



13th January 2023

Dear Academy Trainee Doctors' Group,

I am writing to you in response to the letter dated 1st November 2022. In this letter you, ATDG, expressed concerns over systematic issues that Trainee's were facing across medical College's in relation to exam delivery, marking and reporting that have occurred in recent years. The College would like to acknowledge the concerns expressed. The College has formed a close working relationship with the Trainee Association which is enabling the Trainee voice to be heard and actioned as part of BAU activities and the internal review.

The College would like to offer the following responses to the requests noted in the letter:

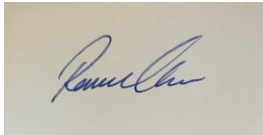
Request	College Position
Where systemic errors occur, Colleges should make contact with the relevant trainee committees to notify them of the event, and work together to formulate a strategy to communicate the information appropriately with the affected trainees, the subsequent plan, and provide the necessary support that will be needed.	Agree. This can be evidenced by the College's approach to the FRCEM SBA issue in March 2022. When the FRCEM SBA issue occurred in March 2022, the CEO liaised weekly with the Chair of the Trainee's Association in relation to the incident and the planned approach and support in relation to the incident.
Where errors occur, affected trainees are contacted at the earliest opportunity, offered an apology and provided with the clear strategy and timescale for subsequent steps to remedy the error.	Agree. A lesson learned from the FRCEM SBA issue in March 2022 is that we could have informed Trainee's earlier but wanted to wait for a final decision from the GMC in relation to a request to remove the SEM from the standard setting for the exam.
There should be clear lines of communication available and open for them to be able to access the relevant College/Faculty department to discuss any challenges or seek support.	Agree, this can be evidenced by the College's approach to the FRCEM SBA issue in March 2022.
That Colleges have a plan for extraordinary circumstances whereby an exam venue is no longer able to offer a sitting (for example, an unscheduled public bank holiday). Where an exam needs to be rescheduled, alternative dates are offered after consultation with trainee groups and offered in a timely fashion.	Agree. If the College needs to reschedule an exam in extraordinary circumstances it will work with the Trainee Association, and where appropriate third-party test center provider, to agree a future exam date at an agreed future point. The College notes that it may not be possible to meet Trainee expectations due to constraints of working with the third-party test center network provider.

<p>The results/outcomes/summaries of any internal investigations or reviews into an error should be shared with trainee committees, and made accessible to the wider trainee body, to reassure current and future trainees that steps have been taken to mitigate similar events happening again.</p>	<p>Agree. Where possible the College will share results/outcomes/summaries of internal investigations or reviews into errors. The College notes that this has not been possible in the recent past for legal reasons, where our advice was to only release the recommendations. Lessons have been learned from this and our External Review has been commissioned with a view to publication. The CEO meets regular with the join Chairs of the Trainee Association. The Director of Education, Head of Exams and Head of Training meet fortnightly with Trainee Association representatives to discuss educational matters. A presentation was given at the recent EMTA Conference as to the current and future work being undertaken to prevent future issues occurring.</p>
<p>When errors occur, the learning points derived from these events and subsequent investigations should be shared between Colleges, to help prevent them from happening to other Colleges. This can be facilitated via the Academy.</p>	<p>Agree. The College has published the recommendations from the Internal Investigation with the membership and the recommendations are available on the College's website. The External Review will also be shared with the College membership and shared via the website. The College would welcome working with the Academy to facilitate this.</p>
<p>We would encourage a review of all current practices related to exam result/recruitment outcome delivery to ensure that potential opportunities for errors in the process can be identified at an early stage and appropriate steps taken.</p>	<p>Agree. The College has just concluded phase one of the internal review of all Exam Team processes. The College has also recently recruited an ePortfolio Manager, with a business analysis background, to review and improve our ePortfolio offering.</p> <p>We will continue to work with our Heads of School and Recruitment Sub-Committee to identify and respond to any issues relating to recruitment activity. This includes ensure that enquiries are responded to in an appropriate timeframe and themes and issues are escalated as appropriate. The Training Team will also direct trainee's to the appropriate information sources such as relevant pages on the HEE website.</p>
<p>Colleges should work to ensure that trainees who require reasonable adjustments are not negatively impacted financially by travelling to distant locations which facilitate the adjustments that are required.</p>	<p>Agree. As part of the internal review work the College's reasonable adjustment policy will be reviewed against Academy and GMC guidance. The College is able to offer candidate's requiring reasonable adjustments the ability to sit the exam at home via online invigilation if they would prefer. When a reasonable adjustment is required at a third-party test center, or College property, the College will work with the provider to meet the requirements.</p>

The College is committed to introducing meaningful change to improve the experience of Trainee's across exam and training activities. The College would also welcome working with the Academy and ATDG to share good practice to improve Trainee experience across Colleges. We are conscious that lessons are shared at the AOMRC CEOs group and that there is a forum for those working in Examinations at Royal Colleges to share learnings.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require more information.

Yours sincerely,

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in blue ink. The signature is cursive and appears to read 'Romana Moss'.

Romana Moss
Director of Education