

**Approvals Committee
(18 November 2004)**

Department of Education & Policy

Director's Report

1. Approvals Visits

1.1 Approvals Visits Undertaken (Table 1)

Approvals visits have now taken place for the programmes listed below in Table 1. Copies of the Visitors Reports for each programme are available as papers to note in the private meeting of the Committee as these are not yet in the public domain. Where conditions have been set the due date for submission of revised documentation has been driven by the proposed start date of the programmes as listed in Table 1 below.

To date Visitors have undertaken a uni-profession single event (item 3), a uni-profession joint event (item 2), and a multiple-profession joint event (x 2 professions – item 3). Each visit has been a learning experience for both the Visitors and the Executive and these lessons are informing the setting of the operational details as well as feeding into the Visitors Guidance. The main issues arising are:

- ensuring adequate time is allowed during the visit for private HPC deliberation as this is a new aspect for Joint Panels and involves not only time for the HPC Panel to meet but also for input to the Joint Panel by each of the different groups represented and agreed feedback to Course Teams from all assessing bodies.
- The role of the Professional Bodies, which has differed on the two occasions in which they have been involved in Joint Panels. At the visit at item 2 in Table 1 the COT fielded a panel of two assessors and one executive officer. This was in addition to the HPC Panel of two Visitors and one Executive Officer, as well as the University's internal validation team of three (including the Chair).

At the visit at item 3 in Table 1 the COT and CSP representatives were asked on arrival if they would join the University's internal validation team, which they agreed to do, however, the input they gave was also on behalf of their respective Professional Bodies.

- The visits have been a challenge for the Visitors who have had to negotiate assessing against the specific criteria laid down in the SETs and SoPs, which has meant a much more structured review of the documentation prior to the visits as little time is available at the visits to allow deliberation against each and every SET and/or SoP. It has also been clear that while Visitors can set conditions and recommendations on the day the actual wording of these, and more importantly the reasoning, takes time and

cannot be completed on the day of the visit. We have had to be extremely careful in the wording of the conditions and reasoning to ensure that these can be fully justified should a University challenge a condition which has been set.

TABLE 1

	Name of HEI	Title of Programme(s)	Date of Visit	Proposed Programme Start Date
1	Leeds Metropolitan University	MA Art Psychotherapy Practice	30 September 2004	asap – retrospective approval
2	University of East Anglia	MSc Occupational Therapy (pre-reg)	8 October 2004	February 2005
3	Leeds Metropolitan University	MSc in Physiotherapy MSc in Occupational Therapy	20/21 October 2004	February 2005 February 2005

1.2 Approvals Visits to Year-End (Table 2)

A further seven Approvals visits are scheduled to the end of the calendar year as noted below in Table 2. As will be seen a number of these are outstanding visits to specialist educational facilities from the previous CPSM process. These will be assessed against the appropriate SETs under the new Approvals system. As these will be short visits to follow-up previous outstanding conditions no Executive Officer will be present. This will clear all outstanding Podiatry conditions except for the programme at Matthew Boulton. This institution’s specialist educational facilities will not be ready until 2005. As soon as we are notified of completion a follow-up visit will be arranged.

It should be noted that the first visits for Podiatry Local Analgesia and Prescription-only Medicine (LA & PoM) short courses will take place at New College Durham and Anglia Polytechnic University. The first of these visits will take place the day prior to the meeting of the Approvals Committee and will be verbally reported upon by the Director as a separate agenda item.

The other point of interest from Table 2 below is that the first Approvals visit under the Partnership Framework prototyping will take place at the University of Teesside on 7 December 2004. This will be a multiple-professional joint event for three professions with a Joint Panel of the HPC and the University’s internal validation team. The NMC will not be assessing their programmes until March, which makes this visit no different to the HPC’s own Approvals process. When this was raised with the QAA, who are co-ordinating the Partnership Framework, querying what was actually being prototyped the Director was informed that the prototyping would: evaluate the use of the Partnership Standards Framework; the shared evidence base (ie

how effectively the core evidence met the needs of all assessing groups); and the integration of the Partnership Framework approvals system with that of the HPC (ie feedback from the Panel and the provider in using the prototype framework of the Partnership). With respect to the use of the Partnership Framework, when the Director enquired it was confirmed that the HPC SETs were embedded in the Partnership Standards but not explicitly so. The Director explained that it would not be possible for the HPC Visitors to use any Standards other than the SETs and SoPs and that the institution would have to complete the cross-referencing pro-formas as per normal evidencing how their documentation matched the SETs and SoPs. The QAA did not anticipate this as a problem but the Director did wonder how the institution would view having to complete the Self-Evaluation document against the Partnership Framework Standards as well as the cross-referencing document to the HPC Standards.

TABLE 2

Name of HEI	Title of Programme(s)	Date of Visit
Ulster University	Specialist Educational Facility – Podiatry (from CPSM process)	4 November 2004
Plymouth University	Specialist Educational Facility – Podiatry (from CPSM process)	12 November 2004
University of East London	Specialist Educational Facility – Podiatry (from CPSM process)	16 November 2004
New College Durham	LA & PoM short course – Podiatry plus Specialist Educational Facility – Podiatry (from CPSM process)	16 November 2004
Manchester Metropolitan University	BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy	2/3 December 2004
Anglia Polytechnic University	LA & PoM short course – Podiatry	3 December 2004
University of Teesside	BSc (Hons) Allied Health Professions (pre-registration): Diagnostic Radiography, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy)	7 December 2004

The forward programme of Approvals visits will be the subject of a separate paper to follow.

2. Annual Monitoring

A discussion on how to take forward Annual Monitoring will be required and the Director hopes to prepare a paper for the February meeting of the Committee. Consideration has to be given to: the commitments around the operational issues still to be finalised for the Approvals process; the forward programme of Approvals visits; the requirement for the operational aspects of Monitoring to be considered – including the volume of reports involved; the drafting of Visitor Guidance for Monitoring and the training of Visitors; and Guidance on Monitoring to be written for the educational providers. Resourcing within the Education & Policy Department will also inform this discussion.

3. Visitor Training

For those Committee members who are not also members of the Education & Training Committee Table 3 below is a copy of the information given at the last meeting of the Education & Training Committee. This contains a note of the numbers of Visitors by profession who have received training for Approvals.

TABLE 3

Art Therapists	12
Chiropodists/Podiatrists	21
Clinical Scientists	3
Dietitians	13
Biomedical Scientists	1
Occupational Therapists	18
Orthoptics	1
Prosthetists & Orthotists	0
Paramedics	7
Physiotherapists	12
Radiographers	29
Speech & Language Therapists	15
Lay Visitors	4
Total	136

4. Visitor Guidance

Helen Best is now working to complete the Visitor's Guidance document, the draft of which is being used at present by the Visitors undertaking Approvals visits. Once this is finalised a copy will be sent to all trained Visitors and the document used as the basis for the two-day training course for the remaining Visitors.

5. Visitor Training

A rolling programme of two-day training events will be held in the new year. It is unlikely that these will take place before March/April to allow time for the new staff in the Department of Education & Training to take up post and undergo training in the Approvals process. Should there be a requirement to fill some of the gaps evident from Table 3 above then a special one-day course may be held in the interim for those Visitors with previous experience of quality assurance assessment.

6. Publication of the Standards of Education & Training

These are now available on the Web and copies are being sent to all institutions who have expressed an interest or requested an Approvals visit. The formal published document is being 'topped and tailed' with a foreword, introduction, etc and should be sent to the printers shortly.

7. Publication of the Approvals Process

This will be published as a separate document from the Standards of Education & Training and will contain a 'Handbook' section with guidance for educational providers on the details of the Approvals process. Helen Best is finalising the draft for the Approvals Handbook section. As soon as this is available the document will be sent to the publishers.

8. Biomedical Science Programme Approval

The Director has arranged to meet with Neil Willis, Biomedical registrant and Council member to discuss the particular needs of this profession with regard to programme approvals. This will allow the Director to more fully understand the current issues.

9. Clinical Science Programme Approval

As with Biomedical Science this is an area which the Director requires to investigate further. This is unlikely to happen before the new year and until additional staff are in place in the Department.

10. Paramedic Programme Approval

This will be the subject of a separate agenda item.

11. Resources

A new Team Administrator, Joanna Kasmir, has been appointed to the Education & Policy Team. Joanna will take up post on Monday 15 November. As well as providing administrative support to the Team Joanna will also act as PA to the Director. Joanna will attend at the meeting of the Approvals Committee by way of introduction to the Committee members and also as part of her induction programme.

By the date of the meeting of the Committee the Director hopes to be able to make an announcement regarding the appointment of a Manager (Approvals/Monitoring).

Adverts have now been posted for two Education Officers to assist the Manager (Approvals/Monitoring), with one position having particular responsibility for the database and IT records for the Approvals and Monitoring processes.

Fiona Nixon
(4 November 2004)