

**Department of Education & Policy**

**Part-time programmes**

**Executive Summary and Recommendations**

**1. Introduction**

The department has received a number of requests in writing from Education Providers wishing to provide a part-time route for an already established full-time programme.

**2. Decision**

**The Committee is asked to consider:**

(i) whether the addition of a part time route constitutes a major amendment to a programme which would require an HPC visit or whether approval of a part-time route could be given by correspondence provided the Education Providers submit documentation detailing how all the SETs will be met for the part-time programme.

(ii) should a part-time route to a programme be tabled at an Approvals Visit should the HPC Visitors be expected to consider this route at the same time as considering a full-time programme.

**3. Background information**

The expectation from the HEIs proposing a part-time route to a programme that has already been given HPC approval for the full-time route is that this is not a significant change to their programme.

At a recent visit to an HEI the HPC Visitors were asked to consider a part-time route without having been informed of this in advance. The Education Provider believed that the information relating to the part-time programme had been incorporated in the documentation for the full-time programme. There was some mention of the part-time route in the documentation although this was very limited. At the start of the Approval Visit it was unclear to both the Visitors and the HPC Executive whether the HEI was expecting both routes to be approved. The Visitors suggested that the HEI removed the approval of the part-time programme from the agenda since the start date for the programme would be 2007 and it was felt that the programme team required more time to prepare their documentation. The HEI was advised that to approve the part-time programme would have involved setting many conditions and a report of these would have been in the public domain.

**4. Resource implications**

If approval for part-time programmes can be given by correspondence Registrant members or Visitors will be required to consider the proposals.

## **5. Financial implications**

A major amendment to a programme requires HPC Visitors to attend the HEI to inspect the resources and ascertain from the programme team how the academic and pastoral care needs of part-time students would be met.

## **6. Background papers**

None

## **7. Appendices**

None