



Accreditation Board Annual Report

Academic Year 2008 –2009

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Overview of the academic year 2008-09

Number of:

Abbreviated Statement of Intent: approved to proceed to renewal of accreditation event x 1
Ditto: submitted and awaiting consideration: x1

Full Submission Documents scrutinised x 1
Initial Accreditation events held x 1
Successful accreditation events x 1 provisional accreditation with conditions to be met

Carried forward: 2008 Accreditation outcome confirmed when board conditions met x 1

Annual Review Reports scrutinised and board review visits carried out: 5
Continuing accreditation confirmed following annual review x 5

Follow up visits to ascertain board conditions have been met x 2

Accreditation Board meetings held x 4

The chair of the board continues as a member of the Finance & General Purposes Committee, the Education Committee and EHTPA Council, and is a Director of the EHTPA.

Please refer to the EHTPA website for an up-to-date list of institutions offering EHTPA accredited programmes.

Other matters of note

Revisions to the management of the Accreditation Board/Accreditation Process

During the year in question changes have been made to the ways in which board responsibilities are organised and managed. Meetings are now normally held 4 times per annum instead of six, although there is the opportunity to hold an additional meeting if necessary. At the start of 2009 the number of days committed to the role of Accreditation Co-ordinator (AC), supporting the work of the Chair/Panels, were reduced from 40 to 20 per annum. In consequence the Chair of the board assumed some of the responsibilities formerly undertaken by the AC. Additionally the role of Accreditation Facilitator was revised: instead of one named post-holder liaising with all institutions at a general level, the need for facilitation will be determined on an institution by institution basis and one board member will be allocated by the Chair to provide necessary guidance.

Core Accreditation Board Documentation

The work to review and update board core documents is an ongoing process. Documents and other key information are accessible on the EHTPA website - follow the "Standards" link.

Changes to Board Membership

Paul Lowe (Educationalist) and Dr. Deepa Apte (Ayurvedic Practitioners Association) stood down during the course of the year. My thanks go to them, and to all other board and non-board colleagues who have given so much of their time and expertise to facilitate and support our work.

Issues arising from accreditation /annual review

- **Minimum Entry Level to the Profession**

The low number of students recruited to post graduate level CHM accredited programmes is a cause for concern. It is worth clarifying here that post graduate level study is *not* an EHTPA requirement for accreditation: the decision to offer a post graduate qualification has been made by institutions based upon their own analysis of demand. The board **recommends** that this be considered further by the Education Committee

- **External Examiner Reports**

The quality of some examiners' reports has been a cause of concern for board members: the brevity (or indeed the complete absence) of comment on clinical standards in some instances is very worrying given the importance of such external scrutiny in providing reassurance about professional/clinical competence. **College and university colleagues are reminded that the board requires that External Examiners comment on clinical as well as academic matters.** Please refer to the EHTPA website for details – follow the “Standards” link to “Supplementary Guidance”.

As a qualification awarded from an institution offering an accredited programme is one indicator of Fitness to Practise it is important that practice issues are afforded sufficient attention within university/college quality systems. It is surprising to note that some reports considered less than satisfactory by the board appear to be accepted without comment by the institution/university concerned. The Chair of the board is able to provide further advice to institutions or individual examiners if required and will welcome requests if assistance is needed.

- **Dispensary Audit**

The practises identified during visits to some institutions' dispensaries generated considerable comment from expert panel members. There is evidence that Professional Association good practice guidelines are not always being adopted and board members have been involved in providing quite extensive follow up and guidance.

In light of this the board **recommends** that the Education Committee devise an Annual Dispensary Self-Audit Tool to be adopted by all institutions seeking accreditation/renewal of accreditation.

It is intended that submission of completed self-audit documentation will become incorporated into the accreditation and annual review process, and will be followed up during board visits.

- **Annual Review**

I reported last year on the variable quality of annual reports submitted by institutions offering EHTPA accredited programmes, ranging from excellent to less than satisfactory. It is good to be able to report an improvement in the quality of reports this year: the introduction of a standardised format across all institutions has helped enormously. However, more remains to be done by institutions in relation to :

1. The conversion of many individual part-time teaching staff hours into full time equivalent staffing numbers.
Calculating the number of full time equivalent staff (37.5 hours = one full time staff) is necessary in order to make year on year comparisons within the institution in relation to overall student numbers.
2. Analysis of completion and attrition rates. Data and accompanying critical comment is required for the number of student withdrawals prior to completion of the programme, any deferrals, failures on completion of the programme, and classification of degrees awarded.

In light of helpful feedback received from institutions the board will consider ways and means of refining the system further.

- **Development of Board Guidelines for Conjoint Validation and Accreditation Events**

These have recently been revised and are available from the Chair of the board.

The principle underpinning such guidelines is to ensure that the conjoint validation and accreditation process:

- meets all of the requirements of both the university and EHTPA,
- provides clarity of roles and responsibilities for all parties involved,
- minimises duplication of workload for institutions seeking validation and accreditation of their award,
- results in clearly reported validation and accreditation outcomes to the validating institution and accreditation board.

It is not sufficient simply to notify the board of the date of an agreed university validation event and expect an accreditation panel to be convened and follow predetermined university procedures.

Commendations for the attention of staff in educational institutions

- Evidence of explicit teaching and learning strategies for adult learners in both clinical and classroom settings
- Staff appraisal that is clearly linked to staff development programmes
- Staff development opportunities systematically afforded to clinical staff
- Reorganisation of services to promote multi disciplinary sharing of expertise and resources

Developmental Points for the attention of staff in educational institutions

- Involve the EHTPA at a much earlier stage in revalidation and/or renewal of accreditation deliberations
- Ensure that External Examiner reports pay due attention to clinical standards
- Critically review dispensary practises, ensuring patient safety issues are paramount
- Analyse attrition rates and make comment on these in annual reports to the board
- Continue to refine criterion referenced clinical assessment linked to learning outcomes rather than a "pass/fail" task orientated approach
- Consider offering qualified herbalists access to individual modules as part of their Continuing Professional Development.

Summary

This year the number of new institutions seeking accreditation for the first time has fallen and the workload of the board has stabilised. A number of issues arising from the work of the board during the year have been identified in the body of this report and we will continue to work alongside institutions to address them.

In addition, two recommendation have been made to the Education Committee given concern over some dispensary practices and the failure of some institutions to recruit sufficient students to already accredited CHM programmes.

In the coming year it will be important to continue to refine our systems in readiness for regulation whilst promoting and maintaining both clinical and academic standards. To do this requires us to work in partnership with staff of institutions, professional associations and individual practitioners as safety of the public is a board priority, a responsibility we all share, and one in which we all have an important part to play.

Lynn Copcutt,
Independent Chair
EHTPA Accreditation Board
August 2009