

The Medical Licensing Assessment - Applied Knowledge Test (MLA AKT)

Terms of Reference – Standard Setting Panel

1. Purpose

1.1 The role of the Standard Setting Panels is to ensure that:

- items in the AKT item bank are standard set using a recognised standard setting methodology in accordance with AKT standard operating procedures
- standard setting is carried out in a timely manner allowing exam construction to be completed by the required deadline.

2. Key objectives

2.1 The Standard Setting Panel will undertake the following activities:

- standard set AKT items according to the procedures and policy set out by the AKT Standard Setting Group. This will include for example, panel members independently pre-scoring items ahead of meetings.
- provide additional quality assurance of the AKT items, making minor edits to items if errors are identified and agreed by the Panel
- review any information provided by the Standard Setting Group on the performance of items including data from post-exam analysis
- engage in constructive discussions of item content and standard
- use the Exam-Write® platform for standard setting
- complete any training required by the Standard Setting Group
- complete the process in a timely manner and by the dates identified by the MLA AKT team.

3. Confidentiality

3.1 The work of the Standard Setting Panel is highly sensitive, and it is the responsibility of those working on the development and delivery of the MLA AKT to ensure that the confidentiality of candidate information, examination results and examination content is respected at all times. Participation in any external commercial or non-commercial enterprise related to the MLA AKT without express permission from the MSC, is not allowed. Confidentiality constraints will remain in place for 5 years after demitting office.

4. Membership

4.1 The Standard Setting Panels will consist of 10-15 members in each panel. Each will be co-chaired by members of the Standard Setting Group.

- 4.2 Panel members must be working clinically and be involved in medical education or training. Where group members stop active clinical work, they will be granted a 12-month grace period before demitting.
- 4.3 To perform its regulatory oversight role and support its quality assurance of the MLA AKT, including ensuring that it is delivered in line with the processes approved by the GMC, a GMC observer with appropriate expertise and authority may attend Standard Setting Panel meetings in order to assure itself about the Panel's work. The GMC observer will not have voting rights and will not participate in scoring.

5. Meeting Frequency

- 5.1 It is anticipated that Standard Setting Panels will meet once a year in the Summer, with the meeting lasting around two days.
- 5.2 Members are expected to attend a minimum of three of the four annual meetings during a four-year term. The Chair may consider exceptional circumstances where attendance requirements cannot be met. Continued membership may be reviewed where attendance falls below this level.

6. Review

- 6.1 Members will normally be appointed to the Standard Setting Panels for a 3 - 4 year term after which there will be an option to reapply along with any new candidates who want to put themselves forward. An additional third term can be requested by Chairs Action for continuity of exam delivery. Members who fail to attend the required number of meetings or to meet the required standard of work may be asked to step down from the panel.

7. Conflict of interest

- 7.1 Should a conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest arise it is the responsibility of the individual to inform the Chair of the Standard Setting Group. This includes involvement with other comparable medical licensing assessments and is to reduce the risk of confidential information being shared between assessments.
- 7.2 Members must declare if they have a child or other close family member studying medicine who may sit an assessment for which the group develops, reviews, or has access to assessment content. The Chair will consider the potential conflict of interest and determine whether any restrictions, recusal, or other mitigating actions are required to protect the integrity and confidentiality of the assessment process.

8. Anti-Fraud, Anti-Bribery Policy

- 8.1 Members are required to sign the MLA AKT anti-fraud, anti-bribery policy.

9. Promoting equality and diversity

- 9.1 Members must engage with MSC's aim that all doctors, irrespective of their background, have the competence and skills to care for the diversity of the UK's patient population, and understand the ethical and professional issues that arise in practising in the UK. Members will need to ensure that items are unambiguous, fair and avoid bias for or against candidates from different backgrounds.

9.2 Members must have an understanding of and a commitment to addressing equal opportunity, diversity, and inclusivity, with a non-discriminatory approach to cultural differences and take into account the needs of individuals who share protected characteristics. Members must also have an appreciation of the issues faced by newly qualified doctors.

10. Version	Date	Author	Status	Comments
0.1	15 December 2021	Veronica Davids	Draft	Final draft
0.2	23 August 2022	Caroline Langmead	Final	Final version
0.3	1 September 2023	Veronica Davids	Final	Anti-fraud, anti-bribery added
0.4	13 March 2026	Veronica Davids	Final	Clarification on Col, para 7.1
0.5	14July 2026	Lauren Skelton	Final	Section 4.2 addition. Update section 5 mtg requirement. Clarified 6.1. Added 7.2 Changed MS AKT to MLA AKT