



## Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust, May 2018

### Section 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 has made acceptable progress with continuing to monitor, review and enhance its higher education provision from the 2017 [Annual Monitoring Visit](#).

### Section 2: Changes since the last QAA monitoring visit

2 There have been no significant changes to staffing or programmes offered by the Trust since the annual monitoring visit in May 2017. Since this visit there has been 11.8 per cent increase in student numbers, from 806 to 914 higher education students studying with the Trust. The Trust has now moved all its provision to the partnership with the University of Essex and is currently teaching out eight programmes validated by the University of East London (UEL).

### Section 3: Findings from the monitoring visit

3 The good practice identified in the Higher Education Review action plan continue to be developed and implemented. The integration of academic and clinical practice, enhancement of online resources, the centralised system for approving assessment and allocating marking continue to be reviewed and implemented to maintain good practice. The promotion of technology enhanced learning (TEL) supports staff in delivering programmes, but has had limited further development (see paragraphs 4-7). Progress has been made with strengthening the assessment process, including the timely marking of scripts and the provision of constructive feedback, and is effectively monitored at programme and institution level (see paragraphs 8-10). The pre-course information provided is clear, informative and accessible through the prospectus and the Trust's website (see paragraph 11). Students are able to engage with broader research groups and have access to annual monitoring reports for individual programmes and subsequent action plans (see paragraphs 12 and 14).

4 The Trust continues to enhance the integration of academic pedagogy and clinical practice. This is evident through the introduction of an accredited scheme allowing staff to apply for Higher Education Academy (HEA) membership at the appropriate level based on their experience. Staff are appointed a mentor who is a member of the HEA, to provide support and guidance. Bespoke continuing professional development (CPD) activities tailored to staff applying for Fellowship are also provided. Applicants are considered by the Trust's Recognition Panel, which has currently awarded four Fellowships and requires an additional four staff to undertake extra work.

5 Enhancement of online access to library and study skills materials remains an important feature of the provision, with evidence of continued high levels of activity and new developments. The actions taken in response to this good practice include the expansion of the provision of information resources, and the further embedding of information skills training within the curriculum to enhance student learning. Sessions are provided to support

research skills in literature searching, citing, referencing and critical appraisal to support academic achievement.

6 The use of TEL continues to be supported and promoted across provision, including the use of online submission of assessments. Library and TEL staff engage with the Trust's deliberative committees and support the development of the virtual learning environment pages, the signposting of information and the use of plagiarism-detection software including draft submissions. Staff development training sessions on digital and video resources for teaching have been made available as part of the broader teaching and learning development opportunities. However, the uptake of workshop sessions has been low, and webinar training is being developed to broaden access to CPD activities across centres.

7 The Trust is continuing to develop and implement its centralised processes for the approval of assessment tasks and the allocation and monitoring of marking. Assessment tasks are centrally approved and marking allocated across centres, with all assessors making use of detailed feedback sheets which reference assessment and grading criteria. The use of plagiarism-detection software provides additional evidence on the authenticity of work. Marked assessments are internally verified, with verification feedback sheets made available to external examiners. Results are reviewed by the Head of the Academic Governance and Quality Assurance Unit (AGQA), and student performance at regional centres monitored and used to inform annual monitoring reports.

8 The Trust has acknowledged concerns raised by some external examiners over the inconsistencies in the application of assessment criteria, which varies across the range of assignments. The assessment process has been strengthened through the provision of a revised and more detailed assessment feedback sheet. Markers are required to provide written feedback against each assessment criterion along with feedback on presentation including style, grammar and referencing. Further constructive feedback is provided on individual work identifying areas for development as well as highlighting strengths. The Trust will also address and monitor the quality of assessment through the periodic review process so that fewer assessment criteria are used when designing assignments, though this has yet to be implemented. The use of the feedback sheets is set out in the comprehensive Assessment and Marking Procedure and CPD sessions have been provided to support staff in understanding and applying the revised assessment processes.

9 Assessment processes including marking and feedback turnaround times are systematically monitored by the Rapid Response Group. The group meets at least twice a month to track the consistency of assessment management and to take immediate action should the need arise. Internal verifier reports and external examiner reports are used to evaluate the consistency of feedback with any concerns being reported to the AGQA Unit. Adherence to the marking turnaround times have improved, as reflected by improved student feedback and satisfaction rates, rising from 59 per cent in 2015-16 to 66 per cent in 2016-17. While the increase is modest, the feedback includes students who were registered before the changes were implemented in 2016-17.

10 The centralised processes for data management have been enhanced through the implementation of the Trust's recently commissioned student information system, whereby student performance on each course is considered separately by location. Grading sheets now detail the location of study for each student together with their overall grade. The quality of student performance data made available to assessment boards has been significantly enhanced, allowing external examiners the opportunity to explicitly comment on student performance at each centre, however, external examiner feedback pro formas have yet to be modified to allow for explicit commentary on individual centres.

11 Staff and students are able to discuss annual monitoring reports, external examiner reports and associated action plans as part of course committee meetings. Each meeting includes a standing item on the agenda to review actions plans and monitor progress, and meetings continue to be held for UEL programmes on teach out. Programme monitoring is conducted on an annual basis through the auspices of the Academic Governance and Quality Assurance Committee and includes consideration of student feedback through surveys and external examiner reports for all provision. The Trust has adopted the University of Essex process which requires a single Annual Review of Courses (ARC) to be prepared. However, to ensure oversight at the individual programme level, the Trust also requires ARC forms to be completed for each programme. UEL have agreed that the ARC reports may also be used for their programmes on teach out, and the Trust continues to review and ensure the standards of UEL provision through this medium. For doctoral programmes a single ARC is completed covering all programmes. ARCs require the analysis of key data including student feedback data, entry qualifications, retention and progression statistics, along with completion, qualification and destination outcomes. Action plans are maintained detailing responsibilities, dates for completion, commentary on progress and the impact on the learning experience of students.

12 Students are actively engaged as representatives on the key deliberative committees as set out in the Trust's policy on student engagement. Students are involved in validation panels for programmes approved by the University of Essex and on subsequent periodic review panels. For students on the Trust's institutional level senior committees such as Academic Governance and Quality Committee, additional guidance is provided. The Student Experience Committee established in 2015 ceased activity due to difficulties with student attendance and has been replaced by the Dean's Forum. This Forum provides more accessible opportunities for student engagement through the scheduling the meetings including use of online technology to maximise student participation.

13 Revisions to the prospectus and the redesign of the Trust's website have improved the clarity of information about courses offered to prospective students. The prospectus includes information on course pathways identifying the progressions routes and how these are linked to subject specialisms and clinical roles. Case studies from students reinforce and enrich the course specific information providing examples of how the courses have helped their career and progression.

14 The Trust's action plan reaffirms its commitment to the continued enhancement of opportunities for postgraduate research students to engage with the wider research community. The annual doctoral conference brings research students in to contact with the wider research community. Building on previous events, the Research Week includes workshops delivered in collaboration with the Learning and Development team at the University of Essex. The Trust is currently in discussion with researchers in the Department of Psychosocial and Psychoanalytic Studies at the University of Essex to establish stronger links.

15 The admission of students is managed in the context of a formal Student Admissions Policy, which has been mapped against the indicators of the Quality Code, *Chapter B2: Recruitment, Selection and Admission to Higher Education*. Applications are considered using explicit academic entry criteria, including strictly applied English language proficiency requirements, which are clearly set out in course descriptors, the annual prospectus and through programme specifications and on the Trust's website. The admissions policy and procedures, entry criteria and the clear appeals process are also available to applicants via the website. The high retention, achievement and progression rates are testament to the effectiveness of the admissions policy and procedures. Students attest to the clarity and fairness of the procedures.

16 The data return, combined with other supporting data, indicates that high levels of retention and achievement have been maintained over the past three years, alongside an increase in student numbers. The data shows a rise in the number of students enrolled from 278 in 2015-16, 332 in 2016-17 to 417 in 2017-18. This is in line with the managed move between validating universities. Overall, the retention rate for the last three completing cohorts is 91 per cent (817 of 902). The rate has been sustained at around that figure in each year, with 253 of 292 students recruited completing in 2014-15, 253 of 278 in 2015-16 and 311 of 332 in 2016-17. During this period, 99 per cent (396 of 398) of students completing the programmes achieved a pass grade. The Trust carefully monitors the reasons for students leaving the programmes.

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

17 The Trust continues to make good use of a range of external reference points, including the Quality Code, to help assure academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities. The University's processes for programme design, approval and review ensure alignment with the relevant expectations and indicators of the Quality Code, while also taking account of *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications*, Higher Education Credit Framework and Subject Benchmark Statements. The Trust undertakes explicit mapping of its policies and procedures against the appropriate chapters of the Quality Code, as is evident in the policies for student engagement, admission of students and assessment.

18 In addition, external examiners, nominated by the Trust but appointed by the awarding bodies, provide regular general and subject-specific inputs into the operation of the courses and how the standards of the courses compare with national reference points. The University's policy for the appointment of external examiners is updated to align with the indicators of the Quality Code *Chapter B7: External Examining*.

## **Section 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 Dr Colin Fryer, Reviewer, and Mrs Mandy Hobart, Coordinator, on 1 May 2018.

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