General Medical Council

Review of our education framework – Organisational standards

November 2026

As part of our review of the education framework, we're seeking views on our standards that underpin education and training across the UK.

We set standards that shape the design, development, management and delivery of the education and training for doctors, anaesthesia associates (AAs) and physician associates (PAs).

These standards set out what organisations are expected to do to support safe, effective education and training.

We do this to help ensure education and training produces safe, competent doctors, AAs and PAs. We also want learning to take place in environments where patient safety is prioritised, learners are supported and education and educators are valued.

We check the organisations are meeting these standards through our approval and quality assurance processes.

This document summarises the organisational standards included in our review of the education framework.

Please note that the MLA model (set out in the main body of the MLA framework), the *MLA content map* (Annex A), and the transitional arrangements (Annex D) are not included in this review.

You can read a summary of our learning outcomes here.

You can also read a summary of the equality, diversity and inclusion content in our standards here.

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You are welcome to contact us in Welsh. We will respond in Welsh, without this causing additional delay.

1. *Promoting excellence: standards for medical education and training*

Promoting excellence: standards for medical education and training applies to the organisations responsible for managing or delivering education and training to learners. This includes:

- **Medical schools** providing undergraduate medical education (medical degrees leading to the award of a UK Primary Medical Qualification) to medical students. Medical schools must also meet the requirements in *Assuring readiness for practice: a framework for the MLA* (summarised below).
- **Postgraduate training organisations** – often referred to as deaneries or local offices – providing training programmes to doctors in postgraduate training within a specific locality or region. The training programmes deliver postgraduate curricula we have approved against our *Excellence by design* standards (summarised below).
- **Local education providers** (LEPs – which includes health boards, NHS trusts, independent sector organisations) who host medical students (on clinical placements as part of their medical degree) and employ resident doctors (in training programmes) and are responsible for the learning environment and culture in which clinical training takes place.

The standards are supplemented by requirements which say what an organisation must do to show us they are meeting the standards. These are categorised into five themes:

- *Learning environment and culture*
- *Educational governance and leadership*
- *Supporting learners*
- *Supporting educators*
- *Developing and implementing curricula and assessments*

Some of the requirements may only apply to a specific stage of education and training – eg some requirements apply only to undergraduate medical education delivered by medical schools.

2. Excellence by design: standards for postgraduate curricula

Excellence by design: standards for postgraduate curricula applies to organisations – usually **medical royal colleges and faculties** – responsible for the design and development of postgraduate curricula. They must show how the standards have been met in the initial design and development, and when making any subsequent changes to it.

We require the UK Foundation Programme curriculum and the 65 specialty curricula and 30 sub-specialty curricula meet these standards.

The standards require curricula to describe generic and specialty-specific learning outcomes, which includes embedding our *Generic professional capabilities framework* (summarised here). They also require the curriculum is deliverable (through local training programmes) across the UK as a whole.

The standards are supplemented by requirements which say what an organisation must do to show us they are meeting the standards. These are categorised into five themes:

- *Purpose*
- *Governance and strategic support*
- *Programme of learning*
- *Programme of assessment*
- *Quality assurance and improvement*

The curricula are delivered within training programmes which must meet the *Promoting Excellence: standards for medical education and training* (summarised above).

3. Annex B and Annex C of *Assuring readiness for practice: A framework for the MLA*

The MLA framework requires that medical degrees awarded by **UK medical schools** include a pass in the Medical Licensing Assessment (MLA). The purpose of the MLA is to ensure that doctors seeking registration with a licence to practise medicine in the UK have met a threshold for safe practice that is appropriate to their point of entry to the medical register.

An MLA has two components: the applied knowledge test (AKT) and the clinical and professional skills assessment (CPSA), through which candidates can demonstrate they have met the threshold for safe practice.

Students at **UK medical schools** sit:

- a CPSA which is designed and delivered by their **medical school**, and
- the Medical Schools AKT which is centrally set and coordinated by **Medical Schools Council** on behalf of all UK medical schools, who deliver it locally.

The framework includes requirements the AKT and CPSA need to meet:

- *Annex A: MLA content map* – the framework which forms the basis of the content of the MLA AKT and the MLA CPSA.
- *Annex B: Requirements for the Medical Licensing Assessment Applied Knowledge Test* – specifies requirements that each assessment provider's AKT must meet.
- *Annex C: Requirements for the MLA Clinical and Professional Skills Assessment* – specifies the requirements that each assessment provider's CPSA must meet.
- *Annex D: Transitional arrangements for medical students* – which enable medical students in specific circumstances to graduate in or after academic year 2024-25 without a pass in the MLA.

By meeting the AKT and CPSA requirements, the **medical school** demonstrates the quality, consistency and fairness of their AKT or CPSA to a standard the GMC requires for the AKT or CPSA to count towards a candidate's MLA.

It should be noted that the MLA model as set out in the main body of the MLA framework, the *MLA content map* (Annex A) and the transitional arrangements (Annex D) are not in scope for this review. The *MLA content map* was updated in October 2025.

Through this review we'll consider whether the AKT requirements (Annex B) and CPSA requirements (Annex C) can be streamlined or adapted to better reflect how MLA assessment providers demonstrate compliance.

4. Standards for the delivery of PA and AA pre-qualification education

Standards for the delivery of PA and AA pre-qualification education sets out the standards we expect organisations who deliver physician associate (PA) and anaesthesia associate (AA) education and training courses meet.

PA and AA course providers implement the AA and PA curricula and assessments to make sure that PA and AA graduates can demonstrate the learning outcomes required by the AA and PA curricula (which must meet our *Standards for PA and AA curricula* (summarised below).

They work in partnership with **local education providers (LEPs)**, to make sure that clinical placements give learners the learning opportunities they need to meet the curriculum learning outcomes, and that the standards for the delivery of pre-qualification education are met.

The standards are supplemented by requirements which say what an organisation must do to show us they are meeting the standards. These are categorised into five themes:

- Learning environment and culture
- Educational governance and leadership
- Supporting learners
- Supporting educators
- Developing and implementing curricula and assessments

The standards sit alongside our *PA and AA generic and shared learning outcomes* (summarised here) and the *Standards for PA and AA curricula* (summarised below).

5. Standards for PA and AA curricula

Standards for PA and AA curricula apply to the design and development of PA and AA curricula. The **curriculum developer** will own the curriculum and retain ongoing responsibility for designing the curriculum in a way that meets these standards.

For the curriculum to be approved, the curriculum developer must provide evidence to show how the standards and requirements set out in the document have been met. This will also apply if the curriculum developer wishes to make any changes to the curriculum.

The standards are supplemented by requirements which say what an organisation must do to show us they are meeting the standards. These are categorised into four themes:

- Purpose of the curriculum
- Governance and strategic support
- Programme of learning
- Monitoring and improvement

The standards require the curricula must incorporate the outcomes in the *PA and AA generic and shared learning outcomes* (summarised here) as well as setting profession-specific outcomes.

The generic and shared learning outcomes contain the knowledge, skills and behaviours that we expect new PAs and AAs to have before being able to register with us and to practise safely.

The *Standards for the delivery of PA and AA pre-qualification education* (summarised above) set out what we expect of organisations that deliver PA and AA education. These organisations must use the curriculum when developing the content of their PA and AA courses.