

Message from MSC Chair



As the new chair of the Medical Students Committee this is my first opportunity through MSC News, to speak to you about what the MSC does, what we plan to do and how we are going to let you know what we are doing on your behalf.

I am privileged to lead a dedicated and hard working committee that represents the views, concerns and opinions of the UK's medical students at both national and international level.

I am committed to working to make sure that medical students are fully and professionally represented and to letting you know about what we are doing on your behalf.

It is vitally important to the Medical Students Committee that medical students have the opportunity to influence policy relating to the way they are educated and trained, as well as having a real say in policy that will affect their future in the medical profession. It is also crucial that you know what the committee is doing for you. Information from your local reps, from the BMA locally and nationally through our website and this newsletter is part of that and we are working on plans to improve our communication with you.

Our plans and our work for the year are under way. The MSC subcommittees and executive have met to discuss and finalise our priorities and allocate the work. Our strategy will hopefully be agreed at the next full MSC meeting in December and we are making progress on our work in the meantime.

Foundation Programme – although the MTAS system rightly received dreadful press about the way specialty training was

handled, the separate process for allocating students to jobs worked relatively well. However, it still has some way to go. One of my priorities over the next year will be to ensure that the application process is fair, transparent and equitable.

International Medical Students – last year the government changed the law on immigration, effectively denying international medical students the right to complete their training. This is intolerable. No one deserves to be treated in such a manner. The MSC will continue to do everything in our power to persuade government to reverse this hugely unfair change to the rules.

Student debt – training to become a doctor has always been financially challenging but it is becoming increasingly more expensive. The BMA's annual medical student finance survey shows this year that the average final year medical student will graduate with debts of over £20,000. This is simply unacceptable. We will keep up the pressure on government to change policies to decrease this burden of debt.

I undertake to represent each of you as well as I can, but I can only do this if I know your views. We produce these newsletters after each main committee meeting and after our Executive meetings so look out for them. Your views are vital to us so please get involved and get in touch with your local BMA reps. They will make sure MSC hears your views. Contact details can be found at <http://www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/Content/Hubmedicalstudentscommittees> If you prefer, you can contact me directly at inoble@bma.org.uk.

The voice of medical students is a powerful one. I believe that, working together, unified, we can make a real difference.

lan

Student debt

The results of our latest survey on medical student finances has shown that first year medical students could leave university £8,000 more in debt than this year's graduates because of the introduction of variable tuition fees.

The survey also shows the average final year medical student will graduate with debts of over £20,000 and that the level of debt among first year students is much worse than it was in 2006. By the end of the first year the average debt is now £7,776, an increase of 12%.

This year's new entrants were the first group to pay variable tuition fees. Under the old system students had to pay a flat rate of £1,175, now it can be anything up to £3,000. According to the BMA survey first year students paid an average of £2,779. This means that

in five years they could be £8,000 more in debt just because of the extra money they are paying in tuition fees. These figures are shocking, but sadly not surprising.

The MSC has met with the Minister to discuss our concerns that UK graduates studying medicine as a second degree do not have access to the same deferred fee arrangements as other students, including those from the EU. Further research is being carried out to assess the real impact of this and we hope to achieve changes to the arrangements. We are also pressing for other forms of financial support to be more easily available and will be campaigning against the removal of the cap on tuition fees.

Blood Borne Viruses

In March 2007 the Department of Health (DH) published 'Health clearance for tuberculosis, hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV: New healthcare workers.

Since the publication of the guidance, MSC has been in discussion with the Medical Schools Council (TMSC) and has attended a first meeting of the TMSC working group which is producing a protocol for Medical Schools based on the DH guidance.

Our guidance, *Focus on BBV*, is now available. You can find it on our website at <http://www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/Content/MSCBBVguidance1007>

Foundation Programme Application Process

The UK Foundation Programme website has now opened. It can be accessed on www.foundationprogramme.nhs.uk and will include information on the application process, training, careers and frequently asked questions.

Timetable

8 October	Application form published & applicants' handbook available online
29 Oct – 9 Nov	Online system open for applications
9 January	Foundation school allocations are made
From 10 January	Preferences for training programmes
End of February	Matching to specific programmes is completed and applicants notified of results

Some students will be on their electives for some or all of this time so it's advisable to start thinking of key achievements that you may want to put across and who you may wish to have as your references so you are not under as much pressure when the time comes.

Some information on the process

Allocation and matching	
Phase 1– Allocation to a foundation school	You must first rank ALL the schools in order of preference on your application form Your application is scored by your first choice foundation school
	You will be allocated to a foundation school based on your preferences and overall application score
Phase 2 – Matching to a programme within the school	Each foundation school will match to programmes locally. For more information on how local matching is completed, go to the website of the foundation school you are matched to for details.
Scoring	
Academic Ranking – 45 points (maximum)	Calculated by your medical school, who will divide your year group into four quartiles based on academic performance. If you are in the first quartile (the top 25% of your year), you will receive a score of 45; if you are in the second quartile, your score will be 40; the third quartile 35 and fourth quartile 30.
Application questions – 55 points (maximum)	Seven questions with an individual score and a word limit. Each question will be scored individually by a panel of two people. The scorers will not know the applicant's identity, their academic ranking or scores they received for other questions.
Completing the form	
You must register online before you can apply.	Go to: www.foundationprogramme.nhs.uk to register from 29 October
TIP!	Write your answers first in a word processing application (like MS Word), spell check, then copy and paste into the application form when it goes live. Save your original answers in case you are called to verify them. Find the applicants handbook and read it before you apply. On line from 8 October from www.foundationprogramme.nhs.uk

Rules Group

Medical Students Committee a seat the Rules Group which has been meeting every week to develop the process for the next round. Keep letting your reps know what questions and concerns you have. They will feed this back to MSC and we will take up issues on your behalf to ensure that the process is as fair as possible.

Numbers of FP places

One of our main concerns has been the provision of an adequate number of Foundation Programme places for newly qualified doctors from UK medical schools. It is vital that the application process includes the expectation that all medical students graduating from UK medical schools are offered a foundation programme post. We wrote to the Minister about this and are still waiting for a response.

Accommodation

The amendments to the Medical Act that removed the requirement for pre-registration doctors to be resident have now been enacted. This means that FHO1s are no longer statutorily required to work in a resident capacity in hospitals, which in turn means that such accommodation no longer has to be provided free of charge. NHS Employers have put out guidance to employers explaining the enactment but encouraging employers to honour any agreements they have already made with FHO1s who have started in post. This can be found on their website at <http://www.nhsemployers.org>

We are working with the Junior Doctors Committee and our case has been presented to the Doctors and Dentist Review Body this year where we have pressed for an uplift in basic pay for FHO1s. We have said that a substantial uplift in basic pay levels for year one Foundation House Officers (FHO1) essential in order to counter the additional cost of private rented accommodation.

If there are any problems locally, please contact your regional office through askBMA. Tel: 0870 60 60 828, email: askBMA@BMA.org.uk

Calling all medical students...

Poster Competition

In partnership with the Medical Council on Alcohol, the BMAs Medical Students Committee is holding a competition to give medical students the chance to design a poster for our campaign to highlight the dangers of excessive drinking and binge drinking.

We believe that medical students have the potential to take the lead in educating friends and others about the dangers, and encourage a good time whilst maintaining a responsible attitude.

The winning poster will be printed and displayed in Medical Schools' Student Unions across the UK in early 2008. Runner up prizes will include your next year's membership to the BMA for free.

Please submit your poster design in an electronic format to postercompetition@bma.org.uk with your name and contact details by **Friday 30 November 2007**. Receipt of your submission will be acknowledged. **Further information** The poster design is entirely up to you but it must be submitted in high resolution (300dpi), EPS, PDF or JPG files. For further information go to our website at www.bma.org.uk/students **Good luck!**

MSC Meetings

2007

Saturday 27 Oct	Executive subcommittee
Saturday 8 December	MSC/Subcommittees

2008

Thursday 31 January	Executive subcommittee
Wednesday 12 March	MSC/Subcommittees
Friday 4 & Saturday 5 April	Medical Students Conference Churchill College, Cambridge
Tuesday 22 April	Executive subcommittee
Saturday 7 June	MSC/Subcommittees

Guidance notes

Focus on... Medical School Charter

Focus on... the MSC

Guidance for students with dependents

Guidance on dealing with bullying and harassment

Student guide to pensions

Look for these on our website at www.bma.org.uk/students

Further help and advice

If you have any enquiries about any of the issues in this newsletter, contact your MSC representative and your ISC Chair. Details can be found on our website at www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/Content/Hubmeetyourmedicalstudentrep?OpenDocument&Login

You can also contact the MSC office on:
Info.students@bma.org.uk

News from Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland

We'll also endeavour to keep you up to date with the latest news from MSCs in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The SMSC Update is available on the BMA Website website.

This provides an update on SMSC work, including:

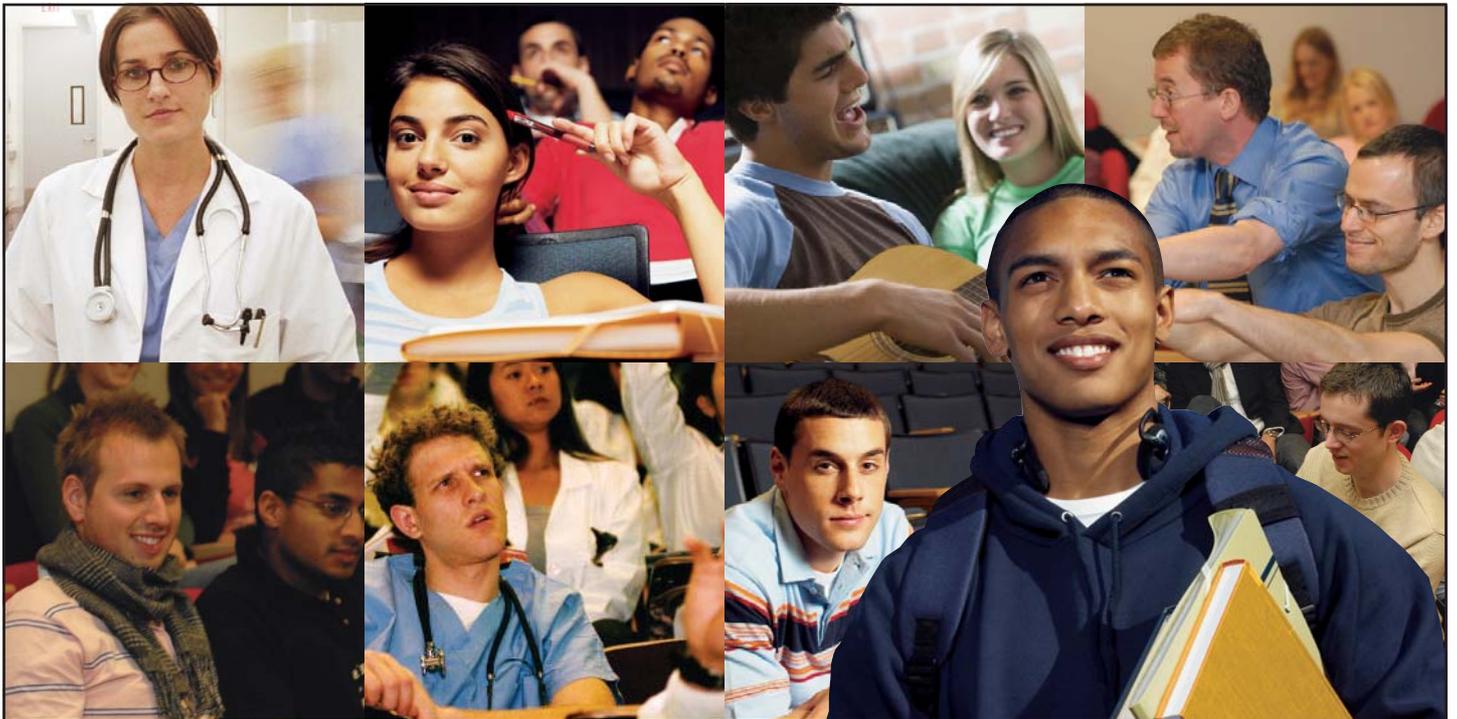
The 'Calman' review into basic medical education in Scotland, about how best to increase/retain the number of medical graduates in Scotland. From this academic year, 55 students admitted to St Andrews will complete their clinical training in Scotland, and the Board for Academic Medicine has agreed the allocation of places be undertaken at the end of Semester One of Year Two. SMSC continues to highlight the need for funding for the additional places and for long term career opportunities.

Graduate endowment – in responding to the Scottish Government proposals, BMA Scotland welcomed the plans to abolish the Graduate Endowment Fee, aimed at reducing the burden of debt on students in Scotland, and supported calls for an independent review of higher education funding.

The recent SFAS meeting – on the application process to the foundation programme. SMSC will be drafting FAQs to be put on the SFAS website. It's understood that the SFAS process will remain the same this year and a CV will be required.

Foundation Programme Board – NHS Education for Scotland (NES) has recently established a Foundation Programme Board to consider all aspects of Foundation Training. Membership includes a trainee consultant and medical student nominated by BMA Scotland.

Watch out for updates from Wales and Northern Ireland in future editions. In the meantime for further information about WMSC and NIMSC go to the BMA website at www.bma.org.uk



Join the BMA!

With 175 years' experience of supporting doctors and medical students, we understand the issues that are important to you and provide essential benefits that really make a difference. The BMA provides support and guidance to help in your progression from medical student to qualified doctor... and throughout your medical career.

Join today so that you can take advantage of the many valuable principal, practical and personal benefits of membership, including:

- *Student BMJ* and *Student BMA News* every month
- discounted medical equipment from BMA Medical Supplies Direct
- discounts on selected medical textbooks from Hammicks Medical Bookshop
- access to the BMA Library including 24-hour online access to Medline Plus and a range of e-books
- local and national representation from the BMA's medical student committee
- 50 per cent discount on online access to *BMJ Clinical Evidence*
- resources and advice from the BMA Careers Service

- discounts on final-year medicine and surgery revision courses from Ask Doctor Clarke
- full access to all areas of www.bma.org.uk
- and much, much more!

Membership is FREE for first year students*, £30 for second years, and £36 for third years and above.

Don't miss out! Join the BMA today at www.bma.org.uk/join

*only available to those paying by Direct Debit



For advice and support, BMA members can also contact askBMA (tel: 0870 60 60 828, email: askBMA@BMA.org.uk anytime from 8.30am to 6pm Monday to Friday (except UK-wide bank holidays). If your query is judged to be complex it will be referred to the appropriate national or local office. For all other queries, either contact the relevant BMA department, the BMA's head office or the appropriate national office – full details are available on the website and in *Your BMA – a guide to membership benefits*.



0870 60 60 828

www.bma.org.uk/askbma