

**GENERAL OPTICAL COUNCIL  
Education Committee**

Confirmed Minutes of the 156th Meeting of the Education Committee held on  
2 October 2009.

<b>Present:</b>	Professor R Anderson Miss R Bailey Dr P Kyle Mr D Pyle Professor A Tomlinson Miss J Underwood
<b>Advisers:</b>	Mr R Carswell Dr A Jennings
<b>In Attendance:</b>	Miss L Kennaugh Mr J Levett (Chair) Mrs H Robinson Miss L Oliver Mr P Gavin Mrs J D Taylor

**Apologies for Absence and Chairman's Announcements**

5344. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted apologies from Professor M Salmon.

**Declaration of Interests**

5345. Members and Advisers were reminded that any interest in an issue for consideration by the Committee which could have, or may be perceived as having an influence on their judgement must be declared pursuant to standing orders 2.7 to 2.10

5346. Dr Jennings, Mr Carswell & Professor Anderson declared an interest in ECOO. Miss Underwood declared an interest in matters relating to visits to Dispensing Training.

**Confidentiality**

5347. Members and Advisers were reminded that the proceedings of the Committee are Confidential under Standing Orders 6.23 to 6.26

**Minutes of the 155th meeting (12:02:09)**

**ED(09)1M**

5348. The Committee received the Minutes from the 155th Meeting of the Education Committee from the 12 February 2009. Minute number 5316 was missing which in turn meant all the numbering was out of sequence.

5349. With this amendment the Minutes were confirmed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

## **Matters Arising**

### **Proposal for MOptom programme at City University.**

5350. The Director of Education informed the Committee that the GOC were still awaiting an updated paper submission from City University.

### **Education Department Staff Update**

5351. The Chairman informed the Committee that Jo Glover and Kelly Parker had left the GOC since the last meeting. This provided an opportunity to restructure and review the roles required to support the department. Lisa Oliver and Paul Gavin have now joined the department. Lisa Oliver is the Accreditation, Policy and Project Officer, responsible for Optometry & Dispensing Visits, Annual Monitoring Scheme and CET. Paul Gavin is the Education Policy and Project Officer, responsible for the Schemes for Registration, European issues including accreditation outside of UK and specialist training (Therapeutics & Contact Lens).

5352. The Director of Education informed the Committee of the rationale for the restructure. The responsibility of the Visits and CET has been divided between the two roles ensuring there is greater resilience within the department.

5353. The Chairman has pleasure in announcing that from today, 1<sup>st</sup> October 2009, Linda Kennaugh will now be the Director of Education.

## **Report from the Project Groups**

### **Project ED01 – Professional Crossing Borders**

5354. The Committee were informed that the GOC were still waiting for an update on the progress in respect of the ECOO diploma and amendments that to the final assessment. A group from the ECOO diploma had visited the Scheme for Registration OSCE to understand how this type of assessment worked.

5355. The Professional Crossing Borders project group are planning a visit to Hogeschool Utrecht in January 2010 to progress accreditation of that programme. The Committee were informed that the programme was very close to being accredited as a training provider but that further work was needed around their pre-registration equivalent placements before they can be accredited as a scheme provider. The visit will focus on those two areas. An update will be reported back to Education Committee at their next meeting.

5356. The Director of Education will be attending ECOO in Budapest in October.

5357. The matter of pursuing accreditation outside of the UK was being deliberated by Council and the Committee will be kept informed of the progress.

5358. The Committee were informed that the Director of Education and the Education Policy and Project Officer will be meeting with Mary O'Donnell CEO of the Irish Opticians Board to scope the remit of a visit to take place in early 2010.

5359. Mr Carswell informed the Committee that ECOO had received a formal proposal from ABDO in respect of the ECOO diploma. This will be discussed at the ECOO conference in Budapest

### **Project ED02 – Entry Standards Dispensing Opticians (ESDO)**

5360. The ESDO Working Group will reconvene shortly to discuss a proposal from Canterbury Christchurch University and ABDO College in respect of their Hons degree programme. The Group will also review and re-evaluate the ESDO visits that have taken place in past year and discuss potential work that the group may need to do in forthcoming financial year.

5361. The Director of Education informed the Committee that issues have arisen between ABDO Exams and the dispensing colleges in respect of the process by which exemptions from the ABDO Theory Exams are granted. ABDO Exams are reviewing and formalising the process as a result of feedback from GOC and QCA visits. This issue was discussed at length and the Committee came to the conclusion that the Director of Education would determine a deadline and request that ABDO Exams provide a report to the GOC by this date.

### **Project ED03 - Scheme for Registration**

5362. The Scheme for Registration Working Group will be meeting with the College of Optometrists in December to look at very specific elements of the OSCE which will take place in summer 2010. The Group has also been working with the College on the Independent Prescribing Final Assessment. This exam will take place on 3 November and will be quality assured by the Independent Prescribing Panel.

### **Project ED04 - Education & Panel Visits/Accreditation Review**

5363. The Committee received for information a pro-forma and guidance notes which were to be completed by the Visitor Panel at the end of each visit to document their rationale and evidence for imposing conditions and recommendations. These documents were created following advice from Council who had suggested that the wording of the conditions and recommendation in visit reports needed to be more consistent and concise.

### **Project ED05 – Overseas Routes to UK Registration**

5364. The Committee was informed that the responsibilities of the OQ Sub-Committee will now be transferred to the Education Committee. The Sub-Committee will continue to assess applications received through the EU directive and Non-EEA routes. It was noted that no temporary application from EU applicants had been received to date.

### **CET**

5365. The Committee received a statistical update on the progress of the CET Scheme. It was noted that the statistics showed an improvement in comparison to the last cycle.

### **Standards Update - ED(18)09**

5366. The Chairman reported that the Standards Committee Revalidation working group is currently awaiting the outcome of two research projects it had commissioned on employer appraisal schemes and risk profiling of registrants.

5367. Work to review the GOC Competencies is continuing and will report back to the next Education and Standards Committee meetings.

## **Supervision of Students**

- 5368.** The Director of Education informed the Committee that following a recent Fitness to Practise case around the supervision of students a meeting had been held between the GOC, the College of Optometrists and ABDO regarding this issue. Both organisations were currently reviewing the guidance that is being issued in respect of supervision and the Committee was asked for advice on whether they thought it was a good idea to make it a requirement of the schemes for registration that students must be clearly identified as under supervision. The committee discussed whether name badges would be an appropriate way to inform patients that they are being seen by a student and therefore would also result in the patient being more aware of the identity and presence of the supervisor.
- 5369.** Education Committee supported the move to include a requirement in the Scheme for Registration that the student must be clearly identified as under supervision but did not wish to be prescriptive in how this was achieved e.g. wearing of name badges etc. The Director of Education agreed to write to the Scheme Providers to request that they submit proposals of how this requirement will be met.

## **Visit Reports**

### **Bradford**

- 5370.** The Director of Education recorded her thanks to Bradford University for participating in the pilot of the annual monitoring scheme. The Committee were informed that the Visit had been successful. At the time of the visit the revised competencies had not been implemented but that condition had now been met.
- 5371.** It was agreed that it would be useful for the annual monitoring reports to be an appendix to visit reports.
- 5372.** The Committee supported the recommendation of the Visitor Panel that the University of Bradford maintains its GOC approval with the next Visit taking place in 5 years.

### **City and Islington College**

- 5373.** The Committee received a copy of the Visit Report to City and Islington College dispensing programmes.
- 5374.** The Director of Education informed the Committee that there had been several issues with this institution. The main issue being that the College had moved to new accommodation without informing the GOC and when this accommodation was visited it was considered to be unsuitable. A meeting took place between the GOC and the Principal of the College and it was agreed that the College would move the department back to its original site. As a consequence a re-visit was required. This took place on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2009 following which the Visitor Panel were satisfied with the accommodation and the Foundation Degree and full and part time Diploma programmes. They were not however satisfied with the distance learning Diploma programme. The Panel is yet to make a decision in terms of the period of recommendation for the distance learning programme as conditions have been imposed requesting follow up information by December

2009. In respect of the other programmes continued approval was recommended with the next Visit in 3 years.

5375. Since the Visit the GOC have been made aware of other issues of concern relating to an optics re-sit examination. The circumstances in which the exam was held was not satisfactory, students complained that the college had not complied with special adjustments for disability and a set of completed exam papers were stolen from a member of staff whilst on a train. The Director of Education has been corresponding with the Principal and Deputy Principal of City and Islington College and was satisfied that they have imposed suitable changes to manage examinations in future. However, concern remains as to the cumulative picture arising in respect of the management of the college and in particular the optics provision at this institution.
5376. Members of the Committee shared these concerns regarding the Management of the optics department and college and it was agreed that the comments from the Committee would be forwarded to Council and that in addition to the College's annual monitoring submission a meeting would take place with the college to review the situation. In addition, Education Committee propose that the GOC also informs Ofsted and the QCA of its concerns.

### **Independent Prescribing Programmes**

5377. The Director of Education verbally updated the Committee on the developments with the Independent Prescribing Provision.
5378. It was noted that the Panel was mid process in quality assuring the three IP programmes and they had visited Glasgow Caledonian and City Universities. The first sitting of the final qualifying exam would be held on 3 November for candidates from both Universities and the Panel would pay close attention to the outcome of the examination and the programmes going forward.

### **ARU**

5379. The Committee were informed that a Visit had taken place on 28 September 2009 to ARU to review the suitability of the temporary accommodation in place and that it was able to accommodate the increased number of optometry students.
5380. The Visitors were satisfied with the situation on a temporary basis however they did have concern about the lack of certainty in respect of accommodation in two years time. The Panel had imposed a condition that a letter be sent to the Vice Chancellor requesting documented evidence as to the accommodation strategy and detail of finalised plans for the optics department beyond the next two years.
5381. The Committee also received correspondence notifying the GOC of a change to a module, the change primarily relates to the modes of assessment.
5382. The Committee agreed to the change but asked for clarification as to how the logbook would be incorporated.

### **Ulster University**

5383. The Director of Education reminded the Committee that following a full Panel Visit in 2007 a further small Panel re-visit took place in 2009 to look only at the areas concerned around patient numbers and hospital experience.

5384. Following the re-visit the Panel were satisfied that the specific conditions from the 2007 Visit had been met and recommended that the programme should therefore be continue to be approved with the next full Panel Visit in 3 years. This Visit in 2012 would be 5 years from date of the last full panel visit.
5385. The department has challenged this recommendation on the basis that the recommended approval should be 5 years from the date of the revisit. The Director of Education had explained to the Head of Department that as it was a small panel visit who only looked at the conditions arising from 2007 and not all aspects of the programme, it was not empowered to recommend a 5 year period till the next visit. It was not an acceptable risk for a period of 7 years between full panel visits.
5386. The department are not satisfied with this outcome, they challenged the consistency of how other re-visits had been handled. The Director of Education explained that there have been other re-visits which granted approval with the next visit in 5 years but these were full panels. During correspondence the Head of Department raised the possibility of requesting a full panel visit sooner than 2012 and the Director of Education sought the committee's advice on the GOC position as she could find no precedent for dealing with such a request.
5387. Education Committee supported the recommendation of the Visitors that the next visit should be in three years. They considered that seven years was too long between full panel visits and this would be an acceptable risk. In addition, they were firmly of the view that it was not appropriate for an institution to request an earlier visit unless a significant change to the programme had occurred, in which case the GOC would instigate a visit anyway.
5388. The Director of Education also pointed out that the Opticians Act empowers the GOC to approve training establishments and that approval is continuous until such time as it is withdrawn. The number of years until the next visit is not an 'approval period' it is rather the period of time deemed to be appropriate until the next QA review should take place. This has caused confusion amongst training providers who believe they are granted approval for a specified period of time until the next visit.
5389. In order to correct this misunderstanding all future reports and letters to institutions informing them of the outcome of a visit will be re-worded to state "the GOC is satisfied that xxxx university/college meets the requirements for continued approval as a training/scheme provider with the next visit scheduled to take place in # years."

### **Publication of Visits**

5390. The Director of Education presented to the Committee an options paper on the public release of education visit reports.
5391. The Committee were informed that the CHRE as part of the performance review of the GOC challenged the education department as to why it did not publish its Visit Reports. The Accreditation Policy and Project officer had mapped the requirements of publication in the event of a freedom of information request and researched what other regulators publish.

5392. The Committee having, discussed the implications of each options, supported option 1, to develop a system of open and closed session visits. A comprehensive record of the visit including closed session items will be produced for internal consumption only along with a Visit Report excluding closed session items and exemptions under FOI for external publication on the GOC website alongside the university's official response.

5393. This recommendation will now be taken to Council for consideration.

#### **Committee Appointment process**

5394. The Chairman informed the Committee that all members should have been sent the link to download the application forms.

**5395.** It was noted that interviews will be held in early February 2010. Current Committee Members were encouraged to apply.

#### **Date of Next Meeting**

5396. To be confirmed following appointment of new committee.