

Education and Training Committee, 10 March 2020

Education department work plan 2020-21

Executive summary and recommendations

Introduction

The work plan set out in Appendix 1, updates the Committee on the Education Department's work over the financial year, and sets out its planned activity for the year ahead. The work plan is framed around the organisations existing strategic priorities, and whilst these may be subject to further change, provide a useful starting point to contextualise the department's focus within the broader strategy.

Once agreed, the work plan will form part of the regular performance reporting provided to the Senior Management Team.

Decision

The Committee is asked to discuss the proposed work plan and provide further input and direction to it. The Committee is also asked to consider how it would prefer to be updated around progress against the work plan.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Education Department work plan 2020-21

Resource implications

- None

Financial implications

- None

Date of paper

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Education Department Work Plan 2020-21

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Brendon Edmonds, Head of Education

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Executive Summary

In 2019-20, we commenced a number of activities to fundamentally review the way we fulfil our legislative requirements in the area of education. This has included commencement of significant work to review our approval process and to work with stakeholders around exploring new and different ways to quality assure education programmes in the future. We will look forward to continuing this work this year, and implementing changes to our underpinning processes.

A key feature of our year ahead will be to continue to develop our thinking around quality assurance, and to start building on the work already conducted through embedding principles in our current monitoring processes. We will also engage with education providers around a significant feedback exercise, and use this information to improve our processes and engagement activities. Our communications will expand next year, with more webinars and online engagement planned with providers and visitors. We will also continue to develop our internal systems through development cycles, aim to improve our efficiency. On the policy front, we will expand our engagement with other sector stakeholders, looking to support initiatives where we can do so. Our thematic reviews of apprenticeships and our new approval process pathway should also add valuable insights.

About this document

This document is divided into several sections:

- Resources – a brief overview of our current and projected resources and expenditure
- Existing activities – an overview of our main functions and supporting activities
- Review of last year's performance - our performance and notable deliverables
- Work plan activities for this year –how we are looking to support strategic objectives through departmental objectives and key deliverables of the department's work.

Resources

The Education department currently consists of 15 permanent full time equivalent employees, 1 fixed term contract employee, and 1 fixed term contract employee funded through the social work transfer grant. The overall headcount plans to reduce to 12 by the end of the year.

Department roles

Head of Education (1)

Education Managers (3)
 Education Officers (5)
 Education Administrators (2)

Systems Manager (1)
 Systems Officer (1)

This work plan assumes the following operating budget.

	2019-2020 Budget (,000) (9 mth reforecast)	2020-2021 Budget (,000) (to be confirmed)	% difference
Operating Expenditure	£776	£694	-10
Capital Expenditure	£0	£0	0

Existing activities

The Education Department approves and monitoring education programmes which lead to registration or annotation with us for individuals who complete them. This function is operationalised through established quality assurance processes, and a range of supporting activities, which contribute to supporting the organisation's strategic priorities.

Strategic priority 1: Improve our performance to achieve the Professional Standards Authority's Standards of Good Regulation

Approvals

We conduct new programme approval, and existing programme re-approval where an approval visit is triggered upon completion of a related monitoring process. The process takes around 9 months to complete and involves site visits to education providers. This is our most intensive programme assessment process.

Annual monitoring

Approved programmes must submit an audit or declaration submission to us in alternating years. An audit is more intensive, requiring submission of information to evidence how the programme continues to operate in accordance with our standards. The process takes around 3 months to complete and involves visitor assessment of an electronic submission.

Major change

We assess significant changes to approved programmes to ascertain if education standards continue to be met through this process. Assessments are filtered through this process, or to annual monitoring or approvals, if deemed proportionate. The full major change process takes around 3 months to complete, and involves visitor assessment of an electronic submission.

Concerns

Concerns about approved programmes are received from members of the public, including learners, placement educators and programme staff. Concerns are investigated, with actions taken where necessary to ascertain whether standards continue to be met. Where needed, referral can be made to other processes to manage issues. The process takes around 3 months to complete, and sometimes involves visitors in reaching outcomes.

Education and Training Committees and Panels

We interface with the Committee and the Panel where needed around the outcomes from quality assurance processes, which require ratification leading to programme approval. The Committee is also engaged around strategy in the area of education on a regular basis.

Visitor recruitment and training

An annual cycle of recruitment, and new and refresher visitor training is managed to ensure we have sufficient numbers to support the education function.

Strategic priority 2: Ensure our communication and engagement activities are proactive, effective and informed by the views and expectations of our stakeholders
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Communication with stakeholders

Regular engagement with education providers, and wider related sector stakeholders is managed in quarterly cycles, with adhoc updates produced where needed. The education provider hub is used to centralise key messages, with signposting used across email and social media platforms.

Events

Seminars and webinars are held periodically with education providers to focus on key topics relevant to regulation. Recent events have covered topics around the revised standards of education and training and service user and carer involvement.

Feedback

Biennial surveys are carried out with education providers, alongside receipt and management of adhoc feedback.

Strategic priority 3: Ensure the organisation is fit for the future and is agile in anticipating and adapting to changes in the external environment

Strategic priority 4: Make better use of data, intelligence and research evidence to drive improvement and engagement

Policy development / implementation

We engage with HCPC and sector wide policy development related to and impacting the regulation of our professions. This includes development and implementation of standards, and influencing wider education policy (e.g. degree apprenticeships, higher education reform, profession specific changes).

Stakeholder engagement

We regularly engage with a wide range of education related stakeholders to inform and influence regulatory and wider sector developments. Examples of relationships we would expect to maintain and continually develop include those with The Council of Deans of Health, Health Education England, the Inter-Regulatory Education Group, the Quality Assurance Agency, and many other profession specific and home country organisations.

Continuous improvement

A regular audit of activities is carried out through established organisation wide processes managed by the Quality Assurance Department. This, in conjunction with regular case review and performance management processes within Department, contributes to continuous improvement of service, processes, guidance and communications.

Process / thematic reviews

Reviews are carried across the entire work of the department (annually) and specific reviews relating to processes and themes periodically. Recent examples include the Education data set 17-18 and, our review of the approval process and review of higher and degree apprenticeships.

Review of last year's performance

Education activities in the past year:

Objective 1: Operate and improve approval and monitoring processes.

This objective was met as follows:

- As of February 2020, we completed 49 of approval visits, received 276 annual monitoring audits, 213 annual monitoring declarations, held 9 assessment days, reviewed 165 major change notifications and 82 submissions, and 3 investigated concerns.
- We recruited and trained new visitors across a number professions and modalities and implemented online refresher visitor training, with three modules rolled out: approval process changes, annual monitoring, degree apprenticeships.
- We implemented changes to our approval process, including a new support pathway for new providers, and further enhancements to support the role of the Executive and Visitors. These changes are primarily designed to shift the burden of assessment earlier in the process, ensuring the education provider is clear around our requirements and where further work is needed to meet standards.
- We completed the Education Systems Development major project to implement further systems development to improve service and efficiency.

Objective 2: Review the principles underpinning the quality assurance approach.

This objective was met as follows:

- A working group was established and met between January-May 2019 to scope a high level approach to education quality assurance. Recommendations made by the group were considered by ETC and SMT in June 2019. Further work will be resourced in 2019-20 to carry out further elements of this work.

Objective 3: Implement the revised standards of education and training and the evidence base for annual monitoring.

- All approval processes held assessed new and existing programmes against the revised standards.
- Education providers submitting annual monitoring audits were required to map their programmes to the revised standards.
- Education providers were advised of our new monitoring requirements which enhanced our scrutiny of practice based learning and service user and carer development.
- A suite of guidance was developed and placed on the website providing clarity around key changes and our expectations of education providers.
- Webinars were delivered in October, the first for the organisation. The purpose was to communicate and engage with education providers around our annual monitoring requirements.

Objective 4: Revise and consolidate education process related guidance to align with the 'Digital First' strategy for the organisation.

- Communicated to education providers around the introduction of revised prescribing standards
- Collaborated with colleagues around the launch of podiatric surgery annotation, and implications for registrants, education providers and members of the public.
- Consolidated education web pages to include publication content where required, and decommissioned PDF publications previously used to explain operational processes.

Objective 5: Support regulatory changes and wider sector developments which impact on HCPC professions / annotations.

- Produced policy statements setting out approach to the assessment of SET 1 threshold, and how we work with professional bodies in the approval process.
- Successfully transferred SW/AMHP data to Social Work England and removed data from internal systems. Transitional processes managed in accordance with transfer agreements.
- Reviewed and reported on year 2 of our work to assess apprenticeship programmes.
- Reviewed our work to support the development and approval of podiatric surgery routes leading to annotation.

Work plan activities for next year

Education activities for the year ahead:

<i>Strategic priority</i>	<i>We will support this SP by...</i>	<i>In this financial year we will...</i>
<p><i>Improve our performance to achieve the Professional Standards Authority's Standards of Good Regulation (SP 1)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operating and improving our approval and monitoring processes. • Ensuring our staff and partners are equipped to perform their roles effectively. • Continuing to develop our risk based, data driven approach to the quality assurance of programmes. • Maintaining and supporting department systems used to manage information, stakeholder relations and approval and monitoring processes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete approval and monitoring activities as per the department's budgetary forecast. • Develop our use of Microsoft Dynamics and SharePoint systems through major project and internal development cycles to deliver 25% more efficiency in the operation of department processes. • Produce a cost-effective new visitor training package, which includes online and face to face learning. • Recruit and train up to 20 new visitors for priority areas, including independent prescribing and chiropody / podiatry. • Review our Education Officer induction processes to improve consistency in training new employees around key aspects of the role. • Develop 4 online learning packages and a suite of reference materials for visitors, prioritising flexible modes of learning to deliver messaging where possible. • Produce new operational guidance to support internal operations of systems and processes, to improve accessibility and understanding for employees. • Review and develop approvals and annual monitoring processes to embed, where appropriate, risk based assessment of institutions and

		<p>programmes, in line with the proposed new quality assurance principles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop our understanding of risk-based data sources of relevance and value to quality assuring institutions and programmes.
<p><i>Ensure our communication and engagement activities are proactive, effective and informed by the views and expectations of our stakeholders (SP 2)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using a multi-channel approach to our engagement with education stakeholders • Continuing to embed a 'Digital First' approach to the generation and dissemination of content and guidance for education providers. • Gathering feedback from our stakeholders to inform our performance and continued improvement. • Improving understanding amongst stakeholders around the expectations we have around engagement with us. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver at least 4 education webinars, with topics covering apprenticeships, new provider / profession pathway, and engagement through our monitoring processes. • Conduct a survey of all education providers and visitors to gather feedback on their experience of engaging with the quality assurance processes. • Publish regular content to the education provider hub, and produce quarterly updates directly to education providers, covering a range of sector related and regulatory topics. • Develop a suite of website materials for providers around when changes should be flagged to us for further review. • Provide step by step process flow information on the website where possible, to improve understanding of key milestones within quality assurance processes.
<p><i>Ensure the organisation is fit for the future and is agile in anticipating and adapting to changes in the</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding current trends and practices for the delivery of quality assurance in the education sector. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in and support working groups relevant to inform HCPC education standards and quality assurance and to support the wider educator sector. • Implement information sharing mechanisms within Microsoft Teams to enable more effective sharing of intelligence within the department.

<p><i>external environment</i> (SP 3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain flexibility in our approach to adapt appropriately to sector developments. 	
<p><i>Make better use of data, intelligence and research evidence to drive improvement and engagement</i> (SP 4)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing quality assurance outcomes we reach, to improve the effectiveness of the regulatory function. • Using data and systems to drive efficiency and capacity in our processes. • Engaging regularly across all four countries to influence and inform our quality assurance function. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on our outcomes from the 19-20 academic year and publish analysis and data set. • Review outcomes across 3 years of our work with apprenticeship programmes and disseminate findings to interested parties • Review the role of lay visitors, looking at more effective methods to embed service user perspectives into the approval and monitoring processes. • Understand the impact of the NPP pathway on staff, stakeholders and outcomes to identify further changes needed to improve approval process outcomes and stakeholder experiences. • Develop workload and capacity models for operational roles within the department.

Looking forward 2 years

A key priority over the next two financial years will be our work to build upon the Review of Education Quality Assurance work which is currently ongoing. The outcomes here, and any subsequent decisions taken by the Education and Training Committee will drive further changes made to our processes, and the way we engage with education providers and related organisations in the sector. Our approach to managing risk will be informed by this work also, and we will use this to feed into our prevention agenda, particularly around the use of data to inform the outcomes we reach. The questions of whether to charge fees for education related activities will also be considered further, as our strategic approach will dictate where we may feel it is appropriate to charge fees in the future.

We will also develop our processes to more readily adapt to the changing education environment. This will be informed through further engagement with key stakeholders across the sector, including our interface with organisations such as the Office for Students, professional bodies and workforce planners across the devolved nations.

These activities will ensure our quality assurance processes are suitably positioned to continue our primary function around the approval and monitoring of programmes. We will continue to invest in our people and will look at ways to support our roles more effectively, including consideration for the types of Executive roles we need to manage the complexity of work we expect to see in the future.

Risks

The department's risks detailed on the HCPC's risk register which can be found within the directorate work plan.