

JRCPTB

Joint Royal Colleges of Physicians Training Board

JRCPTB commentary on GMC statement: "Trainees undertaking assessments in approved postgraduate training or outwith approved training".

General Comments

- The GMC statement is, we understand, based on a legal interpretation of the relevant sections of the Medical Act 2005. We also understand that the decision to seek legal advice was taken at a meeting in December 2009, when a particular subject of debate concerned the position of doctors in foundation posts who took college examinations required in core specialty training.
- We are informed that it is permissible for doctors in training to gain necessary knowledge assessments "out of sequence" as long as they are in approved GMC training posts, but that achievement of the same tests outwith a training post would disqualify a doctor from obtaining a CCT. These doctors would be awarded a CESR(CP).
- One of the tenets of MMC was that training should be competency based, and that competencies should be transferable.
- There are several hundred doctors registered with the JRCPTB who will have been erroneously recommended for, and in receipt of CCTs, because this fact was not known or transmitted to colleges and trainees. We are not aware that PMETB ever rejected a CCT recommendation on the basis that knowledge assessments were achieved in non-training posts. If PMETB required a legal interpretation before publishing their ruling, then the situation can hardly have been clear enough to allow college training administrators or trainee doctors to arrive at such a conclusion. The CESR(CP) programme was only created with effect from August 2007, so we have no guidance as to how doctors who warranted such an award should have been dealt with prior to this.
- It is interesting and relevant that no reference to this interpretation of the Medical Act 2005 was made at any point during the close interaction between JRCPTB representatives and PMETB officers and panels during the presentation of 29 specialty and three subspecialty curricula in 2009/10.
- The GMC note makes no reference to an implementation date. Are we to assume that this ruling has been in place since 2005? Are there any plans to allow a moratorium before this ruling, (which affects hundreds of doctors in, or recently completing training) takes effect? Are there plans to identify doctors who will be requested to give up their CCT?

Impact of the Ruling

Trainee Doctors - the following will be disadvantaged by the ruling:

- Those doctors who have completed training and have been granted a CCT, apparently in contravention of the Medical Act 2005.
- A doctor may take a maternity break after Foundation training during which she might reasonably take MRCP(UK) Part 1 before re-entering training at CMT, but will not be eligible for CCT.
- A doctor might enter a PhD programme after CMT and might complete PACES as they enter research, but will be ineligible for CCT when they re-enter training.
- A doctor might suffer a period of illness and might defer entry to CMT or ST3 training because of this, while taking all or part of MRCP(UK) and thus become ineligible for CCT.
- A doctor may have taken up a non-training post in a related specialty in order to gain particular experience, while taking part of MRCP(UK) and thus become ineligible for CCT

Deaneries and Colleges

- Deaneries are gearing up to deal with CMT doctors needing remediation in order to complete the MRCP(UK) which is the knowledge test for CMT. This problem could be massively compounded by doctors who will decide to re-take all or part of the MRCP(UK) to qualify for CCT.

Conclusion

- The JRCPTB considers that the GMC ruling in relation to the taking of examinations and other knowledge tests within or outwith training to be counter-intuitive, illogical and inconsistent with the way training has been conducted in the UK.
- It is not sufficient to tell trainees that they are eligible for CESR (CP). In spite of claims to the contrary, this continues to be viewed as an inferior qualification to CCT, and in practice is a lesser qualification since it has no European recognition.
- The ruling will adversely affect those taking career breaks for illness and maternity. It seems likely to be discriminatory towards these groups.
- JRCPTB urges the GMC to seek further legal opinion to explore the possibility of resolving this matter.
- Failing this the Medical Act 2005 must be revised

Professor WA Burr
Medical Director, JRCPTB
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