

## **Education Committee**

**21 April 2008**

### **Members Present**

	Paul Cook
Edward Attenborough	Barry Cockcroft
David Herbert	Lesley Kant
Mike Martin	Hew Mathewson
Mabel Slater	Denis Toppin

### **Minutes**

#### **Apologies for absence**

1. None.

#### **Minutes of previous meeting**

2. The minutes were agreed, subject to the following amendments:
  - a. insertion of the date of the meeting, which was 7 February 2008;
  - b. correction of spelling of Mabel Slater's name at paragraph 17;
  - c. clarification, on paragraph 38, that the Implantology Working Group had asked for its view that lack of GDC endorsement of the training standards in implantology had sent mixed signals to the profession to be communicated to the Committee. The Committee had then supported that view.

#### **Declarations of interest**

3. Denis Toppin indicated an indirect interest in some of the issues affecting Scottish programmes.

#### **Matters arising**

*Belfast dental hygiene curriculum update*

4. Staff had written to the school, as requested by the Committee at its previous meeting. A full response had been received. The assessor had examined the response from the school and was satisfied with the reassurances provided. The issue would be followed up as part of future monitoring and quality assurance.

#### *Report on Dundee Dental School re paediatric patients*

5. A written assurance had been received from Dundee Dental School that resuscitation of paediatric patients would be included in each year of the programme. Should any member of the Committee wish to see this, or the response from Belfast on the dental hygiene curriculum, Pravat Bhattacharyya should be contacted.

#### *Annual monitoring of dental schools – sterilisation update*

6. Mike Martin provided an update. He felt that any outstanding issues would be picked up by the next round of annual monitoring of dental schools. There were some outstanding concerns about Belfast, but the school was moving in the right direction. A letter would be sent on behalf of the Committee outlining outstanding concerns and requesting an update as part of the next annual monitoring exercise.
7. Barry Cockcroft advised that updated guidance from the Department of Health on decontamination would be published shortly.

#### *Other matters arising*

8. It was suggested that a paper covering the implications of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 for dental and DCP students should be brought to the Committee. Frances Garratt explained that she and Paul Feeney were working with James Paddick on this issue, since both Registration and Education Committees would need to ensure that related issues were taken into account in their areas of responsibility. Lesley Kant asked if it would be possible for the presentation given to Registration Committee on the topic to be repeated for the Education Committee. Frances Garratt would follow this up with James Paddick.

### **Items for action**

### **Pre-qualification**

#### *Aberdeen Dental School*

9. The School planned to open in Autumn 2008, initially awarding a University of Dundee BDS. There were concerns about whether the level of staffing in both institutions was sufficient to protect patients, particularly in restorative dentistry. Similar views had been expressed about UCLAN and Liverpool but concerns had been resolved as the UCLAN programme progressed. David Herbert had been on the inspection panel and advised that, while it was acknowledged that there was a lot of work still to be done, and staffing issues were a concern, the panel had confidence that these issues would be resolved as the new venture went ahead.
10. The Committee decided to give provisional approval but requested that the school was notified of concerns about staffing levels. No further information was required from the school at this stage. The new programme would be monitored in the same way as the UCLAN programme, on an annual basis, while the first cohort of students progressed through the programme.

*Edinburgh Telford College dental technology re-submission*

11. Hew Mathewson and Denis Toppin both noted that they had been approached locally to take an interest in this matter but had rightly resisted involvement since it was inappropriate for Council members responsible for making decisions on such submissions to get involved in their development.
12. Previously, the programme had been found to be inadequate and Telford College had been advised that the Committee was not minded to grant approval. The College had produced a revised proposal for consideration.
13. Insufficient work had been done to satisfy the Committee's original concerns and the submission was rejected. The Committee was particularly concerned about the impact of that decision on current students and decided that the College should be given detailed guidance on the shortcomings of the current programme, compliance with which would enable the Committee to grant provisional approval.
14. Consequently, the Committee decided that:
  - a. Expert assessors would be commissioned to provide detailed guidance for the College highlighting shortcomings, which would be approved by the Committee before being sent to the College;
  - b. The Committee would invite the College to propose a plan for dealing with the current students, for example, by means of top-up training. The College would be encouraged to come back with a proposal as to how deficiencies in training of the current students could be remedied in order to render them fit for registration;
  - c. Duncan Rudkin would provide a letter, to be sent to the College, with instructions to inform their current and potential students of the situation;
  - d. Paul Feeney would write to Telford College immediately following the meeting to let them know of the Committee's decision.
15. Duncan Rudkin advised that the Committee was entitled to take into account the current context in relation to the profession of dental technology, which is in a transitional period, in its consideration of any proposal for top-up training to enable current students to register. The Committee agreed that it would consider any such proposal constructively, without compromising public protection.

*Edinburgh Dental Institute CDT programme*

16. At its previous meeting, the Committee had accepted a recommendation that it should consider a submission of shorter duration than the 90 weeks stated in *Developing the Dental Team*, on the basis that those who were already qualified as Dental Technicians would be able to demonstrate the required training outcomes after a shorter period, given that their previous training would ensure that they had met a significant number of the key outcomes. The Edinburgh proposal focused on the clinical component required for additional training as a Clinical Dental Technician.
17. The Committee accepted the argument that there was no need for dental technicians to be trained again in activities in which they were already competent, but felt that the proposal in some respects required them to do just that. On the other hand, some components of the curriculum appeared to train students beyond the scope of practice of a clinical dental technician on registration. For example, making occlusal and periodontal splints other than on direct referral from a dentist. Reference, for example, to making an assessment of the patient's response, would require the diagnostic skills of a dentist.

18. There were some concerns about how prior learning would be assessed, given that the original request to reduce the 90 week training had been based on an argument that qualified dental technicians would already have a significant number of the skills required. It was argued that, if someone had been grandparented onto the dental technician register, some form of assessment of skill might be needed. The argument for shortening the programme related to qualified dental technicians and could not simply be extended to apply to students without such a qualification. The institution would need to be clear about the baseline level for students it intended to accept and how it would deal with prior learning if it wished to include students not already qualified as dental technicians.
19. The Committee decided that staff should write to the institution saying that it was minded to provisionally approve the programme, **subject to** the institution addressing the following issues prior to provisional approval being granted:
  - a. accreditation of prior learning;
  - b. training beyond the usual scope of practice of a clinical dental technician;
  - c. 'padding' of the curriculum with tasks that registered Dental Technicians should be trained and competent to do, which could be at the expense of core clinical outcomes;
  - d. the significant lack of clarity about the programme's assessment scheme;
  - e. it was felt to be bad practice for a course director to also be a personal tutor;
  - f. no evidence had been provided of a code of ethics or protocol dealing with recruitment of patients;
  - g. general tidying up of errors in the document which led to a lack of clarity.
20. The institution would need to inform students (current and potential) that the programme has not yet been approved by the GDC.

*Sheffield Castle College BTEC National Diploma in Dental Technology*

21. David Herbert was one of the inspectors and gave some additional background information to the Committee, explaining that the inspection panel had been comfortable with the course and recommended granting sufficiency. The Committee granted sufficiency.

**Items for report**

*Update on first diet of Overseas Registration Examination*

22. James Paddick gave a presentation on the first diet of the ORE. The OREB had discussed a number of complaints that had been received following a low pass rate on part 2 of the exam.
23. Complaints focused on the dental manikin exercise, in particular the suitability of the type of teeth that were used. Additional complaints already acted upon concerned the ratio of examiners to candidates and the treatment of candidates during the exams. Some problems had been encountered with provision of the exam, but these were being addressed.
24. The Committee was particularly concerned with the low pass rate for part 2 of the exam. The OREB would review the exam over the Summer, particularly part 2. The Committee was supportive of the action taken so far by the OREB and was satisfied that appropriate processes had been put in place. The Council would support the

OREB in their dealings with the providers to ensure improvements were made in delivery of the exam.

25. The OREB would update the Committee at its 17 July meeting.

*Update on overseas DCP assessment*

26. Frances Garratt updated the Committee on the position with regard to assessment of overseas DCPs for registration. She explained that the current legal position required the GDC to carry out individual assessment, and therefore there was common sense in seeing the issue in the same way as individual assessments for EEA applicants to the register. Clearly, the issue of how the GDC assured the quality of applicants to its registers was one which fell within the remit of the QA team and Education Committee, and so staff in the QA team were liaising with staff in the Registration team (who are responsible for designing and running the process itself) to develop overarching policy on individual assessment for all groups, and to assist Registration in considering what improvements might be made to existing individual assessment processes to cover all groups effectively, and to ensure equity, where the law permitted, in terms of the standard of evidence required from applicants for individual assessment.
27. Longer term, it would be necessary to consider whether to assess overseas DCPs in a different way, akin to overseas dentists. The Strategic Review of Education report, which would be considered at the meeting on 24 April, made a general recommendation to review issues of equity in relation to the various systems the Council operates for joining its registers. In the meantime, the Overseas DCP Group would disband.

**Post-qualification**

*Update on Specialist Dental Education Board*

28. Ewen Macleod updated the Committee on the SDEB's initial discussions about flexible entry to the specialist lists and accreditation of prior learning.
29. The Committee was asked to approve the Special Care Dentistry curriculum as an interim measure to enable the new specialist list to be established. The Specialist Advisory Committee had been asked to develop a new curriculum in line with SDEB guidance.
30. Committee members' comments, which concerned disinfection procedures and use of appropriate terminology about patients in need of special care, would be passed on to the SAC. The curriculum also included some tasks that were carried out by all dentists and were not specific to special care dentistry – it should be clear which training was specialist in nature.
31. The Committee approved the curriculum.

*Update on additional qualifications meeting at Faculty of General Dental Practice (UK), 3 March 2008*

32. Frances Garratt attended this FGDP(UK) meeting as an observer. The Dean of the Faculty, Richard Hayward, had thought it would be of assistance to the GDC to hold the workshop and present a combined view of the parties involved, for consideration. The FDGP(UK) will reply to the ongoing consultation in due course, both on its own behalf and on behalf of those attending the workshop. A variety of views were expressed at the meeting as to the value of recording additional

qualifications on GDC registers, and, where they were held to have value, what kind of policy should be put in place.

33. Frances advised that efforts to engage the public and patients in the consultation on additional skills and qualifications were paying off, with a higher number of responses from organisations representing patients and individual patients than usual. However, the key development was that Kit Philip of the External Relations team had organised focus groups which would be asked about the issue, and would be able to provide QA team staff with top-line feedback by the consultation deadline of 9 May 2008. The Committee welcomed this development.

*Update on UK Foundation Training meeting, 4 March 2008*

34. Frances Garratt had also attended this meeting, convened by COPDEND, to discuss a possible advisory body for Foundation Training. The general conclusion had been that the creation of such a body would be premature at this stage. Frances had reiterated throughout the meeting that foundation training in itself was not a concern of the GDC, as it is an NHS, not GDC system, not linked to the right to register. However, if GDC policy developed in such a way that foundation training might be one means of accessing the full register (if assessed against outcomes specified by the GDC), the GDC might have an interest in future.
35. The outcome of the meeting was that the possibility of a 'generalist SAC', inputting into an appropriately renamed JCSTD, would be taken forward, in order to establish a link between post-registration training for GDPs, and specialist training.
36. Barry Cockcroft informed the Committee of subsequent developments; a Group had been set up by the Department of Health to develop foundation training on a voluntary basis. The GDC was not represented on that Group, but the Department would be mindful of possible future involvement as GDC policy might change. Barry Cockcroft would liaise with Frances Garratt on this issue.

**Any other business**

*Deputy Chair of Education Committee*

37. Paul Cook asked a member to be nominated to deputise for him when he was unavailable, in particular during his upcoming period of annual leave. The Committee appointed David Herbert to this role.

**Date of next meeting**

38. The next meeting would be on 24 April 2008 at 10:30 am in the Ground Floor Boardroom at the BDA, and was to be a special meeting to deal with the Strategic Review of Education only. The next 'ordinary' Education Committee meeting would be on 17 July 2008.