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MINUTES of the fourteenth meeting of the Registration Committee of the Health Professions Council held on Wednesday 5 November 2003 at Park House, 184 Kennington Park Road, London SE11 4BU

PRESENT :

Prof. R. Klem (Chairman)
Miss M. Crawford
Mr P. Frowen
Dr R. Jones
Mr I. Massey
Mr G. Sutehall

IN ATTENDANCE :

Miss L. Pilgrim, Secretary to the Committee
Mr M. Seale (from item 6), Registrar & Chief Executive
Dr P. Burley, Director of Education and Policy
Mr P. Baker, Finance Director
Miss S. Dawson, International Registration Grandparenting Manager
Miss C. Harkin, U.K. Registration Manager
Mr J. Bracken, Bircham Dyson Bell

ITEM 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from :- Prof. N. Brook, Mr C. Lea, Miss P. Sabine, Miss E. Thornton, Dr A. Van der Gaag and Prof. D. Waller

ITEM 2 APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The Committee approved the Agenda.

**ITEM 3 MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 10 SEPTEMBER 2003
AND 24 SEPTEMBER 2003**

The minutes of the meetings held on 10 September 2003 and 24 September 2003 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, with the following amendment :

- (a) The minutes of 24 September 2003 :
Item 3 "for between two to five years " . . . to read : " for between two and five years " .

ITEM 4 MATTERS ARISING

4.1 Language Competence

Dr Burley reported that the issue of language competence in relation to EU Directives had not been discussed in October 2003 as had been anticipated. He hoped to attend a meeting on 10 November 2003 which would provide an update on the present position.

Mr Bracken reported that the Registration Fees Rules had recently been debated in Parliament. At that debate the issue of language competence had been raised. The Minister had confirmed that language testing was a matter for employers and not for the regulator. The Council's Rules as drafted were correct. Mr Bracken said that the confirmed minutes from that debate would go to Council.

The Committee **AGREED** that the issue of language competence being a matter for employers should be drawn to the attention of all Trusts.

ACTION : LP

4.2 Lead Registration Assessors

The HPC Executive had implemented the process of registration assessor review days. The first of these had been for radiographers; at that review day the radiographers had appointed two lead assessors one for radiotherapy and one for diagnostic radiography. Each professional group would be asked to do the same at their review days.

The Committee was told that one of the issues raised by assessors was the establishment of a forum where they could share information; the Committee felt that this was an issue that would be raised by assessors across all the professions regulated by the Council. It was recommended that, following the assessor review days, the Executive should collate the common issues raised by the assessors across all the professions.

The Chairman referred to the members of the Committee who comprised the panels which considered issues revealed by an applicant's health or character reference. She felt that panel members would benefit more from attending the training days for practice committee partners rather than those arranged for registration assessors. It was **AGREED** that the secretary would inform the Committee panel members of the dates of the next practice committee training days. It was noted that these training

sessions would be run over two days. Council members would be encouraged to attend.

With respect to the registration assessor review days the Committee was encouraged to attend one of these; it was recommended that they attend a review day for a profession other than their own. The Chairman had attended the first of these assessor review days and had found it instructive.

ACTION: LP

4.3 **Applications from refugees**

It was confirmed that there was some basic information on the website about applications for registration from refugees.

4.4 **Guidance Notes**

It was reported that the Executive was in the process of revising these; any comments from Committee members should be sent to the secretary within the next week. It was **AGREED** that the secretary would e-mail all Committee members asking them to submit any suggested amendments.

ACTION: LP

4.5 **Any Other Business**

It was reported that the Order that would be drafted in connection with the regulation by the Council of the Operating Department Practitioners would include miscellaneous items; one of these items would be to amend the register to reflect the protected title of "Chiropodist and Podiatrist" and the replacement of the title "Medical Laboratory Technician" with "Biomedical Scientist".

ITEM 5 NOMINATION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN

With the Secretary in the Chair

5.1 The secretary invited nominations for the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

5.2 The following nominations were received :
For Chairman : Prof. R. Klem
For Vice Chairman : Miss P. Sabine.

5.3 Nominations would be presented to Council on 11 December 2003 for appointment.

With the Chairman in the Chair

ITEM 6 RETURN TO PRACTICE

- 6.1 The Committee considered and discussed the draft documents; it recommended various amendments.
- 6.2 The Committee felt that very clear instructions should be given to those who would be supervising :
- (a) " returners " to practice undertaking a period of supervised practice; and
 - (b) international applicants who might be asked to take a test of competence.

It was confirmed that this issue had been raised at the registration assessor review day.

It was **AGREED** that the Executive would draft guidelines for each category of supervisor. These papers would be presented to the Committee at its next meeting.

ACTION : LP

The meeting became inquorate with the departure of one of the Committee members. Prior to his departure it was **AGREED** that the Secretary would circulate to all Committee members any subsequent issues that required agreement.

ITEM 7 HEALTH REFERENCE FORM

- 7.1 The Chief Executive reported that he had discussed this matter with the President. There were several issues that needed to be explored and clarified; for example in relation to health and disability. The importance of communication about such issues with professional bodies and HEIs was highlighted. It was proposed that a meeting would be held at the end of January or in February. Representatives of various groups, for example disability groups and the General Medical Council, would be invited to speak at the meeting. Recommendations from the meeting would be put to Council. The Chairman of the Registration Committee and of the Health Committee would work closely with the Executive in facilitating the meeting.
- 7.2 As the meeting was inquorate this recommendation would be sent to all members of the Committee for their agreement.

ACTION : LP

ITEM 8 INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE TESTING SYSTEM (IELTS)

- 8.1 The Committee had previously agreed the relevant levels of the I E L T S that would satisfactorily demonstrate an applicant's English language proficiency.
- 8.2 The Committee was now being asked to consider and recommend in what other ways an applicant could demonstrate their proficiency in English to the required standard.

- 8.3 The Committee was told that the Test of English as a Foreign Language (T O E F L) was, after I E L T S, the test most commonly put forward by applicants seeking registration.
- 8.4 The Committee noted from the enclosed papers that the T O E F L score of 600 was equivalent to the I E L T S score of 7.0. The Committee recommended that this test be approved. The Committee also recommended that the computer T O E F L score of 250 should be approved, subject to confirmation that it included an oral communication element. The International Registration/Grandparenting manager would investigate and confirm this.
- 8.5 The Committee was of the view that, as there was a computer T O E F L test, most applicants should have access to the test.
- 8.6 The Committee noted that T O E F L scores did not appear to extend beyond the I E L T S score of 7.0 and that Speech & Language Therapists needed an I E L T S score of 8.0. The Committee recommended that Speech & Language Therapists seeking to demonstrate their English Language proficiency would need to obtain an I E L T S score of 8.
- 8.7 The Committee recommended that applicants seeking to demonstrate their English language proficiency would be required to submit evidence of having obtained the relevant I E L T S or T O E F L score. These would be the only two tests accepted by the Council; the situation would be reviewed if necessary.
- 8.8 In summary the Committee's recommendation would be :
- (1) That for those seeking to demonstrate their English language proficiency only the I E L T S and T O E F L tests would be acceptable.
 - (2) That the T O E F L score of 600 be accepted as equivalent to the I E L T S score of 7.0.
 - (3) That the Computer T O E F L score of 250 be accepted as equivalent to the I E L T S score of 7.0. However, this could only be accepted if it included an oral communication element. The International Registration/Grandparenting manager would investigate this.
 - (4) That the position would be reviewed if necessary.

As the meeting was inquorate these recommendations would be sent to all members of the Committee for their agreement.

ACTION : SD/LP

ITEM 9 COMMITTEE – PROCESS AND OUTPUT – CHAIRMAN'S PRESENTATION

The Committee and the Chief Executive were of the view that the Chairman's presentation adequately reviewed the work of the Committee to date.

ITEM 10 COURSE INFORMATION FORM

- 10.1 It was explained to the Committee that the Council was seeking to identify overseas courses which led to comparable qualifications to those obtained in the U.K. If a reasonable trend in the outcome for applicants completing a particular course could be identified the course would be presented to the Committee for endorsement as a course leading to a comparable qualification for the purposes of Registration. The Executive was compiling a list of the educational institutions from which the majority of applicants had graduated.
- 10.2 The Executive would also be establishing who the competent authority was in Europe for each of the professions regulated by the HPC. Once the list was compiled it would be put to the Committee.
- 10.3 It was recommended that the Executive contact the professional bodies as they were likely to have information about comparability of qualifications and also had links with other regulators.

ACTION : SD/LP

ITEM 11 MINUTES OF THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 24 SEPTEMBER 2003

The Committee noted these.

ITEM 12 REGISTRATION ASSESSORS – REVIEW DAYS

- 12.1 The Chairman reported that she had attended the first of these days. It had been helpful and instructive. Some of the issues raised were likely to be common across all the professions.
- 12.2 The Chief Executive said that a meeting of partners would be organised so that all partners could exchange and share information. The President had been agreeable to this.
- 12.3 It was **AGREED** that the Secretary would e-mail the dates of the other assessor review days to the Committee; each member could then indicate if they wanted to attend one of the days. It was recommended that they avoid attending the review day for their own profession.
- 12.4 The Chairman reported the concern among radiographers that the published Standards of Proficiency (SoPs) were the incorrect ones. It was a particular problem for radiographers as a significant section of the radiography SoPs was inaccurate.
- 12.5 It was confirmed that the correct version of the SoPs was now on the HPC website. The Communications Department was also considering using erratum slips.
- 12.6 The Chairman said that the issue was a fundamental one.

12.7 It was **AGREED** that the correct version of the SoPs would be sent to the radiographers with their renewal notices in December. It was emphasised that it had to be made clear that the version was not a revision but was rather a correction of the earlier error.

ACTION : CH/LP

ITEM 13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

ITEM 14 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

14.1 The next meetings would be held on Wednesday 28 January 2004 at 2.00 p.m and Wednesday 10 March 2004 at 10 a.m.

14.2 The Committee provisionally agreed the following additional dates for 2004/2005 :

14	May	2004
20	July	2004
13	September	2004
4	November	2004
8	February	2005

14.3 However, these dates were subject to those agreed by the Education & Training Committee (ETC) at its meeting on 19 November 2003.

CHAIRMAN

HPC\Minutes\Minutes of 14th meeting of HPC Registration Cttee 5 November 2003