

Quality Assurance Summary for new schools and programmes

This summary provides an overview of how an organisation is progressing towards meeting our standards as detailed in [Promoting excellence: standards for medical education and training](#). It outlines the quality assurance activities we undertook and a summary of our findings.

Organisation

Chester Medical School (Academic Year 2024 – 2025)

Overview of findings

Overall findings statement

Chester Medical School (the school) received their first intake of students to their Graduate Entry Medicine Programme (GEM) in September 2024.

This summary covers the 2024/2025 cycle of our new school approval process.

SAQ & first document submission

The cycle began with the school's submission of an updated Self-Assessment Questionnaire (SAQ) and supporting documentation on 28 November 2024. This submission covered updates on the school's development since the last cycle. A panel of GMC staff and associates scrutinised the SAQ and supporting documentation and requested further documents where additional information was required. These were submitted by the school on 3 February 2025 and reviewed ahead of the April 2025 visit.

Visit

An in-person visit took place on 2 and 3 April 2025. The visit was used to triangulate the detail provided within the SAQ submission. The visit focussed on areas where we needed further assurance of the school's progress towards meeting our standards in delivering year one of the programme and in their preparation for year two.

On the visit, the panel identified areas that were working well as well as areas where there were concerns over the school's progress meeting our standards. As a result, the panel requested further documentation to assure the GMC that the school remained on track to deliver year two.

Second document submission

A second document submission was submitted by the school at the end of June 2025. It was clear from the submission that a significant amount of work had been undertaken since the visit, there remained a number of key areas where the school was not at the stage of development required for a new school about to progress into the delivery of year two.

A virtual meeting took place with the school on 17 July 2025 to provide high level feedback on the second document submission, and as a result of concerns over progress, we decided to set five requirements to support the school's progress. We requested a third document submission to provide immediate assurance over plans for year two.

Third document submission

This submission was completed on 14 August 2025 and again reviewed in detail by the GMC panel. It was clear from the submission that further progress has been made in some areas but that the delivery of year two remained fragile with key clinical placements for year two being lifted into year three, due to lack of capacity in the region.

Clarification meeting

The meeting which was held on 28 August 2025 was an opportunity to clarify some aspects of the document submission, to better understand how the school is working towards meeting both GMC standards and the requirements that were set. This meeting also marked the end of the 2024-25 cycle of QA activity.

Quality Activity undertaken

	Activity	Date	Summary
1	SAQ submission	28 November 2024	The SAQ was submitted on time and covered all five themes of Promoting excellence. It provided a good overview of how the school plans to meet our standards in line with its planned timelines.
2	First Document Submission(s)	28 November 2024 3 February 2025	Documents submitted alongside the SAQ submission Documents submitted ahead of in person visit to the school
3	In person visit to the school	2 & 3 April 2025	The visit focused on areas of the SAQ that required further clarification and exploration to provide assurance around the school's progress towards meeting our standards.

		8 April 2025	<p>The sessions we conducted comprised of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The senior management team ● Curriculum & Assessment ● Management & Quality Group ● Quality Management & Placements ● Student support and fitness to practice. ● Contingency school representatives ● Curriculum and assessment ● Academic and clinical educators ● Placement staff ● Year one students <p>We met with a range of staff and representatives from Chester Medical School, Warwick Medical School who are the contingency partner, Countess of Chester and Primary Care providers. We also met with a group of year one students.</p> <p>At the end of the visit day, we provided verbal feedback on the areas we found to be progressing well as well as areas that required focus.</p> <p>A written version of this feedback was provided to the school shortly after the visit.</p>
4	Line by Line Feedback	21 May 2025	The GMC's line-by-line feedback on the school's SAQ submission and findings from the visit.
5	GP placement meeting with Chester Medical School	25 June 2025	<p>The meeting was held at the request of Chester Medical School, to present their plans for GP placements.</p> <p>We would like the school to provide an update on their plans to recruit SIM patients and detail the training provided as part of the document request due alongside the SAQ update in October 2025.</p>
6	Second Document Submission and feedback	30 June 2025 17 July 2025	<p>Following the visit in April, additional documentation was requested to provide assurance over plans for the delivery of both clinical placements and academic elements of the programme.</p> <p>We held a meeting with the school to talk through our review of the evidence submission and our decision to set five requirements and one recommendation.</p>

7	Third Document Submission and feedback	14 August 2025	Additional documentation was requested to demonstrate how Chester Medical school are working towards meeting the five requirements set in July.
		18 August 2025	We held a meeting with the school to clarify some parts of the evidence submission and talk through next steps of the new school's approvals process for the 2025-26 cycle.

Areas that are progressing 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: Learning environment and culture	Teaching of anatomy by core staff was highlighted by the student groups as a positive experience.
2	Theme 3: Supporting learners	Care for Students: it is clear at all levels that staff are passionate about providing a good experience for students.
3	Theme 3: Supporting learners	Students particularly valued the experience of the anatomy leads, and the continuity of teaching staff for these sessions which has supported learning.
4	Theme 4: Supporting educators	We heard multiple examples of how academic educators worked well together and were supportive of each other. Educators specifically valued time before and after teaching sessions to seek peer support, plan and reflect. Educators found this to be particularly important with the vacancy of the MBChB Clinical Skills & Simulation Lead, which has resulted in less leadership input.
5	Theme 5: Developing and implementing curricula and assessment	We considered facilities to be good, with dedicated space for medical students. There is also the potential for space to be used for interprofessional learning between medical students and other healthcare professionals, such as midwifery and nursing.

Updates on open requirement for cycle 2023/24

Number	Open requirement	Update
1	<p>Theme 1: Learning environment and culture, (R1.19).</p> <p>Chester Medical School must provide evidence of a functional portfolio, which is linked to their curriculum and that will support delivery of safe and relevant learning opportunities. Given the short timescale, the school must also set out their contingency arrangements should the portfolio not be available for their students.</p>	<p>GMC attended a virtual demo of the ePortfolio in March 2025. During the visit in April, we triangulated information with the students by incorporating questions about the ePortfolio. We were assured that students are trained on portfolio use and received confirmation that students found the portfolio usable. Following the visit to the, we agreed that this item can be closed.</p>

Requirements for cycle 2024/25

We set requirements where we have found that our standards are not being met. We set five requirements in this cycle. An update on each requirement is required by **24 October 2025** alongside the SAQ submission.

Number	Theme	Requirements
1	<p>Theme 1: Learning environment and culture</p> <p>R1.7</p>	<p>The school must ensure there are enough staff members, who are suitably qualified to deliver both year one and two of the programme. This includes University, placement staff as well as visiting lecturers.</p>
2	<p>Theme 4: Supporting educators</p> <p>R4.1</p>	<p>The school must ensure that educators are appropriately trained to deliver year two of the programme.</p>
3	<p>Theme 2: Educational governance and leadership</p>	<p>The school must have a closer degree of coordination and alignment with their contingency school to maintain the contingency arrangement.</p>
4	<p>Theme 5: Developing and implementing curricula and assessment</p> <p>R5.3</p>	<p>The school must ensure that learners experience a range of specialties, in different settings, with the diversity of patient groups that they would see when working as a doctor. In particular mental health, women's health, paediatrics and O&G.</p>

5	Theme 2: Educational governance and leadership R2.6	The school must ensure that they have agreements in place with LEPs to provide education and training to meet the standards. This is of particular concern for year two placements.
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Recommendations for cycle 2024/25

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. An update is required by **24 October 2025** alongside the SAQ submission.

Number	Theme	Recommendations
1	Theme 5: Developing and implementing curricula and assessments. R5.6, R5.7, R5.8	The school needs to rapidly build upon the expertise they have, to ensure there is enough dedicated assessment capacity and expertise as the school grows.
2	Theme 2: Educational governance and leadership. R2.1, R2.2	The school needs to invest in the new team to provide stability to the programme. The school must support and develop both senior leadership and academic educators and should specifically consider the enhancement of medical education expertise.

Next steps

In the next SAQ submission we require an update of the school's progress against our standards since the last submission. The school needs to ensure that each update covers the progress made to date as well as preparation for delivery of years three and four.

The school should also ensure that any updates requested in the last cycle's SAQ feedback, provided in May 2025, are also provided. As part of the submission, the school should also clearly list any supporting documents and/or data that would evidence the update.

2025/2026 Cycle Timeline

- The school should provide the 2025/26 SAQ no later than **24 October 2025**.
- Alongside this the school should submit the document request attached in the document list).

- The school should provide the MLA compliance forms no later than **24 October 2025**.

As part of the approval process for the school it is important that we start to understand the school's approach to the Medical Licensing Assessment (MLA) early, to provide enough time to work together to ensure the standards will be met. We will provide you with specific forms to complete to show how the school will meet the MLA requirements for both the applied knowledge test (AKT) and clinical and professional skills assessment (CPSA).

Once we have received the submission of the SAQ and the MLA compliance forms we will review as a team and advise if we require any supplementary documentation evidence to support the review through to the end of 2025.

We intend on arranging a further visit in **early 2026**.

Organisation's response

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

Organisation's response

Chester Medical School are appreciative of the GMC's ongoing support and constructive feedback provided throughout the 2024–2025 cycle. Since the April 2025 visit and subsequent evidence submissions, Chester Medical School has made significant progress in addressing the requirements and recommendations outlined in the Quality Assurance Summary.

We are confident that the progress made so far demonstrates our commitment to meeting GMC standards and ensuring a high-quality learning environment for our students. We will continue to work collaboratively with the GMC, Warwick Medical School and our partners to address remaining requirements and fully prepare for the delivery of Years 3 and 4.