

## Education and Training Committee – 9 June 2011

An introduction to our education processes

Executive summary and recommendations

### **Introduction**

As identified in the Education Department 2010 – 2011 work plan, this document provides an introduction to our approach to education and training, focusing on pre-registration programme approval and monitoring in the UK. The document has been produced to complement existing more detailed publications on our standards, guidance and processes. It provides a useful starting point to understanding our approach to education and training and has been written as an introductory guide. Consequently, the document is aimed primarily at new professions, aspirant groups and those involved on the fringes of our approval and monitoring processes. This includes education providers, the general public and anyone who is unfamiliar with our processes.

The document clarifies the key principles of our quality assurance system. In particular, it explains our system of open ended approval, the relationship between our standards and qualifications and the complexity of the statutory and professional bodies' arena within which we operate.

The purpose of bringing the publication to this Education and Training Committee is to provide a formal opportunity for the Education and Training Committee to review and approve the document prior to publication.

### **Decision**

The Committee is requested to approve this document prior to publication, subject to minor editing changes.

### **Background information**

Education Department workplan 2010 - 2011

### **Resource implications**

This document has been produced by the Director of Education and the PA to the Director of Education. A number of small changes have been made in response to initial legal advice. Following approval by the Education and Training Committee, publication will be arranged in conjunction with the Publications Manager and Communications Officer (Publications). Distribution has been arranged to coincide with the next edition of Education Update and proposed social worker communication activities. On-going resource implications are limited and already planned for in Departmental work plans.

### **Financial implications**

Costs associated for publication and distribution have been accounted for in the Education Department budget 2011-12.

### **Appendices**

An introduction to our education processes

Information for stakeholders

An introduction to our education processes

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## About us (the Health Professions Council)

We are the Health Professions Council (HPC). We are a regulator and our main aim is to protect the public. To do this, we keep a register of professionals who meet our standards for their training, professional skills, behaviour and health.

Professionals on our Register are called registrants. We currently regulate 15 professions.

- Arts therapists
- Biomedical scientists
- Chiropodists / podiatrists
- Clinical scientists
- Dietitians
- Hearing aid dispensers
- Occupational therapists
- Operating department practitioners
- Orthoptists
- Paramedics
- Physiotherapists
- Practitioner psychologists
- Prosthetists / orthotists
- Radiographers
- Speech and language therapists

We may regulate other professions in the future. For an up-to-date list of the professions we regulate, please see our website at [www.hpc-uk.org](http://www.hpc-uk.org)

### **Our main functions**

To protect the public, we:

- set standards for registrants' education and training, professional skills, conduct, performance, ethics and health;
- keep a register of professionals who meet those standards;
- approve programmes which professionals must complete to register with us; and
- take action when professionals on our Register do not meet our standards.

The Health Professions Order 2001 says we must set our standards to protect the public, and we must set standards which are necessary for safe and effective practice. This is why our standards are set at a 'threshold' level (a minimum level of safe and effective practice).

## About this document

This document gives you an overview of our approach to education and training and focuses on pre-registration programme approval and monitoring in the UK. It details how our standards and processes focus on public protection to ensure that prospective registrants are fit to practise when they join the Register for the first time. It also explains how our role in programme approval and monitoring sits alongside the other interests in the wider quality assurance and enhancement context in the UK. The document also clarifies our education and training role outside of the UK and in relation to post registration.

This publication provides a useful starting point to understanding our approach to education and training. It has been written as an introductory guide and should be read alongside other more detailed publications on our standards, guidance and processes.

We try to make our standards, guidance and processes as open and clear as possible. For further information please see the education section of our website: [www.hpc-uk.org/education](http://www.hpc-uk.org/education)

Throughout this document:

- ‘us’, ‘we’ and ‘our’ refers to the Health Professions Council (HPC);
- ‘student’ refers to anyone studying on a programme which leads to eligibility to apply to our Register; and
- ‘registrant’ refers to a professional on our Register.

## About our standards

We set standards for registrants' education and training, professional skills, conduct, performance, ethics and health.

### **Our standards of proficiency**

The standards of proficiency (SOPs) are our threshold standards for safe and effective practice that all registrants must meet. They include both generic elements, which all our registrants must meet, and profession-specific elements. They outline what an individual must know, understand and be able to do when they join the Register and begin practicing their profession. These standards play a central role in how to gain admission to and remain on the Register and thereby gain the right to use the protected title(s).

### **Our standards of education and training**

The standards of education and training (SETs) are the standards that an education and training programme must meet in order to be approved by us. These generic standards ensure that anybody who completes an approved programme meets the standards of proficiency for their profession and is therefore eligible to apply to register with us. The standards cover:

- the level of qualification for entry to the Register;
- programme admissions;
- programme management and resources;
- curriculum;
- practice placements; and
- assessment.

### **Our standards of conduct, performance and ethics**

The standards of conduct, performance and ethics (SCPEs) are our expectations for the continuing attitudes and behaviour of someone who is on our Register. They cover areas such as acting in the best interests of service users, protecting confidentiality and behaving with integrity and honesty. These standards are also taken into account when determining whether an applicant to the Register is of good character.

## Protected titles

All of the professions we regulate have at least one professional title that is protected by law. This means, for example, that anyone using the titles 'paramedic' or 'dietitian' must be registered with us. You can find a full list of protected titles on our website.

It is a criminal offence for someone to claim that they are registered with us when they are not, or to use a protected title that they are not entitled to use. For example, someone should not state that they are a 'physiotherapist' or that they 'provide physiotherapy' when they are not registered with us.

### **What title should students use?**

A student cannot use a protected title until they are on our Register. We have no objection to students using a protected title with an appropriate prefix which makes their status clear, such as 'trainee' or 'student'. By using one of these prefixes there is no intention to deceive the public that a student is fully qualified and registered.

### **What title should approved programmes use?**

There is no requirement for approved programmes to use a particular title. Many education providers chose to incorporate the broader related profession into the title of their approved programme, such as 'BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy'. Whilst other education providers chose to reflect the broader content of the programme in their title, such as 'Masters of Nutrition' (providing eligibility to register as a Dietitian) or 'Educational, Child & Community Psychology D.Ed.Psy' (providing eligibility to register as an Educational Psychologist). The variation of programme titles does not present a problem for us. The important point is that a programme meets our standards and appears on our list of approved programmes.

## Our Register

Being on our Register shows that an individual meets our standards for their profession. We have a Register to show the public that professionals are fit to practise, and that they are entitled to use the protected title for their profession. It shows that registrants are part of a profession with nationally recognised standards set by law. When we say that someone is 'fit to practise', we mean that they have the skills, knowledge, character and health to do their job safely and effectively.

### **Does completing an approved programme guarantee registration?**

Completing an approved programme does not guarantee that an individual will be able to register with us. It shows us that someone meets our professional standards and that they are therefore eligible to apply for registration. They will need to provide further information in order to become registered with us. This information helps us make sure that they are who they say they are, that they meet all of our standards and that we can contact them if we need to.

Sometimes a student who has completed an approved programme declares very serious information which may mean that we reject their application for registration. It is important to stress that this only happens very rarely.



## The role of our standards in education

### **How important are our standards in approving programmes?**

Our standards are the crux of our approval and monitoring processes. Our governing legislation (the Health Professions Order 2001) enables us to set standards for safe and effective practice, for education and training and to approve programmes against those standards. It does not give us specific powers to set the type of academic award required for entry. This means that programme approval is based on whether a programme can demonstrate that it meets our standards, rather than whether it leads to a particular type or level of award.

### **What is the relationship between the standards?**

Our standards perform inter-related but different roles. The standards of proficiency and standards of conduct, performance and ethics apply to individuals; whilst the standards of education and training apply to education providers.

The standards of proficiency apply to students, prospective registrants and registrants; whereas only registrants can comply with the standards of conduct, performance and ethics. This means there is a degree of overlap between the content of the standards of proficiency and the standards of conduct, performance and ethics. For example, both include confidentiality.

The standards of education and training are designed solely to guarantee the achievement of the standards of proficiency. The standards of education and training require that students develop an understanding of the implications of the standards of conduct, performance and ethics.

### **How important is the language used in the standards?**

All of our standards are written in a flexible and non-prescriptive way. They have been written in a way that means they are relevant to all registrants, regardless of profession, sector or service users. It means there is normally more than one way in which our standards can be met.

The language used in the standards of proficiency plays an important role in ensuring that prospective registrants as well as registrants can meet them. We intentionally use verbs such as 'be able to' rather than 'must'. The standards of proficiency are expressed in terms of expectations so that someone who is not yet on the Register can comply with them.

The standards of conduct, performance and ethics have been written in a way which means that only registrants can comply with them. We intentionally use the verb 'must' rather than 'be able to' to recognise that individuals must be practising in their profession in order to meet them.

The language used in the standards of education and training allows education providers to meet them in a variety of ways, relevant to their particular profession or model of education and training. Our standards are outcome-based, rather than input-based. By focusing on the outcome of safe and effective practice, we enable registrants, employers and education providers to develop new ways of working – where safe and appropriate – which encourages and does not stifle innovation. The standards of education and training have deliberately been written to reflect their multi-professional and multi-jurisdictional usage. Our standards are general

principles on which we will make judgements about educational provision. We intentionally use adjectives and adverbs such as 'appropriate' and 'effectively' to ensure that those making the judgements critically assess the systems, policies and scenarios proposed by education providers.

### **What is the relationship of the standards of proficiency to the threshold level of qualification for entry to the Register?**

Our first standard of education and training (known as 'SET 1') sets out the normal threshold level of qualification for entry to the Register for each of the professions we regulate. SET 1 is articulated as an academic award. Every time we open a new part of the Register, we need to determine the normal threshold entry level for the new profession, following consultation, and add this to SET 1. In setting the normal threshold level of entry, we are setting the minimum level of qualification which we would normally accept for the purposes of an approved programme which leads to registration. The threshold level might change over time to reflect changes in the delivery of education and training.

The term 'normally' is included in SET 1 as a safeguard against the unlawful fettering of our discretion. Our legislation (the Health Professions Order 2001) states that we are able to set standards for safe and effective practice, for education and training and to approve qualifications against those standards. However, we do not have specific powers to set the academic award required for entry. Given the terms of our legislation, it would be an improper exercise of our powers to refuse to approve a programme which delivered the standards of proficiency and the remainder of the standards of education and training solely on the basis that it did not lead to the award of a qualification specified in SET 1. Therefore, we will approve programmes which are at a different academic level, or which result in a different academic award to those specified in SET 1. The variation of academic levels or awards in the list of approved programmes for a particular profession does not present a problem for us.

### **What is the relationship between curriculum guidance and our standards?**

We do not produce curriculum guidance or frameworks; we believe that this is best owned by the profession itself. Most curriculum guidance or frameworks go beyond the minimum standards and include new or emergent areas of practice, as well as examples and expectations of best practice. Therefore, for areas such as practice placements, we do not specify a set number of hours or a range of settings, this detail is outlined by the profession via its curriculum guidance or frameworks. Our standards are primarily designed for entry on to the Register; the standards of proficiency are not a career development framework. They are focused on fitness for practise, rather than fitness for employment in a particular role, sector or service. Our standards are not designed to offer detailed guidance on best practice as the standards are written at the threshold level. They are designed to be broad and enabling rather than prescriptive. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with this position, as the standards of proficiency are threshold standards – the minimum necessary for admission to the Register.

Professional bodies have an important role in promoting and representing their professions. Agencies such as the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), QAA Scotland and Skills for Health have an important role in developing the philosophy, values, skills and knowledge base of both professions and educational practice. From our experience of approving programmes, education providers are, in the main, designing and delivering programmes which exceed our threshold standards. Our

standards of education and training tie in with a profession's curriculum guidance or frameworks. Our standards expect each programme to reflect the philosophy, core values, skills and knowledge base articulated in the curriculum guidance. Where programmes do not reflect the curriculum guidance, they are expected to detail how students are still able to practise safely and effectively upon completion of the programme.

**Are there standards of conduct and ethics for students?**

We have produced guidance for students on issues about conduct and ethics. This guidance is based on the standards of conduct, performance and ethics and is designed to build familiarity with our standards. The language used in the guidance deliberately reads 'should' rather than 'must' since we cannot make students comply with the guidance as we do not set standards for them, because they are not registered with us. However, we believe the guidance establishes useful principles for prospective registrants around the expectations of an autonomous and accountable professional on our Register.

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## Our approval and monitoring processes

Our approval and monitoring processes ensure that programmes and education providers meet our standards of education and training and consequently that students who successfully complete the programme meet our standards of proficiency. The approval process involves an approval visit and an initial decision as to whether a programme meets our standards. A programme is normally approved on an open-ended basis, subject to satisfactory monitoring. This means that we do not have a cyclical or periodic schedule of approval visits. Our approval is not time limited or linked to a number of cohorts. There are two monitoring processes, annual monitoring and major change. Both of these processes are documentary and may trigger a new approval visit. Annual monitoring is a retrospective process by which we determine whether a programme continues to meet all the standards against which it was originally assessed. The major change process considers significant changes to a programme and the impact of these changes in relation to our standards.

### **What is the purpose of our approval and monitoring processes?**

Our approval and monitoring processes are designed to protect the public from those who are not fit to practise. In approving a programme, we are confirming that the programme and its associated regulations, systems and processes will ensure that only those individuals who meet our standards will successfully complete the programme and be eligible to apply for registration with us.

Our approval and monitoring processes are not designed to deal with individual decisions about student performance or related conduct.

### **What does completing an approved programme mean?**

For us, completing an approved programme is synonymous with being able to practise safely and effectively. An individual who successfully completes an approved programme is eligible to apply for registration with us. There is no additional period of education and training that is required before registration; nor is there any additional requirement as part of the application process to test an individual's ability to practise safely and effectively.

### **Does completing an approved programme mean that an individual can take up any employment?**

There is a major difference between being registered as a health and care professional and being employed as one. Our approval and monitoring processes are associated with registration, not employment. In particular, it is important that registration is never seen as a guarantee of employment. We guarantee fitness to practise; this is not a guarantee of the opportunity to practise. It is also not the same as fitness to work, which is decided at a local level between the person registering (the registrant) and an employer. Registrants must only practise within what we call their 'scope of practice'. A registrant's scope of practice is the area or areas of their profession in which they have the knowledge, skills and experience to practise safely and effectively. We recognise that registrants' practice changes over time and that the practice of experienced registrants frequently becomes more focused and specialised than that of newly qualified registrants, because it relates to a particular client group, practice environment, employment sector or occupational role. We are supportive of induction, preceptorship and other arrangements that support newly qualified and registered practitioners in their first employment posts.

## **What are the key differences between our approach to quality assurance and that of other bodies?**

Regulators are one of many parties with an interest in quality assurance. Education providers are reviewed by other regulators, funders, commissioners and professional organisations as well as their own internal processes. We are mindful of the cumulative impact of the different quality assurance processes and we periodically review our standards and processes to ensure they are proportionate and focused on public protection. To avoid unnecessary duplication for education providers we encourage joint approval visits and use existing internal documentation where possible.

Our role in quality assuring education and training programmes is focused on public protection, whilst other parties' roles are more focused on developing or promoting the profession or academic credentials of the education provider. Our approach is prescribed in legislation and we act in the public interest. We do not promote or support professionals or services and consequently we do not offer membership services.

Our quality assurance approach follows the general pattern of approval and monitoring; however, unlike many other bodies, we do not undertake periodic re-approval. Our approval is granted on an open-ended basis and we use the documentary monitoring processes to risk assess and trigger approval visits when required. We will not automatically visit a programme as a result of periodic review or revalidation.

Similarly to other bodies, our approach to quality assurance is evidence based, involves peer review and takes into account the views of students of the profession. Our approach also focuses on judgements against a set of pre-determined standards. However, unlike other bodies our standards are output focused; they describe the desired outcomes rather than prescribing a process for achieving them.

In contrast to many other quality assurance approaches, our programme approval is based on whether a programme can demonstrate that it meets our standards, rather than whether it leads to a particular type or level of academic award. This means that we are not commenting on or confirming fitness for academic award. It also means that we are active at both undergraduate and postgraduate level, as well as outside of the formal higher education setting.

## Getting a programme approved by the HPC

### **What programmes can be approved?**

Any education provider (for example a university, college, private training institution or professional body) can seek approval of their programme. There is no requirement that approved programmes must be delivered or awarded by a university or college with degree awarding powers.

As well as approving and monitoring education and training for people who want to join our Register, we also approve a small number of programmes for those already on the Register. The post registration programmes which we currently approve are limited to supplementary prescribing programmes and programmes in local anaesthetics and prescription-only medicine, in accordance with the Medicines Act 1968 and Prescription Only Medicines (Human Use) Order 1997.

### **How long is a programme approved for?**

A programme is normally approved on an open-ended basis, subject to satisfactory monitoring. We refer to this as 'open-ended approval'. There are two monitoring processes, annual monitoring and major change. Both of these processes are documentary and may trigger a new approval visit. This means that we do not have a cyclical or periodic schedule of approval visits. Our approval is not time limited or linked to the number of cohorts.

### **Who makes the decisions on programme approval?**

The Education and Training Committee (ETC) has statutory responsibility for approving and monitoring programmes which lead to eligibility to apply to our Register. The decision to approve or not approve a programme rests with the ETC. The ETC considers recommendations from our Visitors' and observations from education providers, before making their final decision. The Committee meets in public and copies of agendas and minutes are on our website. All Visitors' reports from approval visits are also published on our website.

### **Who visits the education providers?**

'Visitors' are appointed by the HPC to visit education providers and assess monitoring submissions. Visitors come from a range of backgrounds including registered members of the professions we regulate and members of the public. Visitors work on behalf of the HPC and provide the expertise across each of the professions that we regulate to help the ETC in their decision-making. Visitors normally operate in panels, rather than individually. Each panel includes at least one Visitor from the relevant part of the Register for the programme under consideration. All Visitors are selected with due regard to their education and training experience. Visitors represent the HPC and no other body when they undertake an approval and monitoring exercise. This ensures an entirely independent outcome.

### **Can programme approval be withdrawn?**

The decision to withdraw approval from a programme rests with the ETC. The ETC does not take the decision to withdraw approval from a programme lightly. In the first instance, concerns about an approved programme would normally trigger an approval visit. If the approved programme was unable to demonstrate that they continued to meet our standards through this process, then the Committee would consider withdrawing approval. When approval is withdrawn, the programme is removed from our list of approved programmes on our website.

## Education and training outside of the UK

Our statutory powers do not enable us to approve programmes (including franchised and collaborative programmes) which are delivered outside of the UK by non-UK education providers.

Programmes delivered by UK education providers outside of the UK may be eligible for approval if the UK education provider is *directly* responsible for the delivery of that programme outside of the UK. We can approve programmes where parts of the programme are delivered outside of the UK. For example, when a practice placement is provided outside of the UK, or when a student engages in an exchange programme for a term or semester.

Individuals who have trained outside of the UK can apply for registration with us, via the international route. The international route uses the same standards as the UK approved programme route to determine whether an individual can be registered. However, in the case of international applicants, a decision is made on a case by case basis, taking both their qualifications and experience into account.

## Continuing professional development (CPD)

We expect both students and registrants to understand the need to keep skills and knowledge up to date and the importance of career-long learning. We have set standards for continuing professional development (CPD) and all registrants must undertake CPD in order to remain registered.

We have defined CPD as ‘a range of learning activities through which registrants maintain and develop throughout their career to ensure that they retain their capacity to practise safely, effectively and legally within their evolving scope of practice’. Put simply, CPD is the way registrants continue to learn and develop throughout their careers so they keep their skills and knowledge up to date and are able to work safely, legally and effectively while they are registered to ensure that they continue to meet our standards of proficiency.

We believe that CPD takes many forms and that we should not prescribe exactly how registrants should learn. Consequently, we do not approve education programmes which registrants must take after they have registered with us. Education providers can offer programmes for the purpose of CPD, but there is no requirement for them to be approved or monitored by us.

## The approval and monitoring processes explained

### The approval process

We have been carrying out approval visits to education providers and programmes throughout the UK since 2004.

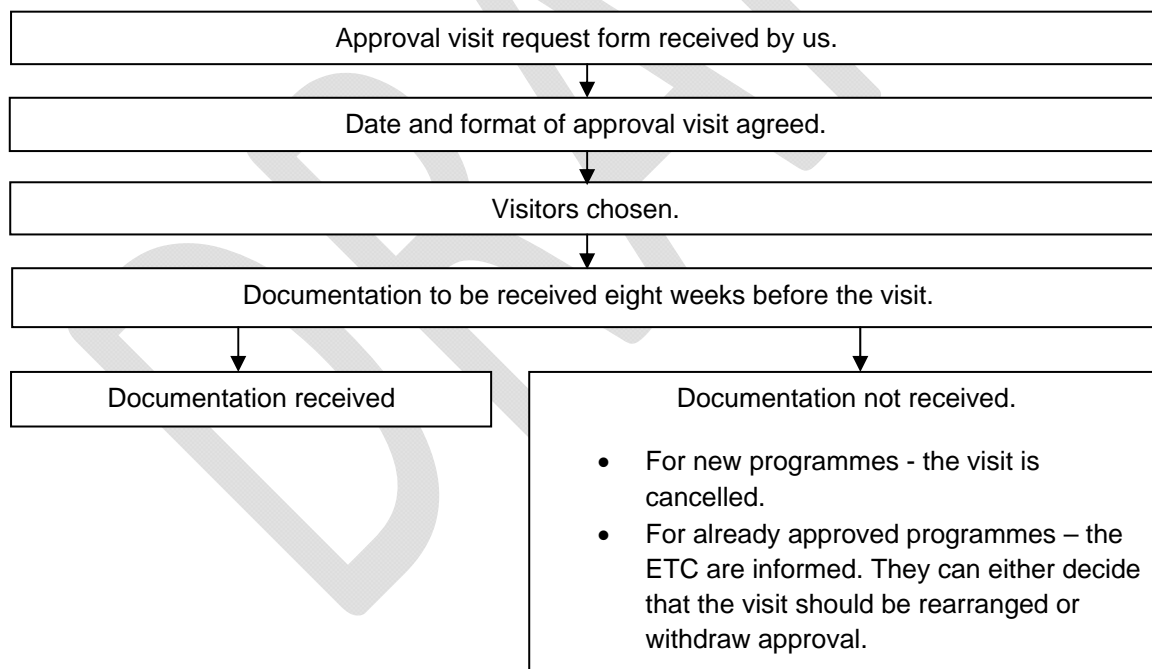
#### The visit

The approval visit is normally undertaken by two of our Visitors along with a member of the Education Department. Each Visitor will undergo a conflict of interest check to ensure objective decisions are made. This group is what we would refer to as the HPC panel, and, throughout the visit, the panel will ask questions of the education provider staff, students, senior managers and placement providers.

Following the visit, our panel will decide whether, or to what extent, the programme meets our standards. They will then make the appropriate recommendation to our Education and Training Committee (ETC) who will make the final approval decision.

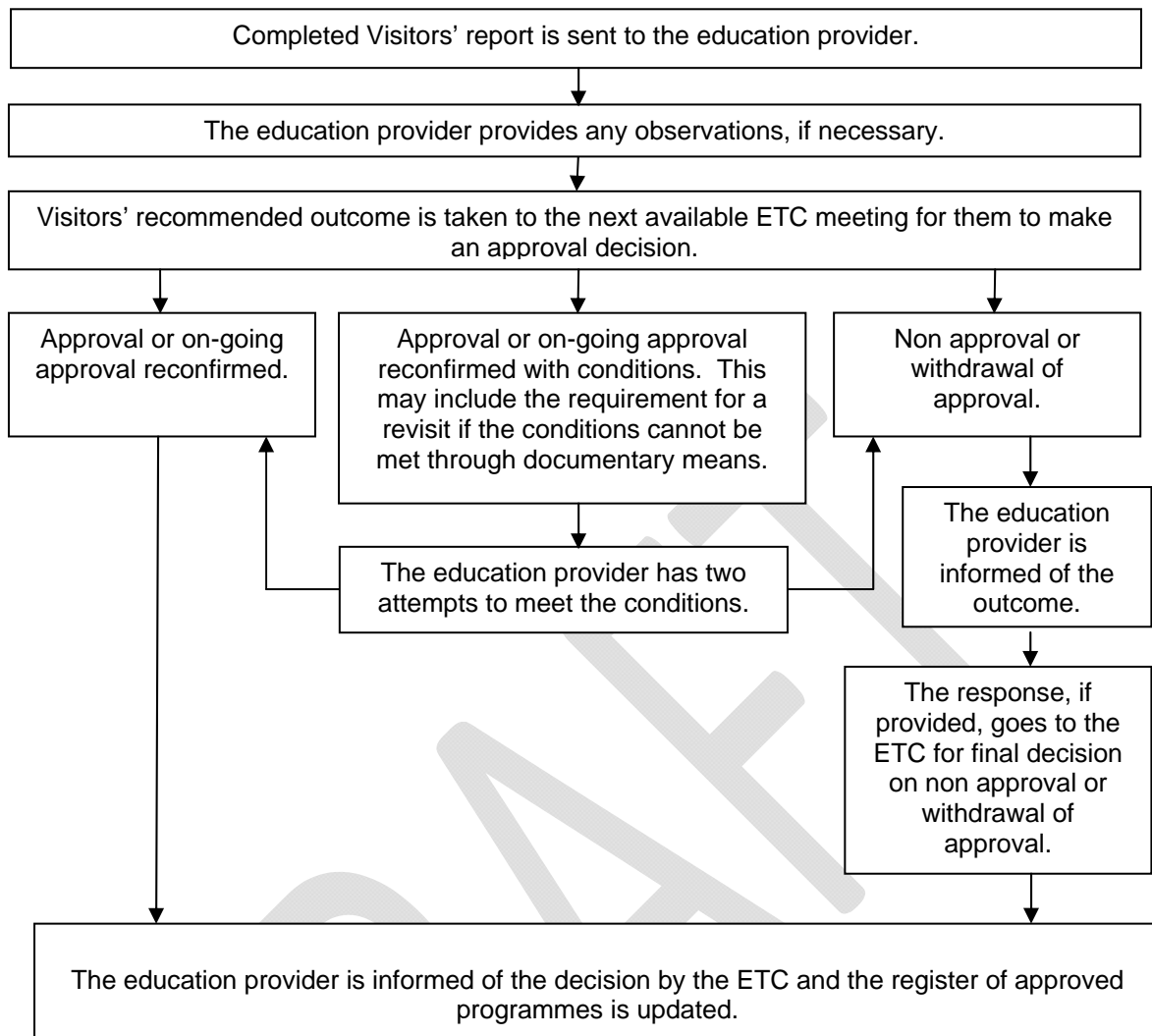
The stages of the approval process are highlighted in Figure 1: the approval process flow chart – pre-visit and Figure 2: the approval process flow chart – post-visit.

**Figure 1: the approval process flow chart – pre-visit**





**Figure 2: the approval process flow chart – post-visit**



## **The annual monitoring process**

Annual monitoring is a retrospective process where we consider whether a programme continues to meet our standards by looking back at the delivery of the programme over the previous academic years.

We try to build on an education provider's own processes for monitoring, drawing heavily on internal documentation to make the process as efficient as possible for both parties and to remove the need for regular visits.

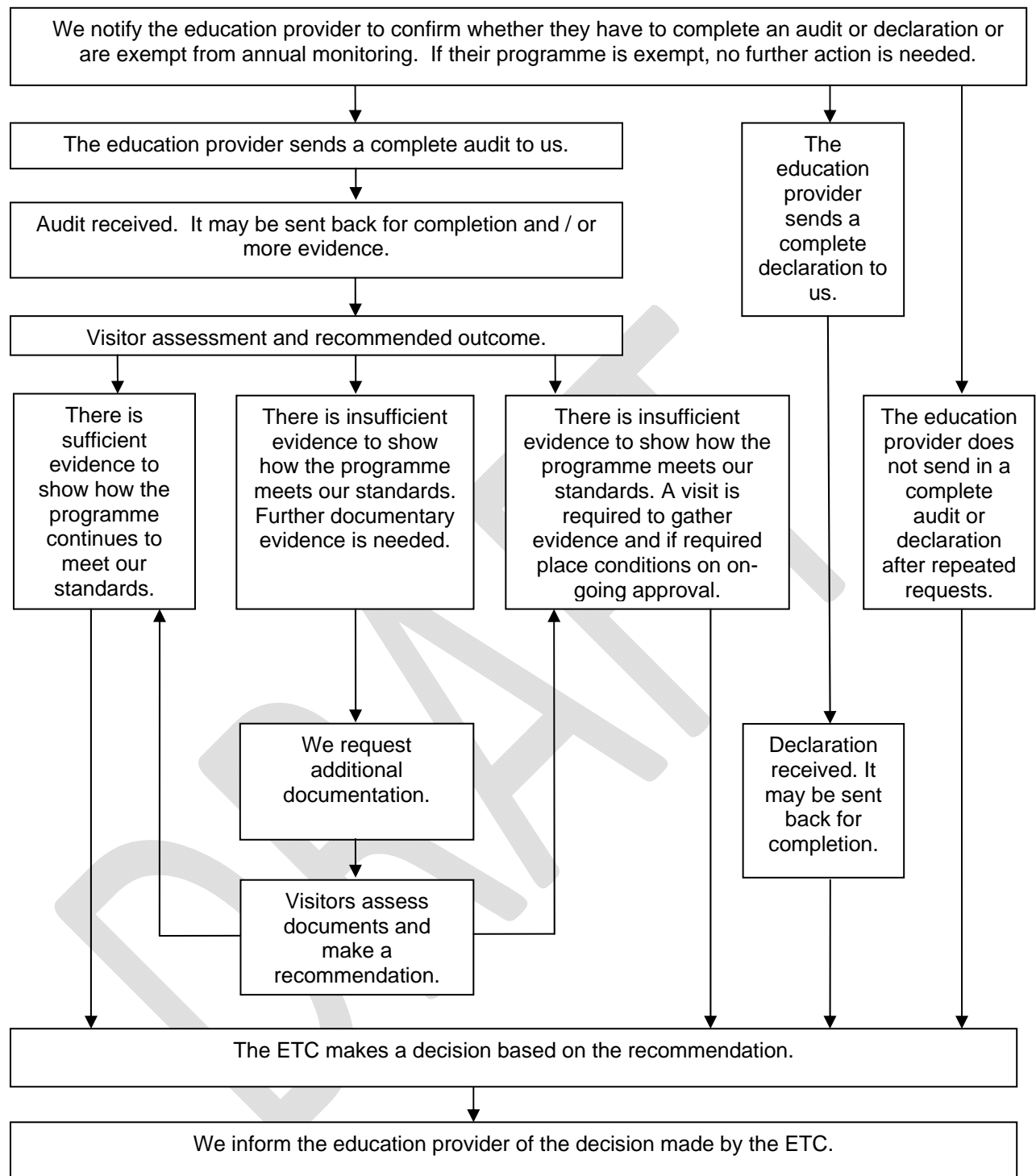
The annual monitoring process involves two types of monitoring submissions: an audit or a declaration. Education providers are divided into group A and group B and each year they are required to submit either an audit or a declaration depending on their group. Every autumn, we contact each education provider with information on the annual monitoring process for their particular programme over the forthcoming academic year. They must then complete the relevant audit or declaration forms for their group and submit them to us by the deadline stated in our initial correspondence. This date will always occur after the education provider's own internal annual monitoring process so that the information we require is available to them. Any programmes which have had an approval visit in the previous year or have an upcoming visit in the current year will usually be exempt from annual monitoring.

Once we receive the declaration form it is submitted to the ETC for approval. Once we receive the audit form, the documentation will be reviewed by two of our Visitors. At least one Visitor will be a registered member of the relevant profession and similarly to the approval process, all Visitors will undergo a conflict of interest check.

The Visitors will then make a recommendation to the ETC. The Committee can either decide that there is sufficient evidence to show the programme continues to meet our standards or that there is insufficient evidence to show how the programme continues to meet our standards and that a visit is required. The approval process is then triggered and used to confirm on-going approval.

The stages of the process are highlighted in Figure 3: the annual monitoring process flow chart.

**Figure 3: the annual monitoring process flow chart**



## **The major change process**

A major change is a change to a programme of study that significantly alters the way in which our standards are met.

Through the major change process we consider whether a programme continues to meet our standards given the significant change that has been made. Unlike annual monitoring, the major change process is initiated by the education provider. It is their responsibility to notify us if they have made considerable changes to an approved programme. The process can be completed retrospectively and prospectively.

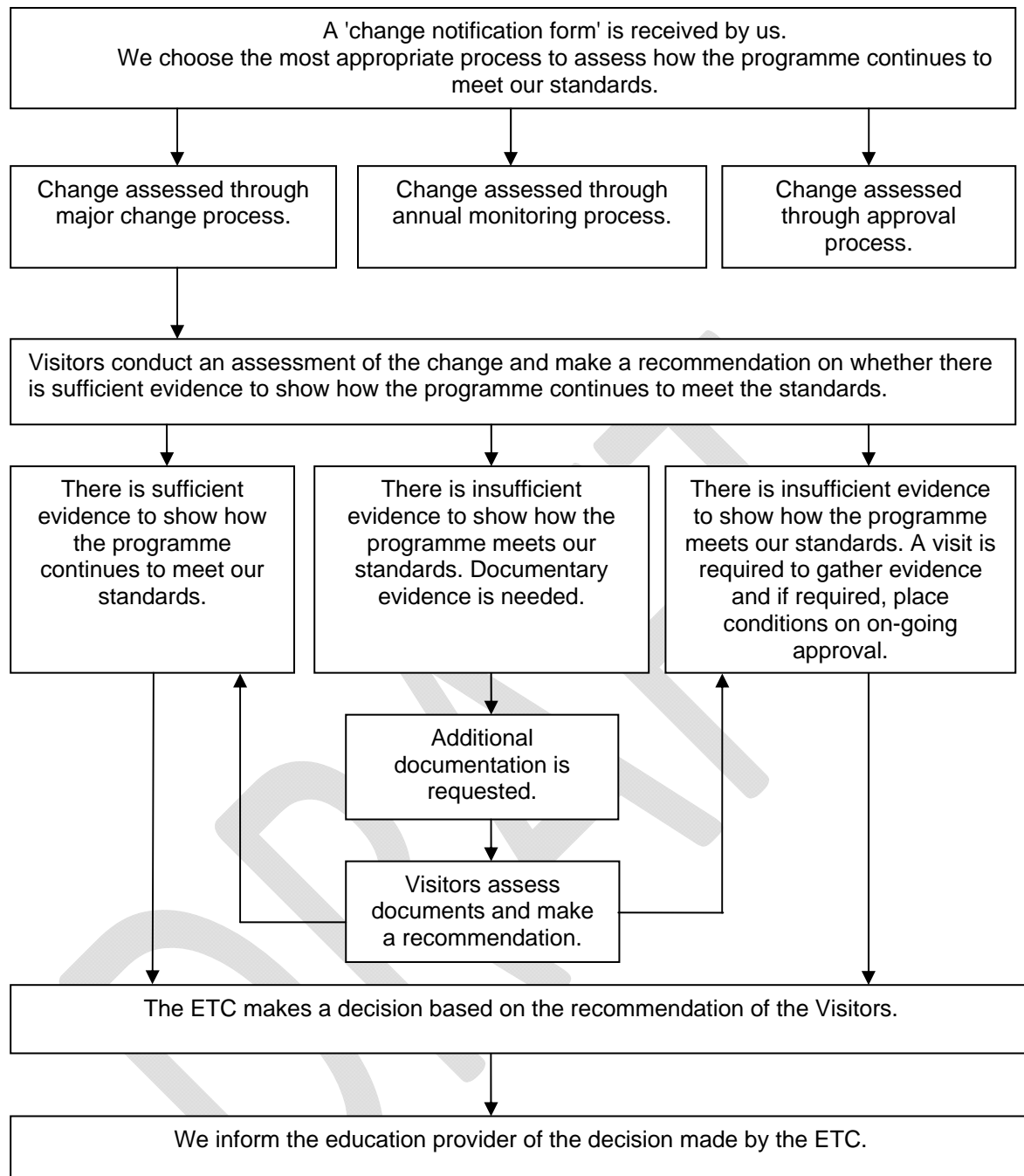
There is no formal documentary set for this process. Each change is considered on a case by case basis and we try to build on an education provider's own processes by drawing on the internal documentation used to consider the change.

When we are notified of a change to a programme of study, we initially assess the change to determine whether the major change process is the most appropriate means for us to consider the change. We have the option to filter out the change and consider it through our approval or annual monitoring process. We will take into account the nature, extent and timeliness of the changes. There is no numerical value or specific criteria. Each change is looked at on a case by case basis.

Once we have confirmed that the major change process will be used, each submission will be considered by two of our Visitors. At least one of these Visitors will be a registered member of the relevant profession and all Visitors will undergo a conflict of interest check. Similarly to the annual monitoring process, the Visitors will then make a recommendation to the ETC as to whether or not the programme continues to meet our standards.

The stages of the process are highlighted in Figure 4: the major change process flow chart.

**Figure 4: the major change process flow chart**



## How to raise a concern about an education provider

In addition to routinely approving and monitoring our approved programmes, we also listen to concerns that anyone might have about them.

Anyone is able to raise concerns about an approved programme with us, although we would usually expect an individual to have completed the education provider's own internal complaint process before we consider the concern, to give the education provider the opportunity to provide local resolution.

When we investigate a concern about a particular programme, the outcome will only affect whether we continue to approve that particular programme. The process does not consider concerns about academic judgement or concerns about an individual's fitness for award. The process will not lead to any financial compensation for individuals, or a change in an individual's grade or award classification.

Any concerns about a registrant's fitness to practise will be directed to our Fitness to Practise Department. These concerns are known as 'allegations'. Concerns about an approved programme and allegations about a registrant's fitness to practise will be dealt with by two different processes.

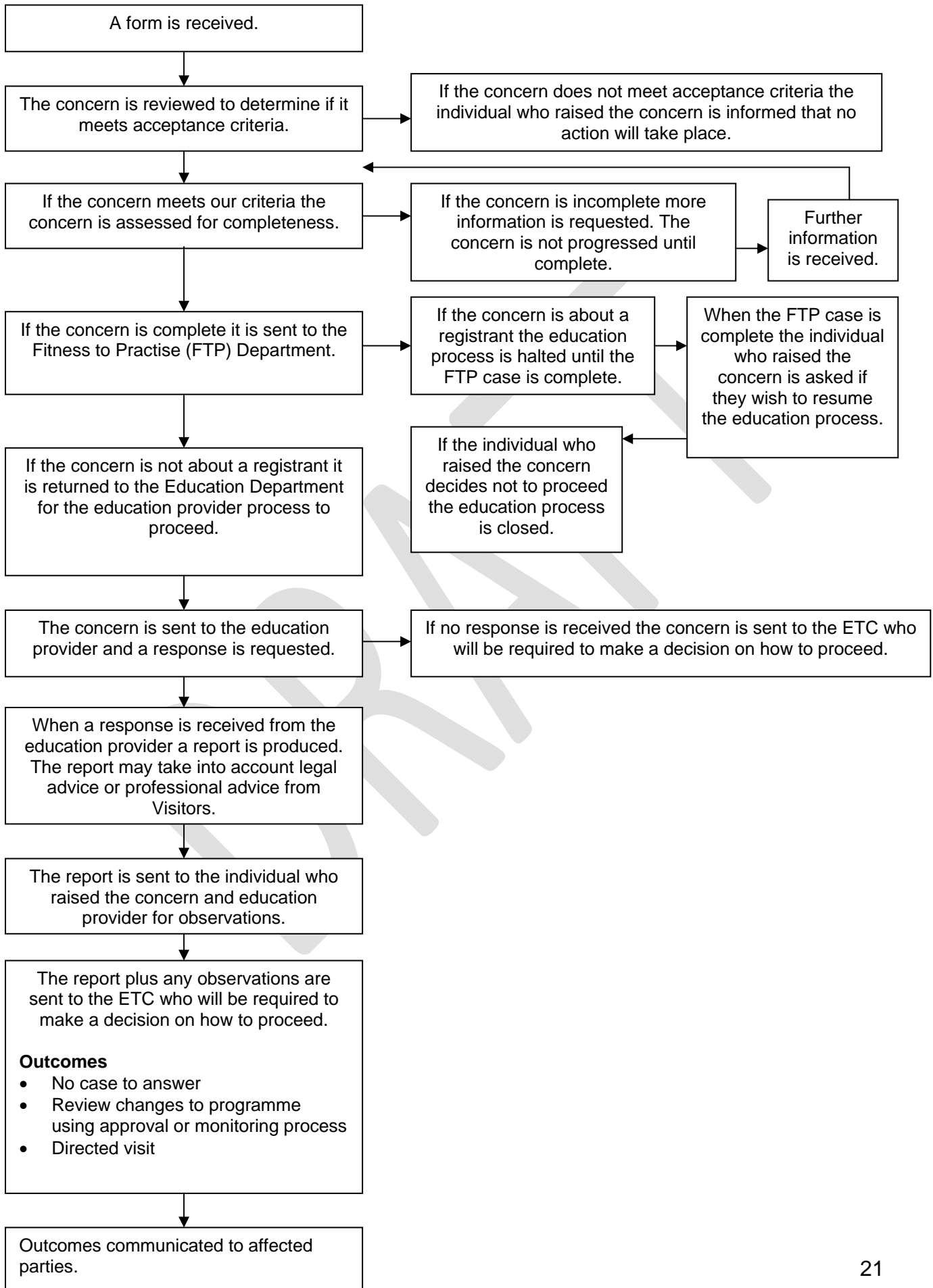
The investigation of concerns is mainly a documents-based process. To ensure that we have the necessary information we recommend that an individual completes the documentation available on our website and submits supporting documentary evidence. We ask that the individual confirms that they are content for the details of their concerns to be shared with the education provider.

Once we have received the concern, we will review the information to ascertain whether the concern is something that we can consider. A member of the Education Department will be responsible for leading the investigation and where the concern deals with knowledge, skills or expertise that is specific to a profession, we will ask one or more of our Visitors to review the information. At least one of these Visitors will be a registered member of the relevant profession and all Visitors will undergo a conflict of interest check.

Once the investigation is complete, a report will be produced and circulated to both the individual who raised the concern and the associated education provider for comment. The report will detail the investigation along with recommendations. The report and any comments will then be considered by the ETC. The ETC will then make the final decision on what action, if any, should be taken.

The stages of the process are highlighted in Figure 5: the education provider complaint process flow chart.

**Figure 5: the education provider complaint process flowchart**



## More information

### **Other useful publications**

All of the documents mentioned in this publication can be found on our website ([www.hpc-uk.org](http://www.hpc-uk.org)). The following documents may be of particular use:

Standards of proficiency (by profession)  
Standards of education and training  
Standards of education and training guidance  
Standards of conduct, performance and ethics  
Standards of continuing professional development

Guidance on conduct and ethics for students  
Guidance on health and character

Supplementary information for education providers – approval process  
Supplementary information for education providers – annual monitoring  
Supplementary information for education providers – major change  
Making a complaint about an education or training programme

### **Contact details**

Any questions and comments about our approval and monitoring processes can be forwarded to the Education Department directly.

Education Department  
The Health Professions Council  
Park House  
184 Kennington Park Road  
London  
SE11 4BU

Tel: +44 (0)20 7840 9812  
Fax: +44 (0)20 7820 9684

[education@hpc-uk.org](mailto:education@hpc-uk.org)



## Glossary

**Accountable:** As accountable professionals, registrants are responsible for the decisions they make and may also be asked to justify them.

**Annual monitoring:** Our yearly process to make sure approved programmes continue to meet our standards of education and training and standards of proficiency.

**Approval:** The process that leads to decisions about whether a programme meets the requirements of the regulatory body's standards of education and training.

**Autonomous:** As autonomous professionals, registrants make their own decisions based on their own judgements.

**Conflict of interest:** When a Visitor has a significant connection with an education provider or programme so they cannot assess that programme or education provider.

**Conflict of interest process:** The process where we decide whether a Visitor has a significant connection with an education provider or programme.

**Education and Training Committee:** Our committee which has responsibility for education and training matters.

**Education provider:** The institution (for example, a school, college or university) where a programme is delivered or which awards a qualification.

**Fit to practise:** When someone has the skills, knowledge, character and health to do their job safely and effectively.

**Institution:** See 'education provider'.

**International route:** The registration process for individuals who have gained a qualification outside of the United Kingdom (UK) and/or do not hold an approved UK qualification but have gained some or all of their professional experience outside the UK.

**Major change:** A change to a programme which has a significant effect on teaching and learning, resources, our standards of education and training and our standards of proficiency.

**Major change process:** Our process for assessing whether a change to a programme can be classed as a major change.

**Open ended approval:** When programmes are approved for an unlimited period. Continuing approval depends on satisfactory monitoring.

**Partner:** See 'Visitor'.

**Programme:** The academic teaching, practice placements, assessment, qualification and other services provided by the education or training provider, which together forms the programme for approval purposes.

**Professional body:** An organisation which carries out work which may include promoting a profession, representing members, producing curriculum frameworks, overseeing post-registration education and training and running continuing professional development programmes.

**Quality assurance:** The systematic monitoring and evaluation of the various aspects of a project, service or facility to maximise the probability that minimum standards of quality are being attained.

**Register:** A published list of professionals who meet our standards. The Register is available on our website at [www.hpc-uk.org](http://www.hpc-uk.org).

**Registrant:** A professional who appears on our Register.

**Scope of practice:** The area or areas of a registrant's profession where they have the knowledge, skills and experience to practise safely and effectively.

**Service user:** Anyone who uses or is affected by the practices of registrants. This includes patients or clients, their carers or relatives and others who may be affected by their practice, such as colleagues.

**Standards of conduct, performance and ethics:** Standards of behaviour that we expect from professionals who are registered with us. Registrants must read and follow these standards to remain on the Register.

**Standards of education and training:** Standards which education providers must meet to make sure that all those students who complete an approved programme meet the standards of proficiency.

**Standards of proficiency:** Standards which make sure each profession practises safely and effectively. Professionals must meet these standards to become registered.

**Student:** Anyone studying on a programme which leads to them being eligible to join our Register. The term includes trainees or people taking part in training.

**UK approved programme route:** The registration process for individuals who have trained in the United Kingdom (UK) and gained an approved UK qualification.

**Visitor:** A partner we have appointed to visit, approve and monitor education and training programmes for the professions we regulate.