

26 March 2015

Dr Vicky Osgood
Director of Education and Standards
General Medical Council
350 Euston Road
London
NW1 3JN

Dear Dr Osgood,

Academy of Medical Sciences and Wellcome Trust letter to the General Medical Council regarding the consultation on draft standards for medical education and training.

We welcome the opportunity to provide comments relating to the General Medical Council's consultation on draft standards for medical education and training. We are concerned that the draft standards do not sufficiently take into account the need for research to be fully integrated into education and training to ensure that the workforce is research aware, and to foster the next generation of high calibre clinician researchers.

Over the coming years, medical practice will have to evolve rapidly to deliver a more innovative, effective and efficient health care system. To deliver this, the whole NHS workforce must become a research workforce - increasingly able to respond to changes in patient need through developing, absorbing, evaluating and diffusing effective new innovations. As outlined in the Association of Medical Research Charities' *Vision for research in the NHS* document, delivering wider research awareness and involvement in practice requires staff that: take part in research and use its findings; understand the benefits of research to their patients; and are motivated to engage with research. This is underpinned by including 'research knowledge and use of evidence in basic training for all NHS staff'.¹

Undergraduate and postgraduate education and training must produce individuals with the ability to keep pace with ongoing developments and the professional judgement and confidence to interpret, apply and embed research findings and the output of innovation, as well as developing and maintaining a strong group of clinical academic leaders.

All education and training must integrate research and clinical activity in a way that is adapted to the needs of individuals. We strongly encourage an approach that would allow all individuals to gain some research experience to generate a research-aware medical workforce, with further support for those who wish to pursue research as a more integral part of their career. In this regard, we take the opportunity to mention the INSPIRE scheme, a five year, UK-wide initiative to engage medical and dental undergraduates with research, funded by the Wellcome Trust and delivered by the Academy.²

Our position echoes the standards outlined in *Tomorrow's Doctors*, referenced in the consultation document, which envisioned the doctor as 'a scholar and a scientist' who should be able to 'apply scientific method and

¹ http://www.amrc.org.uk/sites/default/files/doc_lib/Our%20vision%20for%20research%20in%20the%20NHS.pdf

² <http://www.acmedsci.ac.uk/careers/mentoring-and-careers/INSPIRE/>

approaches to medical research'. *Tomorrow's Doctors* sets out the following standards for education and training relating to research:

"Apply scientific method and approaches to medical research.

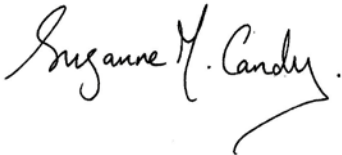
- a) Critically appraise the results of relevant diagnostic, prognostic and treatment trials and other qualitative and quantitative studies as reported in the medical and scientific literature.
- b) Formulate simple relevant research questions in biomedical science, psychosocial science or population science, and design appropriate studies or experiments to address the questions.
- c) Apply findings from the literature to answer questions raised by specific clinical problems.
- d) Understand the ethical and governance issues involved in medical research."

We support these requirements and would not want to see them diluted in the new standards. We therefore ask the GMC to review their draft standards to ensure that research is embedded in the new standards for education and training. For example:

- R3.9 and 4.9 should be revised to ensure that all doctors in training, whether undergraduate or postgraduate, are encouraged to explore academic opportunities, and those who are interested are supported in this; and
- R4.3e should be strengthened, in line with *Tomorrow's Doctors*, to promote a research-aware workforce.

As the GMC is aware, the recommendations of the *Shape of Training* report, which aim to improve the research dimension of postgraduate training as part of their vision, are currently being developed for implementation across the UK. Any refresh of standards by the GMC must be sure to align with the outcome of this activity.

Yours faithfully,



Dr Suzanne Candy
Director of Biomedical Grants and Careers Policy
Academy of Medical Sciences



Dr John Williams
Head of Science Strategy, Performance and
Impact
Wellcome Trust