
Tomorrow's Doctors Consultation – short questionnaire

The General Medical Council (GMC) is the statutory regulator for doctors in the UK. Our role, which is set out in the Medical Act (1983), is to '*protect, promote and maintain the health and safety of the public by ensuring proper standards in the practice of medicine*'.

One way in which we do this is to set the standards or 'outcomes' we expect from all medical students graduating from medical school, and the standards we expect from medical schools when delivering their courses. These standards are set out in guidance called *Tomorrow's Doctors*. This guidance is important as it helps us to ensure that when medical students graduate and join the medical register they have developed the knowledge, skills and behaviours that we, and society, expect of doctors. We do this by regularly assessing medical schools to check that their courses meet the standards we have described in the guidance. *Tomorrow's Doctors* does not specify in detail what or how medical schools must teach their students. Instead the standards and outcomes described in *Tomorrow's Doctors* provide a broad framework that medical schools must use when designing their own courses.

The current edition of *Tomorrow's Doctors* was published in 2003. We have reviewed this guidance to ensure that it is up to date and takes account of developments in medical practice, how junior doctors are trained, changes in the structure of health services across the UK and the expectations that the public have of their doctors.

We set up a working group, which has produced a new version of *Tomorrow's Doctors*. Members of the working group include doctors, medical students and those who teach them and members of the public.

We are now holding a consultation on the revised version of *Tomorrow's Doctors* and would like to hear your views. We have produced a full questionnaire which refers in detail to the revised guidance. If you wish to complete that questionnaire you can respond online at www.gmc-uk.org/tomorrowsdoctors

Alternatively, this shorter questionnaire asks questions about some of the key issues, and you do not need to read the revised guidance to answer them.

We will consider *all* the responses and comments we receive, and make changes to the guidance where required. We expect to publish the new version of *Tomorrow's Doctors* in summer 2009.

Your details

Name _____

Job Title _____

Organisation _____

Address _____

Email _____

Contact Tel _____

How did you hear about this consultation?

Would you like to be contacted about GMC consultations in the future?

Yes No

If you would like to know about upcoming GMC consultations, please let us know which areas of the GMC's work you are interested in:

Education

Standards and Ethics

Fitness to Practise

Registration

Licensing and revalidation

The information you provide in your response may be subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which allows public access to information held by the GMC. This does not necessarily mean that your response will be made available to the public as there are exemptions relating to information provided in confidence and information to which the Data Protection Act 1998 applies. You may request confidentiality by ticking the box provided.

Please tick if you want us to treat your response as confidential

Responding as an individual

Are you are responding as an individual?

Yes No

If yes, please complete the following questions. If not, please complete the 'responding on behalf of an organisation' section below.

Which of the following categories best describes you?

- Doctor
- Medical educator (teaching, delivering or administrating)
- Medical student
- Member of the public
- Other healthcare professional
- Other (please give details) _____

What is your country of residence?

- England
- Northern Ireland
- Scotland
- Wales
- Other – European Economic Area
- Other - rest of the world _____

We aim to consult as effectively as possible. To help ensure that our consultations are reflecting the view of the diverse community, please fill in the information below. Although we will use this information in our analysis of the consultation response, it will not be linked to your response.

The information you supply will be stored and processed by the GMC in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and will be used to analyse the consultation responses and help us to consult more effectively in the future. Any reports published

using this information will not contain any personally identifiable information. We may provide anonymised responses to the consultation to third parties for quality assurance or approved research projects on request.

What is your age?

- Under 24
- 25 – 34
- 35 – 44
- 45 – 54
- 55 – 64
- 65+

Are you:

- Female Male

Would you describe yourself as having a disability?

- Yes No

What is your ethnic origin? (Please tick one)

Asian or Asian British

- Bangladeshi
 - Indian
 - Pakistani
 - Any other Asian background,
please specify
-

Black or Black British

- African
 - Caribbean
 - Any other Black background,
please specify
-

Chinese or other ethnic group

- Chinese
 - Any other background, please
specify
-

Mixed

- White and Asian
- White and Black African
- White and Black Caribbean
- Any other Mixed background,
please specify

White

- British
- Irish
- Any other White background,
please specify

Responding as an organisation

Are you are responding on behalf of an organisation?

Yes No

If yes, please complete the following questions. If not, please complete the 'responding as an individual' section above.

Which of the following categories best describes your organisation?

- Body representing doctors
- Body representing patients or public
- Government department
- Independent healthcare provider
- Medical School (undergraduate)
- Postgraduate medical institution
- NHS/HSC organisation
- Regulatory body
- Other (please give details)

In which country is your organisation based?

- UK wide
- England
- Scotland
- Northern Ireland
- Wales
- Other (European Economic Area)
- Other (rest of the world)

In our consultation reports we often include quotes from respondents. Are you content for the comments you submit to be attributed to your organisation in our consultation reports?

Yes No

Data protection

The information you supply will be stored and processed by the GMC in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and will be used to analyse the consultation responses and help us to consult more effectively in the future. Any reports published using this information will not contain any personally identifiable information. We may provide anonymised responses to the consultation to third parties for quality assurance or approved research projects on request.

Student Selected Components (SSCs)

In the current edition of *Tomorrow's Doctors* we say that each medical degree should comprise a 'core curriculum' which all students must complete, and 'student selected components' (SSCs) that make up 25-30% of the whole course. SSCs allow students to pursue different interests and develop a variety of skills and knowledge. These may also help students to explore future career options. However, medical schools must ensure that SSCs enable students to achieve the outcomes described in *Tomorrow's Doctors*. In the revised version we have removed the requirement that SSCs should make up 25-30% of the course. Instead we emphasise that medical schools must ensure that SSCs contribute to students meeting the required outcomes, but are otherwise free to decide how much of their course students will be able to select themselves. This may mean that the amount of their course that students are able to select themselves will vary between medical schools more widely than at present.

1. (a) *Do you agree that medical schools should be able to decide how much of their course is made up of student selected components, as long as those components contribute to students meeting the overall outcomes?*

Yes		No		Not sure	
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(b) *Can you tell us why?*

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Working and learning with others

In the revised *Tomorrow's Doctors* we say that medical students should have the opportunity to work and learn with other health and social care professionals. We believe that such opportunities will help students to understand the contribution made by other colleagues to the delivery of care, and prepare them for working in a team with other professionals.

2. (a) *Do you agree that medical schools should be required to provide medical students with the opportunity to work and learn with other health and social care professionals?*

Yes		No		Not sure	
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(b) Can you tell us why?

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Student Assistantships

Medical students should be prepared to practise as a doctor when they graduate. As well as developing the necessary knowledge, we believe that having more direct involvement in patient care throughout their course would also help medical students prepare for practice as a doctor. However, it is essential that patient safety is not put at risk by contact with medical students. In the revised *Tomorrow's Doctors* we say that students should have practical experience of working with patients throughout their time at medical school. This contact with patients should increase in duration and responsibility as students progress, but medical schools must ensure that patients are not put at risk. The revised *Tomorrow's Doctors* requires medical schools to provide students with at least one 'Student Assistantship'. We define a student assistantship as a period during which a student acts as assistant to a junior doctor, with defined duties under appropriate supervision.

3. (a) Do you agree that medical schools should be required to provide its students with at least one student assistantship period?

Yes		No		Not sure	
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(b) Can you tell us why?

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Involving members of the public

As members of the public will be treated by the doctors of tomorrow, they have an interest in ensuring that the outcomes that graduates are required meet take account of society's needs and priorities. Therefore, we feel it is important that patients and members of the public have the opportunity to be involved in the design and delivery of medical education. In the revised *Tomorrow's Doctors* we say that medical schools should give patients the opportunity to be involved in the process for evaluating the quality of medical education, by providing feedback on their experiences of medical training (for example where they have been seen by a medical student).

4. (a) *Do you agree that providing patients with the opportunity to give feedback on their experiences of medical training is an appropriate way to involve the public in the design and delivery of medical education?*

Yes		No		Not sure	
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(b) *Can you suggest other ways in which medical schools could involve the public?*

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Involving employers

As well as patients and the public having an interest in defining the outcomes that medical students must meet, those who employ graduates will also have an interest. In the majority of cases this will be NHS organisations, but may also include other service providers. Organisations responsible for health services need to be confident that those they are employing have the appropriate skills and knowledge to enable them to contribute to the delivery of services.

5. (a) *Do you agree that medical schools should involve employers in the design and delivery of medical education?*

Yes		No		Not sure	
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(b) Can you suggest how medical schools might involve employers?

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‘The Doctor as...’

Tomorrow’s Doctors sets out the knowledge, skills and behaviours that medical students must be able to demonstrate before they can graduate. These ‘outcomes’ must be sufficient to prepare them for practice in year one of the Foundation Programme. We have grouped these outcomes into three categories:

‘The doctor as a scholar and a scientist’ – this section describes the scientific and academic basis that medical students should have when they graduate (for example, knowledge of the scientific basis for common diseases);

‘The doctor as a practitioner’ – this section describes the practical skills that medical students should have when they graduate (for example taking a patient’s medical history);

‘The doctor as a professional’ – this section describes the aspects of professionalism that medical students should demonstrate when they graduate (for example, working in a team with other professionals).

6. (a) Do you think that the titles of these categories are appropriate?

Yes		No		Not sure	
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(b) Can you tell us why?

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Specifying outcomes

In the new version of *Tomorrow's Doctors* we have included a list of procedures that students would have to demonstrate they were competent to perform in order to graduate. This list includes urinary catheterisation, taking a cervical smear, using correct techniques for 'moving and handling' patients and taking blood cultures. A more specific list of procedures brings clarity and consistency as to what procedures graduates should be competent to perform, regardless of where they studied, which should help to ensure patient safety. However, a more specific list may make it much harder, or even impossible, for some disabled students to graduate.

7. (a) *Do you think that Tomorrow's Doctors should include a list of specific procedures in which graduates must be competent, even if this means that it would prevent some students from graduating?*

Yes		No		Not sure	
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(b) *Can you tell us why?*

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Knowledge and understanding of the NHS

The majority of medical students will go on to work and train within the NHS. The structure of the NHS continues to develop and evolve. In the revised *Tomorrow's Doctors* we say that graduates will be able to protect patients and improve care. We say that in doing so, graduates will be able to understand the framework in which medicine is practised in the UK, including the organisation, management and regulation of healthcare provision and the structures and functions of the NHS.

8. (a) *Do you agree that graduates should be able to demonstrate an understanding of the structures and functions of the NHS?*

Yes		No		Not sure	
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(b) Can you tell us why?

Improving undergraduate medical education

9. *Based on your own experiences (whether as e.g. a medical student, patient or employer), and bearing in mind our role, if you could suggest one thing the GMC could do to improve undergraduate medical education, what would it be?*

Quality Assurance

As well as providing guidance to medical schools we visit them to check that they are applying it. We visit new schools every year until their first students graduate and once they are on our list of approved medical schools we visit twice every ten years. The visit teams are made up of doctors, medical students, those involved in teaching students and members of the public. The team speaks to members of staff and students at the school, observes teaching and examinations, and tours the schools facilities. We consider all aspects of a medical course, including what is taught, the support available to students and how staff are trained and standards maintained. Every medical school also provides an annual report between visits. These visits, and the information we request from them, help us to make sure that medical schools are meeting the standards we have set in *Tomorrow's Doctors* and that their courses enable students to meet the outcomes we have specified before they

graduate and join the medical register. Our visiting reports are available on our website.

From 2010/11 we intend to quality assure UK medical schools against the standards and outcomes in the new edition of *Tomorrow's Doctors*. As we do so, it would be helpful to know what issues you think should be a priority for us when assessing each school.

10. *What issues do you think we should prioritise when quality assuring medical schools?*

Please return your completed questionnaire to:

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General Medical Council
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London
NW1 3JN

Email: tomorrowsdoctors@gmc-uk.org

Telephone 020 7189 5283