

GMC credentials for doctors: further information

Introduction

GMC credentials bring assured training and regulatory oversight to areas where consistent clinical standards, recognised across the UK, are necessary for better patient care, or where patients are at risk due to workforce gaps, limited clinical governance or other factors that cannot safely be addressed in other ways.

GMC credentials were developed and delivered by external agencies, using our agreed [frameworks](#), but are approved, quality assured and recognised by the GMC. GMC credentials are marked on a doctor's entry on the publicly available [list of registered medical practitioners](#) (LRMP) in a similar way to recognised trainer status.

Training vs recognition

GMC credentials describe the outcomes and standards expected of doctors working in a specific area of practice. Some credentials offer a 'recognition route' whereby a doctor who can provide evidence that they already have relevant skills and experience can have this evaluated against the standards without undertaking the credential training.

Non-mandatory

The GMC does not have the legal authority to make any postgraduate training mandatory, including credentials.

Credentialing and postgraduate training

Our credential approval process focused on patient safety, limiting GMC credentials to where they were a proportionate response.

The standards and outcomes required for the award of a Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT) have not changed. Postgraduate curricula are updated to reflect emerging patient and service need independently of credentialing.

Where an area is a requirement for all doctors in a specialty, it must be included in the postgraduate training curriculum.

Credentials and subspecialties

GMC credentials address areas of patient safety or service need, whether that is due to a lack of regulation in a particular area of practice or because the existing training pathways do not meet the level of demand in the service. Credentials are standalone qualifications, unlike subspecialties and special interest areas included in specialty training.

Review and evaluation

Our standards require organisations designing curricula to have processes in place to evaluate and continuously improve these, and this applies equally to credentials. We will review credentials through our existing postgraduate quality assurance processes.

Maintenance

As with recognition on the specialist register, credentials do not have an ongoing maintenance process. Doctors with credentials will need to continue to demonstrate competence within their whole scope of practice as part of appraisal and revalidation.

The early adopters

We worked with the UK Medical Education Reference Group (UKMERG) to prioritise a small number of areas for development as credentials. Three credentials have been approved: Rural and remote health, Mechanical thrombectomy, and Pain medicine. The early adopter phase is now closed.

Council Decision December 2023

In December 2023, GMC Council decided to bring the credential project to a close. This means that there are no plans to take forward any new GMC credentials.

We will continue to support the Statutory Education Bodies in the delivery and evaluation of the early adopter credentials. Learning from the project will be incorporated into a future GMC education strategy.

Cosmetic Surgery

In December 2023, GMC Council also decided to end the development of cosmetic surgery credential. The complexity involved, and the need to ensure accessibility for non-specialists, means that the cosmetic surgery credential as developed will not address the key patient safety

risks, and a new approach is needed. We want to collaborate with relevant stakeholders to help deliver a joined-up approach which would better serve patient interests.

Funding

All four UK nations have committed to ensuring there will be equitable and proportionate funding arrangements underpinning credentials where they are commissioned to develop and secure services.

Awarding, withholding, appeals

The award of GMC credentials is closely modelled on processes used for awarding CCTs. This involves receiving a recommendation from a panel via the credential developing body and then asking doctors to confirm that they wish to have the credential recorded on the list of medical registered practitioners (LRMP).

We will carry out appropriate checks before awarding a credential and updating a doctor's entry on the LRMP. If there is any fitness to practice activity, we will postpone a decision on award of the credential until this is resolved.

Decisions regarding panel recommendation will be made by the credential developing body and appeals will be managed by the statutory education bodies.

Removals

A GMC credential may be removed from a doctor in the following circumstances:

- a request by the doctor that they no longer wish to have the GMC credential, or
- the GMC credential was awarded because of an administrative error, or
- it can be demonstrated that the credential had been obtained fraudulently.