

To consider

Amending the List of bodies entitled to award UK Primary Medical Qualifications

Issue

- 1 The University of Wales no longer issues Primary Medical Qualifications.

Recommendation

- 2 Council is asked to agree that the University of Wales be removed from the list of bodies that can award UK Primary Medical Qualifications.

Amending the List of bodies entitled to award UK Primary Medical Qualifications

Issue

Entitlement to award Primary Medical Qualifications

- 3 Under Subsection 4(1) of the Medical Act 1983 (as amended), we are required to hold a list of the bodies entitled to hold examinations for the purpose of granting a UK Primary Medical Qualification (PMQ). Under Subsection 4(1C): 'The General Council shall only include in the list maintained under subsection (1) bodies or combinations of bodies that require from candidates at examinations a standard of proficiency that conforms to the prescribed standard of proficiency.' The standard of proficiency is currently set out in *Tomorrow's Doctors* (2009) and compliance with the standard is demonstrated through the Quality Improvement Framework, which includes annual returns from medical schools and a programme of visits.
- 4 The current list of bodies and combinations of bodies entitled to award UK PMQs is published on our website at:
http://www.gmc-uk.org/education/undergraduate/awarding_bodies.asp

The University of Wales

- 5 There are two medical schools in Wales, based in Cardiff and Swansea. In the past, graduates received their PMQs from an umbrella organisation, the University of Wales. But in June 2007, Cardiff University was granted the right to award its own PMQs. At its meeting on 25 February 2014, Council agreed that Swansea University should be able to award PMQs to graduates from its new Graduate Entry Programme.
- 6 The University of Wales no longer issues PMQs. We did not grant provisional registration to any graduates from the University of Wales in 2013 and all graduates from the undergraduate medical programmes in Wales were awarded a qualification from Cardiff University. In 2014, some medical students will graduate with Swansea PMQs.
- 7 As a result, the University of Wales no longer satisfies the criterion set in the Medical Act for inclusion in the list of awarding bodies, since there are no candidates taking examinations for the purpose of receiving a University of Wales PMQ.
- 8 We therefore wrote to the University of Wales on 10 October 2013 to advise them that we had formed the provisional opinion that the University of Wales should no longer be included in the list of bodies entitled to grant UK Primary Medical Qualifications. This is no reflection of our view on the standard of proficiency formerly achieved by graduates awarded University of Wales PMQs.

We simply need to maintain the currency of the list by removing bodies that no longer award PMQs. Also, removing a body from the list does not affect the continuing validity of PMQs previously awarded. We intend to make that clear on our website in relation to University of Wales PMQs.

- 9** On 5 March 2014, the University replied confirming that that the matter was discussed at their Academic Board on 19 February:

'The Board was pleased to receive the General Medical Council's clarification of the status of the University's graduates who were awarded a PMQ in the past. The Board also noted that the GMC was of the view that the University of Wales should no longer be included in the list of bodies entitled to grant PMQs.'

- 10** No objections or concerns were raised about our provisional view.

Supporting information

How this issue relates to the corporate strategy and business plan

11 Strategic aim 2 in the *Corporate Strategy 2014-17* and *Business Plan 2014* is to 'Help raise standards in medical education and practice'. Maintaining the list of bodies entitled to award PMQs is a key component of our regulation of undergraduate medical education.

If you have any questions about this paper please contact: Ben Griffith, Policy Manager – Education, bgriffith@gmc-uk.org, 020 7189 5283.