

Annual Quality Assurance Summary

This summary forms part of our annual quality assurance to review how an organisation is meeting our standards for medical education and training as detailed in [Promoting excellence](#). It provides an overview of the QA activities undertaken over the course of a year and an overview of findings including any areas of notable practice or requirements and recommendations we have set. The summary is published.

Organisation	St George's Hospital Medical School
Review period	October 2020 – September 2021

Overview of findings

Overall findings statement

From the SAQ submission, and the clarification of some points during the SAQ meeting, we consider that St George's Hospital Medical School (the school) is meeting the standards set out in the GMC's *Promoting excellence*.

The QA activities that we have carried out in this annual cycle have provided good opportunities to how the school meets our standards in:

Theme 1: Learning environment and culture, Theme 2: Educational governance and leadership, Theme 3: Supporting learners and Theme 5: Developing and implementing curricula and assessments.

We have not identified any requirements or recommendations for the school's home programme during this cycle.

We have also closely scrutinised the school's teach out of the International MBBS programme during this academic year, through a more intensive process of regular visiting. Moving forward, we will review all programmes through a single SAQ, and the areas working well, open requirements and recommendations from the International MBBS programme have been included in this Annual Quality Assurance process for completeness. Further detail can be found in the most recent visit report.

Quality Activity undertaken

	Activity	Date	
1	SAQ submission	October 2020	The SAQ was submitted on time and covered all five themes of <i>Promoting excellence</i> . The submission included a list of planned St George's Hospital Medical School activities that we could observe for quality assurance purposes.
2	SAQ feedback meeting	January 2021	<p>This meeting was held to provide summarised feedback to St George's Hospital Medical School on its 2020/21 SAQ submission, and to seek clarity and additional information on certain responses - as identified by the GMC following an analysis. The meeting also provided an opportunity to discuss potential QA activities to undertake in this annual cycle.</p> <p>The activities were not selected because of any specific risks identified through the SAQ, and we identified no areas of risk from the SAQ submission or during the SAQ meeting. We are satisfied that where further information and/or clarification is still required that this can be provided in the next SAQ submission.</p> <p>Following this meeting, St George's Hospital Medical School was provided with written feedback on the SAQ submission.</p>
3	Document review	March 2021	<p>This was a desk-based review of the school's management framework for clinical teaching.</p> <p>This activity was listed on the SAQ by St George's Hospital Medical School against Theme 2: Educational governance and leadership</p> <p>R2.1 – Organisations must have effective, transparent, and clearly understood educational governance systems and processes to manage or control the quality of medical education and training.</p> <p>This activity was selected to improve our understanding of the school's recently updated quality management framework for clinical teaching.</p>

4	International MBBS programme Virtual Quality Visit	27 th May 2021	<p>In addition to the quality activity above, a separate virtual quality visit was held to discuss the teach out of the International MBBS programme.</p> <p>This activity allowed us to improve our understanding of communication between students and the school and explore student opportunities to raise concerns and receive supportive feedback.</p> <p>It also allowed us to explore how the school was managing the teach out phase of the International MBBS programme and how this would progress into the programme's final two years.</p>
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Quality Reporting System (QRS)

We use the QRS to monitor concerns raised by organisation when they identify that our standards are not being met in a training environment. Concerns are managed locally by the responsible organisation until resolution.

Activity	Date	Summary
Quality Reporting System (QRS)	Ongoing	The school continues to provide updates to the existing items on the quality reporting system.

Areas that are working well

We note areas where we have found that not only our standards are met, but they are well embedded in the organisation. The following relate to the International MBBS programme.

Number	Theme	Areas working well for International MBBS
1	Theme 1: Learning environment and culture (R1.5) Theme 3: Supporting learners (R3.7)	Following our quality assurance activities, we commend the school on their commitment to strengthening relationships with students on the MBBS programme and ensuring concerns are addressed openly and in a timely manner.
2	Theme 3: Supporting learners (R3.7)	Following our quality assurance activities, we commend the school on their ongoing commitment to improving assessment literature to support students more effectively and improve student experience of feedback.

3	Theme 5: Developing and implementing curricula and assessments (R5.1; R5.3; R5.4)	Following our quality assurance activities, we commend the school on their successful response and focus on learners during the pandemic.
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Updates on open requirements and recommendations

We set requirements and recommendations where we have concerns that our standards are not being met. The following relate to the International MBBS programme.

	Open requirements International MBBS	Update
1	The school must provide students with information and support to help them move between different stages of education and training. The school must consider the needs of students from diverse backgrounds in relation to post-graduate employment and provide timely information to the students regarding aspects of their studies which are specific to International Medicine.	This requirement has been superseded by open requirement 3.
2	A quality management plan for the teach-out period is in place as well as strategic & management risk registers for the programme. However, despite improvement, we remain concerned that the school's quality management processes for identifying and managing risk for the quality of the International Medicine programme may still not be optimal.	The school has met this requirement. We heard of examples of where the school has identified and responded to concerns and potential risks.
3	There has been an improvement in the assistance provided by the school to support students preparing for the USMLE; for example, the school has informed us that the students have appreciated having a Clinical Teaching Fellow for USMLE preparation in post. However, the students we met still feel the school can provide more specialised support which is specific to the International Medicine programmes.	The school has partially met this requirement. We heard of plans to meet with each student individually during the 2021/22 academic year to discuss career plans. However, at the time of the visit, students still felt that there was a general lack of understanding about the programme amongst supervisors.

	Open recommendations International MBBS	Update
1	The school has increased the resources to students to support their health and wellbeing and this has had a positive effect on student morale. The school should continue to monitor student morale and review plans so that support can be expanded, if necessary, once all students have received advice on individual career pathways and agreed the best options for their placements.	The school has partially met this recommendation. We heard of plans to meet with each student individually during the 2021/22 academic year to discuss career paths as well as additional support during the pandemic. However, students still appear concerned that their needs are not fully met by the school.

Next steps

Overall findings statement

The GMC's responses to the information submitted in the SAQ gives feedback on each theme. This will help the school complete the updates to the questionnaire in the next annual cycle.

From the review of the SAQ, we identified that we would like to improve our understanding of how technology and simulation are used to enhance learning. Additionally, we would like to explore how the school collects and uses a range of student feedback. We would be interested to hear about how the views of patients are included in the governance of the school and the more about the school's process of appointing assessors.

For the International MBBS programme we recognise that the school has effectively supported students during the pandemic. We would like to find out more about the school's continued support for students and its communication strategy with students. This includes how the school directs students to raise concerns effectively and how the school closes the feedback loop for students concerns.

Further to this and based on our findings from the quality activities we have undertaken, in the next cycle we would like to further explore how the school's new quality management framework continues to ensure effective governance processes.

The information from the paragraphs above should be included in the next SAQ.

Moving forward, the school will complete one SAQ to include information from all three of their programmes, unless there is a particular concern that needs to be addressed in the future.

Organisation response

The organisation has the right to reply to the AQAS; if they have responded it will be included below.

Organisation response

We thank the GMC for their support and constructive feedback, and recognition that we are continuing to meet the standards set out in the GMC's *Promoting excellence*. We also welcome the move to a single SAQ moving forwards. We particularly valued the commendations of our work on improving assessment literacy and student understanding of feedback, which improves the support we offer them. We are also pleased with the recognition of the success of our response to supporting learning during the pandemic. The steps taken applied across all our MBBS Programmes.

Student support and communication strategy (Open Item International MBBS)

We are pleased to note improvements in this area. Additional steps are now underway or have already been completed.

The International MBBS communication strategy focuses on providing a robust, reliable, and consistent two-way communication framework to International MBBS students. Students have a variety of communication avenues to get in touch with the course team, to raise concerns, seek help and guidance, and provide feedback, including face-to-face individual meetings, email, group meetings via Microsoft Teams, as well as standard feedback mechanisms opened to all MBBS students.

Specific examples of student support and communication include regular update emails to the International MBBS students, bespoke individual career advice from the course director and from academics from institutions in USA and Canada; bi-monthly International MBBS Operations Group meeting (IMOG) with student representatives invited; email communication through shared inbox monitored daily, and opportunities to meet with the Senior team as a cohort. International MBBS Canvas page remains a reliable way to disseminate comms to all students and as a single source of USMLE teaching resources.

USMLE and Residency Careers Advice

Information about applications for residency abroad is a specialised area and we would not expect all UK based clinical supervisors to have any or detailed knowledge or understanding of this. Since 2019, we have provided a letter describing the nature of feedback required to support North America Residency applications. Students can give it to clinical supervisors so that 'end of attachment' feedback can be tailored to the needs of the residency application process. This has worked very well and we have had 100% success in residency applications in 2021 and 2022.

Otherwise, specialised knowledge is centralised in the programme staff. Students in all remaining undergraduate years are offered meetings with the Course Director to discuss their postgraduate employment plans (for example when to sit licensing exams and how to

achieve electives). Meetings with clinicians in the US and Canada who are experts in residency applications there are also available to students. In 2021 and 2022, we have held seminars on how to apply for residency abroad, with participation from faculty staff and doctors successful in these applications. Video recordings of these sessions and the accompanying educational resources and information are published on the Virtual Learning Environment.

In terms of welfare during the pandemic, we exercised flexibility for students on the International MBBS Programme to allow them to do placements out of the usual rotation. We were mindful of their need to prepare for or be abroad for licensing exams. We applied flexibility with respect to individual susceptibility to serious Covid-19 disease and rotations during the year, anticipating variability in restrictions affecting international travel.

Hannah Cock, MBBS Course Director

Judith Ibison, International MBBS Course Director