Dear Students

You will doubtless have been aware of the GMC’s plans to introduce a Medical Licensing Assessment (MLA) for those graduating in 2023/24. In July the GMC Council decided that as a result of COVID-19 there should be a delay until 2024-25. It was also agreed that it would be more appropriate for the MLA to be managed by the universities and regulated by the GMC.

The universities agree that it is appropriate for there to be a consistent, common passing standard for all graduates of UK medical schools. They have therefore agreed to work together to develop the UK MLA Applied Knowledge Test that will be embedded in Finals and be mandatory for all those who will graduate from UK medical schools (including international campuses) from 2024-25.

From a student perspective there will be no change to current proposals. Medical schools already draw exam questions from a common bank developed and quality assured by staff at all UK medical schools. Medical school staff have already started to work together to determine the appropriate pass marks in preparation for the MLA.

The main advantages of the change to a university developed and delivered AKT component of the MLA regulated by the GMC is that it aligns with the arrangements for the clinical component of the MLA, the CPSA. It ensures that universities will maintain the use of the well-established MSC Assessment question bank developed by UK medical schools and widely used in final exams at present. Universities will retain responsibility for mitigation, reasonable adjustments and appeals whilst developing common policies around these issues in order to ensure fairness. Finally, there will be no link to the passing standard required of international medical graduates undertaking the MLA in order to join the specialist register and practise in the NHS at F2 or beyond.

It is important for students thinking about intercalation to note that because the MLA will be a university exam embedded in finals, the timing of its introduction will be without consequence to students. There will therefore be no need for students to consider not intercalating in order to avoid taking the MLA. Medical schools encourage intercalation and the broadened perspective it brings. We very much hope that this recent development will persuade those of you who were considering abandoning plans to intercalate, to rethink your options.

With our best wishes for the year ahead

Professor John Atherton
Co-Chair

Professor Malcolm Reed
Co-Chair

Dr Katie Petty-Saphon
Chief Executive