

Foundation Programme

Final year medical students recently found out about their allocations to the 2008 foundation programme. You'll probably have seen the announcement from the UK Foundation Programme Office (UKFPO) stating that 92.4% of eligible applicants were allocated to their first choice foundation school. With almost 7,000 applicants the high percentage of first choice placements is good news.

We know, though, that this figure will be of little comfort to those who didn't manage to get in to their first choice school. London especially was very over-subscribed and in one London Foundation School the ratio of applicants to posts was almost 2:1.

MSC has always said that students should be able to apply to any foundation school they want. We know that this is what medical students want. Having an open competition process allows you to make decisions about where you want to work and about the specialties you want to pursue. We believe it is the fairest approach. An open process, together with FP places spread across the UK, makes it hugely difficult to guarantee that everyone will get their first choice, but we do our level best to make sure that the application process itself is fair and open. We will be raising your concerns about the process including the current application form and, will pressing for improvements in the future. We will also, of course, push for as many applicants as possible to get their first choice, through for

example, more places to be made available. If a 100% first choice figure was announced next year, no-one would be happier than us.

We don't only welcome your views. We need them. We are already looking at the next round and how things can be improved. Later this month, we will be sending out a survey to those who applied for this years round, asking what you thought of the process and for your views and ideas about how it can be improved. We really do need you to respond to this. We will take your views directly into the UKFPO review meeting in April and will feed into the UKFPO groups which develop the process each year.

One piece of good news is that this year all UK graduates were guaranteed a two year foundation programme. With increasing competition from medical student applicants from the EU, we're anticipating potential difficulties in future. We are lobbying at the highest level to ensure that there are guaranteed foundation places for all applicants graduating from UK medical schools.

Medical Students Committee Meetings 2008 – Visitor Scheme

MSC meets throughout the year to discuss and take action on issues relevant to medical students: We have set up a visitor scheme to give medical students and organisations the chance to see MSC at work. For further information please email: info.students@bma.org.uk

Wednesday 12 March

MSC/Subcommittees

Friday 4 April

Medical Students Conference

Saturday 5 April

Medical Students Conference

Tuesday 22 April

MSC Executive

Saturday 7 June

MSC/Subcommittees

Interest rates on student loans – E mail your MP to sign Early Day Motion 263

In the last edition MSC launched a campaign to raise awareness about student loans to MPs in the Westminster Parliament. MPs have tabled an Early Day Motion (EDM) expressing concern that interest payable on student loans has now doubled from 2.4 per cent to 4.8 per cent – the EDM suggests that the interest charged on student loans should be either abolished as the New Zealand government has done or pegged at a maximum of one per cent to

give a fairer deal to students and maximise recruitment to higher education.

So far EDM 263 has received 82 signatures and with your help we can help highlight to the government the serious implications of high rates of interest payable on student loans. We need your help, so email your MP now using the link below. It's easy and won't take long. www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/content/polwizstudentloans

Medical students conference 2008

The conference this year is being held at Churchill College, Cambridge. The deadline for submission of motions has passed now and the Conference Agenda Committee has agreed the agenda for the priority motions which will form the main basis of discussion to shape the MSC policy for 08/09. Those students attending as conference delegates will shortly receive the Conference agenda and guide. Even if you haven't got a place at conference this year, it is always good to find out the motions are due to be debated. These will be on our website before the conference at www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/Content/MSConference2008

Finance Update! What are they doing?

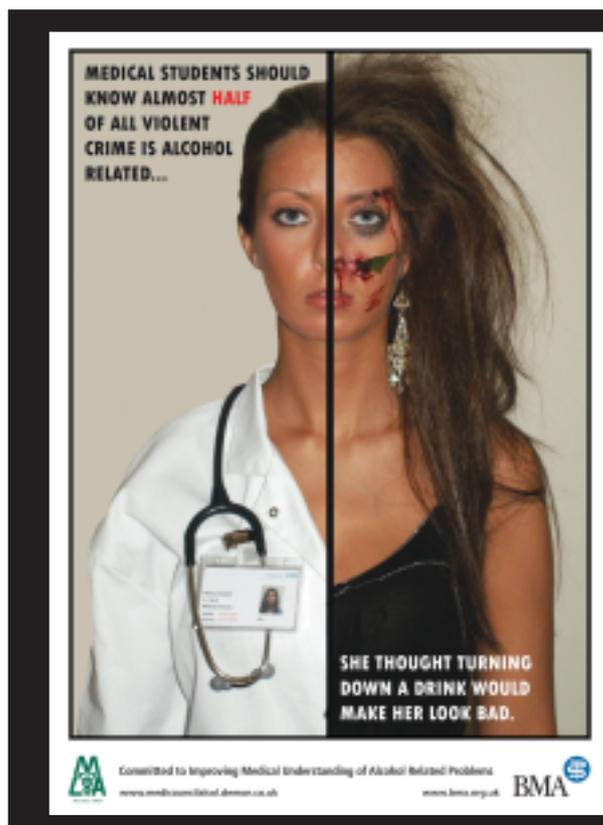
You might be wondering why the Finance subcommittee have been quiet and whether they are lobbying on changes to student support or tuition fees. That couldn't be further from the truth. The Finance subcommittee have been involved with the ongoing discussions to modernise the NHS bursary over the last year or so with the DH and other stakeholders. We've reported on some of this work in our earlier editions. The main task of the Finance subcommittee has been to ensure that any changes to the scheme have a minimal impact to all

healthcare students but in particular to medical students. The new arrangements for medical and dental students should be announced shortly and we will keep you updated with our progress.

Currently we are looking at putting together financial models that we can campaign and lobby on a number of issues including tackling debt. As part of our evidence gathering for our lobbying and negotiations the Student Finance survey is due to be circulated in April and we are currently reviewing the content of it to ensure that the results of the survey can be used on a national and maybe local level.

Although the statistics locally might be rather small, it might show trends or areas in which more support might be needed.

Another thing important to medical students is the financial help available to them. We have formed close links with the RMBF and have helped produce a student friendly website along with them: www.money4medstudents.org MSC is also currently updating the guidance we produce for medical students and it is hoped that we can ensure that it is both informative but also relevant to students in any given situation.



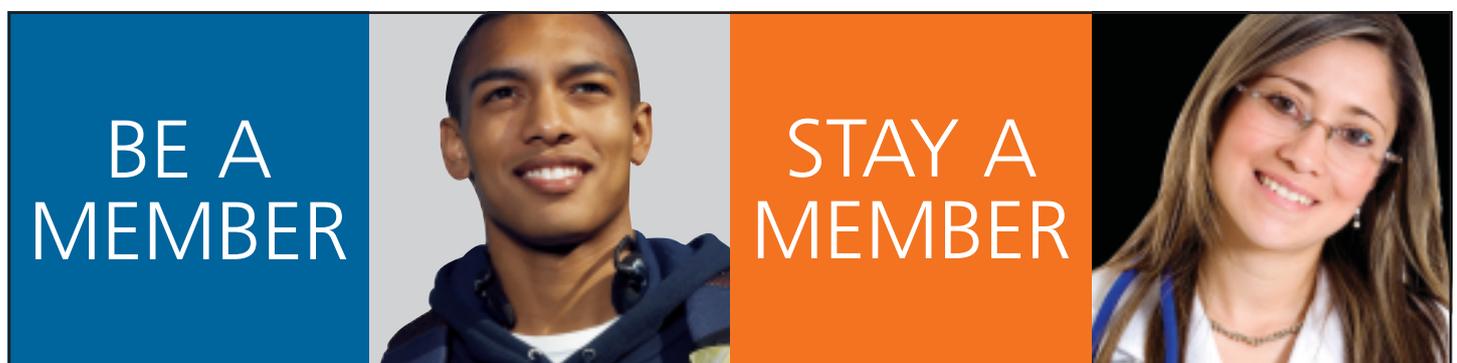
BATTLE OF THE BINGE

The alcohol awareness poster competition was won by Charlotte Anderson, a third year student at Hull York Medical School. The competition was launched by the MSC and the Medical Council on Alcohol in November as part of their drive to raise awareness of the dangers of alcohol amongst the student population. We think you'll agree that it's a striking image and will help the MSC with our aim to promote having a good time whilst drinking responsibly.

Copies of Charlotte's winning poster will be sent to MSC reps to be displayed in medical schools across the UK. Her prize included an iPod Nano, an Ask Dr Clarke revision course and a year's free membership of the BMA.

Join the BMA!

We suspect the Nano was the most anticipated prize for Charlotte, but don't underestimate the benefits of joining the BMA. Go to www.bma.org.uk/join



For your education, your career and your future make sure you have your independent trade union and professional association with you all the way.

Not a member? To join, see one of the BMA team at your course or go to www.bma.org.uk/join

