



## Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of The Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust, April 2019

### Outcome of the monitoring visit

1 From the evidence provided in the annual return and at the monitoring visit, the review team concludes that the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust (the Trust) is making commendable progress with continuing to monitor, review and enhance its higher education provision since the [May 2018 monitoring visit](#).

### Changes since the last QAA monitoring visit

2 The Trust continues to offer a range of programmes at postgraduate level. There have been no significant changes to staffing or programmes since the annual monitoring visit in May 2018. The teach out of programmes validated by the University of East London (UEL) is almost complete. Seventy-six students are still enrolled on UEL professional doctorates and one student is on a master's programme. At the same time 183 students are studying on professional doctorates of the University of Essex, 425 were enrolled on this awarding body's master's programmes, 63 on postgraduate certificates, and 74 on graduate certificates.

### Findings from the monitoring visit

3 The Trust has made commendable progress in continuing to monitor, review and enhance its higher education provision. There are no outstanding recommendations or affirmations from the 2016 Higher Education Review. The good practice continues to be developed and its impact is being assessed through the Trust's internal quality assurance mechanisms. The Trust's annual quality improvement action plan builds on the good practice and is informed by annual programme reviews, external examiner comments and feedback from students and teaching staff (paragraphs 4-6). There have been new initiatives in equality, diversity and inclusion based on information generated through internal quality assurance processes (paragraph 7). The Trust has also developed its own quality strategy and is in the process of implementing key strategic aims and new policies for improving compliance and consistency of approach to academic governance across all delivery centres (paragraphs 8-9).

4 With regard to the good practice since the last annual monitoring visit, the integration of academic study and clinical practice has been further enhanced by the coordination of placements, training for placement supervisors and the introduction of placement surveys. Students acknowledge that programmes enhance their clinical practice. Placement providers have representation on the Operations Committee and the Executive Group and provide input into management and development plans for placement practice. Teaching staff are working professionals and continue to develop towards membership of the Advance HE. Staff are held in high regard by the industry and students.

5 The Trust continues to develop the library and skills resources to a commendable level as confirmed by Health Education England with a well developed annual action plan. Student surveys and the evaluation of journal usage ensure that the right materials and a

sufficient number of electronic resource material are available. There is information skills training for students. Learning resource managers regularly meet with Course Leaders to discuss resource needs and induct students into the use of the library and resources. Students commented that the resources and staff were impressive and the service excellent.

6 Technology-enhanced learning via the virtual learning environment (VLE) is being further developed. The VLE is a learning resource that is highly appreciated by students, who have access to recorded lectures, learning materials and reading lists and there is a discussion space for staff and students. Students also submit their assessments via the VLE and receive feedback via downloadable files from the VLE. Provision of feedback on assessments directly via the VLE is planned for the near future. The ongoing development of the platform as a learning tool is supported by a review group that includes students looking at ease of use and layout.

7 The Trust has a well developed and responsive quality action planning system, which is informed by staff and student feedback, annual course reviews, and the Trust's strategic objectives. Current developments include an equality and diversity initiative led by the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Committee and originating from a concern for the experience of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) groups involved in the Trust's educational programmes as models of thinking about mental health have in the past tended not to treat them in an equal way. This situation resulted in reflections and training on the importance and development of inclusive curricula, the appointment of a diversity lead and the development of an equalities webpage by the library. The initiative, which complements the Trust's Race Equality Strategy, is benefitting students in their clinical practice and is in line with the national health policies. As part of the work on equality the Trust also reviewed, and is updating, its procedures for supporting students with disabilities. Based on feedback from student surveys the Trust recognised a need for greater clarity of procedure. The new procedures will be supported by the standard operating procedures and their effectiveness reviewed in operational managers meetings.

8 The development of an academic quality strategy is an initiative following the migration of programmes to the University of Essex as the validating body and the subsequent adjustment to its academic framework and processes. In the process the Trust has identified a need to develop its own strategy to reflect the greater self-sufficiency the Trust is finding as a higher education provider. The strategy defines key strategic aims and has been developed with reference to its Clinical Quality Strategy.

9 The Trust has a number of centres around the UK delivering its programmes. In order to continue improvements in the management of academic governance across centres, the Trust reviewed how it works with these national centres. This has resulted in the production of a summary scoring sheet to assess the viability of new centres and approved terms of reference for a National Centres Partner Group. A national centre handbook is being developed. It is anticipated that these actions will enable greater consistency of approach and compliance across centres.

10 The Trust has a clear admissions policy that is regularly reviewed. It references the requirements of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code) Expectations and fully aligns with the Equality Act 2010. The policy also outlines requirements for English language for non-native speakers. As the Trust's provision is at postgraduate level, requirements for experiential learning for those without a first degree are clearly set out in programme specifications, in the prospectus and on the Trust website. Applications are submitted online through the Trust's application portal followed by an interview as part of the process. Students attested to the clarity and fairness of the admissions process and the accuracy of the information they received.

11 The assessment strategy for each programme is described in the respective programme specification and for each module within the relevant course handbook.

The strategy makes explicit links between the learning outcomes and assessment instruments. All assessments are submitted through plagiarism-detection software via the VLE. A semi-automated process allows marks from assessments to be recorded and transferred to the Trust's student record system, which minimises errors in recording student marks. Students are aware of the requirements of their assessments, their timing and applicable academic regulations, and confirmed that they also had formative assessments. Marking and feedback quality is monitored by internal verifiers who work with Course Leaders and have weekly meetings with operational managers to deal with any issues. External examiners have reported assessment practices as a strength. External examiner reports are reviewed by Course Leaders who respond to any recommendations and reports are discussed at Course Committee meetings.

12 The data return shows student achievement remained consistently above 90 percent over the last three years. Students completing in 2015-16 had a 99 percent pass rate. After a drop to 94 per cent for those completing in 2016-17, pass rates for students expected to complete in 2017-18 reached 100 per cent. The data also shows a retention rate of 88-89 percent for each cohort. The Trust closely monitor the reasons for students leaving programmes the majority of whom are part-time.

## **Progress in working with the external reference points to meet UK expectations for higher education**

13 The Trust demonstrates highly effective engagement with external reference points. The Trust actively engages with its partner universities' quality requirements and the Quality Code at validation and periodic review. Provision is considered and evaluated with regard to *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ), the qualification descriptors and Subject Benchmark Statements. The Trust also uses the qualification frameworks and benchmarks for regular reviews of learning outcomes and external examiners are asked to comment on how programmes align with qualification and benchmark statements.

14 The Trust has recently undergone successful institutional reviews from both partner universities. In the case of the University of East London this resulted in a critical appraisal by the Trust of the already agreed teach out of programmes, confirmed continuation of the validation arrangements and the production of an action plan to complete successful teach out of programmes within the previously agreed timescale. The University of Essex also undertook an institutional review of the Trust. The Trust prepared a self-evaluation document, which set out how its policies and procedures map and align to those of the University. The Trust has also had its library provision assessed by Health Education England against its library quality assessment framework and its service was commended.

## **Background to the monitoring visit**

15 The monitoring visit serves as a short check on the provider's continuing management of academic standards and quality of provision. It focuses on progress since the previous review. In addition, it provides an opportunity for QAA to advise the provider of any matters that have the potential to be of particular interest in the next monitoring visit or review.

16 The monitoring visit was carried out by Jonathan Baker, Reviewer, and Monika Ruthe, QAA Officer, on 30 April 2019.

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