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Australia

Australian Medical Council Highlights Improvements to Accreditation and Assessment Programs

The Australian Medical Council (AMC) recently released highlights of its accreditation and assessment programs over the last year.

Early in 2011, AMC announced that it had transitioned its accreditation and assessment programs into Australia's national registration process — a key development in Australia's move toward national regulation through a comprehensive reorganization of its former system.

The new process, known as the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS), was formally adopted in 2010.

Highlights of the year include:

- A number of initiatives aimed at improving services for International Medical Graduates (IMGs), including complete review and evaluation of the assessment pathways for IMGs introduced nationally three years ago and planning for the expansion and improvement of its Multiple Choice Question (MCQ) and Clinical Examinations for IMGs.
- Improvements to AMC's standardized MCQ Examination, including a new computer-adapted version aimed at streamlining the administration of the examination. According to AMC, the revised examination will "significantly increase the AMC's capacity to deliver a reliable and secure written examination."
- A significant increase in clinical examination capacity, with more than 1,000 candidates able to participate in the clinical examination during the year. According to AMC, the capacity to deliver clinical examinations has been limited by the availability of suitable clinical examination venues, numbers of examiners, role-playing, and real patients. AMC is now conducting clinical examinations every two weeks throughout the year. AMC is investigating opportunities to

"further increase available places and developing innovative examination methodology while maintaining the integrity of the assessment." ■

Source: Australian Medical Council website, June 2011

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Canada

New Objectives for Canada's Qualifying Examination Online Web Service

An updated edition of the Medical Council of Canada (MCC) publication, "Objectives for the Qualifying Examination," is now available for medical graduates entering practice in Canada. The Objectives outline MCC's proficiency expectations of medical graduates.

The third edition of the Objectives, which was first published in December 2004 and has been periodically updated, serves as the basis for MCC examinations. Canadian medical schools use the Objectives to plan curriculum and they are used by medical experts and assessment organizations to prepare examination content. Candidates preparing to take MCC examinations can refer to the Objectives as a study guide.

MCC has announced a new online web service that will provide better navigation and easier access to the Objectives for all users by allowing the content to be searchable by computer applications.

To learn more about the Objectives, visit www.mcc.ca/Objectives_Online. ■

Source: Medical Council of Canada website, June 2011

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Global Organizations

IAMRA 2012 Conference Dates and Location Announced

The International Association of Medical Regulatory Authorities (IAMRA) has announced dates and location for its 2012 International Conference on



Medical Regulation. The conference will be held at the Ottawa Convention Centre in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, October 2–5, 2012.

The 2014 International Conference on Medical Regulation will be held in September 2014 in London, England.

IAMRA staff and members are at work on the next version of a set of foundational principles that will be used to develop international best practices in medical regulation. The foundational principles were initially compiled during the group’s last international meeting, held in the United States in late 2010.

More than two hundred participants, representing 90 organizations from 32 countries, worked together in interactive, small-group sessions to identify the principles that will help drive a more targeted set of best practices. The principles establish such attributes as fairness, innovation, relevance, portability, transparency, feasibility and others as vital components in best practices.

For more information about IAMRA, please visit www.iamra.com. ■

Sources: IAMRA website, June 2011; FSMB *Newsline*, Fall 2010

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United Kingdom

Revalidation Guidelines in UK to Help Physicians Prepare for Performance Assessment Process

The United Kingdom’s General Medical Council (GMC) is continuing to move forward with its “revalidation” concept—the UK’s equivalent of the Maintenance of Licensure concept in the United States—launching a basic guideline to appraisals for physicians who will need to comply with the new system starting at the end of 2012.

The guidelines provide background for physicians to help them adhere to the professional standards that make up the core of the revalidation concept.

Health care employers in the UK are being asked to make sure that every physician has access to the guidelines as the entire UK health system adapts to revalidation.

At the heart of the new system is a set of ethical principles referred to as “Good Medical Practice” and a framework for self-assessment. UK physicians will be asked to discuss how they have met these core principles during periodic appraisals to assess their practice.

Physicians will use a four-step process during their assessments, according to the GMC:

- Reflect on your practice and your approach to medicine.
- Reflect on the supporting information you have gathered and what that information demonstrates about your practice.
- Identify areas of practice where you could make improvements or undertake further development.
- Demonstrate that you are up to date and fit to practice.

When revalidation is introduced, every physician will be required to bring supporting information to their periodic appraisals that demonstrates that they are keeping up to date.

According to the GMC, they will also be expected to seek feedback from patients and colleagues, and they should be able to show that they take part regularly in activities that evaluate the quality of their work, such as clinical case reviews or the review of clinical outcomes.

The GMC worked closely with a number of organizations to develop the framework, including the four UK health departments and the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges. Niall Dickson, the Chief Executive of the GMC, said an effort had been made to keep the appraisal process “realistic and straightforward.” “We want appraisals to be rewarding and useful, not time-consuming or difficult,” he said. ■

Source: General Medical Council website, June 2011