

Dear members

As you are all aware the consultation process for Modernising Scientific Careers (MSC) ended in March 2009. Since that date very little information has been released regarding the feedback from the consultation, the new model, funding, plans for implementation, methods of assessment or professional body examinations.

It is still very unclear in what format MSC will eventually be implemented, but it is becoming increasingly clear, as it stands, it will not be able to produce a fit for purpose workforce that can meet service demands.

Furthermore it is becoming increasingly worrying that MSC is 'marching on' despite the continued efforts of all professional bodies to work with the Department around formulating proposals which would be more acceptable to their members than those proposed in the MSC consultation. It has recently also emerged that Strategic Health Authorities (SHA) have canvassed Higher Education Institutions (HEI) for applications to fund 'new degree' posts. This is despite the fact that curriculum is yet to be developed and ratified, the absence of a known practical training scheme and a lack of clarity around assessment methods and how professional exams would fit in. This is all very worrying and indicates that there is a likely drop in knowledge and skill base of qualified practitioners

As the 'new degree' has still not been thought through (despite encouraging HEI bids for placements), it has not been confirmed where the practical elements of training will take place. Therefore you may be contacted by your SHA to ask for your time and professional skills to train these new students. It is at this point that the SHA should be told that departments do not back the new proposals and therefore cannot

offer their department as a training facility. Departments should push for funding to be allocated to the current CP degree, so we can continue to produce high quality scientists with appropriate skills for service demand.

SHAs have a commitment to quality assurance and should therefore back the current degree over the new proposals; however we know that this is not the case. In order to stop the 'secondary generalisation' of the MSC we need to act now in order to suppress it. As always there is strength in numbers, so members should discourage the SHA from continuing to progress the new degree until a workable model is produced.

Those of you who are actively involved in workforce planning and student funding may wish to contact your SHA lead in advance to state your reluctance to cooperate with a training model that is both rushed through, and detrimental to workforce, quality and above all patient safety.

As always ANS council will be happy to offer advice regarding this matter if this is required. Please feel free to contact us.

Yours Sincerely

Peter Bill
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ANS

