

HIGHER EDUCATION OCCUPATIONAL PRACTITIONERS WORKING GROUP

Leeds - 16 November 2007

A meeting of HEOPS was held in Leeds on 16 November 2007 kindly hosted by Leeds Metropolitan University. The relatively low turnout proved a real advantage in allowing for more inclusive discussion and participation.

- **OPAS System**

We started with an update by Warwick Systems on the OPAS System as applied to a university's needs. It was agreed that it would be helpful for Warwick to seek consent from the various users for their names to be circulated for cross-referencing.

- **DRC Report and its Implications for Occupational Health**

We then went on to discuss in some detail the recent DRC report "Maintaining Standards: Promoting Equality. Professional Regulation within Nursing, Teaching and Social Work and Disabled People's Access to these Professions". A number of members had drafted new protocols etc, either in anticipation or following publication, and it was agreed that it would be helpful for these to be shared more widely. There was, however, general agreement that medical fitness to undertake a course, subject to core capabilities as laid down by the regulatory bodies, should be consistent with medical fitness to work within the individual profession.

- **Consideration of New Pre-Acceptance Forms**

A previous meeting and a smaller working group had resulted in a number of examples of new pre-acceptance forms which are not only more functionally orientated but hopefully will result in a variation of a single form being acceptable to a number of institutions. It was agreed to review the form after the first year of use and to make further adaptations for wider use for others such as postgraduates/staff. We also intend to review the form used by Glasgow University for applicants to teaching.

- **Implementation of DH Guidance on Screening for BBV, TB etc.**

We discussed individual experiences of implementation and the present status of the Medical Schools Council draft guidance. The question of funding was raised, most especially in relation to students already in the system. TB screening of international students, Mantoux testing and the question of five-yearly research passports for those working in the NHS, also attracted a great deal of discussion.

In the afternoon we agreed to set up a working group to draft guidance on the provision of occupational health services to the higher education sector and the scope of such a document was discussed in detail. Kate Venables from Oxford has kindly agreed to take the lead.

A number of other issues were discussed including a range of subjects for future meetings; the need to formalise the structure of the organisation and the development of a website etc.

The next meeting is to be held in Glasgow (kindly hosted by Dr MacMillan-Hamilton) planned for 16 May. The provisional agenda so far is to consider the range and type of health surveillance undertaken in the higher education sector and further consideration of what we hope will by then be the final draft of the Occupational Health Provision document.

Susan Robson