



# Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of The Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust, May 2017

## 1 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) has made acceptable progress with implementing the action plan from the April 2016 [Higher Education Review \(Alternative Providers\)](#).

## 2 Changes since the last QAA review

2 There have been no major strategic changes at the Trust since the HER (AP) visit in April 2016. Since the visit in 2016 there has been a two per cent decrease in student numbers, from 824 to 806 higher education enrolments. The Trust has completed the validation and approval process for the transfer of the majority of awards from the University of East London (UEL) to the University of Essex (UoE). All conditions have been met, and any recommendations will be considered as part of the 2016-17 annual monitoring and review process.

## 3 Findings from the monitoring visit

3 The review team met staff and students during the monitoring visit and considered the Trust's annual return and supporting documentation, particularly the Trust's Action Plan, which has been maintained since the HER (AP) visit. The four areas of good practice identified at the HER (AP) visit have been reviewed and developed. The Trust's systematic integration of academic study and clinical practice within the taught elements has been maintained (paragraph 5). The provision of online access to library and study skills resources, and the promotion of the technology enhanced learning (TEL) resources across the provision, have been maintained and enhanced to support student learning (paragraphs 6 and 8). The centralised process for the approval of assessment tasks and allocation of marking continue to be developed, with formal consideration of the impacts of these developments yet to be undertaken (paragraph 7).

4 Progress has been made in responding to the four recommendations that were reported at the HER (AP) visit and which were to be progressed by June 2017. Assessment feedback, including verification and marking procedures, have been reviewed and guidance provided to staff (paragraph 9). Procedures are in place to ensure that external examiners provide explicit comments on student performance at individual national centres (paragraph 10). The Trust recognises that further work is required to improve action planning resulting from annual monitoring and to ensure that staff and students are more actively and explicitly involved in annual monitoring processes (paragraphs 11 and 12). The Trust has improved the clarity of course information offered to prospective students (paragraph 13). The affirmation to engage postgraduate research students with the Trust's wider research community has been progressed (paragraph 14).

5 The Trust has maintained the systematic integration of academic study and clinical practice within the taught elements through continued commitment to employing experienced practitioners as teaching staff, and engaging specialist guest lecturers,

which students value. A range of professional development events focus on learning and teaching. The Trust has received provisional approval for a scheme to allow staff to become Fellows of the Higher Education Academy (HEA). The Trust has identified staff mentors recognised for their delivery skills to support 16 colleagues to develop professional HEA accreditation by 2018. These mentors also support the links between clinical background and professional development of the teaching staff.

6 The 2016-17 Library Development Plan is monitored systematically, including online access to library and study skills resources. Student views of resources are discussed at course committees and reported through the Review and Enhancement (REP) annual review process. Students appreciate the ability to access course reading lists electronically from the library as well as the support materials for referencing and searching, which are also available electronically. The number of electronic resources available to students through the library continues to increase. In addition to increasing the use of social media, and providing student study skills support, the library is also offering professional development workshops to teaching staff to support referencing of literature.

7 The Trust reports introducing actions to develop more focused analysis of assessment practices and student performances at the Trust's various sites. Work has been undertaken to manage and track assessment processes, which streamlines and optimises the logistics of achieving marking across multiple sites. External examiners are now able to identify student performance at unique centres delivering the programmes (please refer to paragraph 10 below). The impacts of these activities are anticipated to include improved turnaround in marking and reduction in student complaints. Formal consideration of the impacts of these developments has yet to be undertaken.

8 The Trust continues to support and promote the use of TEL across the provision. A range of initiatives has been developed, including staff attending sessions on use of the virtual learning environment (VLE); development of blended learning packages; attendance recording pilots; the TEL Team and students working together to improve the VLE pages and overall navigation; plagiarism-detection software being implemented for all assignment submissions, supported by training of staff; enhanced student support section with a range of resources, and support from the TEL team for teaching staff and students to develop and promote these resources.

9 The Trust has made acceptable progress with the four recommendations identified at the 2016 HER AP visit. The Academic Governance and Quality Assurance (AGQA) Unit has reviewed the assessment, verification and marking procedures and shared changes with all course teams and markers. The verifier's form has been updated and a new marking sheet has been produced. Improvements include assessment criteria being provided to students when the assessment is set, and feedback comments provided against each criterion. Students confirm the benefit of this development. Several staff development events have been delivered to support the implementation of the policy and good practice in marking and feedback. The impact of these developments on assessment practices is not yet fully established. An academic tutor forum was held on the theme of assessment and marking and further discussion is planned with UoE to compare practices between institutions. A Response Group has been convened to monitor the processes associated with assessment and marking. This group has met to track and resolve issues arising from course delivery and has also run two consultative workshops, which has resulted in recommendations used to revise the Standard Operating Procedures linked to assessment.

10 The Trust has implemented changes to processes and procedural documentation to ensure that external examiners report on student performance at individual national centres. The revised Assessment and Marking Procedures explicitly state that assessment samples should be representative of all markers and grades made up of scripts from the full range of

markers, grades, and any associate centres. If a cross-section of all markers and centres cannot be achieved within one assignment, a sample of each marker's work should be internally verified. Student work from national centres is identified within the sample to allow external examiners to compare student performance and academic standards across different sites of delivery. The effectiveness of these developments has yet to be reported.

11 Staff and students are involved in the annual monitoring processes, with student representatives attending the AGQA Committee, Learning and Teaching Committees, and the course committees. The Guidance for Tutors for the 2015-16 cycle of Annual Course Monitoring and Review clearly states that the report and action plans must be prepared in consultation with the entire course team. The Trust is implementing a planned schedule to effect the transition from the UEL annual monitoring REP processes to the ARC process of UoE. Staff reported that the ARC process will also incorporate reviewing the Trust's enhancement themes and will be supported by staff training delivered in conjunction with UoE. Data and student comments from student surveys are incorporated into the review process. However, the REP examples provided show a lack of consistency and it is not clear where qualitative student comments are considered and appropriate action taken. The Trust is developing guidance to improve the consistency of use and responses made to these surveys, to make the feedback to the student body clearer.

12 As part of the 2016-17 monitoring cycle, the standard agenda for course committees includes scrutiny of external examiners' reports, and REP reports and action plans. These committees are attended by course tutors and student representatives, and the AGQA Unit is developing training materials for student representatives with a selection available online from September 2017. The course committee minutes seen by the team do not have an action plan and Trust staff agreed that this is an area for improvement. The Trust is working with UoE to improve action planning processes, which link outcomes from annual monitoring, enhancement themes, student feedback and other quality indicators. ARC implementation from 2016-17 aims for increased focus on action planning, and the Trust recognises that further work is required to improve action planning resulting from annual monitoring.

13 The Trust has improved the clarity of information about courses offered to prospective students. This includes revisions to the prospectus to show more clearly the training routes that some students can take to progress to various jobs and clinical roles. Managers oversee maintenance of the Trust's information. Students reported that careers information and practical activities could be improved in order to prepare them for the workplace practice. The module combinations are also articulated through the revised website, at Open Mornings/Evenings, and through the developing alumni network.

14 The affirmation reported at the 2016 visit, to engage postgraduate research students with the Trust's wider research community, has been progressed. The Trust recently held a successful Doctoral Conference, which was attended by over 50 staff and students from across the Trust to listen to speakers including current research students. The Research Week event has run annually for a number of years and has been an important way of building communication opportunities between doctoral students. Work is also ongoing to engage with external stakeholders and form links from doctoral research with other research being undertaken within the Trust. Links with researchers in the Centre for Psychoanalysis at UoE are also being explored.

15 The Trust has in place a number of policy documents to support student engagement, including the Trust Student Charter and Policy on Student Engagement Quality Assurance and Enhancement. The Trust recognises that implementing successful strategies to obtain active student representation has not been fully addressed. Student representatives have not attended the last three Student Experience Committee meetings.

A Dean's forum is convened three times annually, and is an informal event for staff and students from taught and research programmes to meet. A working group is considering further approaches to improving active student engagement. The Trust is preparing to use the ARC approaches to monitoring provided by UoE for all programmes previously delivered by UEL. The approach enshrined in the ARC document is recognised to be a significantly different model. Staff development to fully implement this model is planned in May 2017.

16 The Trust has streamlined applications processes to programmes, which outline entry requirements and admissions processes for each programme in course information. Course Leaders have overall responsibility for decision making on applicants. Not all applicants are interviewed; those who are unsuccessful are advised on other options. The Student Admissions Procedure remains a draft document, with intent stated to review this in December 2017. This procedure does not outline the Trust's approach to meeting its responsibility for training on admissions processes, nor make clear what options applicants have for lodging complaints. Staff are aware of the Competitions and Markets Authority requirements, but no specific exercise to check the Trust's processes in the light of these has yet been applied.

17 The data provided by the Trust indicates that retention rates have improved year on year from 85 per cent in 2013-14 to 100 per cent for 2015-16. There is a corresponding improvement in pass rates from 70 to 90 per cent.

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

18 The Trust's quality processes and procedures for validated programmes are also applied to non-validated Trust programmes. These policies have previously been mapped against the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code). Since 2015, the Trust has engaged in considerable development of programmes to validate these for delivery under a new awarding body, UoE. The approval practices undertaken have involved working with the Quality Code requirements, demonstrating continuing engagement with external reference points. These practices are further underscored through external accreditation of many programmes by professional and statutory bodies.

#### **5 Background to the monitoring visit**

19 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.

20 The monitoring visit was carried out by Ms Deborah Trayhurn, Reviewer, and Mr Robert Saynor, Coordinator, on 2 May 2017.

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