

Agenda item:	8
Report title:	Expanding GMC Clinical Assessment Centre
Report by:	Richard Hankins , R&R Head of Assessment richard.hankins@gmc-uk.org ; 0161 250 6967 Steve Jones , Resources Head of Facilities steve.jones@gmc-uk.org ; 0161 923 6287
Action:	To note

Executive summary

The project to procure, fit out and operationalise a new clinical assessment centre in 3 Hardman Square is proceeding on time and within budget. We will deliver our first PLAB 2 exam in the centre on 6 August 2019.

We released dates in the new centre for booking in April, just prior to the release of the March PLAB 1 results. Dates in August and September are now almost fully booked and as a result we have prevented waiting times exceeding six months.

We continue to see increasing demand for both parts of PLAB and we are offering increased PLAB 1 places so that we can more effectively meet demand.

Recommendation

Executive Board are invited to note the progress of the CAC Expansion programme

Demand for PLAB 1 and 2

- 1** We continue to see high levels of demand for both parts of PLAB. Our usual pattern of PLAB 1 exams is to hold four exams a year, two of which are overseas. In the March overseas exam, a record 4,400 candidates entered PLAB 1. For the upcoming exam in June, usually a UK only exam, we have taken 1,634 bookings. This represents growth of over 100% on last year's cohort (718). We are meeting increased demand at PLAB 1 by offering more seats in both the UK and overseas. This includes offering some overseas seats at what have traditionally been UK only events. Despite the increased availability of places, the June PLAB 1 still sold out six weeks before the exam.
- 2** In 2020 we plan to offer a more consistent number of places at each PLAB 1 sitting by offering seats in both the UK and selected overseas venues at every administration. We will also be offering an expanded exam in Scotland at the Royal College of Surgeons (Edinburgh) following the success of our recent pilot and will be opening a venue in the EU based on feedback from candidates. This will improve customer service.
- 3** Spreading the number of candidates across four administrations per year also reduces risks to our IT infrastructure. Issues can occur following large international exams when the number of users have, at times, exceeded the number of available sessions in Siebel.
- 4** Increased testing has led to a greater need for examiners for PLAB 2 and new exam content. To facilitate this we recruited over 500 new examiners and most of these have now completed their training. We will be recruiting more examiners in September. We are also expanding the number of associates in our station management group to ensure we have sufficient exam content for the increased number of PLAB 2 exams we will be offering.

Property fit out

- 5** The fit out of the new clinical assessment centre began on 25 February, with the work being carried out by fit out contractors Overbury PLC who were appointed following a procurement process in December 2018/January 2019.
- 6** The challenging 14 week programme of work has been delivered with practical completion being achieved on 3 June, with a programme of small snagging items to be addressed following this.

- 7** There have been 64 amendments to the design during the fit-out work, but these have been accommodated in the original budget. All amendments have been agreed with Quantity Surveyors from Jones Lang LaSalle and authorised by the GMC Head of Facilities.
- 8** The work has involved some 30,000 man hours with up to 55 contractors on site. Of the 17.9 tonnes of waste produced during the fit out, 98% has been recycled or not sent to landfill. There have been no reportable accidents during the fit out.

Programme delivery

- 9** The programme, to date, has been delivered on time and within budget. There are currently six open programme risks, and no critical risks.
- 10** The centre was handed over to the operational team on 10 June. During June and July, work will focus on operationalising the centre.
- 11** On 8 July we will deliver a full trial run of a PLAB day in the new centre. Over 100 staff from across the organisation have volunteered to be part of this. The trial run will allow us to test processes and procedures for facilities, registration services, and the assessment delivery team. We want to make sure that we can manage the significant increase in the number of visitors and run two circuits concurrently.
- 12** The final move to the new centre will take place during the week of 29 July. There will be no PLAB exams during that week, so all staff can be involved in setting up the new centre. On 1 August there will be a media open day.
- 13** The centre will officially open on 6 August 2019 for the first exam.