

6b

To consider

Member Appraisal

Issue

1. A proposed framework for the appraisal of Council members, following consultation with members.

Recommendation

2. To agree the proposed framework and timetable for Council member appraisal (paragraphs 7-29 and Annexes A and B).

Further information

3. If you require further information about this paper, please contact us by email: gmc@gmc-uk.org or tel. 0161 923 6602

Background

4. The current member appraisal system was introduced in May 2005 under the supervision of the Remuneration Committee. Following feedback from members of this Council a review was initiated for the purposes of informing the Remuneration Committee's work on the appraisal system, and in order to ensure that there was an opportunity to make any proposed changes ahead of full implementation in 2010.

5. A survey was undertaken to gain member views on the orientation process and the key elements of the appraisal system.

6. Information on the development of the appraisal process, in the light of members' feedback, was circulated to members in October 2009. Since then we have reviewed the feedback received and had discussions with the Appointments Commission to clarify the link between appraisal and reappointment.

Discussion

7. The key issues arising from the review are:

a. General acceptance that 360 degree or multi source feedback provides a helpful and practical core element to the process.

b. The existing Competency Framework provides a good basis for the system with scope for further refinement.

c. There needs to be flexibility within the system to allow members to tailor the process to their own circumstances. This relates to both the application of a system using multi source feedback and the use of external support.

d. There needs to be clarity around the links between the process and individual member training, Board development and the reappointment process.

8. In considering all these requirements it is important to acknowledge that there is a range of views on how the system should operate. The proposals outlined in this paper seek to set out options that encompass a range of suggestions and preferences. Alongside this there are aspects of the process that can be tailored to meet individual requirements and provide additional flexibility.

9. The Appointments Commission has confirmed that it will request, through the Chair of Council, confirmation as to whether an existing Council member is recommended for reappointment. The appraisal process, and in particular the discussion with the Chair, will be central to this. Where a recommendation for reappointment is not made, the Appointments Commission requires the background to this recommendation to be documented and the appraisal process used to provide a vehicle for this. The proposed assessment scale set out in the Competency Framework (Annex A) is consistent with the Commission's Appraisal Summary Form (Annex B).

10. The Appraisal Summary Form is the existing mechanism for capturing the appraisal discussion outcomes. It refers to an annual review and a timetable, which would be demanding in terms of the Chair's time and input.

11. The Remuneration Committee agreed that the appraisal system needs to be proportionate to individual member's circumstances and sufficiently lean to allow the Chair to engage effectively in the process with all members. A key benefit of using multi source feedback in the system is that a report forming the agenda for the first appraisal discussion can be generated relatively easily. It also provides a robust framework and process that underpins the content of the discussion.

The proposed appraisal process

12. The timing of appraisal discussions is central to ensuring the process is proportionate in terms of individual time commitment. There are clearly a number of options in terms of scheduling these discussions. The Remuneration Committee recommends that the appraisal cycle is based around two appraisal meetings between the Chair and member, one in the second and another in the fourth year of a member's term of office.

Multi-Source Feedback and external support

13. The proposed 360 degree/multi source feedback system would provide an individual report that would underpin the first appraisal discussion scheduled for the second year of appointment.

14. This first stage of the appraisal process (in the second year of a member's term) should be scheduled at a time which provides meaningful feedback for members. It should also be early enough in the members' term of office to allow any action points to be worked on.

15. While multi-source feedback is a key component of the process, the system of providing feedback would be flexible. This includes the number of people feedback is sought from, and who they are. It could include other Council members, senior GMC staff, or colleagues in other organisations. The Remuneration Committee suggests that feedback should be sought from a group of around six people, but this would be an individual member's choice. The suggested minimum is four people.

16. The report summarising the results of the feedback is intended to be personal to the member and provide background to the first appraisal meeting with the Chair. It is not circulated outside this discussion and would not form part of the documentation shared with the Appointments Commission as part of the reappointment process.

17. Collating feedback confidentially can be done in a number of ways. It has previously been handled externally. While there will be some costs savings in handling this in-house, confidentiality is an important aspect of the process. The use of an external party could also allow for some analysis of the themes that emerge from reports and this can inform the development of members' education and training programme and Board development.

18. While the individual feedback provides the basis for the first appraisal discussion, there are a range of views on the support that members might wish to access in reviewing their feedback and preparing for their appraisal discussion. The Remuneration Committee considers that the system should support the preferences that members express. These range from simply receiving a feedback report to a detailed discussion with an external independent third party. It may also be the case that individual members might prefer to review their feedback with someone who they are already working with, such as a mentor, coach or colleague.

19. This first appraisal would allow any training needs to be highlighted and followed up with individual members. The GMC's previous experience is that relatively few specific requirements emerge. Following this approach would also allow an analysis of the collective outcomes of the 360 degree process which could then be used to inform overall Board development requirements.

20. Following the first appraisal discussion it is suggested that the Chair provides an initial indication of performance based on the overall assessment levels in the Appointment Commission's Appraisal Summary Form.

21. A second appraisal discussion with the Chair would then be scheduled for the final year of a four year term. This would include confirmation of whether reappointment was recommended, in line with the Appointment Commission's overall assessment levels. It is proposed that this discussion is not prefaced by a 360 degree process, but it would remain an option for individual members who would find this useful.

22. The timing of the second appraisal discussion will need to fit with the Commission's appointment/re-appointment process, so appraisals will be scheduled to meet the relevant requirements.

23. The only exception to this timetable would be where there is the possibility of reappointment not being recommended. In these circumstances it is anticipated that an additional appraisal discussion would be scheduled for the third year of a member's term. This would ensure that the background to any possible proposal not to reappoint was documented and the individual member had an opportunity to address any issues that might potentially lead to such a recommendation.

The Competency Framework

24. The feedback from members on the Competency Framework has been broadly positive. The main issues to emerge are the level of detail, terminology and what might be referred to as specialist or technical skills.

25. The Framework provides a good overview of the relevant attributes and sets out examples of both positive and negative behaviours. The main advantage is that the competences we test against, and the Framework, is challenging and robust. Given the importance of this the Remuneration Committee has suggested that the existing Framework is retained, with some adjustments to the drafting and format. These changes allow more focus on the competency headings and less on the detail.

26. The main area not covered by the Framework relates to specialist or technical knowledge. The Competency Framework needs to apply to all members, but it is important that the necessary professional knowledge, skills and experience are part of the process, and where relevant recorded. This is particularly relevant to future appointments to Council.

27. To deal with this it is suggested that professional or specialist knowledge, skills and experience are recorded as part of the individual appraisal discussions and where relevant included within the feedback provided by the Chair to the Appointments Commission.

Using the Appraisal process

28. While there is an important relationship between individual appraisal discussions and the reappointment process there are other important links. The primary aim of the system is to contribute to the effective governance of the GMC. For individual Council members the process provides them with feedback, an opportunity to review the contribution they have made, and for any individual training or learning needs to be identified and met.

29. An analysis of themes that emerge from the process will provide the background for Council to consider opportunities to review how the governance structure, including Council, operates. This would allow appraisal to inform proposals on Board development.

Recommendation: To agree the proposed Framework and timetable for Council member appraisal.

Resource implications

30. The provision of the multi source feedback system and the related reports are anticipated to be around £5,000. There are further costs associated with the provision of a session for an individual member to review the outcome of their 360 and prepare for their appraisal discussion. The cost of these sessions would depend on the number of members who wished to access such support and the time involved, but costs would typically range between £250 and £750 per member.

31. Individual training requirements to emerge from the process to date have had very limited resource implications and we would not anticipate this changing. The resource implications of any Board development would be shared with members along with specific proposals.

Equality

32. The appraisal process has a link to reappointment and in view of this needs to be fair, consistent and free from discrimination. It also supports good governance arrangements; to underpin this specific reference to diversity has been included in the re-drafted member competencies.