Educational Quality Post Grading Policy – incorporating Confirm and Challenge Meetings

Wessex Deanery

Author: Associate Dean, Quality, Quality and Workforce Manager and Deputy Business Manager

Date: September 2012

Review Date: September 2013
Policy Statement

This paper outlines the Wessex Deanery approach to:

- the allocation of quality grades to posts, in each specialty, in a trust
- an annual ‘Confirm and Challenge’ meeting for each School, where post grades are discussed and confirmed
- how issues link to a grade for each post
- how quality post grades are reviewed
- the role of the key stakeholders in this process

The quality grading of posts is intended to help co-ordinate support for education across the whole Deanery area from local, to Trust, to regional level. It gives an overview for each Trust and School and should help local educators when requesting resources and to highlight good practice.

Post grading produces a clear visual summary, and minimises the need to focus on detail at regional level. It provides a common language and immediate overview of postgraduate medical education within Wessex and facilitates appropriate focus and escalation on areas of concern as well as highlighting examples of good practice for dissemination both of which will be reported to the regulator, the General Medical Council (GMC), as required.

Scope of Policy

This policy links with the following GMC standards and domains, outlined in The Trainee Doctor (2011):

Generic Standards for Training - Domain 2: Quality Management, Review and Evaluation

- Training must be quality managed, monitored, reviewed, evaluated and improved. Postgraduate deaneries, working with others as appropriate, must have processes for local quality management, and for quality control through LEPs. This must include all postgraduate posts, programmes and trainers and ensure that the requirements of the GMC’s standards are met.

Standards for Deaneries – Standard 3

- The postgraduate deanery must have structures and processes that enable the GMC standards to be demonstrated for all foundation and specialty training, and for the trainees, within the sphere of their responsibility.
Quality Post Grading

Annually all training posts will be graded (down to the level of the same training programme, same trust). Most posts will be graded as satisfactory (A - Green). The focus of decision for the minority will be whether some posts have issues which are affecting the education of all trainees (B - Yellow, C - Orange), are unsatisfactory (D - Red) or are actually commended as excellent (A* - Dark Green). All posts will have some issues but it is how these are dealt with that is important. All D, C and A* posts will be reported to the GMC as part of the Deanery reporting requirements.

A draft grading will be proposed for each post, determined by the number and type of issues that may be pertaining to that post. This calculation is informed by information taken from multiple sources including annual Trust and School reports, the GMC survey, and visit reports which are all captured on the Deanery evidence base. Schools and Trusts are also given the opportunity to propose a draft grade to be considered.

The draft grade will then be discussed and either agreed or amended at a ‘Confirm and Challenge’ meeting between the Deanery Quality team and Head of School (HoS). D and C graded posts will be reviewed by a Deanery Quality Management Board throughout the year to ensure progress is being made and posts can be re-graded appropriately.

The basis for the draft quality post grades (compiled from the Deanery evidence base) can be summarised as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post Grade</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A * Dark Green</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>All issues are dealt with as they arise AND positive evidence of notable practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Green</td>
<td>Satisfactory Approved</td>
<td>Clear action plan for all issues and no risk to the long term education of all trainees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Yellow</td>
<td>Conditional approval Problems</td>
<td>Issues being addressed, but these may affect the education of the all trainees. The impact of difficult to resolve or long term issues have been minimised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Orange</td>
<td>Conditional approval, Significant Problems</td>
<td>Significant issue(s) being addressed, but which are likely to severely affect the education of all trainees</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chair: Dr Geoffrey Harris
Chief Executive: Sir Ian Carruthers OBE
Wessex Deanery

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Review required after six months</th>
<th>D Red Unsatisfactory Review required after three months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Significant issue(s) not being addressed and affecting the education of all trainees. Post approval will be withdrawn if not addressed within an agreed period</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.0 – Post grade definitions

‘Confirm and Challenge’ Meetings

A ‘Confirm and Challenge’ meeting will be held annually with each School. These meetings will take place in the autumn so that post grades can directly feed into the Deanery Reports (DR) to the GMC.

Agenda items for Confirm and Challenge meetings will include:

- Discussion regarding the School’s quality management processes and annual School report
- Discussion regarding the School’s visits over the past year
- Discussion regarding the national GMC survey results
- Presentation of the proposed draft post grades by the Deanery
- Discussion around these post grades, presentation of evidence to challenge any grading (if applicable); agreement of final post grades

The Associate Dean for Quality or their representative will chair the meeting supported by the Quality and Workforce Manager and other colleagues, including lay input, as required. The HoS should also attend the meeting, supported by the Programme Manager and other colleagues as required/desired. Trust Directors of Medical Education (DME) will be invited to attend by the School for posts where further discussion is required or there is potential disagreement over C or D graded posts.

The outcome of the meeting will be final grades for all the posts in that School. If required action plans will be agreed pertaining to posts, visiting, quality management processes, the GMC survey or any other issue arising from the meeting.

The outcome of the meeting will be recorded by the Quality and Workforce Manager on the Deanery’s evidence base. A summary of all post grades will be presented to the Postgraduate Dean and Quality Management Board. Each Trust and School will receive a report summary for all grades outlining clear timescales for action and updates for review.

Chair: Dr Geoffrey Harris
Chief Executive: Sir Ian Carruthers OBE
**Issue Levels**

A training post may be affected by more than one issue, but only the serious and significant issues for each post require review by Trust, Programme or Deanery, irrespective of the grading allocated to a post. Less significant issues should be monitored locally. The level of an issue is an indication of its seriousness and impact on education. Issue detail is managed at Deanery level by the Quality team on behalf of each HoS and DME.

Various sources of information may highlight an issue with a training post. These can include visit reports, GMC survey data, annual reports from both Trusts and Schools and direct feedback from trainees or trainers.

Each quality issue that is identified will be allocated a level of severity based on the affect on the training experience and patient care. This exercise will be undertaken annually by the Quality and Workforce Manager to determine the proposed post grades in preparation for the Deanery Confirm and Challenge meetings. The calculation for post grades can be found in Appendix 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue level</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Tracking progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>Least Serious – The education is below the standard expected but issues are unlikely to affect the education of all trainees long term</td>
<td>Department will address and subsequently report on annually. Deanery to track via annual report from Trust and Schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>Moderately Serious – The education of the trainee is at risk. These issues may affect the education of all trainees long term</td>
<td>Department will address and subsequently report on annually. Deanery to track via annual report from Trust and Schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>Major Concern – The wellbeing of the trainee or patients is at risk. These are “significant issues” likely to affect the education of all trainees. Sufficient to lead to the withdrawal of posts if not resolved</td>
<td>Department will address and subsequently report on annually. Deanery to track via annual report from Trust and Schools.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1.1 – Issue Levels. For Deanery use to ensure universal application of grading allocation**

Chair: Dr Geoffrey Harris
Chief Executive: Sir Ian Carruthers OBE
The majority of issues that are likely to occur can be found in Appendix 2 together with a suggested level (level 1, 2 or 3) and is used by the quality team to ensure the consistent application of the gradings process.

All issues which present a patient safety concern should be raised immediately with the relevant Trust Medical Director or Chief Executive by the originator of the issue.

Resolving Issues

All issues will be reviewed by Schools and Trusts as part of the annual reporting process or more frequently if required. All issues require an action plan, a resolution date and a review of progress.

The timeframe for producing an action plan on all issues should be four weeks from the point at which the issue was raised. The issue may be raised in a number of ways including; in writing as part of a visit report; as an identified outlier on the Trainee Survey results (below outlier); or as part of a letter from the Deanery. All action plans must state who is dealing with the issue, what they will do and when it will be completed. (IAR.ww Issue Action Review: who, what, when).

The timeframe for resolution or resolution date is determined by the issue originator.

The review of an issue may be a re-visit, a written report, an informal meeting or telephone conversation or other form of review, to be determined by the originator. The purpose is to ensure that the issue(s) are resolved so that the originator can advise the Quality Management Board who can then re-grade the post appropriately.

Issues that are no longer regarded as a ‘live’ by the Trust or School they relate to can be classed as resolved if evidence to support this is referenced to the Deanery either via a written update or presented at a Confirm and Challenge meeting. To ensure an appropriate audit trail these records will still be held within the Deanery evidence base but be classed as ‘resolved’, not requiring future status updates.

Insoluble Issues – it is recognised that some issues are out of the direct control of a department or Trust or may be “insoluble”. These issues should be logged and an action plan formed to ameliorate the impact however it is acknowledged that a full resolution may not be possible.

Chair: Dr Geoffrey Harris
Chief Executive: Sir Ian Carruthers OBE
Post Grade Reviews

All D graded posts will be reviewed by the Deanery Quality Management Board after three months, and all C graded posts at six month intervals (or at the nearest Quality Management Board). Prior to the Board review Trusts and Schools will be required to provide the Deanery with an update on the issues and actions taken so that the Board can make an informed decision on the next steps required and if the post can be regraded.

Visits that take place to review the quality of training may also put forward recommendations of a post grade amendment. These will be reviewed by the Quality Management Board to decide on the next steps required and whether re-grading is appropriate.

For A*/A/B graded posts, unless specific evidence is presented to the Deanery (for example via a visit report) that the post grade should be reviewed, these grades will be reviewed annually at the School Confirm and Challenge meetings.

Disputes/appeals

Quality post grades should not normally present difficulty given the protocols in this document and the opportunity for discussion at the Confirm and Challenge meeting. However, if agreement cannot be reached, an appeal to a representative subgroup of the Deanery Quality Management Board can be made. The Quality and Workforce Manager should be contacted in this instance.

Roles and Responsibilities

Issue Originator

This is the person originally raising the issue or the source of the data. It may be a DME, HoS, Training Programme Director (TPD), Departmental Lead for Education, trainee, via the GMC or other surveys or some other source.

The issue originator (or in the case of issues identified via a trainee or the survey, the Deanery Quality and Workforce Manager) is the named person who will receive the action plan. They will usually be a DME or TPD or HoS or Quality and Workforce Manager.
Departmental Lead for Education

Departmental leads for education should focus on, and have a plan, to resolve all issues identified within their department as soon as possible after the issue is identified. The Departmental Lead for Education should pass this information to their Trust DME for their annual report to the Deanery or more frequently if indicated in the action plan and required to ensure a post reviews by the Deanery Quality Management Board.

Directors of Medical Education

DME's/Clinical Tutors should maintain an overview of the posts they are responsible for and will report on the issues within their Trust in their annual report for the Deanery. As part of this annual return all Trusts are also requested to provide post gradings they feel are appropriate to feed into the provisional gradings exercise at the Deanery prior to the Confirm and Challenge meetings. DME’s may be asked to attend such meetings if required. DME updates on posts being reviewed by the Quality Management Board may be requested throughout the year.

Heads of Schools

HoS should maintain an overview the posts they are responsible for on an annual basis. They will report on the issues within their School in their annual report for the Deanery. As part of this annual return all Schools are also requested to provide post gradings they feel are appropriate to feed into the provisional gradings exercise at the Deanery prior to the Confirm and Challenge meetings. HoS should ensure robust quality management processes are in place in their School. They will represent the School at the Confirm and Challenge meeting, agreeing final post grades or presenting robust evidence to challenge a draft grade. HoS updates on posts being reviewed by the Quality Management Board may be requested throughout the year.

Training Programme Directors

TPD’s should maintain an overview the posts they are responsible. They will report on the issues within their programme to their HoS to feed into the annual School report for the Deanery or more frequently if indicated in the action plan and required to ensure a post reviews by the Deanery Quality Management Board.

Deanery Staff

Deanery staff are involved in the quality management of education and training.
The **Quality & Workforce Manager** ensures each issue is being monitored through to resolution on behalf of all the educators and leads involved; is responsible for the Deanery quality grading process including triangulating and analysing all quality intelligence held and determining a provisional grading for all training posts; and ensures all grades are reviewed at appropriate times in line with the Deanery monitoring cycle and that a ‘live’ grading tracker is developed and maintained to directly inform the Quality Management Board.

The Quality and Workforce Manager reviews the GMC national survey and provides analysis and reports of the published survey results, producing summary reports and accompanying guidance to key stakeholders and identifying and reporting any trends to the GMC via the Deanery reporting cycle. Trusts and Schools provide an update on below outliers identified; confirming to the Quality and Workforce Manager those which are considered to be issues and so should be recorded and tracked through to resolution.

The Quality and Workforce Manager is responsible for the Deanery Confirm and Challenge meetings cycle with each School, determining provisional grading for all training posts, presenting and finalising these with each Head of School on an annual basis. These meetings are chaired by the Associate Dean for Quality. They also ensure appropriate communication of all grades to Trust Medical Directors and education leads and follow up on any action points.

The Quality and Workforce Manager is responsible for managing any appeals to post grades and setting up the sub group of the Quality Management Board to review these.

The **Associate Dean for Quality** chairs the Quality Management Board and takes an overview on quality management for the Deanery.

The **Programme Managers** work closely with the HoS and the Quality and Workforce Manager to support the completion of annual School reports, the Confirm and Challenge Meeting and requested updates for the Quality Management Board.

**The Quality Management Board**

The Board meets on a quarterly basis and reviews those post grades that are due to be considered, with a focus on serious and significant issues and subsequent actions taken to resolve these. Where it is deemed that insufficient progress is being made the Board will make recommendations to the Postgraduate Dean on the next steps to be taken.
The Board will receive and review applications for Deanery triggered visit requests.

The Board will be responsible for signing off all Deanery policy documents.

Guidance Review

This policy was originally on September 2011 and revised in September 2012. The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Further Reading

*Quality Management Board Terms of Reference (Wessex Deanery June 2012)*
*Confirm and Challenge Meetings – A Guidance Document (Wessex Deanery September 2012)*
*The Trainee Doctor (GMC, 2011)*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post Grade</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Review</th>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Provisional Grading Calculation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A* (Dark Green)</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Annually at Confirm and Challenge meeting</td>
<td>All issues dealt with as they arise AND positive evidence of notable practice.</td>
<td>Posts meets all training standards, reviews its own practice and resolves issues as they arise AND demonstrates positive evidence of notable practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A (Green)</td>
<td>Satisfactory Approved</td>
<td>Annually at Confirm and Challenge meeting</td>
<td>Clear action plan for all issues and no risk to the long term education of all trainees</td>
<td>May have up to three Level 1 (Minor) issues which are being actively addressed (evidenced by a robust action plan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B (Yellow)</td>
<td>Problems Conditional Approval</td>
<td>Annually at Confirm and Challenge meeting</td>
<td>Issues being addressed, but these may affect the education of the majority of trainees. The impact of difficult to resolve issues have been minimised.</td>
<td>May have a single Level 2 (Moderate) issue AND/OR up to five Level 1 (Minor) issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C (Orange)</td>
<td>Significant Problems Conditional Approval</td>
<td>Six months (or nearest meeting) by Quality Management Board</td>
<td>Significant issue(s) being addressed, but which are likely to affect the education of all trainees.</td>
<td>Either up to five Level 2 (Moderate issues) AND/OR more than five Level 1 (Minor) issues AND/OR one Level 3 (Major concern) issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D (Red)</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>Three months (or nearest meeting) by Quality Management Board</td>
<td>Significant issue(s) not being addressed and affecting the education of all trainees. Training will be withdrawn if not addressed within an agreed period.</td>
<td>EITHER a mixture of the above with no action plan or evidence of attempt to resolve OR more than five Level 2 (Moderate issues) (with or without an action plan) OR two or more Level 3 (Major concern) issues (with or without an action plan)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Issue Levels – for Deanery use when provisionally grading posts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minor – The education is below the standard expected but issues are unlikely to affect the education of all trainees long term.</td>
<td>Moderate – The education of the trainees is at risk. These issues may affect the education of all trainees long term.</td>
<td>Major concern – The wellbeing of the trainee or patients is at risk. These are ‘significant issues’ likely to affect the education of all trainees. May lead to the withdrawal of posts if not resolved.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2 – Issue Level Categories

These are used by the Deanery Quality team to ensure consistent application of the provisional gradings process on an annual basis.

Level 3 Major Concern Issues

Issues in this category are of sufficient concern which may lead to the withdrawal of posts.

*The wellbeing of the trainee or patients is at risk.* These are significant issues likely to affect the education of all trainees.

Examples

- No educational supervisor
- Absence of clinical or educational supervision
- Overwhelming workload, working hours or work intensity
- High risk of clinical errors
- Clear evidence of bullying, harassment or discrimination
- Absence of handover, leading to risk to patients
- Trainee(s) taking consent beyond their experience
- Large parts of the curriculum not being delivered
- No access to occupational health or counselling services
- Continued non compliance with the European Working Time Regulations

Level 2 Moderate Issues

*The education of the trainee is at risk.* Issues may affect the education of all trainees long term

Examples

- Absence of induction
- Absence of appraisal
- Ongoing Inadequate supervision
- Absence of teaching
- Absence of study leave
- Work intensity or workload significantly affects education
- Poor RITA outcomes for majority of trainees
- Several aspects of curriculum not being met
- No access to weekly hour of education
- Trainees not released for educational events

Chair: Dr Geoffrey Harris
Chief Executive: Sir Ian Carruthers OBE
- Consistently poor handover
- Inadequate learning opportunities
- No access to career advice
- No opportunity for clinical audit
- Educational supervisor not qualified for role
- Deficiency in consent training
- Difficulty in maintaining compliance with European Working Time Regulations
- Indications or reports of bullying/harassment or discrimination that require further investigation
- Concurrent GMC survey below outliers evident in three concurrent surveys
- Delayed or incomplete transfer of information from medical school
  (Foundation training only)

**Level 1 Minor Issues**

Education is below the standard expected, but issues are unlikely to affect the education of all trainees long term

**Examples**

Not reaching the expected standard for:

- Learning resources including access to library facilities, information resources, internet, clinical skills facilities, wet labs, meeting rooms or AV equipment required
- Learning opportunities and curriculum coverage
- Induction
- Appraisal
- Teaching
- Supervision – educational or clinical
- Attendance at weekly hour of education
- Release to attend educational events
- Difficulty in obtaining study leave
- Lack of simulation opportunities