

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	University of Southampton School of Medicine
Review period	April 2021 – March 2022

Overview of findings

Overall findings statement

From the SAQ submission, and the clarification of some points during the SAQ meeting, we consider that University of Southampton School of Medicine 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 observe how The University of Southampton School of Medicine meets our standards across Theme 1 (Learning environment and culture), Theme 2 (Educational governance and leadership), Theme 3 (Supporting learners), Theme 4 (Supporting educators) and Theme 5 (Developing and implementing curricula and assessments) of this guidance.

During this cycle, we have set two recommendations, one relating to the school's raising concerns process and another around staff training. We have set the recommendations in response to feedback we received from students at the Q&A session we held. Students told us that there was a disparity between policies at trusts and at the University which can make raising a concern seem confusing and unduly intimidating. Even when students did have the confidence to raise an issue, they felt the process became very complex which discouraged them from taking the concern forward. We were also informed of some disruption to students learning caused by educators lacking familiarity with technology and IT systems, and it was proposed that there should be a standardised level

of training given to teaching staff in this area to ensure disruption to teaching is reduced in future.

Quality Activity undertaken

	Activity	Date	Summary
1	SAQ submission	28/06/2021	The SAQ was submitted on time and covered all five themes of <i>Promoting excellence</i> . The submission included a list of planned University of Southampton School of Medicine activities that we could observe for quality assurance purposes.
2	SAQ feedback meeting	20/08/2021	<p>This meeting was held to provide summarised feedback to University of Southampton School of Medicine on its 2021 /2022 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, The University of Southampton School of Medicine was provided with written feedback on the SAQ submission.</p>

3	Virtual observation of an EDI Education Group meeting	08/11/2021	<p>This activity was listed on the SAQ by University of Southampton School of Medicine against Theme 2: Educational governance and leadership.</p> <p>The newly formed EDI Education Group meetings are held once a month and bring together representatives from the medical school and the student body to discuss concerns raised in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion.</p> <p>We undertook this activity to further understand how the school is working to ensure fairness across the curriculum, how the school captures the student voice and how learners are involved in the school's governance structures. We also wanted to hear more about the various projects the school is undertaking in relation to ED&I and how the work of this group feeds into the work of the student ED&I committee.</p> <p>Overall, we observed a well led and organised meeting. The structure of the meeting encouraged attendees to discuss their thoughts and experiences openly. There was effective communication and collaboration between students and educators and it was clear how the work of the student ED&I committee feeds into the work of the education group. The interactions between all attendees were positive and there was an obvious shared commitment to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion within the medical school. The meeting also demonstrated that the school seeks out and considers the student voice and that students are actively involved in the school governance structures and decision-making processes in relation to ED&I.</p>
4	GMC led Q&A session with students	08/11/2021	<p>This activity was a GMC led Q&A session with University of Southampton School of Medicine students. With a student associate supporting, we talked to a wide representation of students and covered the following Themes in <i>Promoting excellence</i>: Theme 1: Learning environment and culture, Theme 2: Educational governance and leadership, Theme 3: Supporting learners, and Theme 5: Developing and implementing curricula</p>

			<p>and assessments. It provided the students with a forum to share their experiences, provide feedback on a variety of topics and discuss any issues.</p> <p>Overall, students shared generally positive feedback for the school. They value that they school gives them the forums they need to express their ideas and spoke positively of the opportunities the school offers students to be involved in the development of the course. Students also spoke highly of the pastoral support they receive from the school. It appears the provision of support is excellent where students have concerns related to mental health and personal welfare, and we praise the school for its commitment to student wellbeing.</p> <p>We also heard that students appreciated the introduction of lecture recordings during the pandemic, but that there had been some disruption to students learning caused by educators lacking familiarity with technology and IT systems. Students also noted that there is a disparity between raising concerns policies at trusts and at the University. This makes the raising concerns process seem complex and unduly intimidating which discourages students from taking concerns forward.</p>
5	Observation of a Student Progress Committee meeting held via MS Teams	18/01/2022	<p>This activity was listed on the SAQ by University of Southampton School of Medicine against Theme 2: Educational governance and leadership and Theme 3: Supporting learners.</p> <p>Concerns regarding student progression and fitness to practise are reported to the Student Progress Committee (SPC), which decides if support is required or if the concern needs to be considered via fitness to practise procedures.</p> <p>We undertook this activity to improve our understanding of the systems the school has in place to manage progression and fitness to practise issues when they arise. We were also interested to hear how the work of the committee</p>

			<p>informs decision making in relation to student progression and fitness to practise.</p> <p>Overall, we observed a well led and organised meeting with the structure encouraging attendees to discuss their thoughts openly. There was constructive discussion, where it was evident that student welfare was a priority. The meeting gave us a greater understanding of the processes the school has in place for managing student progression and fitness to practise issues and highlighted how the student progress committee meetings feed into these processes.</p>
6	Observation of the Clinical Centres Forum held via MS Teams	04/02/2022	<p>This activity was listed on the SAQ by University of Southampton School of Medicine against Theme 1: Learning environment and culture, Theme 4: Supporting educators and Theme 5: Developing and implementing curricula and assessments.</p> <p>The school organises a regular clinical centres forum, where representatives from placement providers across year groups and modules come together for training. The forum is one method used by the school to ensure feedback between learners and educators and provides an opportunity for attendees to share information regarding curriculum changes, staff development and good practice.</p> <p>We undertook this activity to better understand how the Clinical Centres Forum fits into the school's feedback mechanisms, and its value as an opportunity for educators to liaise and connect with each other.</p> <p>Overall, we felt that the Forum acted as an effective information sharing platform and a good opportunity for educators to liaise with each other. We praise those who presented at the Forum for their evident passion and enthusiasm for improving the student and educator experience. The school showed an openness to receiving feedback and a desire to find solutions to issues raised. We were also pleased that there was a year 4 student</p>

			representative present at the forum. The student was introduced at the beginning of the day and it was ensured that their voice was heard at feedback discussions. The Forum provides us with assurance that the school actively seeks feedback from educators and learners and that both groups are involved in the development of medical school curricula.
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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 University of Southampton School of Medicine is fully engaged with the Quality Reporting System, opening new items when necessary, providing updates when new information becomes available, and closing items that are no longer of concern. The school currently has two open items on the QRS.

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.

Number	Theme	Areas working well
1	Theme 1: R1.5	Following our quality assurance activities, we commend the school for continuously encouraging and creating opportunities for student involvement across the medical school. The school appears to facilitate and encourage an honest and open environment for students to raise concerns and provide feedback.
2	Theme 3: R3.2	Following our quality assurance activities, we commend the school for its commitment to student wellbeing. It appears the provision of support is excellent where students have concerns relating to mental health and personal welfare, and several

		students spoke highly of the pastoral support they received from the school.
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Open Recommendations

We set requirements where we have found that our standards are not being met. We will monitor each organisation's response and will expect evidence that progress is being made during the next QA cycle.

No.	Theme	Recommendation	Update
1	Theme 2 (R2.6) - April 2021	The University of Southampton School of Medicine should consider spending more time exploring systems for raising patient safety concerns in future visits.	The University of Southampton School of Medicine has responded fully to this recommendation. The school has reviewed processes to ensure that patient safety is a key part of its quality visits and is confident that this is well embedded. This recommendation is now resolved.
2	Theme 2 (R2.6) – April 2021	The University of Southampton School of Medicine should consider student/lay member representation on their QAE visit panels.	The University of Southampton School of Medicine has provided a full update and is progressing with the recommendation. We look forward to receiving a further update in September 2022.

New Recommendations

We set recommendations where we have found areas for improvement related to our standards. They highlight areas an organisation should address to improve, in line with best practice.

No.	Theme	Recommendation	Date set
1	Theme 1: R1.6	The University of Southampton School of Medicine should consider reviewing its raising concerns process to minimise the disparity between university and trust policies and to reduce student uncertainty.	March 2022
2	Theme 1: R1.19	The University of Southampton School of Medicine should take steps to ensure that,	March 2022

		when teaching is being delivered virtually, adequate technology and IT systems training is provided to staff to minimise disruption to learning.	
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Next steps

The GMC's responses to the information submitted in the SAQ gives feedback on each theme to help The University of Southampton School of Medicine complete the updates to the questionnaire in the next annual cycle. These include:

Theme 1: Developments relating to the new process for managing patient safety concerns.

Theme 2: An update on the recruitment of lay/students on QAE visits, and the elective module (following the changes reported to the module in this year's SAQ).

Theme 3: "Look after your mate" sessions.

Theme 5: The amount of training being delivered to assessors.

Further to this, and based on our findings from the quality activities we have undertaken, in the next cycle we would like to learn more about:

- Developments in the school's work around the raising concerns process for students.
- Developments in the various ongoing workstreams and EDI projects we heard about in the EDI Education Group meeting.
- Whether the recommendations made in the presentation we heard in the Student progress Committee have been considered and implemented.
- Whether the feedback from the Clinical Centres Forum has been taken forward, and if changes have been considered or implemented as a result of this. We would like to know if and how the feedback from the forum is discussed, what process is followed when considering if any changes need to be made and who is involved in these discussions.
- Why the specific specialities were chosen for the Subject Lead Presentations at the Clinical Centres Forum. We would like to know how these specialties were selected and whether other subject leads have the opportunity to present if they want to.

Finally, based on the findings of our COVID-19 survey, we would like an update in the next SAQ submission regarding the schools plans to return to in person OSCEs. We would also like some further information regarding the school's evaluation of the changes made to the final year for the 2021 graduating cohort, and whether this has had any impact on the

arrangements for the final year of the 2022 graduating cohort. We would also like to hear of any plans to undertake evaluation of the changes made for the 2022 graduating cohort.

Organisations response

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

Organisations response