



## MSC Statement on the UKFPO decision to remove Educational Achievements from the Foundation ranking process

The Medical Schools Council (MSC) strongly opposes the recent decision of the Medical and Dental Recruitment and Selection (MDRS) Programme Board and the UKFPO to remove the Educational Achievement (EA) score from the 2023 allocation process for foundation posts. MSC argued against such a decision at every meeting where this was officially discussed with UKFPO ahead of the final decision being made and it is disappointing that our concerns have been ignored.

As a general principle, MSC supports the inclusion of additional points for Educational Achievements. Encouraging students to undertake additional degrees and research can enrich the student experience. Crucially for the profession it can also spark an early interest in a clinical academic career that students then choose to actively pursue. At a time when the number of clinical academics is falling students should be incentivised to take opportunities to find out if a research career is for them.

Medical schools and universities are well aware that students face financial pressures and support many students from a WP background to intercalate and the award of such degrees further enhances social mobility. These are exactly the students who will be affected by the decision to not award extra points for their courses, having already invested in them.

The result of this decision has been unprecedented levels of student anger that they are currently undertaking courses which they had a legitimate belief would attract extra points in the allocation but now will not do so. This anger is understandable and it is also worrying for the profession as a whole. These are future doctors and colleagues who have the impression that their future employer is one that makes arbitrary decisions that impact negatively on their future careers and working lives despite warnings from their medical schools.

Of great concern is the fact that the UKFPO states in their letter to stakeholders that this decision was made in February yet not confirmed to students or medical schools until December. Had the decision been announced in February many students would have made different decisions on whether to undertake an intercalated degree and would have avoided the additional cost of the degree and loss of one year's earnings.

MSC strongly urges UKFPO and MDRS to reconsider their position on the inclusion of EA points in the allocation process and to talk to MSC and medical schools about other options for supporting students from WP backgrounds and improving the fairness of the allocation system for F1 posts. At the very least this decision should be delayed to 2024 so that students currently undertaking intercalated degrees are not negatively impacted. Showing some flexibility at this point would show that the UKFPO, and by extension the NHS, do care about the views and concerns of the people they will work with in the near future and throughout the next 40 years of their careers.

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