Medical Student Registration – the GMC’s Position

The GMC has decided that it will not introduce either mandatory or voluntary registration of medical students.

The GMC will continue work to strengthen engagement with medical students and plans to issue GMC reference numbers at the beginning of the final year of their course, rather than towards the end of their final year, for students beginning their final year in 2013.

The GMC considers that both students and medical schools will welcome this news as it makes provisional registration more straightforward, and should enable easier access to certain NHS resources. It will bring forward the point at which medical students engage formally with the GMC. The GMC will be clear that issuing a reference number does not mean that a student is registered, to ensure there is no misunderstanding over their status.

The GMC undertook a review of its position on Medical Student Registration following a commitment made in its Education Strategy 2011-2013 and a recommendation to reconsider the issue made by Professor John Collins in his 2010 Medical Education England Review of the Foundation Programme.

It considered four options, including mandatory or voluntary registration, but concluded that neither was necessary to ensure the promotion of professional values or to support a smoother transition to practice. The recent Command Paper, Enabling Excellence, made clear that the Government would not extend statutory regulation to currently unregulated professional groups except where there is a compelling case on the basis of a public safety risk. It is clear that student registration would not meet that threshold and the alternative of a voluntary register was ruled out as potentially confusing for the public.

The GMC has agreed to review its position in 2015.

The full paper considered by the Council is available here:

http://www.gmc-uk.org/6a_Medical_Student_Registration_the_GMC_s_Position.pdf