

Joint statement: supporting final year medical students in 2021

There is considerable pressure on our UK healthcare system at present and the General Medical Council (GMC) and the Medical Schools Council (MSC) will do all that is possible to support the healthcare response to the coronavirus pandemic.

A survey of medical schools across the UK has identified a strong desire for students to help wherever possible, but also reveals the challenges affecting our final year medical students. The first wave in early 2020 resulted in a loss of learning opportunities through the withdrawal of clinical placements and catching up has been – and continues to be – challenging.

In the short term, we encourage, but do not require, medical students who feel able to assist to take up voluntary or paid roles working with their medical schools and healthcare partners. Students must be properly supported by employers and students must not be expected to exceed their competencies.

The current priority is to provide mechanisms for students to achieve the required Outcomes in order to be able to graduate, thereby providing an important addition to the medical workforce in the summer.

We believe that this approach will ensure that there is a new cohort of doctors who are well prepared to join the workforce in the summer, whilst still helping students to respond effectively to the immediate healthcare crisis.

Both the GMC and MSC are very grateful to students, staff and the wider healthcare system for all they are doing through this very challenging period.