
Education and Training Committee – 8 March 2012

Fees associated with undertaking overseas approval visits

Executive summary and recommendations

Introduction

In March 2008 Committee agreed that Article 15(6) of the HPC Order 2001 could be used to approve programmes delivered outside of the UK, where all or part of the programme is actually run by an approved UK institution. Article 15(6) reads as follows;

“In connection with paragraph (5), the Committee may approve or arrange with others to approve a course of education or training run outside of the United Kingdom by an institution to which paragraph 5(c) applies.”

Since March 2008, the Education Department has received a small number of requests to visit programmes delivered outside of the UK. The Department has reviewed all these requests following the processes implemented after the Committee’s decision and the Department has recently undertaken its first approval visit to a programme delivered outside of the UK. During the organisation of this visit, it was found that the costs associated with travel, accommodation, subsistence and visitors’ fees were higher than the normal costs associated with undertaking a two day visit within the UK.

There are no powers within the HPC Order 2001 to charge for a visit whether the visit is inside or outside of the UK. However, it was recognised that if more requests are received which meet the established criteria and allow a programme to seek approval; there may be a significant impact on future Education Department budgets. To ensure that the Department is prepared for this possibility, it was important to seek legal advice during the organisation of this first visit in relation to the costs.

The legal advice stated that while HPC was liable to incur additional expense as a result of conducting a visit outside of the UK, any costs recovered from the education provider had to be proportionate. It was therefore recommended that the Department discuss this with the education provider before the visit and seek to recover the following costs, on an ‘at-cost’ basis:

- all travel costs for the HPC Panel (in line with the partners and employee expenses policies);
- all accommodation costs for the HPC Panel (in line with the partners and employee expenses policies);
- any additional HPC visitor fees and subsistence costs incurred as a result of extending the visit beyond the normal two day visit programme (in line with the partners expenses policy);

- any additional employee subsistence costs incurred as a result of extending the visit beyond the normal two day visit programme (in line with the employee expenses policy); and
- any additional carer costs for the HPC Panel incurred as a result of extending the visit beyond the normal two day visit programme (in line with the partners and employee expenses policies).

The Education Department should seek to recover costs from the education provider in all cases where the visit has taken place irrespective of the outcome of the visit. The Department should also seek to recover costs when the education provider cancels the visit with insufficient notice in order for HPC to cancel and recover the costs associated with travel and accommodation or reduce the visitors' fees in line with the partner expenses policy.

Following pre-visit discussions, the Education Department should contact the education provider one month after the actual visit to seek to recover the costs outlined above.

Decision

This paper is for information only. No decision is required.

Background information

- Approval of overseas qualifications – 26 March 2008.
- www.hpc-uk.org/education/providers/nonuk/ - information available on HPC's website regarding programme approval outside of the UK.

Resource implications

Visits will be planned for and scheduled as normal as part of the Departments work plan.

Financial implications

The usual costs associated with undertaking visits will be planned for as normal as part of the Departments work plan.

Appendices

None

Date of paper

27 February 2012