

## **Job description for members of the Professional and Linguistic Assessments (PLA) Board**

The Registration and Resources Directorate is responsible for one of our most important functions: registering qualified doctors and ensuring that those who need to know about a doctor's registration have ready access to the information we hold. Doctors must meet our criteria for entry to the register; to remain on the register; or to return after a break in registration.

### **The PLAB Test**

1. The PLAB test is for doctors qualifying outside the UK and EEA who wish to practise medicine in the UK. The test assesses a doctor's ability at the level of entry to Foundation Year Two.
2. The test is in two parts:
  - a. Part 1 is a three-hour, 200-item extended matching question (EMQ) and single best answer (SBA) question examination.
  - b. Part 2 is a 14-station objective structured clinical examination (OSCE).
3. Before entering Part 1 of the test, candidates must have obtained appropriate grades in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) test a maximum of two years previously. Candidates must pass Part 2 within three years of passing Part 1. The test is valid for three years.
4. Candidates can take Part 1 of the test at centres around the world. It is held four times a year. Part 2 is taken at the GMC's Clinical Assessment Centre in Manchester.

### **PLA Board**

#### *The job*

5. The Board's purpose is to develop and review methods of assessing, to the appropriate standard, the knowledge and skills determined by the Registration Committee under section 23(2) of the Medical Act 1983; to conduct tests in

accordance with these methods; and to oversee the development of each examination.

6. The functions of the Board are to:
  - a. Recommend to the Registration Reference Group the scope of the test.
  - b. Recommend to the Registration Reference Group appropriate methods of assessment.
  - d. Review the efficacy of the test.
  - e. Develop the policies which relate to candidates.
  - f. Appoint panel members.
  - g. Set criteria for the appointment of examiners for the test.
  - h. Approve panel decisions.

#### *Method of work*

7. The Board reports to the GMC's Registration Reference Group and oversees the work of the two Examination Panels (one for each part of the test). It fulfils an internal quality assurance role. It meets for three times a year to discuss policy issues and the work of the two Panels. The Panels are responsible for recommending developments in their respective examinations and for ensuring that the examinations are of the appropriate standard.

#### *Commitment*

10. Members are normally appointed for three years and may be re-appointed for one further term. There are three meetings a year, although as part of the quality control function of the Board members may be interested in attending other activities related to the test.

#### *Training*

11. Members may not undertake any activities that might constitute a conflict of interests such as teaching or coaching on PLAB training courses. We would also wish to encourage members to familiarise themselves with all aspects of the test by attending examinations and other events such as examiner training and question writing.

## **Further Information**

14. There is further information about the test on [www.gmc-uk.org](http://www.gmc-uk.org)