



The Royal College of Ophthalmologists response to the General Medical Council's consultation on Developing the Medical Register

October 2016

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Royal College of Ophthalmologists (RCOphth) welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation.
- 1.2 The RCOphth is the professional body for ophthalmologists and we champion excellence in the practice of ophthalmology on behalf of our members to optimise care for patients. We set the curriculum and examinations for trainee ophthalmologists, provide training in eye surgery, maintain standards in the practice of ophthalmology, and promote research and advance science in the specialty.
- 1.3 Below are our comments to a range of the proposed changes to the register.

2. Our Comments

- 2.1 We agree that openness with patients and carers is an important part of safe and effective care. We support the concept of sharing information on the register that could prevent patients from seeing doctors who are not appropriate for their problem or condition. Additional information about a doctor's skills and experience should help patients, or other health care professionals, to make an appropriate choice.
- 2.3 Overall, we would support enhancements to the register with additional information that is factual, objective and relates to a doctor's professional skills and experience.
- 2.4 Information about sub-specialty or scope or practice would be a valuable addition, enabling register users to identify doctors with skills and experience most closely suited to their requirements. For example, qualifications that relate to their current practice. Place of work and post may also provide useful information about an individual's professional experience and skills.
- 2.5 However, we would not consider information that is subjective or open to interpretation to be helpful or appropriate. For example, links to patient feedback websites. We also would not consider registrant photos an appropriate addition, since this raises concerns about discrimination. NHS Choices, Trust websites and other sources which are designed primarily for patients, already provide some of this information.

- 2.7 We would expect that all information on the register must be accurate and kept up to date.
- 2.8 Any increase to registration fees as a result of enhancements, would be unacceptable where there is no benefit to patients.