Appointment of PLAB Part 1 Question Management Group Member

Information for Applicants

July 2019
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What is the GMC?

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 when we believe a doctor may be 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.

The PLAB test

3 The PLAB test is the main route by which International Medical Graduates (IMGs) with acceptable primary medical qualifications demonstrate they have the necessary skills and knowledge to practise medicine in the UK. The test is set at the level of a doctor successfully completing Foundation Year 1.

4 Before entering Part 1 of the test, candidates must provide evidence of their knowledge of English, usually by obtaining the appropriate scores in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS).

The test is in two parts:

a. Part 1 is a three-hour, 180-item computer-marked single best answer (SBA) question examination held in centres around the world. The exam is currently held four times a year in the UK and overseas.

b. Part 2 is an 18-station objective structured clinical examination (OSCE) held at our purpose-built Clinical Assessment Centre in Manchester.

5 Further information about the PLAB test is available on our website.

Why should I apply for this role?

6 As a GMC associate, Part 1 Question Management Group (QMG) members work under a Contract for Services. They are not employees and we engage them because of their special knowledge and expertise.
Members are appointed based on the need to ensure that there is an appropriate balance of the desirable skills within the QMG. We are looking to increase the membership of the QMG and therefore invite applications from all specialties, with the exception of paediatrics.

We would particularly welcome applications from the following specialities:

a. obstetrics and gynaecology

b. anaesthetics

c. and intensive care.

Applicants will have knowledge and understanding of the duties and responsibilities of a doctor successfully completing Foundation Year 1 and will have regular clinical contact with Foundation doctors.

Experience of clinical assessment, question writing is essential. Knowledge of standard setting methods would be an advantage.

**What skills and experience are you looking for?**

**Specific skills/ experience for members of the Question Management group**

11.1 Be of Consultant, General Practitioner (or equivalent senior academic status) or Specialist Trainees (ST3 and above) or equivalent Staff and Associate Specialist (SAS) Grade with knowledge and skills in the specialties required. We currently have vacancies in all specialties that are relevant to Foundation practice, with the exception of paediatrics.

11.2 Have a knowledge and understanding of the duties and competencies expected of a doctor successfully completing Foundation Year 1.

11.3 Should have experience of multiple choice question writing (particularly single best answer questions) in a peer review setting and/or peer-reviewed publications on assessments. Involvement with the Medical Schools Council Assessment Alliance or experience in writing questions for final year medical students would be an advantage.

**Analytical ability**

12.1 Knowledge and understanding of producing high quality peer-reviewed written exam questions.

12.2 Previous experience of analysing data to review the validity and reliability of questions in similar examinations.
12.3 Question writers will be expected to prepare questions on specified topics, which may not be within their clinical specialty depending on the needs of the exam and the question bank, follow the approved templates and house style, and submit them electronically in advance of a question writing workshop.

13 **Decision making and sound judgement**

13.1 During question writing workshops, question writers will introduce their own items in the peer-review process. They will receive and offer constructive feedback respectfully on all the items presented using sound clinical judgement.

13.2 Question writers will make decisions on editing and amendments to new and existing questions.

14 **Interpersonal skills**

Excellent interpersonal skills are required as this role involves establishing and maintaining good working relationships and interactions with Panel members, other question writers, GMC staff and others.

15 **Communication skills**

Be able to work effectively as an individual and as part of a team to contribute to the Part 1 Panel’s objectives to ensure that the question bank contains high quality materials of the appropriate standard.

16 **Promoting equality and diversity**

The question writer will have a knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the importance of promoting equality and valuing diversity and its application.

**Are there any other criteria for the appointment?**

17 Applicants must be of the correct level and specialty (see section 11 above).

18 Applicants must have recent experience of medical practice or of working in medical education. Applicants are required to hold registration with the GMC throughout their appointment.

19 Applicants must be in good standing with the GMC and be familiar with and act in line with the principles of Good Medical Practice. Applicants must be able to demonstrate personal qualities of integrity, fairness and confidentiality.

20 Applicants must have a commitment to the principles of equal opportunity and diversity, with a non-discriminatory approach to cultural communication differences and an appreciation of the issues faced by international medical graduates.
Applicants must demonstrate the experience, knowledge and skills at the level of senior doctor within their specialty. This is either as an independent practitioner such as a Consultant or a qualified GP, or as a senior doctor in their specialty who meets all other eligibility criteria and can provide a supporting reference from a supervising Consultant or GP to show they have had the appropriate exposure to gain a suitable breadth of experience. They must have successfully completed membership examinations at the relevant medical college.

Question writers are not permitted to teach or coach on training courses for PLAB candidates.

**What is the time commitment?**

You will need to commit a minimum of six days a year.

Meetings will take place at the GMC offices in London and Manchester on an alternating schedule.

**What can I claim for my services?**

Panel members are paid £310 per full day and £155 for half a day for the provision of the services. Fees are paid for training and the full fee details will be provided on appointment. GPs are able to claim a higher locum fee under certain circumstances.

You will be eligible to claim travel and subsistence expenses in accordance with the current Associates Expenses Claim Policy and Procedure. All travel and accommodation is booked through the GMC’s travel booking system which will ensure that appropriate discounts may be applied to travel arrangements.

**Equality and diversity is important to us**

We are committed to being fair, and meeting our legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. We will not discriminate against anyone on the grounds of a ‘protected characteristic’ when making appointments.

We are fully committed to making the appointment process accessible at all stages for any applicants with a disability or other specific requirements. This may include providing application forms in an alternative format or making adjustments to the interview process. Please contact Associate Services if you would like to discuss your requirements in more detail.

* The nine ‘protected characteristics’ under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, sexual orientation, religion and belief, race, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity.
How can I apply?

29 You will need to complete an applications form detailing how you meet the criteria set out in sections above.

30 When completing the on-line application form, you must demonstrate, by using specific examples, how your experience matches the person specification detailed above. For each specific example you will need to concentrate on your role, the process and the outcomes. Please refer to the ‘Guidance notes making the most of your application’ for further information.

31 Your application will be marked on the ‘Reasons for Application’ and ‘Relevant experience and skills’ sections only.

32 You must submit your application by **14 August 2019 at midnight**. Late applications will not be accepted.

What will happen next?

33 In appointing Part 1 QMG members we will ensure a balance in terms of diversity, skills and experience to complement our current pool.

34 Candidates will be notified of the outcome of the shortlisting stage by 2 September 2019.

35 An assessment centre will take place in **30 October 2019**. Candidates will be required to submit draft questions in advance and to work within a group to edit and approve items on the assessment day.

36 Appointment is conditional on the outcome of the assessment centre, receipt of satisfactory references and the outcome of the basic criminal background check.

37 The first meeting will be held on 11 December 2019 at the GMC offices in London.

**Latest update 11 July 2019**