

Education and Training Committee – 16 September 2010

Hearing aid dispensers – revised schedule of visits

Executive summary and recommendations

This paper follows on from the papers entitled ‘Hearing aid dispensers – list of approved programmes’ and ‘Hearing aid dispensers – approval and monitoring processes’ considered by Committee on 10 March 2010 and the ‘Hearing aid dispensers – approval prioritisation day 21 May 2010’ considered by Committee on 8 June 2010.

It seeks to agree a revised schedule of visits to approved hearing aid dispenser programmes over the next two academic years.

Introduction

Paragraph A of Article 15(1) of the Health Professions Order provides that:

- “(1) The Council shall from time to time establish –
 - (a) the standards of education and training necessary to achieve the standards of proficiency it has established under article 5(2);”

In turn, Paragraph B of Article 15(4) of the Health Professions Order provides that:

- “(4)The Education and Training Committee shall –
 - (b) take appropriate steps to satisfy itself that those standards and requirements are met.”

The standards of proficiency are our threshold standards for safe and effective practice that all registrants must meet. They play a central role in how to gain admission to and remain on the Register and thereby gain the right to use protected title(s). The standards of proficiency for hearing aid dispensers were approved by Council on 11 February 2010 and become effective on the day that the register opened (1 April 2010).

The standards of education and training (SETs) are the standards that an education programme must meet in order to be approved by us. These generic standards ensure that anybody who completes an approved programme meets the standards of proficiency and is therefore eligible for admission to the Register.

Our approval and monitoring processes ensure that programmes and education providers meet the SETs. A programme is normally approved on an open-ended basis, subject to satisfactory monitoring.

At the meeting on 10 March 2010, Committee received papers for discussion and agreement relating to the list of approved programmes and the mechanism for

the HPC to use to ensure the programmes meet our SETs and that those students who successfully complete it meet the standards of proficiency for the relevant part of the register. At this meeting it was agreed that the approval process would be used to ensure the programmes meet our standards and that programmes would be visited in the 2010/2011 and 2011/2012 academic years. A mechanism to prioritise the visits utilising the documentation provided by the Hearing Aid Council (HAC) in relation to their approval and monitoring processes undertaken for each programme was also agreed.

Approval and monitoring processes of the HAC

The HAC utilised a variety of methodologies to initially approve programmes of study. The variance in methodologies was related to the time at which the programmes were approved and therefore was parallel to the qualification levels that emerged as the profession developed. The table below briefly summarises how initial approval was granted to HAC approved programmes:

Qualification level	HAC initial approval mechanism
Foundation awards	Subject to a site visit from an HAC panel (broadly similar to the approval process)
Bachelors awards (ordinary and honours)	Subject to a documentary means for initial approval (no similar process exists at HPC for initial approval beyond occasional new pathways to programmes becoming approved via major change)
Masters level awards	Subject to a documentary means for initial approval (no similar process exists at HPC for initial approval beyond occasional new pathways to programmes becoming approved via major change)
Aptitude tests	Subject to a documentary means for initial approval (no similar process exists at HPC for initial approval beyond occasional new pathways to programmes becoming approved via major change)

HAC also operated monitoring processes. Education providers were expected to inform HAC when changes were made to programmes. However, in practice, HAC did not receive information in relation to changes to programmes for the period that this process was in operation.

HAC also conducted a monitoring cycle in which education providers were required to submit a mapping exercise and documentation to illustrate how HAC standards continued to be met. This exercise was the only cycle of monitoring conducted on the HPC approved programmes.

Prioritisation assessment day

At the prioritisation assessment day the visitors considered the documentation which had been provided by the HAC in response to their approval and monitoring processes for all the programmes granted open ended approval by

Committee on 10 March 2010. The visitors were asked to reach their decisions based on a proportionate response to the risks presented by each programme and its status with the HAC approval and monitoring processes. The programmes were individually assessed and visitors' reports were produced recommending an academic year in which to conduct the visit.

At the 8 June 2010 Committee, the schedule of visits to the hearing aid dispenser programmes was agreed. Upon notifying the education providers it became apparent that for one programme, the visitors had not had access to all the available documentation. The visitors were therefore asked to review the full submission and submit a visitors' report to the Committee for their approval. This can be found in Appendix one while Appendix two provides the revised visit schedule for hearing aid dispenser programmes taking this recommendation into account.

Decision

The Committee is therefore asked to discuss and agree the following:

- To accept the visitors' report in Appendix 1.
- To accept the revised visit schedule in Appendix 2.

Should the Committee wish to amend the visitors' report or the visit schedule, the Committee is asked to articulate and agree reasons for their decision so that they may be communicated to the education provider.

Background information

- Hearing aid dispensers – approval and monitoring processes - 10 March 2010
- Hearing aid dispensers – list of approved programmes – 10 March 2010
- Hearing aid dispensers – approval prioritisation day 21 May 2010 – 8 June 2010

Resource implications

Accounted for in five year plan, 2011-2012 Education work plan and budget.

Financial implications

Accounted for in five year plan, 2011-2012 Education work plan and budget.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Report for approval for Mary Hare, Foundation Degree in Hearing Aid Audiology, full time.
- Appendix 2 – Revised schedule of visits to hearing aid dispenser programmes.

Date of paper

6 September 2010

Appendix 2 – Revised schedule of visits to hearing aid dispenser programmes

Visit recommended 2010/2011

EP NAME	VALIDATOR	PROGRAMME NAME	MODE OF STUDY	Recommended year for visit
Aston University		Foundation Degree in Hearing Aid Audiology	Full time	2010/2011
University of Bristol		BSc (Hons) Audiology	Full time	2010/2011
De Montfort University		BSc (Hons) Audiology	Full time	2010/2011
Swansea University		BSc (Hons) Audiology	Full time	2010/2011
University College London		BSc Audiology	Full time	2010/2011
University College London		BSc (Hons) Audiology	Full time	2010/2011

Visit recommended 2011/2012

EP NAME	VALIDATOR	PROGRAMME NAME	MODE OF STUDY	Recommended year for visit
Anglia Ruskin University		Aptitude Test	N/A	2011/2012
De Montfort University		Aptitude Test	N/A	2011/2012
Anglia Ruskin University		FDS <i>c</i> in Hearing Aid Audiology	Distance Learning with residential periods as appropriate	2011/2012
Aston University		BSc (Hons) Audiology	Full time	2011/2012
University of Bristol		BSc Audiology	Full time	2011/2012
De Montfort University		Foundation Degree in Hearing Aid Audiology	Full time	2011/2012
University of Manchester		BSc (Hons) Audiology	Full time	2011/2012
University of Manchester		MSc Audiology (with clinical competency certificate or certificate of audiological competence)	Full time	2011/2012
University College London		MSc Audiology (with clinical competency certificate or certificate of audiological competence)	Full time	2011/2012
University College London		MSc Audiology (with clinical competency certificate or certificate of audiological competence)	Full time	2011/2012
Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh		Diploma in Higher Education Hearing Aid Audiology	Full time	2011/2012
Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh		Diploma in Higher Education Hearing Aid Audiology	Part time	2011/2012
Mary Hare	Oxford Brookes University	Foundation Degree in Hearing Aid Audiology	Full time	2010/2011