

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Sample Letter to Professional Bodies**

#### **Re: Professional Examinations**

We are conducting a literature review for the General Medical Council (GMC) to inform their decisions in relation to their Professional and Linguistic Assessment Board (PLAB) Examination. This exam is for international medical graduates (from outside the European Economic Area (non-EEA)) wishing to register with the GMC to practice medicine in the UK.

In particular we are looking at exam conditions, including a review of standard setting, number of permitted attempts, re-sit intervals, periods of validity, test environments, and protected characteristics.

To support this work the GMC would like to know about the evidence that other organisations use to inform their assessment decisions. We would be very grateful if you could help us with some questions arising out of this.

In relation to your assessment decisions (about re-sits and periods of validity) we have obtained the following information from your website, or related websites, concerning, firstly, UK and, secondly, overseas (non-EEA) candidates for registration or licence to practice as a doctor.

Would you be able to confirm if our understanding is correct, or guide us as to any recent changes, in answering the following questions:

1. How many re-sits do you allow per examination or assessment?
2. If there are any time constraints on the intervals at which an individual may re-sit, or the total number of re-sits permitted?
3. What is the length of any period of validity for your examinations or assessments?
4. Whether these decisions are based on any evidence or are they pragmatic decisions? If you have relied on any evidence could you tell us more about this?
5. Are you planning or contemplating any major changes, and if so, what is the rationale for these?
6. We are also interested in question banking procedures. In relation to your question bank for examinations and assessment could you:
  - a. Please tell us how many questions you have in your question bank?
  - b. How many questions you use each time?
  - c. What rate do you refresh your question bank at?

Since the GMC project only runs for a limited period, we would be most grateful if you could reply by Monday 18th June 2012. If this correspondence is not relevant to you please feel free to forward it to the most relevant person who could provide the information.

Would you be willing to be contacted for further information? If so, and if this is not the most convenient way for you to be contacted, please provide your most appropriate contact details. Alternatively, if it would save you trouble, we would be happy to discuss this on the phone, if you wish to provide a phone number.

Thank you for your time, and for your help with this.

Best wishes,

Yours sincerely

John C McLachlan (Professor)