Education and Training Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the Education and Training Committee held in public on:

Date: Wednesday 9 September 2026

Time: 10am

Venue: Videoconference (Microsoft Teams)

Members: Katie Thirlaway (Chair)
Helen Gough
Carl Stychin
Helen White (from item 3)

Apologies: Rebekah Eglinton

In attendance:

Claire Amor, Executive Director of Corporate Affairs
Francesca Bramley, Governance Manager
Georgia Cross, Governance Officer
David Fell, Operational Manager - UK Registration and Contact Centre
Emma Greening, Head of Professional Liaison and Outreach
Richard Houghton, Head of Registration (until item 8)
Jamie Hunt, Head of Education
Thalia Lau, Student Representative
Tom Miller, Policy Manager (from item 8)
Patricia Morrissey, Head of Governance
Andrew Smith, Executive Director of Education, Registration and Regulatory Standards and Deputy Chief Executive
Allison Whitenack, Policy Lead
Anita Wilson, Education Manager

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1 Welcome and introduction

1.1 The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting.

2 Apologies for absence

2.1 Apologies were received from Rebekah Eglinton.

2.2 The meeting was declared quorate.

3 Approval of agenda

3.1 The Committee approved the agenda.

3.2 It was noted that item 10, artificial intelligence research update, would be considered in the private session in view of the preliminary nature of the findings being presented, and that a break would be taken between the public and private session.

4 Declaration of members' interests in relation to agenda items

4.1 No interests were declared.

5 Minutes of the Education and Training Committee meeting held in public on 3 June 2026

5.1 The Committee approved the minutes as an accurate record of its meeting held in public on 3 June 2026.

6 Matters arising

6.1 The Committee noted the matters arising from its previous meeting. The actions proposed for closure would be closed.

7 Registration Performance Report

7.1 The Head of Registration presented the report covering registration performance for the period May to July 2026 which showed continued good performance across main registration services.

7.2 The following key points were highlighted:

- The registration appeals service standard had not been met during the reporting period with capacity constrained by the limited number of eligible appeal panel Chairs. Current legislation limited appeal Chairs to Council members who were not members of the Education and Training

Committee (ETC). Ongoing Council recruitment would increase the pool of eligible chairs, and options for legislative change were also being explored.

- The report included key themes and outcomes of registration appeal panels during the first quarter of 2026-27.

- UK registration applications continued to be processed within a median of two to five working days during the reporting period.

- Performance against email and telephone enquiry service standards remained strong, with timely responses provided to registrants and applicants.

- Recent audits for contact centre call quality and management of readmission processes had both received a High/Medium assurance rating, providing assurance regarding the effectiveness of the processes in place.

7.3 The Committee noted the low percentage of appeals upheld and enquired if there was public awareness around the low success rate. It was confirmed that data was only available publicly through the registration reports, and that while the low rate of successful appeals provided assurance around the decision-making process, the process remained resource intensive. Demand was expected to continue, with technological advances potentially supporting appeal submissions.

7.4 The Committee discussed the legislative restrictions relating to the appointment of appeal panel Chairs and noted the resulting capacity challenges, with only three eligible Chairs currently available. As government support would be essential for legislative change, the HCPC had written to the Department of Health and Social Care seeking support for a number of discrete legislative changes, including three Section 60 orders, ahead of wider regulatory reform.

8 Education Performance Report

8.1 The Head of Education presented the performance report and highlighted that an overall key performance indicator (KPI) summary had been added to the title page to provide a clearer overview of performance.

8.2 The following key points were highlighted:

- A bottleneck in report production had impacted performance against a number of KPIs, with resource challenges within the team due to increasing complexity within assessments and wider changes across the education and training sector. Recruitment campaigns were underway to increase capacity and address these challenges.

- The revised standards of Education and Training (SETs) had recently been issued to education providers, professional bodies and other

stakeholders. No queries had yet been received following the communication, although further engagement and support activity was planned to assist the sector with implementation ahead of the September 2027 compliance deadline.

8.3 The Committee noted that the time taken to complete reports remained above the KPI target at over 72 days and questioned whether the KPI target was correctly positioned. The Head of Education reflected that the KPI remained appropriate, having been based on a legislative requirement and applied consistently across operational processes. The 72-day figure represented a median average and it was noted that many reports continued to be completed within the target timeframe. Delays in report production had been impacted by a condensed period of assessments, and opportunities to stagger assessments were being considered where possible whilst ensuring that programmes meeting the standards were approved in time for September starts.

8.4 The Committee discussed whether it was realistic to return to meeting the KPI in light of current activity and the additional work associated with implementation of the revised SETs. It was noted that, where possible, compliance assessments would be incorporated into existing operational processes, with the majority expected to be considered through existing performance review submissions. While this would add some complexity, it was not expected to result in a significant increase in the number of reports required. Additional resource was being introduced within the team, including the recruitment of an Education Quality Officer and a revised team structure from September 2027 to improve efficiency, accountability and workflow. It was acknowledged that current performance challenges were likely to continue in the short term, but that the additional resource and planned changes were intended to support a return to meeting the KPI.

8.5 The Committee discussed whether there were opportunities to streamline report writing processes considering the increasing complexity of education programmes and challenges with report completion times. It was noted that report writing was a common challenge across the sector and that Education Quality Officers completed a comprehensive induction programme to support report production. Opportunities to improve efficiency were being explored, including completing elements of reports earlier in the assessment process where possible.

9 English language proficiency: implementation

9.1 The Policy Manager presented the report, which reviewed the first full year of operation following implementation of the changes.

9.2 The following key points were noted:

- Evidence indicated that the changes had strengthened the robustness of requirements, and impacts identified were proportionate to the changes and policy objectives and broadly aligned with those anticipated through the equality impact assessment.

- A reduction in international applications had been identified. While the strengthened requirements may have contributed to this trend, there was no evidence that the changes to English language requirements were the sole case, with a range of external factors as outlined in the paper also influencing application numbers. Similar reductions had been seen across other healthcare regulators.

- Implementation of the changes had been operationally successful. Whilst a spike in applications had been experienced prior to the changes taking effect, processes had subsequently been refined, including training for colleagues within the International Registration team.

- Control and test groups were used to compare applicant cohorts before and after implementation of the changes. This enabled assessment of the impact on applicants whose primary qualifications were obtained in qualifying countries and those whose qualifications were obtained elsewhere.

9.3 The Committee was reassured by the data presented and recognised the challenge of maintaining a robust system without creating unnecessary barriers for applicants. It was noted that the review provided a sufficient evidence base to assess the effectiveness of the policy changes and that the revised requirements had now transitioned into business-as-usual activity. The impact of the policy would continue to be monitored through existing performance and registration data to identify any emerging trends or unintended consequences.

9.4 In response to a question, the Policy Manager advised that the current range of approved English language test providers was considered appropriate. The test provider approved following implementation of the policy changes accounted for a relatively small proportion of tests undertaken, and no significant issues had been identified. It was confirmed that the position would continue to be monitored and that any substantive developments would be reported back to the Committee.

9.5 The Committee discussed whether the impact of the revised English language proficiency requirements varied across professions, particularly where different standards or professional requirements applied. While this analysis had not yet been undertaken, existing monitoring and the performance dashboard would support further analysis of the impact by profession.

Action: The Policy Manager would undertake an analysis of the impact of the revised English language proficiency requirements by profession and share this analysis with Committee members.

9.6 Concerns raised by some applicants regarding dyslexia and the accessibility of the approved English language tests was discussed. While the HCPC did not prescribe specific adjustments that test providers must offer, accessibility considerations formed part of the assessment of test providers, and it was expected that approved providers make appropriate adjustments for applicants with additional needs.

9.7 The Committee discussed the qualifying countries list and noted that, whilst English may be widely used in some countries not included on the list, inclusion required robust evidence that English language proficiency could be demonstrated consistently within education and professional practice. It was noted that the list had been developed using evidence on English language use and remained under review, and that the HCPC remained open to considering additional countries where sufficient evidence was available.

10 Artificial intelligence research update

10.1 This item was considered during the private session of the meeting.

11 Revised standards of education and training – education quality assurance compliance assessment approach

11.1 The Head of Education presented the compliance assessment approach to the revised standards of education and training (SETs).

11.2 The Committee noted the following points:

- The compliance deadline for education providers and programmes to meet the new SETs was September 2027. A programme of support would be undertaken for stakeholders, including guidance, webinars and other engagement.

- The proposed compliance assessment approach had been designed to be proportionate, risk-based and achievable. This would include education providers providing a compliance declaration from by November 2027, updated institutional information by August 2028, and a full compliance assessment undertaken over a three-year period from the 2027-28 academic year. This would be done through existing monitoring processes where possible, and higher-risk education providers would be prioritised earlier in the assessment cycle.

- By August 2030, all approved education providers and programmes would have undergone a full assessment against the revised SETs, with regulatory action taken where compliance could not be demonstrated.

- Updates on compliance activity would be reported to ETC from November 2027, with implementation updates being reported through the performance report in the interim.

- The revised SETs represented a significant element of the HCPC's preventative regulatory approach. Effective education and training supported public protection and would remain a key focus for the Education team in its engagement with stakeholders.

11.3 The Committee discussed whether there would be any training implications for members of the Education and Training Panel arising from implementation of

the revised SETs. It was noted that the potential impact on panel members had not yet been specifically considered and would be explored further.

Action: The Head of Education and the Committee Chair would discuss the implications of the revised SETs for Education and Training Panel members.

11.4 The Committee discussed how the revised SETs compliance assessment would align with existing performance review cycles, and it was confirmed that around 65% of education providers were expected to undergo compliance assessment through existing performance review processes during the initial three-year implementation period. For the remaining providers, a separate compliance assessment process would be undertaken, and whilst this would involve a separate process, the compliance requirements would be the same for all education providers with only the timing of assessment differing.

11.5 It was suggested that a visual flowchart setting out the different compliance routes may be helpful, and it was agreed that this would be considered as part of the supporting materials developed for implementation.

Action: The Head of Education would consider developing a flowchart setting out the different compliance assessment scenarios for education providers.

12 Committee forward plan

12.1 The Committee noted the forward plan and noted that the proposed 2027 forward plan would be brought to the November meeting.

13 Resolution to move the meeting to private session

13.1 The Committee resolved that the remainder of the meeting would be held in private, because the matters being discussed related to matters which, in the opinion of the Chair, were confidential or the public disclosure of which would prejudice the effective discharge of the Committee's or Council's functions.

13.2 The meeting was briefly adjourned.

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