



T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Lewis Macdonald MSP
Convener
Health and Sport Committee

By email

17th December 2020

Dear Lewis

The University of St. Andrews (Degrees in Medicine and Dentistry) Bill

Further to the evidence I provided to the Committee on 08 December 2020, I am writing to provide you with additional information.

Workplace backgrounds of Scottish Graduate Entry Medicine (ScotGEM) students

I undertook to provide the Committee with information on the workplace backgrounds of ScotGEM students given that it is the first graduate entry programme for medicine in Scotland. As the following information demonstrates, ScotGEM students are recruited from a wide range of backgrounds.

The workplace backgrounds for the first three ScotGEM cohorts collectively (2018 to 2020) are as follows:

- 36.5% healthcare;
- 30.5% students who applied directly to ScotGEM;
- 18.6% 'other professions' such as teacher, lawyer, vet, customer services assistant, land consultant, chartered accountant, sales representative, policy advisor and transport manager;
- 10.8% researchers in positions such as post-doctoral research assistant, research fellow and research analyst; and,
- 3.6% with an 'unknown' workplace background as this information was not disclosed.

For those with a healthcare background (36.5%) the specific type of healthcare profession is as follows:

- 49.2% healthcare assistants;
- 21.3% pharmacists;
- 6.5% radiographers;
- 5% paramedics;
- 5% dieticians;

- 5% podiatrists;
- 1.6% nurses;
- 1.6% optometrists;
- 1.6% phlebotomists;
- 1.6% occupational therapists; and
- 1.6 clinical exercise specialists.

Clinical research funding

I would also like to take the opportunity to clarify the position regarding the University's ability to compete for clinical research funding in its own right. This would not be impacted by the Bill itself, but, instead, relates to the separate matter of the University's ability to award its own Primary Medical Qualification (PMQ).

The University is currently limited in its ability to access clinical research funding as it is unable to offer clinical teaching in medicine. The University would only be able to access the entire range of clinical research funding in its own right if it offered its own PMQ degree and delivered clinical teaching in medicine. The University may, however, have access to some clinical research funding by virtue of the ScotGEM degree if it is jointly awarded. This is likely to require to be jointly pursued by Dundee and St. Andrews universities under the specific arrangements for the ScotGEM programme.

Whilst the Bill would remove the legislative prohibition which prevents the University from being able to offer PMQ degrees, the Bill is not determinative of this ability. As I had advised the Committee, and as is detailed in the Policy Memorandum to the Bill, whether any Higher Education Institution is able to offer a degree in either of the controlled subject of medicine or dentistry is subject to separate financial and regulatory controls and decision-making processes involving the Scottish Government, Scottish Funding Council, NHS Education Scotland, the General Medical Council and others.

I trust that the Committee will find this helpful.

JEANE FREEMAN