

GMC response to the GOC's consultation on their Education Strategy Review

10/09/2018

Q6. What are your views on the GOC's approach to the accreditation and quality assurance of education programmes, including on whether this is an appropriate focus on outcomes and on the use of the competency model to set the standards of education?

We don't have views on the GOC's approach to the accreditation and quality assurance of education programmes but thought it might be useful to provide an update about how we are considering our approach for the future. The General Medical Council regulates medical schools by setting outcomes that graduates must meet. Medical schools have flexibility as to how outcomes are implemented in their curriculum and this supports medical education that after foundation training leads to a wide range of higher specialty training. There is no UK-wide curriculum or assessment process and final exams (finals) vary substantially between the established medical schools. A major expansion in student numbers is now underway, potentially involving wholly new medical schools as well as new programmes, sometimes delivered overseas. In addition to the outcomes for graduates (which we are currently reviewing) we are looking at introducing a medical licensing assessment. This would create a single, objective demonstration that those applying for registration with a licence to practise medicine in the UK can meet a common threshold for safe practice.

We set standards for all stages of medical education and training in our document Promoting excellence. The standards apply across the UK in a range of complex education and training environments while acknowledging that the way in which organisations meet the standards may vary depending on the context in which education and training is delivered. We adopted the following principles when developing the standards:

supporting transparency and sharing of information to reduce risk and improve quality; supporting professional and systems regulators working together in partnership in the shared learning environment; responding to changes in medical practice and care of patients in different healthcare settings; and allowing flexibility in delivery to promote quality improvement and innovation.

Q7. Should the GOC accredit and quality assure additional or different higher qualifications and if so, on what basis?

We set standards and approve postgraduate curricula and assessment systems. We have recently agreed a framework of generic professional capabilities (GPCs) that are broader human skills, such as communication and team working, needed by doctors to help provide safe and effective patient care. They are common to doctors across all medical specialties. In future all postgraduate curricula will reflect the GPCs. We have also recently revised our standards for curricula and assessment systems that are used to approve medical specialty curricula. We are considering how the GPC framework will be reflected in outcomes for graduates.