

For the Academic Policy &
Regulations Committee
19 May 2011

**Request for Exemption from Code of Practice on Taught Programmes and
Module Assessment for the MBChB**

Topic and Purpose of the Paper

1. APRC is asked to **consider**, and if thought appropriate, **approve** a request for the MBChB programme, in the College of Medical and Dental Sciences, to work outside of the Code of Practice on Taught Programme and Module Assessment.

Proposals/Recommendations

2. That the MBChB be permitted to work outside of the section 11.13.3 of the Code of Practice on Taught Programme and Module Assessment

11.13 .3 There should be no adjustment to marks if they accurately reflect the achievement or otherwise of the learning outcomes and have not resulted from an error in the assessment process or some other factor which would have affected students.
3. That instead, the MBChB is allowed to employ or adapt as appropriate, standard setting approaches currently used within the medical education sector.

Background

4. There is currently a conflict between University legislation and the requirements of the GMC in relation to the adjustment of marks. The MBChB programme has, for some time, been using standard setting in relation to final examinations (being unaware of the conflict with the Code of Practice) and is now expected to extend standard setting to all parts of the programme. We are therefore seeking retrospective permission in relation to current practice and permission to extend this practice as required by the professional body.

Arguments to Support Proposals/Recommendations

5. In the most recent iteration of Tomorrow's Doctors (GMC 2009) the GMC require that medical training programmes should employ standard setting:

119. Medical schools should not employ fixed pass marks – that is, pass marks which are the same every year - since these do not reflect variations in the difficulty of examinations over time and therefore could result in individuals of identical ability passing in one year and failing in another. The schools should have processes to establish that standards are stable over time.
120. Schools should use approaches to standard setting which ensure concordance with absolute standards.

5. This change in GMC requirements reflects what has rapidly become a sector norm and, although time consuming, has generally been welcomed as fitting with the ethos of the programme.
6. In order to comply with GMC requirements, we are requesting permission from APRC to work outside the said paragraph of the Code of Practice.
7. Whatever pass mark is arrived at through standard setting, marks will be scaled back to a standardised pass mark of 50% as agreed under current exemptions.