

To consider

Evaluating the GMC's Performance

Issue

1. Our approach to evaluation.

Recommendations

2.
 - a. To note our approach to embedding evaluation (paragraphs 10-17).
 - b. To consider the six-month evaluation of progress towards the outcomes in the 2010 Business Plan (paragraphs 18-20 and Annexes A and B).
 - c. To note the next steps for developing the 2011 Business Plan and Budget, and plans for the Audit and Risk Committee to review progress with our work on evaluation twice a year (paragraphs 21-25).

Further information

3. If you require further information about this paper, please contact us by email: gmc@gmc-uk.org or tel. 0161 9236602.

Background

4. This paper relates to theme four of the Corporate Strategy: delivering value for money, by using our resources efficiently and effectively, and ensuring the organisation is well governed, with a clear purpose and evidence-based policies that demonstrate 'better regulation' principles.

5. In May 2007, Council agreed that we should broaden our approach to performance management at the GMC by introducing a focus on evaluation. In practice, evaluation means defining and measuring our success in terms of outcomes and impacts, rather than focussing on simply delivering tangible outputs and meeting operational service targets. Following an effective evaluation approach enables Council and the Senior Management Team to establish a clearer understanding of how well we are performing.

6. Therefore, the Evaluation Framework Review Group was established in May 2007 and it developed the Evaluation Framework. The framework is made up of four evaluation criteria intended to help us identify the outcomes we should seek to achieve through our work. The criteria are:

- a. Achieving our statutory purpose.
- b. Commanding the confidence and support of our key interest groups.
- c. Adhering to accepted principles of better regulation.
- d. Delivering economy and efficiency.

Evaluation pilots

7. In 2009, we piloted the Evaluation Framework across four work programmes in the 2009 Business Plan (the merger of PMETB with the GMC, introducing the licence to practise, GMC Affiliates pilot studies, and guidance on standards and ethics). The aim of the pilots was to demonstrate how the framework could be applied in practice and to learn any lessons for its future development.

8. The criteria in the framework helped us to define the specific outcomes we were seeking through each of our work programmes. We then specified measures to assess whether those outcomes had been achieved, completed an evaluation of our performance based on available management information, and assigned a performance rating (red, amber or green) to reflect progress against each outcome.

9. The pilots provided useful learning points; notably that our application of the framework should be flexible, that it should start at the planning stage of any work programme before work is started, and that it should draw on available management information to ensure our approach is efficient and we are not creating unnecessary new work (while acknowledging that there are occasions where there is value in gathering additional information to address gaps in our knowledge).

10. These findings were endorsed by Council in September 2009, which agreed that we should apply the framework to the development of the 2010-2013 Corporate Strategy and 2010 Business Plan.

Discussion

Evaluation work programme

11. Following the pilots, our work on evaluation has focussed on two areas: embedding evaluation within our corporate planning and reporting processes, and establishing an evaluation work programme through the Performance Board.

Embedding evaluation within our corporate planning and reporting processes

12. We developed and published long-term outcomes for each strategic aim in the Corporate Strategy, and short-term outcomes for each activity in the 2010 Business Plan. We currently provide updates on progress against Business Plan activities through the Chief Executive's Report to Council.

13. We have publicly committed to reporting progress against the Corporate Strategy in our Annual Report. We also agreed to give Council six-monthly updates on progress towards the outcomes in the 2010 Business Plan. We have completed an evaluation of progress to date, which is discussed further from paragraph 18.

14. In September 2010, we will launch our business planning process for 2011. Our work on evaluation will be an important input to its development. Towards the end of 2010, we will complete a full-year evaluation of progress against the Business Plan outcomes for 2010 and this, together with an update on progress against the Corporate Strategy, will inform the contents of our 2010 Annual Report.

Establishing an evaluation work programme through the Performance Board

15. In January 2010, the Performance Board was established, chaired by Paul Philip, Deputy Chief Executive. The purpose of the Board is to support Council and the Senior Management Team to oversee the performance of the GMC.

16. The Board has three main areas of focus. The first relates to reviewing management information reported through the Monthly Management Report to the Chief Executive and the Senior Management Team. The second relates to overseeing a GMC-wide programme of efficiency savings and continuous improvements. The third programme is focussed on evaluation, which incorporates work on benchmarking. Our benchmarking programme will compare our approaches and processes to those of other organisations we might meaningfully learn from, to validate our work and assist us in identifying examples of best practice which we could adopt in order to improve our performance. This is discussed further at Annex B.

17. As part of this evaluation work in 2010, the Performance Board has reviewed our Equality and Diversity, Communications, and Standards functions, and the benefits of the merger of PMETB with the GMC. A discussion on our approach to developing the medical register is scheduled for the next Performance Board meeting on 8 July 2010, to be followed by further discussions on our other functions.

18. We will report to Council later in 2010 with an update on the emerging findings from the Performance Board's work programmes, and implications for the 2011 Business Plan.

Recommendation: To note our approach to embedding evaluation.

Key findings from the six-month evaluation of progress towards the outcomes in the 2010 Business Plan

19. We have completed an evaluation of progress towards the 2010 Business Plan outcomes. Overall, we are on track to achieve these outcomes, although there are some challenges which we are actively managing (for example, achieving our service targets for fitness to practise, and putting in place all the necessary arrangements for the transfer of our adjudication function to the Office of the Health Professions Adjudicator). A brief summary of progress against each outcome is included at Annex A.

20. This evaluation was useful in helping us to reflect on how we are performing against the four criteria in the Evaluation Framework (achieving our statutory purpose, commanding the confidence and support of our key interest groups, adhering to accepted principles of better regulation, and delivering economy and efficiency). It confirmed that these criteria are still appropriate, although there is less discussion on the third criteria (adhering to accepted principles of better regulation), reflecting the fact that the outcomes specified in the 2010 Business Plan are more explicitly aligned with the other criteria. It also helped us to identify gaps in our knowledge where more in-depth evaluation techniques are required.

21. Annex B outlines in more detail the key findings from the six-month evaluation that are likely to be of particular interest to members. As this is the first time we have reported to Council on progress against our outcomes, Annex B is also intended to provide additional assurance on the process that has been followed. We do not propose to provide such a level of detail in future reports to Council.

Recommendation: To consider the six-month evaluation of progress towards the outcomes in the 2010 Business Plan.

Developing the 2011 Business Plan and Budget

22. In September 2010, we will be launching our business planning process for 2011. As part of this process, we will update the six-month evaluation of progress towards the 2010 Business Plan outcomes to ensure that this usefully feeds into this work. We will also review our reporting framework to ensure it is fit for purpose.

23. We will discuss the 2011 Business Plan with members on 27 October 2010, in preparation for Council approval of the finalised Business Plan and Budget on 8 December 2010.

24. Our evaluation of progress against the 2010 Business Plan focuses on outcomes relating to our core functions as they currently stand. It is clear however that the GMC is entering a period of significant change arising mainly from assuming responsibility for the continuum of medical education and training, the future transfer of our adjudication function to OHPA, work to develop the medical register, and the introduction of revalidation.

25. All of these changes have implications for our role as a regulator and the ways we engage with our key interest groups, and raise important questions about our future focus and how we define and measure our success. These questions are being explored through the Performance Board and will help to shape the work programmes in the 2011 Business Plan.

26. We propose that going forward, the Audit and Risk Committee will review progress with our work on evaluation twice a year in order to provide Council with assurance on the process that is being followed. This will then be reported to Council through the Chief Executive's Report.

Recommendation: To note the next steps for developing the 2011 Business Plan and Budget, and plans for the Audit and Risk Committee to review progress with our work on evaluation twice a year.

Resource implications

27. The resource implications for taking forward our work on evaluation will be managed within Directorate budgets.

Equality

28. We have completed a six-month evaluation of progress towards the outcomes in the 2010 Business Plan that relate specifically to our work on equality and diversity (E&D). These outcomes include:

- a. Ensuring we remain compliant with equality and diversity legislation.
- b. Embedding E&D considerations in our policy development and operational activity.
- c. Enhancing awareness internally and externally of our commitment to E&D.
- d. Supporting effective collaboration on areas of healthcare regulation that impact on E&D.

29. Our evaluation to date shows that we have made significant progress in these areas, although there are challenges to ensuring that our policies, processes and procedures are updated in time to align with the Equality Act 2010. More detail can be found at Annexes A and B.

30. In addition, the Performance Board has considered our Equality and Diversity function as part of its work programme on evaluation (as well as our Communications and Standards functions, and the benefits of the merger of PMETB with the GMC). This has helped us to identify some high-level outcomes and success measures for our E&D work, which are informing the development of our supporting E&D Strategy (item 7a on the agenda of the Council meeting on 13 July 2010). We are now in the process of agreeing with each business area how we will continue to integrate E&D considerations into our Business Plan activities and evaluate progress and outcomes in this area.