

# THE HEALTH PROFESSIONS COUNCIL

Chief Executive and Registrar: Mr Marc Seale

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MINUTES of the sixth meeting of the Approvals Committee held on **Wednesday 2 February 2005** at Park House, 184 Kennington Park Road, London SE11 4BU.

**PRESENT:** Professor J Harper (Chairman)  
Professor N Brook (part)  
Mrs S Chaudhry  
Mr P Frowen  
Professor T Hazell  
Professor C Lloyd  
Miss G Pearson  
Miss P Sabine  
Mrs B Stuart  
Mr D Whitmore

## **IN ATTENDANCE:**

Ms N Borg, Education Officer  
Ms F Nixon, Director of Education and Policy  
Miss N O'Sullivan, Secretary to Council and Acting Secretary to the Committee  
Mr M Seale, Chief Executive and Registrar  
Miss R Tripp, Policy Manager

## **Item 1.05/01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Miss E Thornton and Professor D Waller.
- 1.2 The Committee thanked Miss L Pilgrim, Secretary to the Committee for her work on its behalf and wished her well for the future now that she had left the HPC.

## **Item 2.05/02 APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

- 2.1 The Committee approved the agenda.

Approvalscommitteeminutesfebruary2005	Draft DD: None	Public RD: None	2005-02-03	a	APV	APV
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**Item 3.05/03 MINUTES**

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

**Item 4.05/04 MATTERS ARISING**

- 4.1 Item 4.2 – Matters Arising
  - 4.1.1 The Committee noted that a scheme of delegation from the Education and Training Committee to the Approvals Committee was likely to be considered at the 30 March 2005 meeting of the Education and Training Committee.
  
- 4.2 Item 6.5 – Report from the Director of Education and Policy- Annual Monitoring
  - 4.2.1 The Committee noted that the Education and Training Committee had ratified the decision taken at the last meeting of the Approvals Committee that the implementation of annual monitoring should be deferred until September 2005.
  
- 4.3 Item 9.2 – Approval of Paramedic Programmes
  - 4.3.1 The Committee noted that work on the drafting of interim Curriculum Guidance for paramedic programmes was progressing well.

**Item 5.05/05 CHAIRMAN’S REPORT**

- 5.1 The Chairman had no specific matters to report to the Committee.

**Item 6.05/06 REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND POLICY**

- 6.1 The Committee received a report from the Director of Education and Policy.
  
- 6.2 The Committee noted that a letter to education providers informing them of the new Approvals and Annual Monitoring processes would be available at the next meeting of the Education and Training Committee.
  
- 6.3 The Committee noted that the term ‘lighter touch regulation’ related to the totality of the approvals process. Using this in relation to the approvals visit alone could mislead education providers to have unrealistic expectations in relation to the visit.
  
- 6.4 The Committee noted that education provider roadshows were planned for all the four home countries of the United Kingdom. Committee members would be approached to take part in the roadshow panel as required.
  
- 6.5 The final draft of the Approvals Handbook and the Visitors Guidance was nearing completion. Both documents would be brought to the

Approvalscommitteeminutesfebruary2005	Draft DD: None	Public RD: None	2005-02-03	a	APV	APV
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Committee for consideration.

**Action: FN**

- 6.6 Consideration was being given to issues regarding clinical science modalities and registration. The Executive was engaged in ongoing discussions regarding this matter. The Health Professions Order 2001 did not make any reference to modalities however the modality of a practitioner in the area of clinical science was taken into consideration when international applicants were being assessed for registration.
- 6.7 The Committee noted that as stated in Article 19(6) of the Health Professions Order 2001 the approval of post-registration qualifications was a matter which could be considered by the Council at a future date.
- 6.8 The Committee noted that Ms Nadia Lupo and Ms Sharon Woolf would be joining the Education and Policy Team as Education Officer and Education Manager respectively in February 2005. A further two education officer posts were being advertised.

**Item 7.05/07 APPROVAL OF SUPPLEMENTARY PRESCRIBING COURSES**

- 7.1 The Committee received a report for discussion/approval from the Executive.
- 7.2 The Committee noted that the Department of Health (DH) intended to amend the Prescription Only Medicine Order 1997 and NHS regulations, in order to allow radiographers, physiotherapists and chiropodists/podiatrists to become supplementary prescribers. The HPC was therefore required to set up a process for approving Supplementary Prescribing courses, and annotate the Register for those registrants successfully completing such approved courses.
- 7.2 The Committee noted supplementary prescribing courses were always at post-registration level as there was a requirement that a practitioner had to be in practice for a number of years before they could include supplementary prescribing in their practice.
- 7.3 The Committee agreed to recommend to the Education and Training Committee that the following criteria should be adopted for the approval of Supplementary Prescribing courses:

(i) That the courses should be assessed:

- against the Council's existing Standards of Education and Training (with the exception of SET 1: *Level of qualification for entry to the Register*, which was not applicable since these are post-registration courses) and the Standards of Proficiency;

Approvalscommitteeminutesfebruary2005	Draft DD: None	Public RD: None	2005-02-03	a	APV	APV
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- using Curriculum Guidance provided by the document ‘Outline Curriculum for Training Programmes to prepare Allied Health Professional Supplementary Prescribers’ (Department of Health and the National Prescribing Centre, 2004 ); and
- by a Visitor Panel, which includes at least one registrant Visitor who has their name annotated on the Register as a supplementary prescriber. Until such times as supplementary prescribing training was more widely available for the approved groups of health professionals and, therefore, a reasonable pool of so-annotated registrant Visitors existed, then the Visitors Panels would include at least one chiropodist/podiatrist registrant Visitor (who must have local anaesthetic *and* prescription-only medicine entitlements) or one paramedic registrant Visitor.

**Action: FN/NO’S**

**Item 8.05/08 APPROVAL OF POST-REGISTRATION PROGRAMMES LA AND POM**

- 8.1 The Committee received a report for discussion/approval from the Executive.
- 8.2 The Committee noted that two approvals visits had taken place for standalone Local Analgesia courses for Chiropodists/Podiatrists. Questions had been raised about whether it was appropriate to use the full set of Standards of Education and Training (apart from SET 1 – threshold entry standards) for standalone courses such as LA and PoM and Supplementary Prescribing.
- 8.3 The Committee noted that all the conditions which had been set at both of the visits which had already taken place were as a result of using the full set of Standards of Education and Training (excluding SET 1) as the criteria for assessment.
- 8.4 The Committee agreed to recommend to the Education and Training Committee that the full set of Standards of Education and Training (excluding SET 1) should be used as the criteria for assessing standalone courses.

**Action: FN/NO’S**

**Item 9.05/09 VISITORS’ PAPER**

- 9.1 The Committee received a report for discussion/approval from the Executive.

Approvalscommitteeminutesfebruary2005	Draft DD: None	Public RD: None	2005-02-03	a	APV	APV
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- 9.2 The Committee noted that a programme of Visitor training was being organised for 2005.
- 9.3 The Committee noted that feedback had been received that an important element of Visitor training was allowing a new Visitor to attend a visit with an experienced Visitor. The Committee agreed that this should be included as part of future Visitor training which should consist of a one day session to be followed by a visit on which the new Visitor attended and participated in a visit with an experienced visitor.
- 9.4 The Committee noted that there was a requirement that there should be at least two registrant members from the relevant part of the Register to be on each Visitor Panel and that the cost of also including a lay visitor on each panel needed to be considered. The Committee agreed that lay visitors had a role to play by providing an external and objective view of the Approvals events thereby ensuring the robustness and rigour of the overall process.
- 9.5 Following consideration of these issues the Committee agreed to recommend the following to the Education and Training Committee;
- that lay visitors were in attendance at intermittent Approvals visits to provide an external and objective view of Approvals events to ensure the robustness and rigour of the overall process. The frequency of such involvement would be determined by the Approvals Committee using an agreed number of attendances per year to be set by the Committee and reviewed annually.

**Action: FN/NO'S**

- 9.6 The Committee noted that following ratification of the above proposal by the Education and Training Committee a letter would be written to all Visitors about this and other issues.

**Action: FN**

- 9.7 The Committee also noted that a form which would allow the University to provide feedback on their experience of a visit would be developed for future use.

**Action: FN**

**Item 10.05/10 FORWARD PROGRAMME OF APPROVAL VISITS/ANNUAL MONITORING**

- 10.1 The Committee received a report for note from the Executive.

			2005-02-03	a	APV	APV
Approvalscommitteeminutesfebruary2005	Draft DD: None	Public RD: None				

- 10.2 The Committee noted the number of visits which were outstanding and the number which were planned for the coming months.
- 10.3 The Committee noted that currently the Education and Policy Department was being reactive in its forward planning, scheduling visits as a result of requests from education providers. However, once new staff were in post and had received training, the Department would begin to be proactive for those programmes which required a visit to be initiated by the HPC.
- 10.4 The Committee noted that priority was being given to visiting new programmes seeking approval however in situations where institutions started to recruit students onto programmes which had not been approved these could not be advertised as leading to registration with the HPC. A reasonable lead-in time was required to plan and organise a visit and therefore institutions were encouraged to contact the HPC as early as possible in the planning stage for a new programme.
- 10.5 The Committee noted that public protection issues were the major consideration when considering the timescale for a visit. However, it was unlikely that a delay in visiting a programme would impact on the public. A significant number of programmes had been included in the list of those requiring a visit as, although they had only recently been approved, subject benchmarks had not been agreed for the professions covered by these programmes at the time of the visit and therefore they now required a visit which would assess the programme against the subject benchmarks.
- 10.6 The Committee noted that it was likely that the register for Applied Psychologists would open in early 2006. This would increase the number of programmes requiring approval and reapproval by the HPC. Consideration needed to be given to the timescale for approving programmes once a new profession came onto the register, taking into account when the programme was last visited by the relevant professional body and the time required to advertise for, appoint and train Partner Visitors in that profession (which could not begin until the Register opened).

**Item 11.05/11 PROGRAMME APPROVAL – BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE**

- 11.1 The Committee received a report for note from the Executive.
- 11.2 The Committee noted that there appeared to be progress in the work toward the creation of co-terminous and fully integrated degrees for Biomedical Scientists. This would mean that there would be no requirement for a Certificate of Competence to be awarded by the Institute of Biomedical Science and that the full programme, including the practice element, would be approved by HPC Visitors with no involvement by the Institute in the approvals process for regulation purposes. There were some funding issues to be resolved. Also many institutions were as yet unaware of the possibility of running fully integrated degrees.

			2005-02-03	a	APV	APV
Approvalscommitteeminutesfebruary2005	Draft DD: None	Public RD: None				

- 11.3 The Committee noted that it was likely that developments with regard to Biomedical Science degrees would impact on the education of Clinical Scientists and vice-versa.
- 11.4 Members of the HPC Council and the Executive would be meeting with Sue Hill, Chief Scientific Officer to discuss these matters further. The Committee noted that it would be useful if the Scientific Officers from all the four home countries could attend this meeting.

**Item 12.05/12 VISITORS' REPORTS**

- 12.1 The Committee received a report for note from the Executive regarding a visit to New College Durham to approve a Local Analgesia Programme in Chiropody/Podiatry.
- 12.2 The Committee noted that two Committee members had taken part in the visit. The Committee were discussing general process issues and did not discuss any of the details of the visit which had been undertaken and therefore the two members remained in the room while this matter was under consideration.

**Item 13.05/13 COMMITTEE GOVERNANCE**

- 13.1 The Committee received a report for note from the Executive.

**Item 14.05/14 PROGRAMME APPROVALS EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN'S ACTION**

- 14.1 The Committee received a report for note from the Executive.
- 14.2 The Committee agreed that programmes could be approved by Chairman's action as a matter of routine. Under good corporate governance these actions would be brought back to the Committee for note. This agreement would be subject to ratification by the Education and Training Committee.

**Item 15.05/15 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 15.1 There were no items of any other business.

**Item 16.06/16 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

- 16.1 The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 17 May 2005 at 11 am.
- 16.2 Further meetings will be held on the following dates:  
  
Friday 9 September 2005

Approvalscommitteeminutesfebruary2005	Draft DD: None	Public RD: None	2005-02-03	a	APV	APV
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Tuesday 22 November 2005

Thursday 2 March 2006

Wednesday 17 May 2006

**CHAIRMAN**

			2005-02-03	a	APV	APV
Approvalscommitteeminutesfebruary2005	Draft DD: None	Public RD: None				