

GMC April 2011 statement about the credentialing pilot studies

Recent years have seen growing interest in the concept of credentialing in UK medicine. A number of factors have prompted this:

- The general appetite for more information about the status and competence of doctors.
- The changing nature of healthcare delivery.
- The need to ensure that postgraduate medical training equips doctors to best care for patients now and in the future, and that this training can be shown to enable doctors to be fit for this purpose.
- The need to promote doctors' continuing professional development.

However, the credentialing of medical practice has come to mean different things to different people. In March 2010 the then regulator of postgraduate medical education and training issued a report on credentialing which defined it as:

'...a process which provides formal accreditation of attainment of competences (which include knowledge, skills and performance) in a defined area of practice, at a level that provides confidence that the individual is fit to practise in that area in the context of effective clinical governance and supervision as appropriate to the credentialed level of practice.'

Building on this earlier work, the General Medical Council (GMC) has now agreed to the piloting of credentialing in three areas of medical practice which currently have no formal recognition as specialties: breast disease management, musculoskeletal medicine, and forensic and legal medicine.

This early stage piloting is intended to test the principles and practicality of credentialing and help the GMC form a view as to its future feasibility.

The intention is to complete the pilots in January 2012. The conclusions will then be reported to the GMC to consider.