

Health Professions Council
Approvals Committee – 5 September 2006

Executive Summary and Recommendations

This paper is tabled due to exceptional circumstances.

Introduction

An Approvals visit is planned to the University of Worcester on 6 & 7 September 2006 to consider their Foundation Degree in Pre-hospital and Unscheduled Emergency Care programme. This is a new programme, due to commence in January 2007. The visit is combined with the internal validation event, which means that there will be independent panel of academics and clinicians representing the University of Worcester scrutinising the academic award.

The HPC Executive was informed at 5pm on 4 September 2006 that one of the appointed Visitors can no longer attend due to bereavement. The HPC Executive has spoken with the remaining Visitor and they are willing to attend the visit alone, if necessary. This Visitor has educational and clinical experience and experience of HPC visits. They are from the paramedic part of the register.

In line with the operational process, neither Visitor has flagged up significant concerns about the programme based on their initial reading of the documentation. The Visitor who can no longer attend has made comments on the documentation, but due to his personal circumstances, is unable to access these to forward them onto the HPC Executive in advance of the visit. They have agreed to forward these comments at the earliest opportunity. The Visitor who is still able to attend has identified parts of Standards of Education & Training 2, 5 & 6 to discuss further with the education provider at the visit. The Visitor does not intend to discuss Standards of Education & Training 1, 3 & 4 with the education provider, based on their reading of the documentation.

The visit has two HPC Executive officers attending, both of which have considered the documentation in detail. They are both confident that there are no major points of clarification or additional information requests that need to be discussed as part of the visit. Given that this is the first time that the University of Worcester has undertaken an HPC approvals visit, the two HPC Executive officers have provided positive feedback on their documentation, liaison and understanding of the process.

The Health Professions Order 14(6) stipulates that “ Visitors shall be selected with due regard to the profession with which the education and training they are to report on is concerned and at least one of the visitors shall be registered in that part of the register which relates to that profession”.

The Education & Training Committee and Approvals Committee have discussed the appointment of Visitors previously and made operational decisions on the combination of Visitors that should be appointed to visits in normal circumstances. At the Approvals Committee in May 2005, the Committee noted a paper in which it stated that ‘in exceptional circumstances, for example the illness of an appointed

Visitor, an individual who is not from the same part of the register may be appointed to the Visit, with the consent of the education provider’.

Given the time restraints to both find a replacement second Visitor and allow them to scrutinise the documentation, there are concerns over the effectiveness of the role that they could play as a second Visitor to the forthcoming visit to the University of Worcester.

Decision

The Committee is asked to **agree** that in, exceptional circumstances, the following options in the order of priority;

- i. The HPC Executive find another visitor from the same part of the Register to attend the visit
- ii. The HPC Executive find another visitor from a different part of the Register to observe process
- iii. The visit is allowed to continue with the remaining Visitor attending alone
- iv. The visit is allowed to continue with the remaining Visitor attending alone, with the second Visitor acting by correspondence

Background information

Approvals Committee, 17 May 2005, item 1.4

Approvals Committee, 2 February 2005, item 9.4

Education & Training Committee, 15 December 2005, item 18.3

Resource implications

None

Financial implications

Rescheduling the visit would result in a loss of approximately £1200

(£260 Visitor Fee, £500 Visitor travel, accommodation & subsistence and £400

Executive travel, accommodation & subsistence)

Background papers

None

Appendices

None

Date of paper

5 September 2006