

Call for written evidence: Professional Qualifications Bill

Introduction

- 1** The General Medical Council (GMC) is an independent organisation that helps to protect patients and improve medical education and practice across the UK.
 - We decide which doctors are qualified to work here and we oversee UK medical education and training.
 - We set the standards that doctors need to follow, and make sure that they continue to meet these standards throughout their careers.
 - We take action to prevent a doctor from putting the safety of patients, or the public's confidence in doctors, at risk.
- 2** Every patient should receive a high standard of care. Our role is to help achieve that by working closely with doctors, their employers and patients, to make sure that the trust patients have in their doctors is fully justified.

Overview of the legislation

- 3** The Professional Qualifications Bill will put in place obligations on regulators to establish a framework for the recognition of professional qualifications from around the world, will grant regulators the power to agree recognition agreements with international counterparts, and will ensure regulators share information with counterparts overseas. It also aims to ensure greater transparency of information regarding the entry and practice requirements of regulated professions.
- 4** These powers will be invoked via secondary legislation subsequent to the passing of this framework Bill.

Summary of the GMC's position

- 5** We currently register over 10,000 internationally qualified doctors per year through well-established routes to the register. Unlike some sectors and regulated

professions, the GMC (and other health professional regulators) already have powers within existing legislation to take the majority of the actions this Bill introduces.

- 6** When the Bill was first published we highlighted how some aspects could force health professional regulators to accept professionals into UK practice in a way that compromised patient safety.
- 7** Following the Bill's introduction to the House of Lords, we worked closely with the Minister, Lord Grimstone, with officials at the Department of Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, and with cross-party Peers to mitigate some of the unintended consequences of the Bill.
- 8** A series of Government amendments were laid and subsequently adopted to mitigate these concerns. These are reflected in clauses 1, 14 and 15.
- 9** They introduce important clarifications to safeguard the autonomy of regulators and to ensure that regulators can continue to assess both the qualification, but also the skills and experience of an international applicant through our existing well-established processes, before taking an independent decision to grant access to the medical register.
- 10** We welcome the clauses in the Bill as amended.

Further information

If you would like to discuss this further please contact: parliament@gmc-uk.org or 0161 250 6954

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