

Role of a Visitor – Brochure

The Health Professions Council (HPC) is the new regulator whose duty is to safeguard the health and well being of anyone using or needing the services of the 12 health care professions it regulates.

Visitors are appointed by the Council at HPC on the request of the Education and Training Committee. They make up one of a range of “partners” HPC have been using since April 1st 2003 to carry out its work. Working as agents of the HPC (and not employees), partners provide the expertise and professional advice HPC needs for its decision making.

Purpose of the role

A Visitor visits and reports on institutions providing and delivering (or proposing to provide and deliver), education, training, examinations and assessments, awards, and tests of competence. The advice they give then forms the basis of the Education and Training Committee’s decisions.

Main responsibilities and activities

Visitors will give expert advice and contribute to discussions and decision making as directed by the Council or relevant committee.

The main responsibilities of a Visitor are :

- To be appropriately expert in the regulatory, educational and professional context and requirements of the provision visited,
- Visiting institutions both inside and outside the UK (if a course outside the UK leads to the award of a UK qualification)
- Preparing reports arising from visits and making recommendations for the Education and Training Committee on the instructions, resources and facilities provided or proposed to be provided;
- Working collaboratively in teams both of peers and with other agencies and other professions;
- Reporting directly to and attending as needed meetings of the Education and Training Committee and its subordinate bodies; and
- Undertaking any other duties arising from visiting as may be prescribed by the Committee

Visits normally take place collaboratively with the relevant professional body (and with other stakeholders where feasible), but the integrity of HPC’s role and advice to it must be maintained at all times. Most visits are in teams, and visitors only operate individually in specific and prescribed circumstances. Visitors make recommendations and give advice, which they can share with the visited institution, but they do not themselves have the authority to approve – or not to or to cease to approve – provision. Visitors enjoy secretariat support of an officer c/o HPC.

Objectivity

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interests.

Leadership

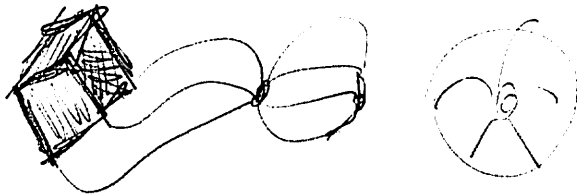
Holders of public interest should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

How can I become a Visitor?

If working with the HPC as a Visitor is something you are interested in then you should download an application form from the HPC website at www.hpc-uk.org, ensuring you fill in all the appropriate public office forms and have read all the corresponding information.

Alternatively you can write to the HPC Human Resources department at the address on the back of this leaflet and request a form.

Chris, query here please – does this mean that we will have a rolling programme of inviting applications and appointing visitors? I would strongly support doing this, and, in fact, I think we may have to soon anyway. If so, no comment on the text.



What sort of person can become a Visitor?

First and foremost a Visitor must show demonstrable commitment to the principles of quality assurance in Higher Education and/or in the placement learning environments as linked to the statutory regulation of professions. They should also be able to demonstrate an understanding of the importance of upholding public interest in all that the HPC undertake. Demonstrable experience of contributing to and encouraging open and proactive accountability to the public and profession is preferred.

Basic skills such as the ability to grasp the detail of a wide range of issues in order to make informed and sound decisions and an experience of working collaboratively, with a broad network of stakeholders are also required.

The Commitment

x

The time commitment for each Visitor is estimated at around x working days - up to a maximum of 30 - each year.

Training

HPC runs its own induction programmes for partners appointed as Visitors.

Fees and Expenses

The role of Visitors attracts a daily fee of £130 with reasonable travel and subsistent expenses also payable.

Seven Principles of Public Life

All "partners" of the HPC, of which a visitor is one, must commit to the seven principles of public life before undertaking work on behalf of the Council.

These are:

Selflessness

Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

Integrity

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Visits arise at:

- the start of a new course or award,
- when an institution first wishes to deliver a course or be the awarding body for one,
- period review and re-approval,
- major changes to a course, and
- where the Education and Training Committee directs that a visit should take place.