

## Summary of the main review outcomes

### Subject provision and overall aims

Nursing, midwifery, health visiting, occupational therapy, physiotherapy and radiography programmes at the University of Beeston were reviewed in the academic year 2001-02. Judgements were made about the academic and practitioner standards achieved and the quality of the learning opportunities provided.

The review covered the following programmes:

- Pre-Registration DipHE Nursing (Adult);
- Pre-Registration DipHE Nursing (Mental Health);
- BSc (Hons) Pre-Registration Nursing;
- BSc (Hons) Pre-Registration Midwifery;
- BSc (Hons) Community Health Care Nursing;
- BSc (Hons) Pre-Registration Occupational Therapy;
- BSc (Hons) Pre-Registration Physiotherapy;
- BSc (Hons) Pre-Registration Diagnostic Radiography;
- BSc (Hons) Pre-Registration Therapeutic Radiography;
- Postgraduate Certificate/Diploma/MSc Radiography;
- Postgraduate Certificate/Diploma/MSc Medical Ultrasound;
- MSc Clinical Practice;
- MSc Health Care Practice; and
- MSc Physiotherapy.

### Academic and practitioner standards

Overall, the reviewers have confidence in the academic and practitioner standards achieved by the programmes in nursing, midwifery, health visiting, occupational therapy, physiotherapy and radiography at the University of Beeston.

Strengths include:

- the learning outcomes for nursing are in line with the School's aims, meet Nursing and Midwifery Council competency requirements, reflect the *Subject benchmark statements* appropriately and articulate well with the national qualifications framework;
- the MSc route to physiotherapy professional registration is one of only a very small number available in the UK and is innovative and demanding in its design, although conventional in its content;
- the curricula in midwifery foster reflective practice to produce graduates who meet the needs of employers and are able to work effectively in a changing NHS environment with a commitment to research;
- community practice teachers in health visiting are involved in providing feedback to the School to ensure that the curricula are current and address NHS needs;
- there is ample evidence that the assessment process in occupational therapy is being managed fairly and effectively;
- students receive feedback on their examination performance in radiography, which is unusual and valuable;

- in all subjects, students demonstrated the acquisition of relevant scientific knowledge and the ability to apply this in the clinical environment. They are successful in integrating theory and practice, and in obtaining employment;
- in radiography, standards match *Subject benchmark statements* and the requirements of the Joint Validation Committee, Health Professions Council and College of Radiographers;
- in all subjects, the achievements of students are broadly in line with the expectations and application of practice of the emerging health professions framework.

**Issues include:**

- the rationale for the six-credit modules within the University's modular scheme is not evident and their value to the BSc programme in physiotherapy is questionable;
- there has been some criticism by external examiners that wider contemporary issues in occupational therapy are not sufficiently addressed
- in a few instances in nursing, theoretical assessment does not measure the achievement of all stated module learning outcomes, while specific marking criteria for individual assignments are not used across all of the provision;
- in midwifery, there is not always good linkage between assessment design and learning outcomes of modules, and marking criteria are not a standard feature,
- the good practice in the moderation of assessments in radiography is somewhat countered by the considerable burden on staff that this brings about, leading to a delay of six weeks before feedback on assessments is received by students, negating its formative function;

**Quality of learning opportunities**

**Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching and learning is approved, but:

- in the absence of a coherent learning and teaching strategy, it is not possible to confirm that the School's existing procedures enable teaching and learning to be effectively monitored;
- in view of problems with nursing student lecture attendance, programme committees may wish to consider a more proactive stance to ensure compliance with NMC standards and European directives;
- peer observation of teaching is not consistently practised and the School will wish to accord its establishment a high priority.

**Strengths include:**

- progressive development of each student is successfully monitored through the students' professional portfolios;
- there are examples of innovative delivery in some modules and some examples of good practice are disseminated effectively;
- the use of innovative information technology teaching is being encouraged, though its development at present appears to be the result of individual initiative rather than reflecting a coherent School strategy.
- frameworks to enable interprofessional learning to take place are being developed although, at present, there are only occasional interprofessional learning opportunities for undergraduate students;

- there is good evidence that students in placement are required to apply their knowledge and to reason clinically;
- teaching is informed by lecturers' academic background and clinical experience, and is enhanced by staff development. Effective teaching partnership exists between the WDC and the School.

## **Student progression**

The quality of student progression is commendable:

- students found the range of pre-admission information and activity particularly helpful;
- the School's recruitment is in line with broader University strategy and is committed to widening access;
- a high proportion of students from ethnic minorities reflects the local population and the diversity of patients that they encounter during clinical placement;
- induction for students is clear, informative and concise;
- a large majority of students progress successfully and complete their programme although, in keeping with national trends, attrition rates are highest in radiography;
- a significant feature of the undergraduate programmes in nursing, midwifery and physiotherapy is the high quality of degree results;
- the quality of and commitment to academic support is variable, consistently good in some subjects but dependent on individual personalities in others;
- students are consistently well supported in practice;
- the University through its Student Services provides additional, well-documented support for students with special learning needs.

The quality of student progression for pre-registration DipHE nursing programmes is approved, but

- regulations for these students should be revised to ensure that equal opportunities are offered to all nursing students completing level 1.

## **Learning resources and their effective utilisation**

The quality of learning resources and their effective utilisation is commendable:

- learning resource opportunities in general match the intended learning outcomes;
- the staff:student ratio is favourable;
- all academic staff hold an appropriate range of qualifications;
- current teaching facilities are, in most cases, sound;
- in clinical placements the quality of access to effective learning resources is variable and some students reported a lack of adequate training because some of their placement mentors were unable to attend the staff training sessions and meetings;
- students have access to excellent library and study facilities on campus;

- student and staff access to electronic means of communication is satisfactory;
- every effort is made by the University to progress and develop learning resources in line with NHS development.

The quality of learning resources and their effective utilisation for the BSc (Hons) Pre-Registration Occupational Therapy programme are approved, but

- the occupational therapy programme does not have sufficient placements available in the vicinity of Beeston.

### **Summary of practice**

- the School has successfully integrated clinical work into the curriculum. Practice placement experience allows students to show intellectual progression and provides a vehicle for the integration of theory and practice;
- clinical staff in all subject areas said that they were well supported by their managers, and that appropriate staff development opportunities are in place;
- students have the opportunity to experience a variety of practice areas and to work with other professions while on placement, thereby promoting interprofessional learning;
- scrutiny of student work demonstrated acquisition of relevant scientific knowledge and the ability to apply this in the clinical environment;
- students are well prepared for placement and well supported through their practice-based learning experience;
- learning resources in practice settings are of variable quality, with some areas well resourced, while others are less than satisfactory.

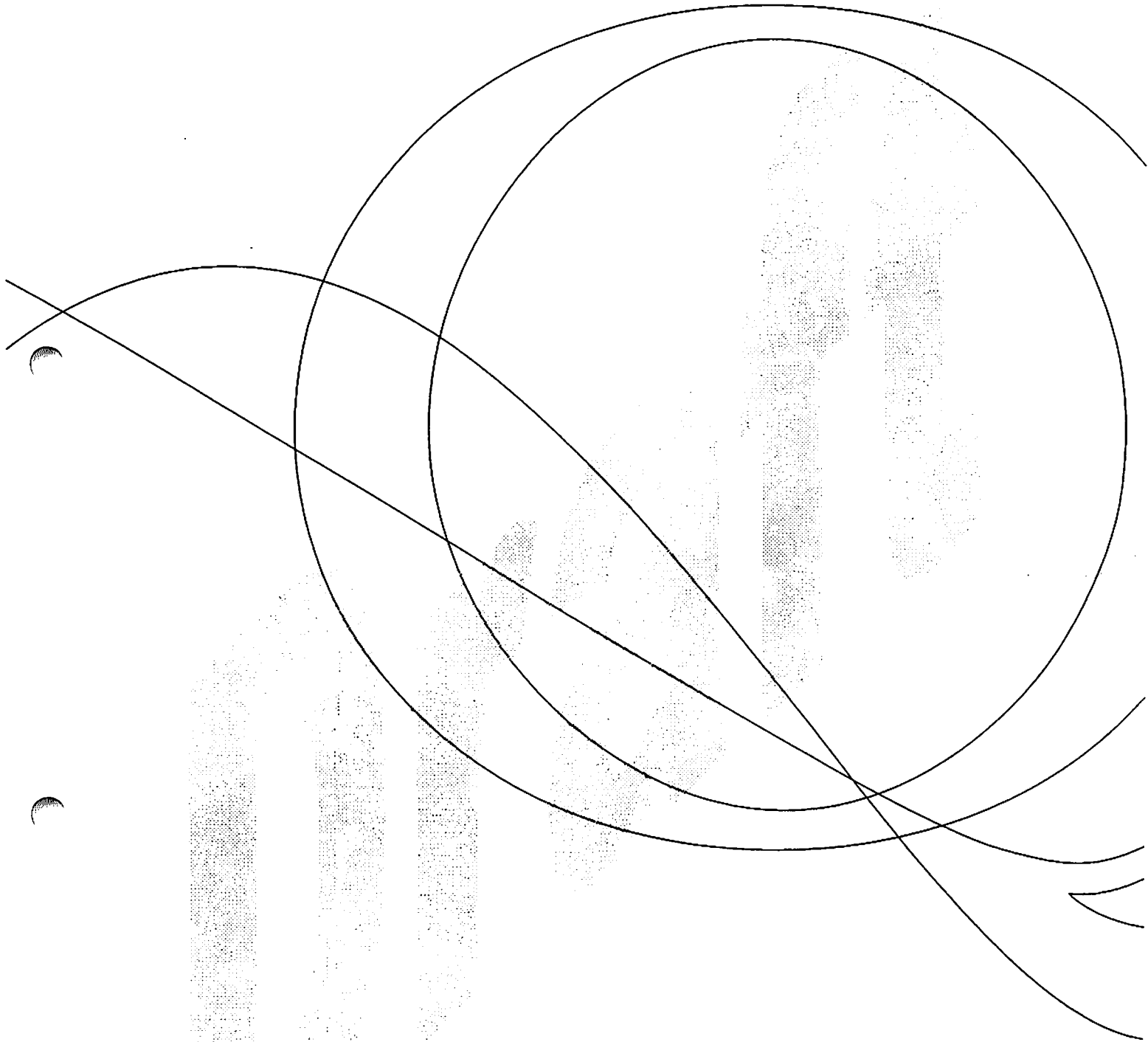
### **Maintenance and enhancement of quality and standards**

The School's senior management team is supported by the robust and effective framework of University policies, regulations and procedures for the management, maintenance and enhancement of quality. The effective partnership between the University and the Ashburton WDC has also led to successful and innovative academic partnership arrangements with NHS Trusts to enhance existing and future curricula and interprofessional teaching and learning opportunities. The annual programme review system leading to action plans is both active and effective and has been instrumental in ensuring comparable learning experiences for students across the range of programmes. While student evaluative comment across the provision is generally positive, their views at subject and course level rely on informal mechanisms that vary in their effectiveness. Through all of the comprehensive quality assurance procedures in place, there is demonstration of openness and responsiveness to feedback that gives the reviewers full confidence in the ability of the University to maintain and enhance academic standards.



Promoting higher quality

**The Quality Assurance Agency  
for Higher Education**



**Prototype reviews of health profession programmes**

**QAA Evaluation Report**

## Executive Summary

During 2002, the Agency conducted six prototype reviews of programmes of nursing, midwifery, health visiting, and allied health professions in six Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)/ Workforce Development Confederations (WDCs) in England. The six HEIs represented a range of city/rural settings and had previously been subject reviewed, the provision judged to be in good order. Two HEIs had a range of provision within nursing, two had a range of allied health professions provision across four of the seven professions, and two had mixed nursing/allied health professions. In total 70 programmes were reviewed, of which 38 were pre-registration programmes at Diploma/Degree level, 18 were post-registration at Diploma/Degree level, and 14 were postgraduate.

The work has been done under contract with the Department of Health (DH), which is working in partnership with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), the Health Professions Council (HPC) and WDCs.

The prototype reviews have been based on the Agency's Handbook for Academic Review (2000) except that:

- they include scrutiny of practice as well as HEI-based learning;
- reviewers are drawn from practice as well as academic backgrounds;
- they use key government initiatives such as national service frameworks as points of reference;
- they focus on the interprofessional opportunities in multiprofessional health care provision; and
- they operate on behalf of all stakeholder groups.

A prototype handbook was developed and used throughout the project: *Prototype Handbook for Academic Review of Health Profession Programmes (19 November 2001)*.

In keeping with the established QAA evaluation framework (2001), the QAA undertook a detailed evaluation of the prototypes and review method drawing on a number of data sources and activities.

The results of the evaluation indicated that the prototype method was successful in reaching judgements on academic and practitioner standards, and the quality of learning opportunities. There was a high level of expressed satisfaction with the method from all those participating in the prototypes. The method was considered to be an appropriate approach for the review of NHS-funded health care provision and it met the aims set out in the prototype review handbook. The prototype review method enabled interprofessional education to be considered fully as well as recognising practice as an integral part of the provision. Visits to practice strengthened the evidence base for the judgements.

**Drawing upon the experience and knowledge of reviewers from practice backgrounds as well as academics ensured that professional and statutory regulatory bodies, and employers' needs/requirements were considered throughout.**

**In conclusion the review method offers a real opportunity to integrate and streamline the quality assurance mechanisms in NHS-funded nursing, midwifery, health visiting, and allied health professions educational provision.**

Executive summary.....	i
Table of contents.....	iii
Introduction.....	1
Background.....	1
The prototype reviews.....	3
Evaluation approach - data sources.....	5
Evaluation results.....	7
The Handbook.....	7
Schedule of visits.....	7
Self-Evaluation Document.....	8
Preliminary meeting with HEIs.....	8
Provision of documentation.....	9
Visits to practice placements.....	9
Judgements.....	10
Exemplary features.....	11
Reports.....	12
Review teams.....	13
Allocation of review time.....	13
Size of teams.....	13
Selection of reviewers.....	13
Reviewer responsibility.....	13
Reviewers skills.....	14
Review co-ordinators.....	14
Payment of reviewers.....	15
Subject review facilitators.....	15
Agency support.....	15
Information communication technology.....	15
Training.....	16
Subject specialist reviewers.....	16
Review co-ordinators.....	17
Subject review facilitators.....	17
Placement review facilitators.....	17
Higher education institutions.....	17
Conclusions.....	18
Recommendations.....	19



## Introduction

1. This report outlines the findings of Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education's (The Agency) evaluation of the Academic Review of Health Profession Programmes commissioned by the Department of Health (DH) in partnership with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), the Health Professions Council (HPC) and NHS Workforce Development Confederations (WDCs), and undertaken by the Agency. The prototype reviews were conducted in six higher education institutions in England between February and July 2002.
2. This evaluation will contribute to discussions, which will inform the DH in the development of 'Major Review'; the process under which all NHS funded programmes in England will be reviewed during the period 2003 to 2006. The report is intended to encourage debate about major review and the roles of each stakeholder in the context of integrating and streamlining the procedures for monitoring quality.
3. The DH commissioned an independent external evaluation of the prototypes reviews, this may be found on the DH's web site in December 2002.
4. The Agency's report begins by setting the context in which the prototype was undertaken, gives details of the reviews, the review method and evaluation process, before outlining the results, recommendations and conclusions.

## Background

5. The National Health Service (NHS) currently has an annual budget of some £3 billion for learning and personal development of its workforce<sup>1</sup>. A substantial amount of this (£1 billion) is spent on nursing, midwifery, health visiting and allied health profession education provision in higher education, largely through contracts between local WDCs and higher education institutions (HEIs). The NHS funds tuition costs, as well as student support costs, for pre-registration diploma/degree programmes. Contracts also cover a large programme of post-registration provision.
6. In 2000, the NHS Plan put forward a radical agenda for modernising education, training and development, acknowledging that learning and development is key to delivering the Government's vision of patient centred care in the NHS<sup>2</sup>. The workforce must be fit for practice, fit for award and fit for purpose. The Plan describes the need for regulatory bodies, employers, education providers and professional bodies to collaborate to ensure that the quality of education is continuously improved in line with changes in health care and increasing public expectations about professional practice<sup>3</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> Department of Health (2002) *Funding Learning and Development for the Healthcare Workforce*. London: HMSO p2.

<sup>2</sup> Department of Health (2001) *Working Together – Learning Together' A Framework for Lifelong Learning for the NHS*. London: HMSO pvii

<sup>3</sup> Department of Health (2001) *Working Together – Learning Together' A Framework for Lifelong Learning for the NHS*. London: HMSO p25

7. Healthcare education (nursing, midwifery, health visiting and allied health profession) in England is currently being delivered in a period of rapid and continued change. Funding has moved from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) to the DH. There has been a significant increase in student intakes and more are planned. Benchmark Statements, commissioned by the DH in partnership with the NMC, HPC and WDCs, have been produced by the Agency to provide a means of describing the nature and characteristics of programme of studies and training, and outlining the attributes and capabilities that those possessing such qualifications should be able to demonstrate<sup>4</sup>. Benchmark statements have been developed, within a shared framework, for healthcare programmes covering eleven professions.

8. Two UK wide regulatory bodies are responsible for setting and maintaining standards of professional training, performance and conduct for the NHS funded provision in nursing, midwifery, health visiting and allied health profession education. In the context of higher education they ensure that programmes are adequate to prepare newly qualified practitioners as *fit for practice*. The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) (regulating 3 healthcare professions), and the Health Professions Council (HPC) (regulating twelve healthcare professions), came into being on 1 April 2002 and replaced the United Kingdom Central Council for Nursing Midwifery and Health Visiting, and the Council for Professions Supplementary to Medicine respectively.

9. WDCs were set up from April 2001 in response to the review of workforce planning that took place in September 1999<sup>5</sup>. The WDCs have a central role in enabling the delivery of Strategic Health Authority franchise plans through planning and development of the healthcare workforce, working with Postgraduate Deaneries to commission education and training, and managing the DH annual investment in training. More specifically the WDCs negotiate, manage and monitor performance of contracts with education and training providers, including Further and Higher Education. NHS Trusts are constituent members of WDCs and are co-providers of education in terms of the provision of placements. Thus WDCs, with HEIs, also have a responsibility for ensuring that there are sufficient placements of appropriate quality to support the programmes they fund. WDCs support the modernisation of professional preparation, education and training<sup>7</sup> to ensure that the students are *fit for purpose*.

10. Higher Education, funded by the Higher Education Funding Councils or under specific contracts, for example the DH, continues to be reviewed by the Agency to ensure that the

---

<sup>4</sup> Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (2001) *Subject Benchmark Statements: Health Care Programmes Phase 1*. Gloucester: QAA.

<sup>5</sup> Department of Health (2000) *A Health Service of all the talents: Developing the NHS Workforce Consultation Document on the Review of Workforce Planning*. London: HMSO

<sup>6</sup> Department of Health (2000) *Workforce Planning Review: A Health Service of all the Talents Results of Consultation*. London: HMSO

<sup>7</sup> Department of Health (2002) *Workforce Development Confederations: Functions, Accountabilities and Working Relationships*. <http://www.doh.gov.uk/workdevcon/guidance.htm>