links with such external sources which had been developed.

3.1.ix Turning to the research element, students would be counselled as to their suitability for conducting an MSc and provided with a wide range of subjects for their dissertations which would be the subject of joint discussions between staff and students drawing on the experience of both College staff and regional dietetic departments. It was anticipated that some projects would be linked to staff in relevant disciplines in other departments of the College, to expand the diversity of projects and constrain the work load on dietetic staff. It was noted that as part of this process each member of staff would have their workload continuously reviewed to ensure that adequate support was available.

3.1.x The staff informed the visitors of their intention to provide additional support for students undertaking research projects through established University schemes. Such projects would be carefully monitored. All relevant research projects will be submitted to the Local Research Ethics Committee.

3.1.xi Prior to the visit the Dietitians Board had been concerned about the College's approach to Compensation regulations and mitigating circumstances in relation to satisfactory completion of the course. The visitors took the opportunity to raise this and were informed that awards were based on 50% course work and 50% examination. Students were required to pass both components and the College assured the visitors that HPC requirements would be met in relation to this issue. The visitors were referred to page 66 of the College's validation Document which states that:-

(i) if (the) work is classed as a fail the student will normally be allowed reassessment on one occasion only. Reassessment will normally be by resubmission of coursework assignments and examination.

(ii) it is College policy not to permit such practices in programmes of a professional nature leading to State Registration. Mitigating circumstances where appropriate may be considered through the normal channels but would never lead to State Registration.

The visitors believed that the above wording still needed absolute clarification and return to the subject in the requirements of this report.

3.1.xii The visitors were informed that the appointment of an external examiner in relation to clinical studies was almost complete, but the appointment in relation to nutrition had yet to be resolved. Again the visitors return to this in the requirements of this report.

4 Tour of Premises.

4.1 The visitors were very grateful to Dr. Sykes, Ms. Wright, Professor Andrew and Dr. Pender for showing them round the College campus which is situated on a pleasant 30 acre site just a short distance from Chester City centre. They would also like to record their thanks to Carlyn Haresign, Librarian and Brian Fitzpatrick, IT officer for joining them on the relevant parts of their tour.

4.2. The visitors were impressed by the Chester College campus and the generic facilities available to students including sports and leisure provision. They noted that induction courses were available for students in both the use of the Library and IT equipment and that support was also available for dyslexic students. At a ratio of 10 students per PC, access to computing facilities was generally good. However they were concerned about the cramped conditions and extensive refurbishment which needs to be done to meet the specific requirements of the dietetics course, especially in the laboratories. Also, that essential equipment, including cooking facilities had not yet been installed. Similarly, although the library facilities seemed adequate overall, with good access arrangements and student support services, the visitors did not consider the range of journals relating specifically to nutrition and dietetics to be of sufficient depth or breadth to support the delivery of the course to the standard required for registration. Urgent consideration is also needed in relation to books, although the visitors were pleased to hear that an appropriate budget had been set aside for this purpose.

5 Conclusion

5.1 The visitors conclude by recording their impression of a thoroughly positive visit. The College's commitment to the course had been evident but both they and the visitors were aware that this was not the end of the process but the beginning. As with any new courses the first year would require careful monitoring particularly to ensure that the resources provided across the board were sufficient and adequate to ensure that it did get "up and running."

5.2 The visitors accordingly suggest to the Education and Training Committee the following requirements and recommendations.

5.3 Requirements.

5.3.i The College must satisfy to the Council and clarify within the documentation that its compensation provisions for the conferment of awards unambiguously meet Council's requirements.

5.3.ii The College inform the Council of the appointment of external examiners within the timescale for them to undertake their duties.