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PRESS RELEASE

Medical education regulator seeks views on changing fees

The Postgraduate Medical Education and Training Board (PMETB) launched its consultation document today (Wednesday) to gain feedback on its proposal to increase fees for specialist doctors applying for a Certificate of Eligibility to the Specialist Register (CESR) and Certificate of Eligibility to the General Register (CEGPR), equivalence routes to the Specialist and General Practice registers. This will apply to doctors who have not successfully completed a full UK training programme and who want to apply for specialist or GP registration.

For the bulk of applicants applying for a Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT) the rise will be fixed at the current rate of inflation but PMETB proposes to increase fees from £1250 to £1850 for CESR and CEGPR applications only, about 20 per cent of the total number of applications dealt with by PMETB. This has arisen from lengthy negotiations between PMETB and the 11 main medical Royal College/Faculty providers who undertake this work on behalf of PMETB and who have expressed concerns since 2005 that the price paid to them by PMETB does not meet their actual costs.

Applicants have expressed concern that in some specialties it has been difficult to meet the three month target for CESR decisions. PMETB is committed to making sure all CESR applicants know the outcome of their application within the agreed three month timescale and this increase in funds will help PMETB and the medical Royal Colleges to achieve this. In addition - PMETB intends to work with the medical Royal Colleges to ensure that the agreed contract with them contains measures and financial incentives so that the three month deadline is met in most cases.

The Department of Health and PMETB have agreed the medical regulator should move to a self funded model and be financially independent by 2010 which it is on track to do so. This will give PMETB the opportunity to operate as an impartial regulator.

PMETB's Chief Executive, Paul Streets, said: "These proposals arise from lengthy and detailed negotiations between PMETB and all the medical Royal Colleges and Faculties. Increasing fees is always a difficult decision to make but is necessary now that we are aware of the complex work and cost involved in assessing equivalence applications. Our role as a regulator

is to safeguard the needs of patients and be sure that applications from doctors meet the standards we set.”

Most doctors who successfully complete postgraduate training approved by PMETB are awarded a Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT). However, PMETB introduced the opportunity for doctors who have not followed a traditional training programme, but who may have gained the same level of skills and knowledge as CCT holders through training and experience, to enter the Specialist and General Practice Registers.

The fees consultation offers an opportunity for all stakeholders in the postgraduate medical education sector to voice their opinion. Each section of the consultation document outlines key issues, with specific questions at the end of each section.

To provide feedback by Wednesday 30 January 2008 (by letter or email) contact Jan Quirke, Board Secretary, PMETB jan.quirke@PMETB.org.uk or visit www.pmetb.org.uk for further copies of the consultation and more information about CESR applications.

Ends

For media enquiries, please call Jo Akbar on 020 7160 6132 or email jo.akbar@pmetb.org.uk

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. PMETB is an independent statutory body, responsible for overseeing and promoting the development of postgraduate medical education and training for all specialties, including general practice, across the UK.
2. It assumed its statutory powers on 30 September 2005 taking over the responsibilities of the Specialist Training Authority of the medical Royal Colleges (STA) and the Joint Committee on Postgraduate Training for General Practice (JCPGPT).
3. The vision that PMETB has set itself is to achieve excellence in postgraduate medical education, training, assessment and certification throughout the UK to improve the knowledge, skills and experience of doctors and the health and healthcare of patients and the public.