To note

Assessment Advisory Board terms of reference and constitution

Issue

1. At its meeting on 2 October 2014, the Strategy and Policy Board agreed to the establishment of an Assessment Advisory Board, to include assessment experts to advise on best practice in design, standard setting, running and evaluation of assessments.

2. This paper outlines the Assessment Advisory Board’s draft terms of reference and composition.

Recommendations

3. The Strategy and Policy Board is asked to note:

   a. The proposed terms of reference.

   b. The proposed arrangements for the constitution of the Assessment Advisory Board.
Assessment Advisory Board terms of reference and constitution

Issue

4 At its meeting on 2 October 2014, the Strategy and Policy Board agreed to the establishment of an Assessment Advisory Board (AAB), to include a range of experts to advise on best practice in design, standard setting, running and evaluation of assessments. The Board considered an outline of a series of next steps, including the appointment of a Chair and the drafting of terms of reference.

Terms of reference

5 The AAB will provide advice on a wide range of issues associated with the fair and effective running of assessments. It will help us to remain at the forefront of assessment methodologies and ensure that all assessments conducted by or on behalf of the GMC are fair, robust and fit for purpose. In particular, we anticipate that the AAB will advise on:

a Ensuring equality and fairness in the delivery of assessments.

b The identification and amelioration of differential outcomes.

c The benefits and limitations of various assessment methods, including the latest developments in assessment design and new assessment methodologies.

d Ensuring validity and improving reliability of assessments.

e Statistical approaches to analysing the effectiveness of assessments.

f Assessment of non-subject-specific attributes such as professionalism and sound decision making.

6 The AAB will report to the Strategy and Policy Board by way of an annual report. Further papers may be brought to the Board as required, as detailed below and provided for within AAB’s terms of reference, at Annex A.

7 We have drafted the terms of reference in line with those used for the Curriculum Advisory Group and the Quality Scrutiny Group. The terms of reference will be finalised in collaboration with, and following the appointment of, the Chair of AAB as agreed in October 2014.

Constitution

8 Members of the AAB will be GMC Associates appointed for their knowledge, skills and experience. Membership of the AAB will not represent specific organisations or
stakeholder bodies. Instead, members will be selected against a competency framework.

9 The specific constitution of the AAB will be agreed in consultation with its Chair, once appointed. However, appointments will be made by the Chief Executive and we anticipate that there will be Advisory Board members with expertise in areas including:

a Equality and diversity, especially in relation to performance in assessments.

b Statistical analysis of examination performance (psychometrics).

c Educational supervision.

d Assessment design.

e Medical Simulation.

10 The Chair of AAB will be appointed by the Chief Executive for an initial term of three years, with an annual review of performance. The Chief Executive may invite the Chair to serve for an additional period, subject to the GMC’s requirements and satisfactory performance. Terms of appointment for members may be set on a staggered term basis to ensure that AAB retains the appropriate balance of expertise. We propose that members serve for an initial period of three years, with a provision to extend dependent for a further period as required, on the basis of the GMC’s requirements and satisfactory performance.

11 AAB may convene working groups focussed on specific issues/assessments, which will be comprised of AAB members and/or co-opted members. This would allow AAB to harness appropriate expertise, to operate effectively, and also to maintain oversight of all the assessments conducted by the GMC and provide consistent and appropriate advice/recommendations. To illustrate this, the Part 1 and Part 2 Professional and Linguistic Assessments Board (PLAB) panels will continue, much as currently constituted, with responsibility for creating examinations, setting questions and examination standards. They will continue to be administered by GMC staff as now, and technical and operational matters will be reported through GMC staff at the appropriate level.

12 However, where AAB make recommendations which involve strategic or policy issues or where there might be a generic application with the potential to affect other GMC assessments, these will be presented for consideration by the Strategy and Policy Board. This will enable consistent consideration and application of all recommendations and the maintenance of executive oversight by the Strategy and Policy Board.
AAB will present an annual report to the Strategy and Policy Board which will cover its work during the year and include the work of any working groups and panels. The terms of reference for the PLAB panels have been updated accordingly and those for the other groups will be drafted in line with these. Details of the formal reporting line and operational arrangements will be agreed with the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair of AAB as necessary. The administration of the work of AAB and its working groups and panels is still to be determined but the team responsible will draw on expertise from across the GMC as appropriate.
Supporting information

How this issue relates to the corporate strategy and business plan

14 Strategic aim 1 ‘to make best use of intelligence about doctors and the healthcare environment to ensure good standards and identify risks to patients’ requires us to monitor and review the performance of our assessments in order to improve standards.

15 Strategic aim 2 ‘to help raise standards in medical education and practice’ incorporates our commitment to ensure that doctors holding registration and a licence meet the required standards for safe and effective practice and that assessments designed to provide assurance that this is the case are up to date and fit for purpose. The terms of reference have been drafted to ensure the Board is able to contribute to the delivery of both of these aims.

How the issues support the principles of better regulation

16 The terms of reference detail governance arrangements to allow us to access expertise so that our oversight of our assessment programme is consistent across a range of assessments; targeted by ensuring the Assessment Advisory Board focuses on an advisory role; and, through the use of clear reporting mechanisms to the Strategy and Policy Board, transparent and accountable.

How the action will be evaluated

17 The Strategy and Policy Board will receive annual reports from the Assessment Advisory Board and these reports will form the basis of an evaluation of the Board’s performance.

What equality and diversity considerations relate to this issue

18 The Assessment Advisory Board will have a key role in evaluating and monitoring the equality and diversity performance of individual assessments. Specifically, we will recruit expertise in equality and diversity with respect to performance in assessments. This will ensure that we get the best advice to enable us to meet our statutory obligations as well as ensure our assessments are fit for purpose.

If you have any questions about this paper please contact: Juliet Oliver, Assistant Director - Policy and Regulatory Development, Registration and Revalidation, JOliver@gmc-uk.org, 020 7189 5459.
Terms of Reference for the Assessment Advisory Board

1. These are the proposed terms of reference for the Assessment Advisory Board.

Statement of purpose

2. The Assessment Advisory Board (AAB) will provide expert advice on the development and operation of GMC assessments across all directorates.

3. The Board will provide expert insight into the current performance of GMC assessments and advise on where there might be risks to assessment performance and how those might be mitigated. It will propose programmes of research and analysis, and advise on external developments and improvement opportunities. The AAB will receive reports and recommendations from working groups such as examination panels (e.g., PLAB 1 and 2 panels) and shall provide expert advice on the content, format, delivery and other aspects of the assessments.

Terms of reference

- To advise on the design and format of GMC assessments as required
- To advise on the content of the assessment and the provision of effective and current blueprints for all relevant assessments
- To advise on standard setting methodologies and how they can best be applied to GMC assessments
- To advise on how the GMC might develop a methodology for the statistical analysis of assessments (psychometric analysis) to assure the performance of GMC assessments meets the required standards (e.g., reliability and fairness).
- To receive regular psychometric reports for review and advise upon necessary actions from these reports
- To review and consider developments within other examining bodies and in the published literature and advise upon their implications for GMC assessments
To assist with the development of proposals for research to be commissioned by the GMC on assessment methodology and practice

To advise on best practice in relation to equality and diversity in the development and conduct of assessments

To advise upon the effective quality assurance of GMC assessments

To provide expert advice upon examinations procedures and protocols (e.g. entry requirements, reasonable adjustments policy, re-sit policy, appeals and allegations of misconduct)

Other duties as requested.

**Reporting**

4 The AAB shall produce a report annually for submission to the Strategy and Policy Board.

**Membership**

5 AAB members will be recruited as GMC Associates as agreed by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair of the AAB. Co-opted members may be invited at the discretion of the Chair to provide advice in relation to specific projects. Permanent members may be added to the Board as required, subject to the agreement of the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair.

6 The AAB may convene one or more working groups to report to it on specific assessments or specialist areas. These groups may comprise panel members and/or co-opted members.

**Working arrangements**

7 The Chair of the AAB will work on a regular basis with relevant GMC staff to ensure that the programme of work undertaken by the group is closely aligned with the needs of the GMC executive, Council, and other key interests. The work of the Board will cover the assessments currently run by the GMC and others that might be developed as needed.

8 Secretariat responsibilities will be undertaken by a member of GMC staff. GMC staff will attend meetings as required.
Meeting frequency

9 The Assessment Advisory Board will meet as frequently as required, but as a minimum it will hold at least one meeting per calendar quarter. Meetings will normally be scheduled in advance on an annual cycle.

Authority

10 The Assessment Advisory Board is not a decision making body and is limited to providing advice and recommendations to the Chief Executive and staff of the GMC.