

Information for doctors

whose cases are due to be considered
by a Fitness to Practise Panel

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Medical
Council

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We have developed these pages to help you prepare for your Fitness to Practise (FTP) Panel hearing as you are likely to be unfamiliar with the environment of a hearing and the procedure followed.

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Introduction

We have developed this leaflet to help you prepare for your Fitness to Practise (FTP) Panel hearing as you are likely to be unfamiliar with the environment of a hearing and the procedure followed.

You may, for example, be unaware that you have a right to attend and be represented, to present evidence and to call and cross-examine witnesses.

If you are a member of a medical defence organisation (MDO) and are being assisted by them, or have organised your own legal representation, your legal adviser will be able to provide you with information and advice on what is involved. If you are a member of an MDO and have not already contacted them, you may wish to do so (see page 31).

You may be interested to note that the Bar Pro Bono Unit is a charity which helps to find *pro bono* (free) legal assistance from volunteer barristers. The Unit may be able to assist with advice and representation and help at mediation for cases in all legal areas, in all tribunals and courts in England and Wales, including those where proceedings have not yet started. *Pro bono* assistance is only available to those who cannot afford to pay and who do not have the benefit of support from an MDO. Contact details for the Bar Pro Bono Unit can be found on page 31.

If you are represented, many of the actions set out in the pages that follow will be undertaken by your representative. However, you may nevertheless find this information helpful. If you are representing yourself, it may be particularly useful.

We would welcome any comments you may have about the information set out in this document. The information can be made available on request in Braille, on audio cassette tape, on disk, via e-mail or in large print. Wherever possible, we will provide the information in the format you require. Please contact us (see page 30) to discuss your requirements and any other additional needs in advance of your hearing.

Our hearing procedures are set out in The General Medical Council (Fitness to Practise) Rules 2004 (as amended), 'the Rules'. We will send you a copy of the Rules with the Notice of Hearing. Alternatively, you can access a copy online at www.gmc-uk.org/consolidated_version_of_FTP_Rules.pdf_26875225.pdf

We will also send you a copy of the Medical Act 1983, which is available at www.gmc-uk.org/about/registration

For ease of reference, this document is split into eight sections as follows:

Before the hearing: information on pre-hearing case management, attending the hearing, submitting documents, about the GMC hearing centres, including support and facilities available.

Attending the hearing: information on when to arrive, public access, who will be at the hearing and more.

The three stages: information on the three separate stages of the hearings procedure, including a flowchart, on the *Indicative Sanctions Guidance for Fitness to Practise Panels* and review hearings.

The order of proceedings: information on how the hearing will proceed, including non-attendance, preliminary legal argument, confirmation and admissions, and the order of presentation at Stage 1.

Other hearing information: information about giving evidence, submitting documents, the hearing timetable and adjournments.

At the end of the hearing: information on what happens at the end of the hearing, including information on the right of appeal.

Glossary: for a glossary of the terms used in the process.

Contact information: GMC and other contact details, including the MDOs and the Bar Pro Bono Unit.

Before the hearing

Pre-hearing case management procedure

The GMC operates a voluntary pre-hearing case management procedure, which is designed to facilitate the effective scheduling and running of Fitness to Practise Panel hearings. Unless your hearing is related exclusively to allegations about your health, you will receive an invitation to participate in the procedure, under which agreement is usually reached on a number of key areas including the hearing date and length. The procedure will not, however, provide an opportunity to consider the merits of a referral or to test the evidence before a hearing. A copy of the pre-hearing case management guidance manual is available at www.gmc-uk.org/concerns/hearings_and_decisions

Attending the hearing

Although you are not obliged to attend your FTP Panel hearing, and it can proceed in your absence, it will usually be in your best interest to do so, for example, questions may arise which only you can answer. In any event, you should seriously consider being advised and represented by solicitors who have experience of the GMC's fitness to practise jurisdiction, because they will know how to prepare your case and present the kind of information which the panel will require.

If you are unable to attend due to personal circumstances, for example if emergency care issues arise, you should inform us of this wherever possible. If you are unrepresented and do not intend to attend your hearing, please let us know as soon as possible.

Please also contact us in advance of the hearing if you intend to make any admissions on the facts alleged in the notice of hearing and on which the case against you is based or if you intend to raise any preliminary legal issues, as these may affect the time required for the hearing. (see *The order of proceedings*). A list of GMC contacts can be found on page 30.

Submitting documents

If you intend to rely on any documents at the hearing, the Rules require you to notify the GMC at least 28 days before the hearing and to provide copies of any documents – indexed and paginated as appropriate – which the GMC has not previously received.

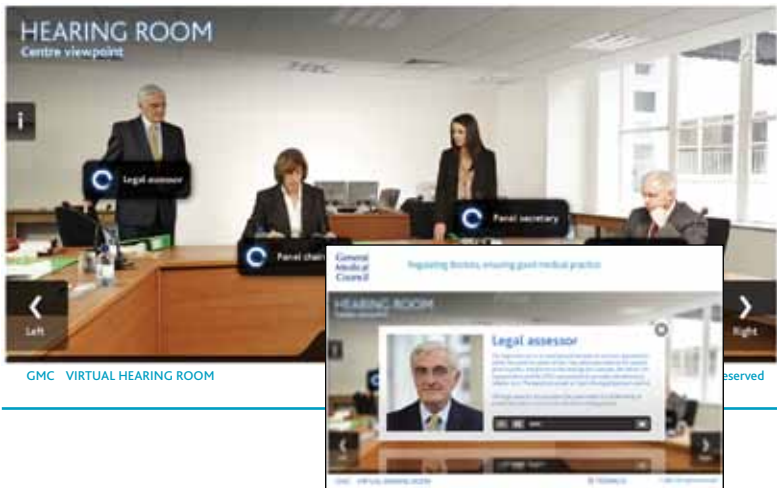
However, we recognise that not all documents can be produced in advance and it should be noted that the panel will not usually read documents before the start of the hearing. You will have an opportunity to submit documentation at the hearing (see page 24).

Virtual tour

A short 'virtual tour' of the Manchester¹ hearing centre is available on our website www.gmc-uk.org/concerns/witnesses to help you familiarise yourself with the hearings environment and the facilities available, before you attend.

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¹ Hearing arrangements are similar at our London hearing centre.

Hearing centres

We have two hearing centres, one at our London office in Euston Road and another in Oxford Street, Manchester, which is separate from the GMC's main Manchester office. Location maps of both hearing centres are set out on the inside back cover of this booklet. Occasionally, hearings are held at external venues in London and Manchester.

We recognise that you may have a preferred hearing location. However, our overriding aim is to schedule hearings to take place as soon as reasonably practicable, consistent with sufficient time being allowed for all parties to prepare adequately, therefore it may not be possible to schedule your hearing at your preferred location. Please let us know if there are any specific circumstances that would impact on your availability to attend either hearing centre.



Entrance of our London office



Reception of our London office



Hearing room in our London office



Entrance of our Manchester hearing centre



Reception of our Manchester centre



Hearing room in our Manchester centre

Support for those with disabilities

Both hearing centres have wheelchair access and a 'loop' system for people who are hard of hearing. If you have a disability, communication difficulties or other additional needs, please contact us in advance of your hearing to ensure any necessary arrangements can be made.

Attending the hearing

Arriving at the hearing centre

You should aim to arrive at the hearing centre at least half an hour prior to the hearing start-time (see page 24).

Please report to the reception desk in the main foyer of the hearing centre, where you will be informed which hearing room to attend. A GMC member of staff (panel assistant) will escort you to your private waiting room, which will be available to you for the duration of the hearing. On request, the panel assistant, or the panel secretary, will show you the hearing room before the hearing commences.

Both hearing centres have free hot and cold drinks machines.

The emergency evacuation procedure will be displayed on the wall of your waiting room. Please take time to read through this.

Public access to the hearing

All GMC hearings are held in public, except those that relate solely to a doctor's health.

However, applications can be made by one of the parties to hear all or part of the hearing in private (see paragraph 41 of the *Rules*).

Each hearing room has an area, usually at one end of the room, where the press and public can sit to watch the proceedings. Sometimes the panel will ask the press and public to leave the hearing if there are any confidential matters to discuss.

Who will be at the hearing?

All GMC hearings are held in public, except those that relate solely to a doctor's health.

The panel and panellists – the panel is made up of people, known as 'panellists', who hear the evidence and make decisions on a case. The panel will include at least one doctor (who is medically qualified and

who holds a licence to practise) and at least one lay person (who is not medically qualified). One member of the panel will act as the chairman. Their role includes ensuring that proceedings are conducted within the procedural rules, that those appearing at the hearing are treated with courtesy and consideration and that time is used effectively. Usually, there are three panellists for hearings of up to ten days and five panellists for longer hearings.

Legal Assessor – an experienced barrister or solicitor appointed to advise the panel on points of law. Any advice provided to the panel is given in public, and parties to the hearing (for example, the doctor, his representative and the GMC representative) can make submissions in relation to it. The panel can accept or reject the Legal Assessor’s advice and will usually produce a determination (a written explanation) of its decision, which will be read out in open session and made available to parties. The Legal Assessor accompanies the panel when it is deliberating in private (otherwise referred to as being *in camera*) but takes no part in the decision making process.

Specialist adviser – may be appointed to advise the panel in health and performance cases on medical issues regarding a doctor’s health or performance. They do not give any opinion on fitness to practise and do not accompany the panel when it is deliberating in private. With the consent of the panel chairman, they may ask questions of the doctor, if they give evidence, or other witnesses.

GMC representative – the solicitor or barrister who presents the case against the doctor.

Doctor(s) – the person(s) against whom the case has been made.

Doctor’s representative – the solicitor or barrister or other representative who presents the doctor’s case or speaks on behalf of the doctor. If unrepresented, the doctor may present their own case to the panel.

Panel secretary – a GMC staff member responsible for the administration of the hearing.

Panel assistant – a GMC staff member responsible for assisting the administration of the hearing. They will escort the doctor to their private waiting room and, on request, show them the hearing room before the hearing commences.

Shorthand writer – the person who takes a note of the hearing, which is usually transcribed.

Witnesses – these can be called to give evidence by the doctor or their representative and the GMC representative. They are required to take an oath, or affirm, and answer questions put by GMC and doctor representatives, an unrepresented doctor or the panel. Please note the restriction placed on an unrepresented doctor questioning (cross-examining) witnesses set out in the section on *The order of proceedings*.

At the outset of the hearing

You will be escorted to the hearing room by a panel assistant and shown where to sit. You will also be provided with a diagram which will identify who is present and where they will be sitting. A template diagram is available on the virtual tour pages of our website www.gmc-uk.org/concerns/witnesses.

The panel chairman will introduce themselves and others present to you, explain the panel's role and how the hearing will proceed.

The three stages

Outline of the three stages

There are three stages to a FTP Panel hearing, depending on the outcome at each stage. The panel has to decide:

Stage 1: whether any of the facts alleged and not already admitted by you, have been found proved on the basis of the evidence called before it by both parties.

IF THEY HAVE

Stage 2: whether, on the basis of all the facts found proved, your fitness to practise is impaired.

IF IT ISN'T

The panel may consider issuing a warning.

IF IT IS

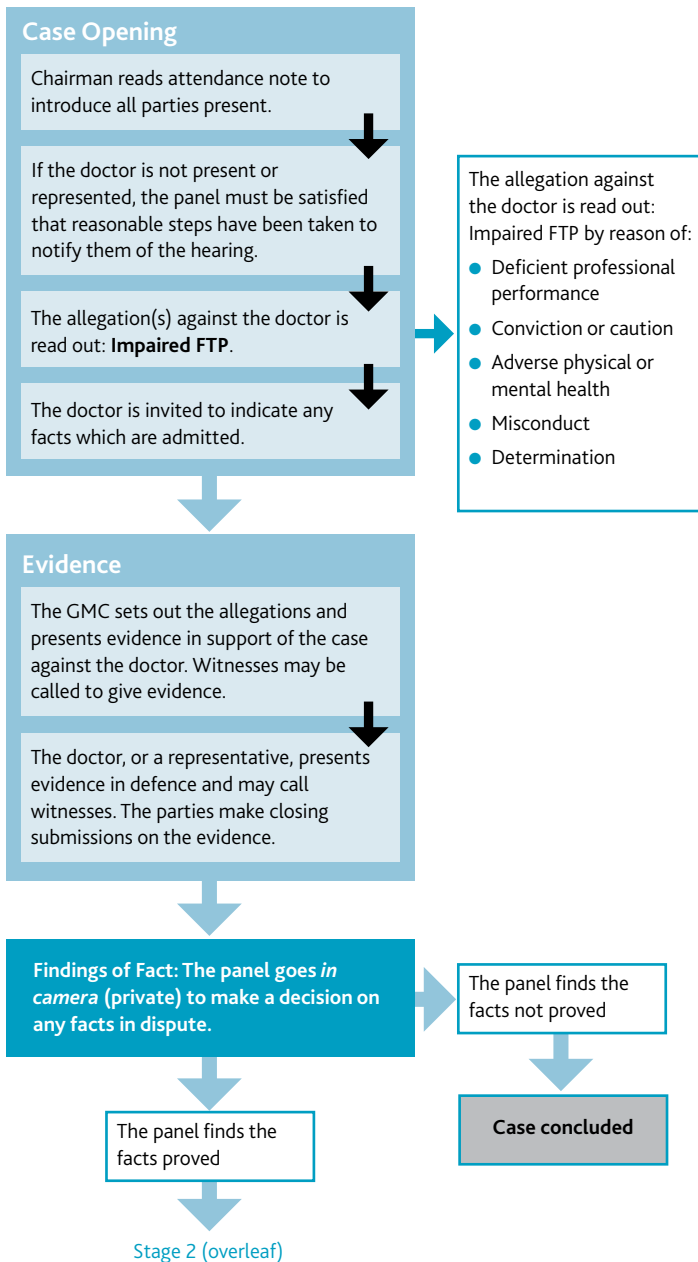
Stage 3: whether any action should be taken against your registration and, if the panel decides to take action against your registration, whether an immediate order should be imposed.

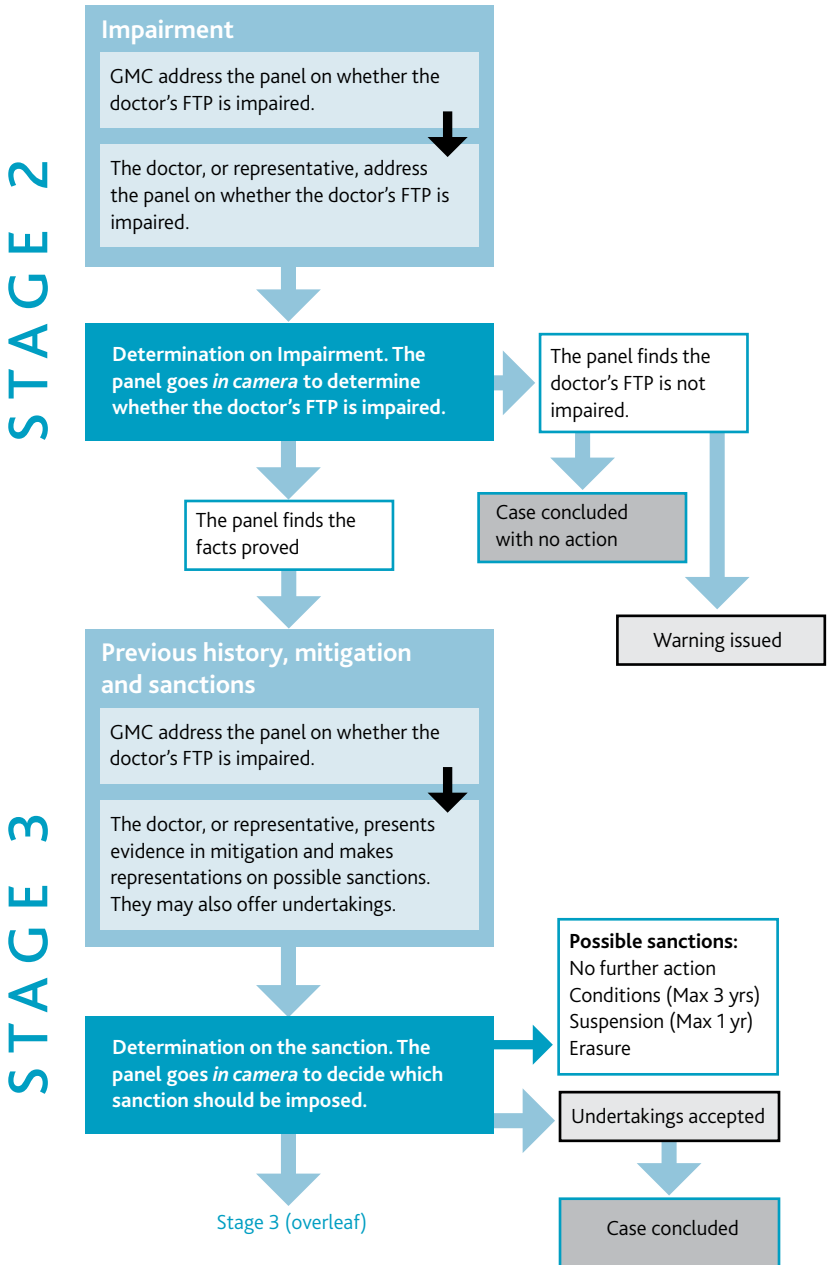
At the end of each stage the panel will retire in private to reach a decision and prepare a written determination. The chairman will then read the determination in open session and copies of the determination will be provided to parties.

Fuller information on each of the three stages of a hearing is set out on the pages that follow.

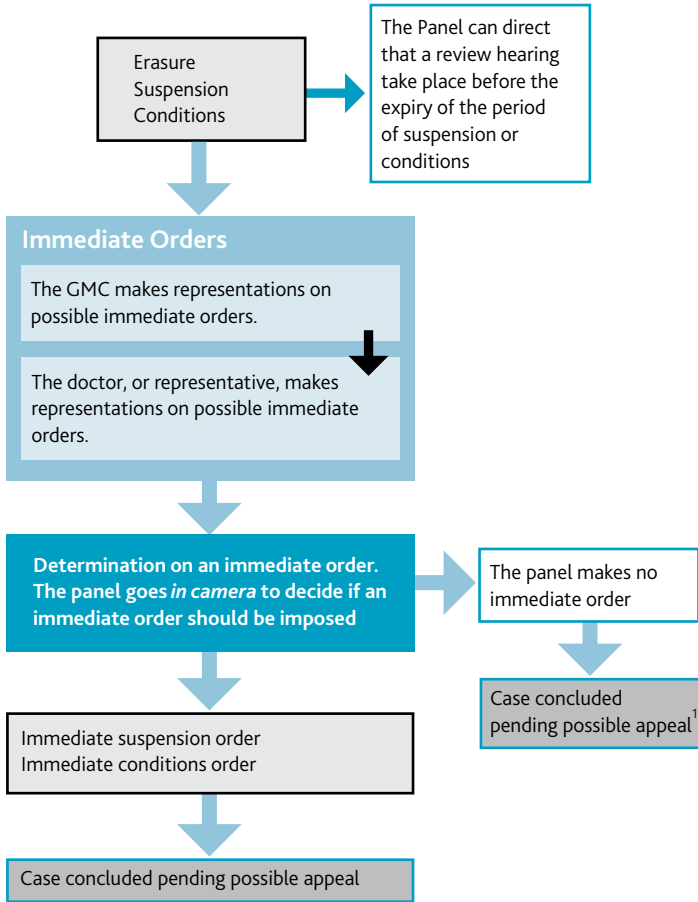
Hearings flowcharts

STAGE 1





STAGE 3



Please note the statutory period to lodge an appeal is 28 days.

¹All appeal applications are made to the High Court or the Court of Session in Scotland.

Stage 1 – Findings of fact

You may have admitted some of the facts before or after the allegation was read out by the panel secretary (see *The order of proceedings*). This stage is concerned with any facts that remain in dispute. The burden of proof lies with the GMC, that is, it is for the GMC, which makes the allegation, to prove it to the satisfaction of the panel. You do not have to prove anything.

The panel is required to apply the civil standard of proof, that is, proof on the balance of probabilities: a fact will be established if it is more likely than not to have happened.

Information on how the standard of proof is applied at FTP Panel hearings is available at www.gmc-uk.org/concerns/hearings_and_decisions/standard_of_proof

During Stage 1 the GMC will present evidence and usually call witnesses in support of its case. The witnesses may be questioned by the GMC representative, by you and by the panel. As set out in *The order of proceedings*, you will have an opportunity at the end of the evidence called on behalf of the GMC to make a submission on whether sufficient evidence has been presented on which the facts could be found proved or to support a finding of impairment. You will also be able to present evidence and call witnesses in support of your case. The Legal Assessor may advise the panel, as appropriate.

At the end of Stage 1 the panel will deliberate in private on each outstanding fact in the allegation and determine whether each is found proven or not. In open session the panel chairman will read out the panel's determination and a copy will be provided to parties.

Stage 2 – Impairment

This stage is about whether or not, based on the facts found proven, your fitness to practise is impaired. This is a matter of judgment for the panel. You cannot argue about the facts at this stage – the panel has made its decision on those.

The GMC representative will address the panel and you may address the panel on the matter of whether or not your fitness to practise is impaired. This may, where relevant, include the presentation by either party of any additional evidence which relates specifically to the issue of impairment.

The Legal Assessor will advise the panel as appropriate.

The panel will retire in private to make its decision and then return to open session. The chairman will read out the panel's determination, with reasons, and a copy will be provided to parties.

'No impairment' outcome: consideration given to issuing a warning

If the panel determines that your fitness to practise is not impaired, it may invite submissions from parties on whether a warning should be imposed. This is likely to occur where there has been a significant departure from the standards set out in *Good Medical Practice* or where there is significant cause for concern on assessment.

We have produced guidance on warnings and this is available at www.gmc-uk.org/concerns/printable_documents

Although warnings do not appear on a doctor's registration, they are disclosed to the doctor's employer and to any other enquirer and are published via the GMC website on the List of Registered Medical Practitioners and remain in force for five years.

If the panel does not impose a warning, then the hearing will be concluded, with no action having been taken against your registration.

'Impairment' outcome

If the panel determines that your fitness to practise is impaired, it will then invite submissions as to the sanction to be imposed on your registration.

Stage 3 – Sanction

The GMC representative will address the panel on what the GMC considers to be the appropriate sanction, taking into account the *Indicative Sanctions Guidance for Fitness to Practise Panels*.

You will then have an opportunity to address the panel on the matter of sanction, taking into account the *Indicative Sanctions Guidance for Fitness to Practise Panels* (www.gmc-uk.org/concerns/hearings_and_decisions).

You may decide to offer written undertakings for the panel to consider as an alternative to imposing any sanction (www.gmc-uk.org/concerns/printable_documents).

Personal mitigation and testimonial evidence

You may wish to introduce testimonials from fellow doctors and/or other health professionals and patients. You can also call witnesses – people who are willing to attend personally to give evidence of your character. These witnesses may be questioned by you, the GMC representative and by the panel.

You should prepare in advance of the hearing any testimonials that you may wish to read out, as you may not be given extra time to do so after the Stage 2 (impairment) determination. Also, you should have any character witnesses on standby to attend. It is sensible to discuss the timings involved with the GMC representative.

The panel will receive further advice from the Legal Assessor and will then go into private session to decide on the appropriate sanction to impose, or whether to accept written undertakings.

Possible outcomes

The options open to the panel are as follows:

- To conclude the case with no action on your registration.
- If offered by you and deemed to be appropriate, to accept undertakings.

Possible sanctions

- To direct that your registration be subject to specified conditions for a period of up to three years.
- To direct that your registration be suspended for a period of up to 12 months.
- Except in cases that relate solely to your health, to direct that your name be erased from the medical register.

Public interest

The panel's determination on sanction is not intended to be punitive, although it may have a punitive effect. The panel's consideration is focused on acting in the public interest which includes, amongst other things:

- the protection of the public
- maintaining public trust and confidence in the profession
- declaring and upholding proper standards of conduct and behaviour.

Having reached its decision on sanction, the panel will return to open session and the chairman will read out the panel's determination, with reasons. A copy of the determination will be provided to parties.

Indicative Sanctions Guidance for Fitness to Practise Panels

This guidance has been produced for use by FTP Panels when they are considering what sanction to impose following a finding that a doctor's fitness to practise is impaired. It outlines the decision-making process

and factors to be considered and aims to promote consistency and transparency in decision-making. The GMC representative and you should both refer to it when making submissions on sanction.

Review hearings

If the panel directs that a period of conditions or suspension should be imposed on your registration, it will usually also direct that a review hearing takes place shortly before the date on which the sanction is due to expire. At the review hearing, the panel, which will likely comprise of different panellists from the original hearing, will consider whether any further action needs to be taken against your registration.

Immediate orders

If the panel determines to impose an order of conditions, suspension or erasure, the order will come into force 28 days after notice of the hearing outcome has been deemed to have been served on you, unless you exercise your right of appeal.

If you lodge an appeal, the substantive sanction will not come into force until such time as the appeal is either withdrawn or determined.

The panel has the power to impose an immediate order of conditions or suspension on your registration, to come into effect immediately if you are present at the hearing or within a day or so if you are not present at the hearing. If you lodge an appeal, an immediate order will remain in place until such time as the appeal is either withdrawn or determined.

The panel will invite the GMC representative and you to make submissions on whether or not an immediate order is necessary.

The panel will retire in private to reach its determination. It will then return to open session and the chairman will read out the panel's determination, a copy of which will be made available to both parties.

The order of proceedings¹

Doctor non-attendance

If you do not intend to attend the hearing, it would be helpful if you would inform the GMC of that fact in advance of the hearing. If you are not present or represented, the panel must be satisfied that the GMC has taken appropriate steps in accordance with the Rules to ensure, as far as possible, that you have been served with the Notice of Hearing (the Notice), which provides you with formal notification of the allegation against you and the alleged facts upon which it is based, together with the panel's powers of disposal. The Notice also sets out the hearing date, time and venue, and confirms your right to attend and be represented, to present evidence and to call and question witnesses. It is usually issued no less than 28 days before the hearing start date.

If the panel is satisfied that the Notice has been served in accordance with the Rules, it will then determine whether to proceed with the hearing in your absence. In this respect, the panel will be informed if you have contacted the GMC to confirm that you are unable or do not intend to attend the hearing.

The hearing will commence if the panel decides that all reasonable efforts have been made to serve the Notice and, having taken into account all of the factors relevant to your case, that the hearing should proceed in your absence. If not, the hearing will adjourn to a later date.

Preliminary legal arguments

At the start of the hearing, preliminary legal arguments may be raised by either party, for example, an application to adjourn the proceedings or to amend the allegation. If a preliminary legal argument is raised, submissions are usually made by both parties, the Legal Assessor will then provide advice in open session before the panel retires in private to reach its decision. The panel will then read out its determination in open session and a copy of the determination will usually be provided to parties.

¹ Paragraph 17 of The General Medical Council (Fitness to Practise) Rules 2004 (as amended) refers.

Confirmation and admissions

Once the preliminary matters have been dealt with, and if the hearing continues, the chairman will ask you to confirm your full name and GMC reference number. If you are not present or represented, the GMC representative will confirm these details. The panel secretary will then read out the allegation and the alleged facts on which it is based.

If present, you will be asked if you wish to make any admissions. If you do so, the chairman will formally announce that these facts are 'admitted and found proven'. If you are not present or represented, you can submit written admissions to the panel. Where facts remain in dispute, the chairman will then invite the GMC representative to open the GMC's case, present evidence and call witnesses in support of its case.

If all of the facts are admitted and found proven, the panel will then move on to consider whether, on the basis of the facts found proven, your fitness to practise is impaired.

Order of presentation – Stage 1 Findings of fact

The GMC's case

- The GMC representative opens the case.
- The GMC representative may call witnesses. If witnesses are called, the sequence shall be:
 - The GMC representative asks questions.
 - You ask questions (cross examine).

Note: If you are unrepresented at the hearing and if the allegation is based on facts which are sexual in nature, you will not be permitted to question any of the alleged victims. In such circumstances the GMC will appoint and cover the cost of a barrister to conduct the cross examination of the witness(es) on your behalf. The GMC will not cover the cost of the barrister for any other part of the hearing.

- The GMC representative may ask further questions arising from your questions.
- The panel may ask questions.
- You may ask further questions arising from the panel's questions.
- The GMC representative may ask further questions arising from the panel questions.

Before the conclusion of the GMC's case, the GMC representative may withdraw some elements of the allegation or apply to amend the wording of the allegation. If so, you will be given an opportunity to make a submission in relation to this. The panel will then retire in private to make its decision on the matter. The panel will then return to open session and the chairman will read out its determination on the matter. A copy of the determination will usually be provided to all parties.

Submissions at the conclusion of the GMC's case

At the end of the GMC's case you may make submissions that insufficient evidence has been presented to find the facts proven or to support a finding of impaired fitness to practise. If so, the panel will retire in private to make its decision on the matter. The panel will then return to open session and the chairman will read out its determination on the matter. A copy of the decision will be provided to parties.

If the panel decides that sufficient evidence has been presented on which the facts could be found proved or to support a finding of impairment, then your case will commence. You may present evidence and call witnesses in support of it.

The doctor's case

- You may open the defence case.
- You may give evidence and/or call witnesses. If witnesses are called, the sequence shall be:
 - You ask questions.
 - The GMC representative asks questions.
 - You may ask further questions arising from the GMC representative's questions.

- The panel may ask questions.
- The GMC representative may ask further questions arising from the panel's questions.
- You may ask further questions arising from the panel's questions.

You may give evidence, as opposed to simply making submissions on the evidence given by others. If you give evidence the GMC representative and the panel will be entitled to ask you questions on your evidence. You will not be questioned by the GMC representatives or the panel if you choose only to make submissions. However, evidence which has been given on oath and subjected to questions may carry more weight than submissions alone.

Closing remarks

- The GMC representative makes closing remarks.
- You may make closing remarks.
- The Legal Assessor (and Specialist Adviser, if present), may give advice, as appropriate, to the panel before it retires in private to reach its decision on the remaining facts in dispute.

Stages 2 and 3 follow a similar process if further evidence is presented at either of those stages.

Other hearing information

Giving evidence

If you decide to give evidence you will be directed to the witness desk and asked to take a suitable oath or to affirm as to the truth of your evidence.

You may present your own evidence as you see fit (although the rules of evidence applicable to GMC hearings require that your evidence should be relevant to the allegation) and can then be questioned by the GMC representative and the panel. In giving evidence, you should speak clearly into the microphone on the witness desk so that your evidence can be heard by everyone present. While you are giving your evidence, you may be shown documentation. Take your time to read any documents carefully.

You must not speak to anyone else present about your case, including your representative, or other witnesses, while you are giving evidence or during breaks while you remain under oath or bound by your affirmation.

Submitting documents

If you wish to submit documents as part of your evidence, these should have been provided to the GMC at least 28 days before the hearing. Subject to any argument on admissibility, arrangements will be made to copy them for circulation to the panel and the GMC representative, among others. The chairman will give each document a number. The GMC's documents will follow the order C1, C2 etc. as the 'C' stands for 'Council' and yours will follow the order D1, D2, D3 etc. as the 'D' stands for 'Doctor'. It is helpful to use this numbering to identify documents to which you refer during the hearing.

Hearing timetable

The timetable is the responsibility of the panel chairman, but the hearing day usually starts at 09:30 and finishes around 17:00. There is a lunch break of about an hour, usually from 13:00-14:00. There is usually a refreshment break for 15 minutes mid-morning and mid-afternoon.

If you need a break for whatever reason at any time in connection with the case, for example to formulate written submissions, please seek the permission of the panel chairman.

Adjournments

For hearings scheduled to last for more than one day, the hearing will adjourn at the end of each day. The panel may also adjourn for a longer period in order to obtain additional evidence, for example for health or performance reports, or because the case has overrun the days allotted to it.

If you decide to give evidence, and if the hearing adjourns overnight while you are in the middle of doing so, it is important that you do not talk to anyone about your evidence or the case during any adjournment while you remain under oath or bound by your affirmation.

At the end of the hearing

Written notification of outcome

At the end of the hearing the panel chairman will read out the panel's determination. If you are present, the panel secretary will provide you with written notification of the outcome and you will be asked to sign to acknowledge that you have received it. If you are not present, written confirmation will be sent to you immediately after the hearing by registered post.

Appeals

You have a right of appeal to the High Court (or the Court of Session in Scotland) against any panel determination that has the effect of restricting or removing your registration. Where applicable, the written confirmation of the hearing outcome will include details of the appeals procedure.

The Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence may also appeal against certain decisions if they consider them to be too lenient www.chre.org.uk.

Glossary

There may be some terms that you are not familiar with. Here is a list of some of them:

Allegation	the charge that the fitness to practise of the doctor is impaired.
Adjournment	a break in the hearing before the panel has completed its deliberations. The hearing will adjourn for lunch or comfort breaks and at the end of each day, if the case lasts for more than a day. An adjournment may be agreed in order that additional evidence can be obtained, or in the case of illness, or if the hearing has overrun.
Condition	a sanction imposed by a panel that restricts a doctor's right to practise for a period of time.
Determination	decision of the panel in the case.
Evidence	what a witness says at the hearing, and documentary evidence put before the panel.
Erasure	sanction imposed by the panel to remove the name of the doctor from the medical register. This means the doctor cannot continue to practise medicine.
Expert witness	a witness able to give opinions on any matter falling within their area of expertise on matters considered by the panel.
Finding of fact	the panel, once it has heard all the evidence, will decide whether the alleged facts have been proven. This is known as a 'finding of fact' determination.
Finding of impairment	when the panel has made findings of fact, it will then consider whether the doctor's fitness to practise is impaired.

Fitness to practise	a doctor's ability to practise without restriction on their GMC registration.
Hearing	a meeting of the Fitness to Practise Panel appointed to hear a case.
Mitigation	the doctor's reasons for his or her actions, and testimonial evidence.
Medical register	the list of medical practitioners (doctors) eligible to work in the UK.
Restriction	a measure that prevents the doctor from carrying out certain functions or activities, for example, the doctor could be prevented from working privately.
Sanction	a decision by the panel that either restricts or removes a doctor's right to practise.
Suspension	a sanction imposed by a panel which removes the doctor's right to practise for a specified period of time.
Undertaking	a commitment given by the doctor to the panel to restrict their practice.
Vulnerable witness	<p>in GMC proceedings, the following may, if the quality of their evidence is likely to be adversely affected as a result, be treated as vulnerable witnesses:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) any witness under the age of 17 at the time of the hearing b) any witness with a mental disorder within the meaning of the <i>Mental Health Act 1983</i> c) any witness who is significantly impaired in relation to intelligence and social functioning d) any witness with physical disabilities who requires assistance to give evidence

- e) any witness, where the allegation against the practitioner is of a sexual nature and the witness was the alleged victim
- f) any witness who complains of intimidation.

Subject to the advice of the Legal Assessor, and on hearing representations from the parties, the panel may adopt such measures as it considers desirable to enable it to receive evidence from a vulnerable witness. This may include use of video links, screens, interpreters and prerecorded evidence.

Warning

a warning may be issued to a doctor if the panel decides there has been a significant departure from the principles set out in the GMC's guidance for doctors *Good Medical Practice* but a restriction on the doctor's registration is not necessary.

Contact information

To receive the information in this leaflet in an alternative format contact the GMC's Publications Team gmcpublications@gmc-uk.org or call the GMC Contact Centre on 0161 923 6602.

GMC Case Presentation Team

The Case Presentation Team (CPT) works to ensure that cases are presented to a FTP Panel in a way that best enables the panel to understand the issues raised.

The CPT works closely with the GMC Legal team and the Council's external solicitors. They or their external solicitors will contact you or your legal representatives immediately after your case is referred for hearing before a FTP Panel. If you need to contact the CPT prior to your hearing, for example, in relation to the disclosure of documentation, please quote the case reference number set out in their letter to you.

The GMC Adjudication Management section

The GMC Adjudication Management section works to ensure the effective management of FTP Panel and other hearings. This includes:

- case scheduling and empanelment
- issuing Notices of hearing for cases to be considered by FTP Panels
- providing support to panels during hearings
- undertaking follow up work, for example, notifying doctors and others of hearing outcomes.

Please contact the Adjudication Management section about your attendance and admissions intentions or to submit hearing documentation in advance of the hearing.

The GMC Adjudication Management section and CPT can be contacted via the GMC Contact Centre on 0161 923 6602.

Medical defence organisations

The contact details for the medical defence organisations can be accessed on our website or directly via the following link:

www.gmc-uk.org/doctors/information_for_doctors/medical_defence_organisations.asp

Bar Pro Bono Unit

The contact details for the Bar Pro Bono Unit are as follows:

Address: 289–293 High Holborn, London WC1V 7HZ

Telephone: 020 7611 9500

Website: www.barprobono.org.uk

E-mail: enquiries@barprobono.org.uk

Directions

London hearing centre

Regent's Place,
350 Euston Road,
London NW1 3JN

Open

08:00 to 18:00 from Monday to Friday

Tube

Great Portland Street, Regent's Park,
Warren Street or Euston Square stations.

Train

The building is a short walk from Euston mainline station. Kings Cross, St Pancras, Paddington and Marylebone stations are a short bus or taxi journey away.

Taxi

There is a dedicated taxi drop off and collection point through the Longford Street entrance.

Manchester hearing centre

5th Floor, St James's Buildings,
79 Oxford Street
Manchester, M1 6FQ

Open

08:00 to 18:00 from Monday to Friday

Metrolink

The closest Metrolink station is St Peter's Square.

Train

The building is a ten minute walk from Manchester Piccadilly station. Alternatively, the building is opposite Oxford Road station.

LONDON



London Hearing Centre

Regent's Place, 350 Euston Road, London NW1 3JN

MANCHESTER



Manchester Hearing Centre

St James's Buildings, 79 Oxford Street, Manchester M1 6FQ

The GMC is a charity registered in England and Wales (1089278) and Scotland (SC037750)

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