

## Practising medicine in the UK

If you want to practise medicine in the UK, you must be registered with the General Medical Council (GMC).

You are entitled to GMC registration if you have:

- Qualified at a UK medical school
- Qualified elsewhere in the European Economic Area (EEA) and are an EEA national.

You are eligible to apply for provisional and full registration if:

- you qualified at one of certain recognised medical schools outside the EEA
- you are an EEA national and hold an acceptable overseas qualification, which has been accepted, by another EEA member state as qualifying you to practise in that state.

**If you are not an EEA national** and hold an acceptable overseas qualification, you can apply for limited registration, allowing you to practise under supervision in approved training posts. To obtain limited registration, you must provide objective evidence of your capability for practice in the UK. This may be achieved by:

- passing the PLAB test
- obtaining a place on a GMC approved training scheme
- providing evidence of achievement in specialist training.

You should check with the GMC to find out which is the best route for you. Contact details for the GMC are given at the end of this leaflet.

## Checking training opportunities in the UK

Passing the PLAB test will not guarantee you the offer of a job in the United Kingdom and you will not be granted limited registration without the offer of a job. Finding a job is your responsibility and you should ensure that you are well informed about opportunities for work before embarking on the PLAB test. There are fewer vacancies in some specialities than in others and there is almost always a delay of several weeks, possibly months, between passing the test and starting a job.

General Medical Council does not have information on job opportunities. Information can be obtained from one of the organisations whose addresses are given at the end of this leaflet.

## Nature of the test

The test assesses suitability to undertake hospital employment at Senior House Officer Level (SHO) in the UK hospital by examining the candidate's medical knowledge and clinical and communication skills. The PLAB test currently consists of the following examinations:

### Part 1

- Part 1 of the PLAB test is in Extended Matching Question (EMQ) and single best answer format. The proportion of SBA questions may vary from examination to examination but no more than 30% of the paper will be composed of SBA questions. The emphasis of the test is on clinical management and includes science as applied to clinical problems.
- The test is confined to core knowledge, skills and attitudes relating to conditions commonly seen by the SHO's to the generic management of the life-threatening situations, and to rarer, but important problems. It will contain 200 questions, dividing into a number of themes. The duration of the test will be three hours.

- **Extended Matching Question:** For each group of questions there will be a list of options. Candidates are required to select the most appropriate option for each question.
- **Single Best Answer:** Consider each of the questions and decide what you think the answer is to the lead-in question given at the end of each scenario, which typically reads 'What is the SINGLE most likely diagnosis?' You should then look for that answer in the list of options below (each of which is identified by a letter of the alphabet). If you cannot find the answer you have thought of, you should look for the option which, in your opinion, is the best answer to the problem posed.
- One mark is awarded for each correct response, but no marks are deducted for any incorrect answer. Candidates will be required to enter their responses on special answer sheets, which can be read by an optical mark reader. The examination will be marked by computer. (Please contact the GMC for further information on the new test).

## Part 2

- Objective structured Clinical Examination (OSCE). The aim of the PLAB OSCE is to test candidates' clinical and communication skills in a number of controlled situations.

## Fees

PLAB Part 1-£145.00

PLAB Part 2-£430.00

## Preparation for the PLAB test

Special courses for the PLAB test are available in the UK. The courses cover either the combined English and professional component or just the English. The GMC does not inspect these courses and can not recommend or comment on any particular course. Contact the National Advice Centre for Postgraduate Medical Education (NACPME) for details and a list of available courses.

Pas Test produces publications/learning materials for the PLAB examination. Contact details are as follow:

Pas Test Ltd, Egerton Court, Parkgate Estate, Knutsford, Cheshire WA16 7BR. Fax: 01565 650264 or visit [www.pastest.co.uk](http://www.pastest.co.uk)

## Obtaining Limited registration without taking the PLAB test

This is not intended to be a means of avoiding taking the PLAB test. The following categories may entitle the doctor to be exempted from taking the PLAB test.

- Senior Doctor's route (Check with the GMC)
- Full membership of one of the Royal Colleges
- Sponsorship Through an overseas Doctors' Training Scheme managed by one of the Royal Colleges (Contact the appropriate Royal College). A failure in the PLAB test disqualifies a candidate from this type of Sponsorship.
- Sponsorship through British Council (Contact Health Department, British Council Manchester).
- Sponsorship through a UK university, for doctors undertaking research or academic work for which they require clinical access.
- A small number of postgraduate institution (Check with the GMC)
- Doctors whose primary medical qualifications were obtained at one of the selected medical schools in the following countries: Australia, Hong Kong, New Zealand, Singapore, South Africa, West Indies and Malaysia (before 1980). As with a minimum score of 7.0 in the Academic module, with not less than 7.0 in each band.
- Doctors who, in addition to their primary overseas medical qualifications, also hold or have passed all the examinations for one of the following primary medical qualifications:
  - LRCS England/ LRCP London
  - LMSSA London
  - LRCP Edinburg/ LRCS Edinburg/ LRCPS Glasgow

This is only a summary of the requirements. Doctors should contact the GMC for further details about sponsorship and the other ways to obtain limited Registration.

### Test Centres

Part 1 of the PLAB test can be taken in the UK at test centres in London, Birmingham, Edinburgh or Glasgow. Part 1 of the test may also be taken overseas in Bangladesh, Egypt, India, Pakistan (**Karachi and Islamabad**) and Sri Lanka.

Part 2 of the test can only be taken in the UK. The IELTS examination can be taken in the UK and overseas. Lists of test centres are available from British Council offices in the UK or overseas.

### Test Dates

PLAB 1 test dates for Karachi and Islamabad for forthcoming exams of 2004 and 2005 are:

9 November 2004  
8 March 2005  
13 July 2005  
9 December 2005

Deadline to register for the PLAB 1 test: **8 Weeks before the exam date for paper applications**  
**4 Weeks before the exam date for registering on-line**

### How to apply for the PLAB 1 test:

- Check you have a primary medical qualification accepted for limited registration.
- Consider whether you have the appropriate postgraduate clinical experience.
- Check the situation regarding job and training opportunities with the National Advice Centre for overseas doctors.
- Check you have a valid IELTS report with a minimum overall score of 7.0 and minimum scores of 7.0 in the speaking component and 6.0 in the listening, academic reading and academic writing components.
- You can get information about this test from British Council's IELTS website [www.ielts.org](http://www.ielts.org)

### Registration:

To register for PLAB 1, applicants can either send their forms with required documents to their local British Council office or register on-line. To register on-line visit [www.gmc-uk.org](http://www.gmc-uk.org).

Before filling out the form, please read Advice to the candidates on GMC's website.

Services available online:

- Book and pay for a Part 1 PLAB test place
- Book and pay for a Part 2 PLAB test place
- Cancel a confirmed PLAB test place (both Part 1 and Part 2)
- View details of a PLAB booking
- Change your password
- Change your address

## Steps for processing applications:

You can either process your application online or submit it to relevant British Council offices.

### Online Registration

You will need a PIN, password and GMC reference number. You can contact GMC by email ([registrationhelp@gmc-uk.org](mailto:registrationhelp@gmc-uk.org)) or telephone +44 (0) 8453 573456. GMC will ask you for identification and will send you your PIN and Password to your registered address. Once you have your PIN and password, you can go to the GMC home page at <http://www.gmc-uk.org/> select Registration and then Registration Services for Doctors and finally the service you need.

Please remember that you will need the PIN number and password GMC issue, before you can choose your own password.

### Submitting the application to the British Council office

Following documents have to be sent to the relevant British Council Offices:

- GMC application form
- Bank draft payable to the General Medical Council for £ 145/- (The draft should not be dated more than 6 months before the test.)
- Photocopy of the IELTS TRF
- Photocopy of pages 1 & 3 of valid passport
- Photocopy of primary medical qualification
- The PLAB application along with the above must be sent by courier or registered mail to the appropriate British Council office

British Council  
British Deputy High Commission  
P.O Box 10410, Shahrah-e-Iran,  
Clifton-Karachi.  
Tel: 92 (21) 111 424 424  
Fax: 92 (21) 111 425 425

British Council  
House 32, Street 19  
F-6/2, P.O Box 1135,  
Islamabad  
Tel: 92 (51) 111 424 424  
Fax: 92 (51) 111 425 425

In case if any bankdraft and / or PLAB 1 test related documents are not delivered to the British Council, candidates will resolve the issue directly with the respective courier or post office (as for any other postal courier services) based on their proof of positing. The British Council has no liabilities for items lost in transit and consequently missed deadlines for sending PLAB 1 applications.

**Payment:**

If you book online, you must pay through debit or credit card; otherwise the fee of £145 must be paid in advance in sterling. Bank draft must be made payable to General Medical Council. If you do not wish to apply online, please post your PLAB 1 form and enclosures to the appropriate British Council Office. Bank Draft should be made payable to General Medical Council.

**Cancellation Fee:**

If you wish to cancel your place, please give the office which offered you the place as much notice as possible. You must return the letter offering you an examination place, completed as appropriate.

If you cancel your place, you will be charged a fee. The amount charged depends on the amount of notice you give.

Any changes to a confirmed booking will be treated as a cancellation which will attract the appropriate cancellation charge.

The current cancellation charges are as follow:

All Centres:

<b>Period of notice</b>	<b>Cancellation Charge</b>
Four months or more	£87
Between 21 days and four months	£101
Less than 21 days	£145

If you do not want to re-book a place, balance of your fee will be refunded.

**Re-sitting the PLAB test**

Part 1: Candidates who have failed the test may only retake it while the IELTS result is still valid.

Applicants wishing to re-take PLAB 1 can either apply directly on-line or send their applications to GMC.

Part 2: If candidates fail, they can re-apply on-line for part 2 of the test. However, if the test is failed at the fourth attempt, the candidate will be required to re-sit the IELTS test and also the whole of the PLAB test.

There are no exceptions to this rule.

**Further information:**

On routes to registration:

General Medical Council  
178, Great Portland Street  
London W1W 5JE  
Tel: +44 (0)8453 573456  
Fax: +44 (0) 20 7915 3532  
E-mail: [registrationhelp@gmc-uk.org](mailto:registrationhelp@gmc-uk.org)

On the PLAB test:

General Medical Council  
E-mail: [gmc@gmc-uk.org](mailto:gmc@gmc-uk.org)

See the web site for advice to candidates:  
[http://www.gmc-uk.org/global\\_sections/sitemap\\_frameset.htm](http://www.gmc-uk.org/global_sections/sitemap_frameset.htm)

On the IELTS test and test dates:

Any British Council office in Pakistan  
See the web site for contact details: [www.britishcouncil.org.pk](http://www.britishcouncil.org.pk)

On postgraduate training in the UK:

The National Advice Centre for Postgraduate Medical Education (NACPME)  
E-mail: [www.britishcouncil.org/health/nacpme/index.htm](http://www.britishcouncil.org/health/nacpme/index.htm)

**Useful websites:**

On IELTS  
[www.ielts.org](http://www.ielts.org)

On job vacancies

The British Medical Journal  
[www.bmjclassified.com](http://www.bmjclassified.com)

The Lancet  
[www.thelancet.com/jobs](http://www.thelancet.com/jobs)

Health Service Journal  
[www.hsj.co.uk](http://www.hsj.co.uk)

**Other useful information:**

On medical training in the UK

A Guide for International Graduates  
[www.doh.gov.uk/medicaltrainingintheuk](http://www.doh.gov.uk/medicaltrainingintheuk)