Job reference: PSA 01

Location: UK, though international candidates may consider applying and delivering the project remotely. A small amount of travel may be required

Category: Independent assessment reviewer

Application closing date: 13 July 2018

Start date: August/September 2018

Finish date: Negotiable (expected end February 2019)

Contact: lee.page@bps.ac.uk

The British Pharmacological Society and MSC Assessment are inviting applications from expert candidates, to conduct an independent review of the Prescribing Safety Assessment (PSA). We are seeking an individual with significant experience in the field of UK medical education and assessment psychometrics, who appreciates the challenges of improving prescribing competency for newly qualified junior doctors in the UK health service. The independent reviewer will be asked to deliver a report to the PSA Executive committee, responding to 6 key areas of enquiry, which make up the scope of the commission.

The independent reviewer will be expected to work flexibly around their existing role. Some travel to attend key meetings is expected. Expenses and some administrative support will be provided, subject to agreement in advance and standard policies.

A job description is available for this position. To apply, please email Lee Page (lee.page@bps.ac.uk) enclosing an up-to-date CV and one-page covering statement, setting out how your skills and experience matches the objectives of the independent review. Please submit your application before the closing date of Friday 13 July 2018. It may be possible to arrange informal briefing calls before the submission date – please contact us for more information.

Remuneration: commensurate with the role, to be agreed with the successful candidate.

Interviews:  We will contact prospective candidates during the week commencing 16 July 2018 with further information on the process.

**About the Prescribing Safety Assessment (PSA)**

The Prescribing Safety Assessment (PSA) is a pass/fail national assessment of the skills, judgement and supporting knowledge related to prescribing medicines in the NHS. The PSA assesses the prescribing skills of final-year medical students and is based on the competencies identified by the General Medical Council outlined in Outcomes for graduates (originally published in *Tomorrow's Doctors[[1]](#footnote-1)*).

A General Medical Council (GMC) sponsored study from 2009 found that 9% of hospital prescriptions contain errors[[2]](#footnote-2). It is also apparent in other research (see ‘The state of medical education and practice in the UK report: 2014[[3]](#footnote-3)’ and ‘How prepared are UK medical graduates for practice? 2014[[4]](#footnote-4)’) that this is the area of the Foundation doctor role that new graduates find the most challenging. In response, the GMC (which regulates undergraduate medical education in the UK) has placed a much greater emphasis on the prescribing competencies expected of new graduate in ‘Outcomes for graduates’ and this document is due to be updated in the summer of 2018.

At the heart of these recommendations is patient safety. The Prescribing Safety Assessment (PSA) is designed to respond to them by raising the profile of prescribing in medical education so that doctors in Foundation Year 1, the first year of a two-year generic training programme which forms the bridge between medical school and specialist/general practice training, are well prepared to work in the NHS.

In 2016, Health officials from the four UK countries stipulated that all new Foundation Year 1 doctors would be required to pass the PSA. Any UK medical student who did not pass the PSA at medical school and overseas entrants into the Foundation Programme had an opportunity to sit the PSA during their induction week in July. Those not passing this sitting would be expected to undergo a programme of remediation prior to retaking the PSA later in the year.

The PSA is funded and delivered in a partnership between the *Medical Schools Council* (MSC) and the *British Pharmacological Society* (BPS) with initial support for the development from Health Education England and NHS Education Scotland. It is currently delivered to over 8,000 medical students per year, over 4 sittings, and around 300 Foundation Year 1 doctors over 3 sittings, via a secure online assessment environment which offers concurrent access to the electronic *British National Formulary* (eBNF).

1. GMC report, Outcomes for graduates – Tomorrow’s Doctors <https://www.gmc-uk.org/-/media/documents/Outcomes_for_graduates_Jul_15_1216.pdf_61408029.pdf> (last accessed May 2018) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Dornan T. *An in depth investigation into causes of prescribing errors by foundation trainees in relation to their medical education. EQUIP study*. 12 Jan 2009 <https://www.gmc-uk.org/-/media/documents/final-report-prevalence-and-causes-of-prescribing-errors_pdf-28935150.pdf> (last accessed May 2018) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. GMC report, *The state of medical education and practice in the UK*. October 2014 <https://www.gmc-uk.org/-/media/documents/SOMEP_2014_FINAL.pdf_58751753.pdf> (last accesses May 2018) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Monrouxe L. GMC commissioned report. *How Prepared are UK Medical Graduates for Practice?* 14 June 2014 <https://www.gmc-uk.org/-/media/about/how-prepared-are-uk-medical-graduates-for-practice.pdf?la=en&hash=1797AFD84B58E269D4FAB5E107A99EE93509ED12> (last accessed May 2018) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)