

Education and Training Committee, 10 March 2020

Review of education quality assurance update

Executive summary and recommendations

### **Introduction**

Since the last update in November, the Executive has investigated options around progressing this work further. As detailed in the Education work plan for 2020-21, we propose to undertake two streams of activity as part of next steps to develop our approach to quality assurance:

#### Data

This work is aimed to provide the basis for accessing a wider set of information from across the sector to inform a risk-based approach.

Our focus in the short term will be on Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data – discussions have been held with the GMC and GDC around their use of HESA data. The GMC have a Data Sharing Agreement in place with HESA which enables them to access raw data relating to undergraduate medical education programmes, which is coded specifically to the GMC. This similar coding already exists for programmes relating to HCPC. Subject to the Committee's discussions, further activity will be progressed with HESA around a possible data sharing agreement.

The GMC have highlighted the level of investment required to handle, mine and analyse HESA and other data sources further. The DSA they have in place with HESA since around 2015 was pursued on the basis of an organisation wide data strategy, which informed the used of data across all aspects of their regulatory activities. This means that whilst an element of the GMC central data team's work relates to the provision of data for quality assurance activities related to medical education, the work of the function to administer a comprehensive medical data set has wider application across many other areas of regulation and policy development. In effect, the GMC have invested over time in their approach to data handling to such an extent that they can track applicants to medical education programmes all the way through their undergraduate and post graduate training, registration, revalidation and fitness to practise engagements. The GMC have offered to discuss their approach to data and its application at a suitable Education and Training Committee

meeting. We would suggest the June meeting as a suitable opportunity for this to take place, to inform the Committee's thinking further in this area.

### Developing the quality assurance processes

We have started work to further develop the approval and annual monitoring processes. Broadly, this work will look to:

Approvals - develop the pre-visit processes to embed institution and programme level assessments, possibly as distinct stages (gateways) at the start of the approval process. Also consider how institution wide baselines around certain areas of the standards could be established (e.g. service user and carer strategies, equality and diversity policies and procedures).

Annual monitoring – conduct a pilot approach with a small number of institutions with a fundamental shift in approach towards:

- Self-reflection
- Key risks and challenges
- Institution wide assessment
- An assessment of key data measures
- Outcomes providing more differentiation in further engagement required

Discussions have been held with the GDC around their initial steps in this area, through the introduction of a thematic self-assessment tool. We would like to take initial steps in a similarly thematic based approach to monitoring, which focuses more on key risks, changes and targeted data to inform a visitor panel's considerations. We would also like to review how elements of institution and programme level review can be embedded into monitoring.

The GMC are moving to a four year monitoring cycle for their undergraduate medical education programme, with concepts such as declarations and audits (similarly to the HCPC's current approach) being used to drive targeted engagement activities with each medical school in the years 3 & 4. Both the GMC and GDC models and thinking in this area reflect elements of our current approach to quality assurance (particularly around proportionality), and are moving in the same direction as us with regards to the use of data to drive and understanding of risks and further engagement.

To inform this work, we intend to engage with education providers and our visitors to explore it in more detail, with further proposals made to the Committee in June, with a view to implementing a piloted approach across both processes in the next

academic year. Our initial findings can then be considered further at the Committee's March 2021 meeting.

### **Decision**

The Committee is asked to discuss the planned activity in this area to inform its focus in the year ahead. In particular, the Committee is invited to consider:

- Extending an invitation to the GMC to present at their next meeting around their use of data for quality assurance and wider regulatory purposes
- The focus for activity around developing the quality assurance processes.

### **Appendices**

- None

### **Resource implications**

- Work plan priorities for the first 6 months will be focused around this work, and work to review the lay visitor role, in addition to operational delivery. The Committee should note the reduction in overall headcount within the Department meaning there is limited capacity at present to dedicate resource to project and development-based activity for an extended period time.

### **Financial implications**

- Small project costs included within the Education Department budget to cover visitor fees, education provider engagement activities, travel and expenses.

### **Date of paper**

21 February 2020