

Hearing aid dispenser education seminar 2010

Introduction

This document provides a summary of all the common questions which delegates asked at our Hearing Aid Dispenser education seminar delivered in autumn 2010. If you require any further information regarding any of the information contained within this document please contact us at education@hpc-uk.org.

Frequently asked questions

Who is the professional body for hearing aid dispensers?

There are a number of organisations who currently represent hearing aid dispensers. The biggest of these is the British Society of Hearing Aid Audiologists (BSHAA). The society provides a programme of continuous and mandatory ongoing education to ensure that its members' experience and knowledge is maintained and developed. A programme of continuous professional development is required by the society and has been developed to achieve this objective.

For further information please visit the BSHAA website: www.bshaa.com

Other organisations also representing hearing aid dispensers include:

- Association of Independent Hearing Healthcare Professionals
- British Academy of Audiology
- Royal National Institute for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People and Hearing Concern

Who investigates international applicants when they apply to the Register?

The Registration Department has a team that deals specifically with international applications. After the application has been checked internally, it is sent to our profession specific registrant assessors.

Registrant Assessors work in pairs. They consider each application on an

individual basis and look at a number of elements – initially comparing the level and the content of the training course with reference to the Standards of Proficiency. If they identify shortfalls they look to see if these have been made up through post qualification training and post qualification experience.

You can find out more about the application process for international applicants by following the link below:

www.hpc-uk.org/apply/international/

When does the education provider receive the SETs mapping document?

The SETs mapping document is available to download at any point from our website however if you send us a visit notification form you will receive an introductory email including the SETs mapping document within 48 hours.

The SETs mapping document is available by following the link below:

www.hpc-uk.org/education/providers/download/

What is the implication to a student if the HPC approves a programme subject to conditions or if approval is withdrawn?

The HPC approval process does not allow pre-registration education programmes to be retrospectively approved. As such if students enrol on a programme before the programme is formally approved by the Education and Training Committee, these students would not be eligible to apply for registration.

If a programme is already approved it has ongoing approval until such time as the Education and Training Committee formally withdraws approval. Therefore if a programme is subject to an approval visit, and the visitors' recommendation is that the programme should be re-approved subject to conditions, this would have no implications for students.

If the Education and Training Committee decided to withdraw approval from a programme the implications for students on that programme would be considered and taken into account as part of the decision.

Do visitors visit for a major change? The word 'visitors' is confusing for education providers.

The major change process is a documentary process where an HPC visitor or visitors assess the change(s) against our standards. We use the term visitor to describe a partner we have appointed to visit, approve and monitor education and training programmes for the professions we regulate. It is

possible that one of the recommended outcomes from a major change would be a visit, in which case the HPC would undertake an approval visit to the programme.

You can find out more about the major change process by following the link below:

www.hpc-uk.org/education/providers/majorchange/

Does the HPC provide any guidance on the style of documents to submit for the approval, annual monitoring and major change processes?

We do not give guidance on the style of documents to submit however we do give guidance on the types of documents you need to submit for our processes. You can find details of the document requirements in supplementary information for education providers that support each process. You will also be informed via email and in writing when you engage with our processes.

You can access our supplementary information publications by following this link:

www.hpc-uk.org/education/providers/download/

If visitors decide that a programme leader is not appropriately qualified or experienced (in line with standard 3.4) what impact would this have on the programme leader?

The purpose of having this SET is to ensure that there a person in place that has appropriate qualifications and experience for the programme to be led effectively. If we decide that a programme leader is not appropriately qualified or experienced the reasons for doing so would be reasoned and clearly articulated in the visitors' report. We would require further evidence from the education provider of how the programme leader is appropriate to lead the programme.

The effect on the programme leader would be entirely dependent on the individual programme and circumstances involved. This would determine how and to what extent the education provider would be required to make changes to respond to the condition under this SET and therefore the impact to the programme leader would vary accordingly.

Can you provide further guidance on what HPC considers to be a significant change? Do we need to tell the HPC about every single change?

When a change occurs to an approved programme we expect the programme team to consider the impact of the change on how the SETs and SOPs continue to be met. However, the HPC will not need to be notified of every change to a programme. If a change does not have an impact on how a programme meets our standards it can be reported to us in annual monitoring. A programme team should only notify us of changes to a programme that change the overall way in which a programme meets our standards or the way a programme is recorded on our website.

To help you make an assessment of the impact of a change on our standards, we have provided examples of common changes to programmes and how they can impact each of the SETs in appendix two of the publication - [‘Supplementary information for education providers’](#).

If we make changes that enhance the programme and this occurs in the year between audits do we need to inform the HPC?

Changes which enhance how an approved programme continues to meet the SETs would usually be assessed through an annual monitoring audit. This is as long as the changes to enhance the programme in one area do not affect how the programme meets the SETs in another area. So for example a change to increase the curriculum content relating to standards of conduct, performance and ethics would be considered minor as long as other learning outcomes relating to standards of proficiency are not displaced.

What support/training do visitors receive to ensure parity across the approval process?

Visitors make up one of a range of “Partners” who provide the expertise the HPC needs for its decision-making. The visitors’ role is to give expert advice and contribute to discussions and decision making as directed by the Council or relevant committee. A visitor receives comprehensive training for their role prior to taking part in the approval process and their performance is monitored through a partner peer review system. The visitors are also aided by an education executive throughout.

The education executive is normally a member of our Education Department and will have experience of visits to all professions across a range of education providers and locations. The role of the education executive is to brief the visitors on process and the particulars of each visit and to guide the visitors in their questioning. The executive also ensures that HPC policies and regulations are adhered to and ensures that high standards of professionalism are maintained at all times during the approval process.

Are visitors who the HPC consider to be ‘educationalist’ always from higher education institutions?

No. The HPC approves pre-registration training and education programmes from a variety of education providers, not all of whom are higher education institutions (HEI’s). HPC visitors who are considered to be ‘educationalists’ are similarly from a variety of different education providers and are not necessarily from a higher education institution. These visitors have significant experience of the type of professional education and training necessary for students to be eligible to apply to the Register.

If a member of the public decided to dispense, at what point would that person be in breach of the law?

By offering protection of function the HPC ensures that only hearing aid dispensers will be able to assess, test or prescribe with a view to supplying a hearing aid to, or for the use of retail sale or hire. Someone who is not a hearing aid dispenser would be in breach of the law as soon as they assessed, tested or prescribed with a view to supplying a hearing aid to, or for the use of, an individual by way of retail, sale or hire. There will, however, be exempted groups from protection of function namely; students on approved HPC pre-registration training programmes and ENT surgeons on the GMC specialist register.

Would NHS students becoming Audiologists, studying on an HPC approved programme need to apply to the register?

No. The HPC have exempted students on approved pre-registration training programmes from protection of function. Therefore students on an approved programme leading to eligibility to apply to the Register are exempt from protection of function regardless of their eventual employment. However, upon successful completion of an approved programme an individual must register with us before they can begin practising under a protected title or undertaking a protected function.

What if a person does screen testing but not dispensing, do they need to register with the HPC?

A person screen testing would only have to register with the HPC if the screen testing they were undertaking was with a view to supply a hearing aid to, or for the use of, an individual by way of retail, sale or hire.