

# Medical Council of New Zealand's consultation on the recognition of UK PLAB licentiate examination for registration of IMGs in provisional general scope of practice

## GMC response

### Introduction

This consultation sets out two proposals for registration of International Medical Graduates (IMGs) in the Provisional General scope of practice in Aotearoa New Zealand based on an applicant having passed Part 1 and Part 2 of the United Kingdom (UK) Professional and Linguistic Assessments Board (PLAB) test. The PLAB test is a pre-registration examination administered by the General Medical Council (GMC) with a view to ensuring IMGs have the right knowledge and skills to practise medicine in the UK.

### Our response

*Sent via email*

- 1 Do you support the proposal for a new registration pathway based on an IMG passing the PLAB 1 and 2 tests, completing FY1 and obtaining full general registration with the GMC (proposal 1)?**

The GMC is neutral on the proposals but we are responding to this consultation to highlight that the vast majority of IMG applicants seeking to enter UK practice demonstrate their knowledge and skill by passing both parts of PLAB and meeting our experience requirements. As such, these applicants demonstrate that they are at standard of a doctor at the end of UK Foundation Year 1 (FY1), and if they meet our other evidence requirements, are eligible for full registration. They do not have to undertake FY1.

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We do not hold data on applicants taking PLAB in order to hold UK provisional registration and apply for a Foundation Programme place. However, for context it may be helpful to know that 656 IMGs were granted provisional registration during 2022. It is not an unreasonable assumption to make that the majority of these will have been individuals applying to join the Foundation Programme as this is the only purpose of UK provisional registration.

**2 What do you see as the main issues/benefits/risks with proposal 1?**

As above while we consider this a robust pathway, it is likely to be limited in the number of applicants it attracts as few IMGs seeking GMC registration complete FY1.

The MCNZ should also be aware that demand for PLAB places is high and continues to increase. To meet this demand we have expanded our PLAB 2 assessment capacity beyond pre-pandemic levels. Candidates are able to secure PLAB places but wait times to sit the exams have increased, we are currently (20/01/2023) taking PLAB 1 bookings for August and PLAB 2 bookings for July 2023.

While we do not consider that any decision by MCNZ to accept either proposal will significantly increase demand for PLAB places, we consider it important to highlight the current situation.

We also note the consultation refers to the planned transition from PLAB to the Medical Licensing Assessment (MLA) in 2024 and that this is accounted for in the proposals.

**3 Do you support the proposal for an amended examinations pathway recognising passing Part 2 of the PLAB test as an alternative to IMGs passing the NZREX Clinical (proposal 2)?**

The GMC is neutral on the proposal but as with our response to question 2, we consider it important to highlight the significant demand for PLAB places and the current wait times.

**4 What do you see as the main issues/benefits/risks with proposal 2?**

N/A

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**5 Do you have any other comments about these proposals?**

N/A