



HCPF
Quality Assurance
Scheme

Handbook

March 2015

DISCLAIMER

The Homeopathy Course Providers Forum (HCPF) Quality Assurance Scheme supports course providers to meet the professional standards agreed by the sector. However, the course provider itself is responsible for the viability of their course and its overall financial soundness. HCPF takes no responsibility for the support of non-viable courses in homeopathy or for students on courses that cease to be offered.

Homeopathy Course Providers Forum
Liz Angell, 63 Chaldon Way, Coulsdon, Surrey, CR5 1DL
Tel : 01737 552 312 – mobile : 06941 439 237 - email : hcpfiz@gmail.com - website : www.hcpf.org.uk

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Homeopathy Course Providers Forum Quality Assurance Scheme Handbook builds on work undertaken by representatives of the homeopathy professional bodies, the homeopathy course providers, patient representatives and independent educationalists over many years.

1.2 This Handbook is based on work originally undertaken by the Accreditation Steering Group of the Council of Organisations Registering Homeopaths (CORH), an organisation that was formally dissolved in September 2007, and the disbanded British Homeopathy Accreditation Board (BHAB) (formally dissolved 2009). BHAB ran two pilot projects and processed one accreditation application. This involved the short term appointment of an accreditation advisor and the training of ten accreditation visitors, with three volunteer course providers going through the accreditation process. This has provided valuable feedback on the processes involved. One of the key findings was that the structure as originally proposed was not financially sustainable.

1.3 This Handbook is based on what has already been agreed by the profession, takes into account the present situation and is intended to be used as a developmental process, building on what has already been found to work in practice. It should be considered as an evolving document that will change through experience, further developments in the wider sector, and with input from the service users.

2.0 The Place of Accreditation within professional health care regulation in Homeopathy

2.1 The Homeopathy Course Providers Forum has undertaken to ensure that all the excellent work towards an independent accreditation system is taken forward in a practical way. It is also very clear that there have been major changes in the external environment that course providers have to work in and that the homeopathic community itself is in a very different position than it was ten years ago. It has been agreed that, in the short term, we will work creatively with what has been achieved so far, rather than wait for support or funding from the profession as a whole or the government.

2.2 Creating a credible accreditation process is a strong statement from any profession about its confidence to be scrutinised. It appears, however, that the sector is currently far too small and under-resourced to be able to run a fully creditable independent and externally validated accreditation process.

2.3 The intention is to create a working solution and be willing to adapt it to meet changing circumstances. If the structures that have been created are robust, efficient and cost effective then the process can evolve organically to meet whatever future requirements might be imposed either by government or by economic and societal factors.

2.4 A common system that is accepted by the profession and that is promoted on all websites will be a step towards the unity, which is desperately needed by the profession as a whole. In addition, working on what we have in common and can agree on in this field may set a precedent for future developments that will unify the whole sector.

2.5 Course providers essentially fall into two sectors - with homeopathy as part of the CAM sector and as part of the Education and Training sector, which is much larger and more diverse. Changes in the Education sector now mean that any accreditation system should be by an OfQual registered accrediting body in order to stand any chance of being considered professional and independent. The homeopathic community is far too small to be able to operate a body that could meet the criteria for such a body and therefore we are much better off sourcing an organisation that can do that for us.

2.6 A small number of course providers have already had their courses either externally accredited by independent accrediting bodies or validated by an educational body.

2.7 It is worth stating that none of these systems have protected course providers or students from bankruptcy, closure due to economic failure, or closure by a University for various reasons.

2.8 It is clear that the sector does need to take note and work towards proven ways of improving its services in line with other professions. In particular we need to understand that the world of education and training, CAM, and regulation have all changed drastically in the last few years and we have to adapt to meet these changes. The other important issue, as it lies at the heart of problems that have beset the earlier attempts to set up a viable and sustainable system, is that of finances - it must by now be clear that without starting with what we have available in terms of finance

and resources, then no system we attempt to implement will survive even a few months.

2.9 For the profession of homeopathy, the education of practitioners is the future and it is important that course providers as the professional educators are accountable to students, and to the profession as a whole. This should be borne in mind by the professional bodies who also need to be more accountable to the course providers.

2.12 This initiative is a way that all parties concerned about the profession can move forward, based on the excellent work that has already been achieved, from a practical and rational developmental model and within current economic constraints.

3.0 The Principles of Quality Assurance

3.1 The Quality Assurance process for homeopathic education must have integrity and stability and be congruent with the principles of homeopathy. The principles on which it is founded must be clear and agreed so that where decisions are made to amend the process, the principles are not compromised. The same principles will apply to any future accreditation scheme. The key principles are:

Patient Safety - The principle of patient safety is paramount. The quality assurance process should be sufficiently rigorous to enable the public to have confidence in practitioners from quality assured courses regarding their ability to practise in accordance with standards agreed by the profession.

Proportionality - Interventions should only be made when necessary and should only carry out those functions that are necessary. Interventions should be targeted on the problem and minimise side effects and should only be appropriate to the risk posed.

Cost Effective - The scheme should uphold the principles of quality assurance at an agreed and affordable level. Structures and processes should be efficient and costs should be explicit and justified.

Accountability - To demonstrate public accountability, the quality assurance process should be informed both by those within the profession of homeopathy and by generally agreed principles of accountability (The 'Nolan Principles') and be in line with the criteria accepted by independent OfQal registered bodies for Quality Assurance (QA) programmes for training providers.

Fair and Equitable – Quality assurance processes should be fair and equitable to the course providers and individuals involved. The Quality Assurance Scheme should have the support of course providers. The public, students, course providers and the profession should have confidence that decisions are made with regard to due process and in accordance with the Code of Conduct, which is based on the Nolan Principles of Public Life.

Developmental - All participants in the Quality Assurance Scheme should adopt a developmental and self-reflective approach to working. There should be regular feedback from HCPF members, panel members, course providers and other stakeholders, with an annual summary and review of the Quality Assurance Scheme. The process should encourage course providers to reflect on and develop their programmes to continually enhance the quality of homeopathic education and of the graduates of these programmes. The process should enable all course providers to develop their own understanding of, and skills in, supportive course evaluation resulting in positive and creative professional growth.

Inclusive - The system of Quality Assurance will support diversity of approach in homeopathy education and practice consistent with homeopathic principles and traditional methodologies. Quality assurance decisions will be based on meeting generic criteria rather than on the 'style' of homeopathy taught. The system will also take account of the fact that graduating practitioners may choose to work in both the public (NHS) and private sectors. The Quality Assurance process must be appropriate for any course provider who wishes to take part in collaborative development work in homeopathic education.

Transparency - Structures, processes and outcomes should be transparent. The quality assurance criteria and system should be clear to those directly involved and to relevant others, such as professional associations, patients' associations, healthcare commissioners and providers and other professional groups. The decisions and the way in which decisions are made should be open to scrutiny, although the detail of information and discussion about individual course providers will remain confidential.

3.2 The Quality Assurance Scheme should take into account the following factors:

- The costs of any scheme of quality assurance must be low and proportional to the ability of the course providers to sustain it over time.
- The scheme must support diversity of provision.
- The scheme must start with what has already been agreed by the HCPF, be seen as developmental in process and practical in nature.
- The course providers must 'own' the system at the same time as being able to demonstrate they meet, and in some cases, exceed the commonly accepted requirements of the privately funded educational and training sector.

3.3 The purpose of the Quality Assurance Scheme is to create a process through which the quality of homeopathy education can be self-evaluated by course providers against agreed criteria. Each criterion contributes to the overall assessment of whether a course will produce graduates of sufficient competence to practise as an independent professional homeopath and meet the standards for registration.

3.4 The aim of the Quality Assurance Scheme is three-fold:

- to put in place an agreed set of standards as a benchmark for all course providers to assess themselves against,
- to ensure that learning programmes are likely to produce safe and competent practitioners, and
- to be seen as developmental, so course providers seek to continually improve their services in line with resources available and external needs and expectations.

3.5 The Quality Assurance Scheme seeks to establish standards and promote quality and is not intended to encourage standardised programmes across the UK. Rather it is about setting baseline criteria for courses that aim to produce independent professional homeopaths and developing a process for self-assessment of courses against these criteria that is valid and reliable.

3.6 The criteria as a whole form the baseline for course provision. Quality Assured status will depend on the extent to which a course is able to accurately reflect on how it substantially meets the criteria as a whole based on the totality of the evidence compiled. If the same course is provided in a different mode and/or in different locations then it is the responsibility of the course provider to demonstrate that the locations and/or modes are of the same quality.

3.7 The third aim is to support course providers in the future development of their course. It is anticipated that it will always be possible to find areas where constructive feedback can be offered to help improve all courses and institutions. The Quality Assurance process aims to stimulate the development of learning programmes within each course that are in keeping with the ethos and values of homeopathy and its diversity.

3.8 The Quality Assurance Scheme is a tool to help the sector to regularly review standards for homeopathic education and to encourage course providers to develop their courses over time.

3.9 Course providers should consider whether seeking accreditation of their course from an independent OfQual registered body or University offers them and their students value for money. In the medium term, it is envisaged the sector as a whole will develop nationally accepted qualifications that are placed on the new Qualifications Framework thus opening up the possibility for a genuinely independent accreditation/validation process open to course providers.

3.10 Bearing this in mind this handbook proposes building on what has been generally accepted and agreed by the majority of course providers and professional bodies. It includes a set of principles, criteria for good standards in educational practice and organisations and a new process based on the principles of self assessment for evaluating whether homeopathy course providers meet those criteria.

4.0 The Homeopathy Course Providers Forum (HCPF)

4.1 Membership of the HCPF is a necessary condition for application to the Quality Assurance Scheme.

4.2 Membership of the HCPF, as described in the Constitution, is open to all providers of homeopathy courses designed to develop competent professional homeopathic practitioners. All course providers are encouraged to attend and be active members of the Forum. The Forum decides for itself how often it meets and sets its own agenda. HCPF takes into account the views of course providers, professional registering bodies and patient organisations.

4.3 HCPF as a whole has accepted the following as a basis for all members to agree to work towards in principle:

- The Principles of recognition (as in the former BHAB Accreditation Handbook, with minor amendments),
- The Overall Criteria A, B and C plus the 13 criteria that have been agreed and piloted and which, in broad terms, meet the requirements of any quality assurance scheme, and
- Adoption of the current set of National Occupational Standards (NOS) that has been agreed with Department of Health as a reference document.

4.4 HCPF has set up a Quality Assurance Panel consisting of six to ten nominated course providers supported by a part time administrator. The Panel is tasked with promoting existing standards of professional education in homeopathy within the UK through an informal two stage process of quality assurance of the self-evaluation process undertaken by participating course providers. The focus is on courses run by independent colleges where the primary emphasis is on homeopathy and which prepare students to be independent primary practitioners of homeopathy. The Quality Assurance Panel would see its key concerns as promoting clear educational standards and a developmental approach alongside patient safety and an adult student approach through quality assurance of the course provider's self assessment against the agreed principles and criteria.

4.5 It is anticipated that the successful completion of the Quality Assurance Scheme to Quality Assured Status could lead to the possibility of accreditation by a fully independent body for those course providers who choose to go down that route.

4.6 The HCPF will have the following roles in relation to the Quality Assurance Panel. It will:

- nominate representatives to serve on the Panel and
- act as a critical friend to the Panel on all matters concerning quality assurance and be consulted on all major changes to the scheme.

5.0 The Quality Assurance Panel and Process

5.1 The Quality Assurance process consists of two clearly defined stages:

- Applicant stage – see Section 7.0
 - Quality Assured stage – see Section 8.0
- HCPF is currently working towards an optional third stage:
- External accreditation/validation by an independent body

5.2 The Quality Assurance Panel is supported by an Administrator. The Administrator will:

- act as the point of contact for course providers who are interested in seeking Quality Assurance or who are undergoing the process.
- support the work and smooth running of the Quality Assurance Panel

5.3 The Quality Assurance Process - Applicant Stage:

- A Course Providers initial Application (Applicant Stage) will be reviewed and clarified by a Review Group. This is a simple process preceding the full application for Quality Assured Status.
- The Review Group will consist of two members drawn from those who have been nominated by HCPF as members of the Quality Assurance Panel. Every effort will be made to ensure that there are no conflicts of interest.
- Once the Review Group are satisfied with the Application, they will inform the Panel Chair who will inform the Course Provider.

5.4 The Quality Assurance Process - Quality Assured Stage:

- The full application for Quality Assured status will be reviewed by a Review Group who will dialogue with the Course Provider via email, telephone, Skype, meetings etc as appropriate, in order to clarify the application.
- Peer support may be available to course providers from other members of the HCPF and the Professional Registering Bodies, external consultants etc. to assist them in the preparation of their application.
- The Course Provider's self reflection and explanation of how their course meets the Overall and Specific Quality Assurance Criteria (QA criteria) using the related guideline questions together with the outcome of the dialogue between the Review Group and the Course Provider, will form the basis of their Quality Assurance assessment.
- The Review Group will then compile its report and make its recommendation to the Panel which will be discussed at a Panel meeting where the Panel will seek to arrive at a final decision based on consensus.
- A representative from the Course Provider whose application is being considered at a specific meeting of the Panel will be free to attend the meeting at their own expense. This Meeting may be held as a 'Virtual' meeting, eg on Skype. The representative will be able to answer any questions specifically directed at them and listen to the discussion. They will not be able to interrupt the proceedings and will not be present when final decisions are made.

- In the unlikely event that consensus cannot be reached, the decision will be put to a vote. Every member of the Panel will have one vote. The Chair in addition will have a casting vote.
- Should a Course Provider be dissatisfied with the outcome, there is an Appeals Process to follow in Section 10.

5.5 The HCPF Quality Assurance Panel will be responsible for overseeing all matters to do with the Quality Assurance Scheme. This Panel will be responsible for decisions on Quality Assurance and will be accountable to HCPF.

- The Panel is not a regulatory body. It is set up to Quality Assure the self-assessment process undertaken by the Course Provider.

5.6 Quality Assurance Panel members will:

- Attend a Panel Development Day and be familiar with the roles and responsibilities of Quality Assurance Panel members and conversant with the content of the Handbook and the associated documents.
- Read the documentation provided by the course provider against the criteria for Quality Assurance and identify any specific areas of concern. Request additional self reflections, explanations, information and/or evidence where necessary through a process of dialogue with the Course Provider.
- Work effectively and reflectively with other Panel members to view all aspects of the course and its programme.
- Express their views clearly and without prejudice having evaluated the quality of the course provider's self reflections and explanations in their application explaining how the course meets the QA criteria.
- Through the Quality Assurance Panel Chair, provide constructive feedback to the course provider using the QA criteria as the basis.
- Produce the necessary documentation to record the Quality Assurance process forming the basis of the report to the Panel and the course provider.
- Take joint responsibility for the outcomes and the information contained in the report.
- Abide by the Code of Conduct drawn from the Nolan Principles of Public Life, including maintaining the confidentiality of the information gained during the process, and preparing in advance by fully reading the documentation.

5.7 It may be possible for the Quality Assurance Panel to have observers. Observers may be a member of a professional registering body or other relevant person/s. The observer's role is solely to observe, and give advice on issues of principles and processes but they will not have a role in discussions or decisions around individual applications. The costs of observers are met by the organisation from which they are drawn and cannot be charged to the Quality Assurance Scheme. The role may be used for monitoring or training purposes.

5.8 The Quality Assurance Panel will have overall responsibility for the maintenance, review and development of the quality assurance process.

Specifically the Panel will:

- agree the two people from their membership who will constitute each Review Group, to review the documentation provided by the course provider and determine if there is sufficient evidence to proceed
- make decisions on the progression of an application from a course provider through the Quality Assurance process
- make the final decision on the application for Quality Assurance to a course provider and, through the Chair of the Panel, inform the course provider of the outcome at each stage of the process
- provide ongoing support to course providers of Quality Assured courses through monitoring and confirmation of the Quality Assurance process - see Section 11.0
- monitor, review and develop the system in consultation with the HCPF and the professional registering bodies as appropriate.

6.0 Course Providers

6.1 Course providers, who choose to enter the Quality Assurance Scheme process, will:

- Confirm their membership of the Homeopathy Course Providers Forum
- Submit relevant documentation (linked to the criteria) before a panel meeting is arranged (see 6.2 for more details).
- Provide honest and accurate information about their course on paper and orally.
- Dialogue with Review Group members to provide further information if requested to do so - see Section 5.5.
- Quality Assured providers will use the criteria as a base for ongoing evaluation and self reflection, and provide an annual report - see Section 11.0.
- Agree to take part in the peer review process.
- They may appoint a representative to attend the meeting of the Quality Assurance Panel, at their own expense, at which their application is being considered.
- Course providers will have the right of appeal against any decision made on their course. The appeals process is set out in Section 10.
- They will be able to request replacement of individual member/s of the Review Group provided valid reasons are given in writing that are acceptable to the Chair of the QA Panel.

6.2 It is important to remember that the basic assumption of the Quality Assurance process is that course leadership has integrity and management skills, and is committed to the organic development and evolution of the educational process.

This scheme is based on a 'bottom-up' organic developmental process employing homeopathic principles utilising structures and composition that it is assumed will gain external respect by their very inner authority and integrity.

The scheme is inclusive and encourages the involvement of all the course providers in its development.

The short term aim is to ensure that all the excellent work done so far by the sector is not lost. The long term aim is to develop the scheme so that it may eventually be harmonised with an externally recognised accrediting body.

The Evaluative Summary documents should be produced using the Criteria and Guideline Questions. An overall evaluative statement should be provided relating to Overall Criteria A, B and C (approximately 600 words).

Then for each Specific Criteria the course provider should prepare a concise Evaluative Statement (approximately 300 words for each criterion) explaining how they believe that they meet the criterion. For each specific criterion they should list the evidence they have available. It is important that all criteria are addressed for the Review Group to have an overall view of the course provider as an organisation as well as the course content and the standards achieved on the programme. The document should include a list of policy documents available.

7.0 Stage 1, Applicant Status (read in conjunction with 5.4)

7.1 In the initial application the Course Provider will confirm their commitment to proceed with the QA process in writing to the administrator, pay the Application fee and provide the following:

- Confirmation of membership of the Homeopathy Course Providers Forum
- An Evaluative Summary should be produced using the QA Criteria and Guideline Questions explaining how the course provider considers that they have met the Overall Criteria A, B and C (this should be concise - approximately 600 words overall is suggested) plus Criteria 1 and 2 (this should also be concise - approximately 300 words per criteria is suggested)
- a Declaration of Intent to work towards meeting the 13 Criteria with reference to the NOS.
- Payment of the application fee.

7.2 Each course provider needs to compile an Evidence File as they go along for their own internal use, to support their application and for future reference if and when they decide to apply to an OfQual registered body for formal external evaluation.

- Evidence Files should largely be compiled using existing documents and should evidence the course provider's claim that they meet the Specific Criteria. Where necessary, the course provider may choose to develop new documentation, eg if they find that they have not already developed a particular policy. They may like to seek the support of other members of the HCPF in this process.

7.3 A Course Providers initial Application will be reviewed and clarified through a process of informal dialogue with the Course Provider by two members of the Panel - the Review Group.

- This is a simple process preceding the full application for Quality Assured status - see Section 5.3
- Every effort will be made to ensure that there are no conflicts of interest in the selection of the Review Group.

7.4 Once the Review Group are clear about the Application, they will inform the Chair who will inform the Course Provider.

7.5 The Application will either be accepted or referred back to the course provider with specific action points to enable the course to meet the criteria.

- When accepted, the Course Provider will be of Applicant Status.
- If not accepted, the Course Provider can resubmit an Application when ready to do so.
- The expectation is that applications will normally be accepted. The Application is a relatively simple process and any clarification of the application will take place through dialogue with the Course Provider.

8.0 Stage 2, Quality Assured Status (read in conjunction with 5.4)

8.1 Course providers need to be accepted at Applicant Status (see Section 7.0) before applying for full Quality Assured Status

8.2 The full Application comprises:

- Confirmation of membership of the Homeopathy Course Providers Forum.
- A signed Declaration of Intent to maintain and develop standards as outlined in the Handbook with reference to the National Occupational Standards (NOS)
- Submission of an Evaluative Summary produced using the QA Criteria and Guideline Questions reflecting on and explaining how the course provider considers that they have met the Overall Criteria A, B and C (this should be concise - approximately 600 words overall is suggested) plus Criteria 1 to 13 (this should also be concise - approximately 300 words per criteria is suggested).
- Payment of the annual fee.

Please note that the Course Provider, in connection with their initial Application, will already have prepared:

- An evaluative summary for the Overall Criteria A, B and C.
- And an evaluative summary for Criteria 1 & 2 of the 13.

8.3 In addition, they should prepare but not submit, an Evidence file - a list of the evidence that they have available to support their statements and which they could produce if required.

8.4 The Application will be reviewed and clarified through a process of informal dialogue with the Course Provider by two members of the Panel - the Review Group. Section 5.4 describes the review, evaluation and decision making process of the Panel and the QA Scheme.

8.5 The Chair of the Panel will inform the Course Provider of the outcome of the Application.

9.0 Quality Assurance Outcomes

9.1 The principle of this quality assurance process is for panel members to engage with course providers in an atmosphere of mutual cooperation and openness. This involves encouragement towards self reflective growth and the continuing development of each course. It is worth noting that this means it is unlikely that anyone is going to be surprised by the outcome. This is because:

- The process of review includes dialogue between the Course Provider and the Review Group by meeting, Skype, email, telephone etc as appropriate,
- The Review Group is assessing the quality of the self reflections and explanations given by the course provider. If a course does not meet the criteria, as set out in NOS and the Criteria and Guideline Questions document, then the Course Provider themselves needs to realise that their course does not meet the standard. It is the Review Groups role to help them to be able to accurately reflect on their course.
- Remember what was said at 6.2 "It is important to remember that the basic assumption of the Quality Assurance process is that course leadership has integrity and management skills, and is committed to the organic development and evolution of the educational process".

9.2 Quality Assured Applicant Status is granted

The Course Provider will be entitled to:

- Display the QA Certificate.
- Use the following statement in the CP's literature and publicity material - "The (name of CP) is recognised as having gained Applicant Status by the Homeopathy Course Providers Forum under the HCPF Quality Assurance Scheme".

9.3 Quality Assured Status is granted

The Course Provider will be entitled to:

- Display the QA Certificate.
- Use the following statement in the CP's literature and publicity material - "The (name of CP) is recognised as having gained Quality Assured Status by the Homeopathy Course Providers Forum under the HCPF Quality Assurance Scheme".
- Use the QA logo in the CP's literature and publicity material.

9.4 QA Applicant Status or QA Status is not granted

The Application will be referred back to the Course Provider by the Chair of the Panel (see Section 5.4) with specific action points to enable it to meet the criteria. The report will make clear where further developments have to take place.

9.4 Course Providers can appeal a decision not to grant QA Status. The Appeals Procedure can be found in Section 10

10.0 Appeals Procedure

10.1 Course Providers will have the right of appeal against the Quality Assurance decision made on their application. The QA Panel will, in its report to the Course Provider, indicate their decision and will notify them of their right of appeal.

10.2 The Quality Assurance policy and procedures described below are for use by course providers that wish the QA Panel to reconsider their decision based on:

- The Application as it stands or
- A request that further evidence is considered with the Application

10.3 If a Course Provider wishes to lodge an Appeal, they should inform the Chair of the QA Panel in writing of its intention to appeal within 30 days of receiving the official notification of a QA Panel decision.

10.4 The course provider must send an electronic copy of a written statement of appeal, including the grounds of appeal and any accompanying documentary evidence, so that it is received by the Administrator within 60 days of the official notification described in 10.3.

10.5 The appeal statement should state the reasons for seeking reconsideration of the Panel decision, together with a detailed statement of any error, omission or misjudgement which it believes has occurred in the decision-making processes. If new information, previously unavailable to the Panel, forms any part of the appeal statement, the course provider must explain why it believes such new information should cause the Panel to reconsider its decision and why this information was not available prior to the Panel's decision.

10.6 All expenses incurred by the QA Panel in considering the appeal will be payable by the course provider, unless the QA Panel acts to modify or reverse its original decision having been persuaded of an error, omission or oversight on its part.

10.7 The Panel will enter into further dialogue/mediation with the Course Provider, to clarify the issues with the aim of reaching a consensual resolution of the Appeal. The Panel will then formally consider the appeal at the next QA Panel meeting. The Course Provider will be invited to attend the discussion phase only of their appeal as an observer - see 5.7

10.8 The Chair of the QA Panel will inform the course provider as soon as is practicable after the meeting whether it has decided to affirm, modify or reverse its original decision. The dialogue process in 10.7 should mean there will be no surprises.

10.9 The QA Panel is accountable to HCPF. The Chair of the QA Panel will provide a statement in response to the appeal to the Chair of the HCPF, either justifying its previous recommendation or showing sympathy to the grounds of appeal. This statement will be available to members of HCPF alongside the course provider's appeal statement.

10.10 If requested to do so, members of the Panel and/or Review Group may attend an HCPF meeting to answer any questions from members of HCPF.

10.11 The QA Panel's decision is final.

11.0 Monitoring and Maintenance of Quality Assured Status

11.1 Maintaining QA is a joint endeavour between the course provider and HCPF. Course providers will be expected to submit an annual report, (covering developments and changes to how they meet the 13 criteria) together with their annual fee and to undertake to carry out a joint peer review with another course provider no less than every three years.

11.2 The following outlines the nature and processes of the Annual Report. All Course Providers within the QA Scheme will supply the following:

- A Submission of basic statistics for the past academic year:
 - Numbers of students in each intake (year) group
 - Numbers of students transferring into the course in each intake (year) group
 - Numbers of students transferring out of the course from each intake (year) group
 - Numbers of students taking time out from the course from each intake (year) group
 - Numbers of students returning to each intake (year) group after taking time out from the course
 - Numbers of students who have left the course from each intake (year) group.

- B A brief report of any major changes or developments, such as:
 - Any Key Recommendations from previous QA
 - The course itself - this is about the material taught, the way it is taught, the way assessments are made, clinical training etc.
 - The resources available to the course provider, its staff and its students - this is about the buildings used, library facilities, computer facilities etc., together with a list of staff changes and the CVs of new staff.
 - The structure of the institution - this is about the management structure, the departments, the people running the organisation, the ownership etc.
 - Any other significant changes not covered by the above (please refer to the Overall Criteria A, B and C, the 13 Criteria and NOS for homeopathy).

- C A statement of commitment to develop the areas related to any outstanding *Key Recommendations*.

- D A report on the Peer Review Process. The following guidelines apply:
 - The peer review process is intended to provide opportunities for self-assessment and sharing of practice and is not intended as assessment by another CP.
 - Feedback is intended to be supportive and educational, and to offer sufficient flexibility to accommodate different courses.
 - Two CPs agree to enter into the peer review process; each CP agrees own area(s) of review based on the 13 criteria of the Accreditation Handbook. The areas could be the same or different for the two providers, depending on the developmental needs of the CP.
 - Visits are agreed appropriate to the area(s) reviewed, either in person or 'virtual' (eg Skype meeting).
 - The focus of the review is to find out how the CP does something in the area agreed. This would require the host CP to clarify its processes and

explanations of what it is trying to achieve and how successful they think they are in meeting their goals. The visiting CP provides a questioning role that is intended to help the host CP critically assess its practices and processes.

- Each CP prepares a brief reflective report, concentrating on what it has learnt for its own organisation, on:
 - The meaning and value of the review from the host perspective
 - The meaning and value of the review from the visitor perspective
 - Reports to be submitted with the Annual Report for that year.
 - The Peer review process is owned by the colleges taking part. The principles of Confidentiality, Conflict of Interest, etc apply.
 - Colleges retain the rights to any materials shared and any use of such material for teaching purposes can only be made with the express written permission of the CP who owns the material.
- E A signed declaration that, other than any aspects listed in B above, there have been no major changes since the last QA submission.
- F Payment of any fees due.

12.0 Evaluation of the QA Scheme

An ongoing system for feedback and evaluation on the whole of the QA Scheme will be managed by the Chair of HCPF, Chair of the QA Panel and the Administrator.

Feedback will be requested from all participants in the QA process, including course provider staff, students, lay members and any observers. Collated feedback will be presented and discussed fully by HCPF.

A short report will be produced annually by the Chair of the QA Panel and circulated to relevant groups/persons annually. This document will contribute to the annual review of the QA Scheme by the HCPF.

13.0 Associated documents:

The following documents are relevant to the HCPF QA Scheme.

- 13.1 How to apply for QA Applicant Status, see Section 7 of this Handbook.
- 13.2 How to apply for QA Status, see Section 8 of this Handbook.
- 13.3 Criteria and Guideline Questions for QA.
- 13.4 Declaration of Intent
- 13.5 Policy and Code of Conduct for HCPF QA Panel members
- 13.6 National Occupational Standards (NOS)
- 13.7 QA Fees