

***NORTHERN IRELAND MEDICAL AND
DENTAL TRAINING AGENCY***

***STRATEGIC PLAN
2009-2012***

December 2008

**Northern Ireland Medical and
Dental Training Agency**

Strategic Plan 2009 - 2012

MISSION STATEMENT

***“Excellence in learning, ensuring
outstanding patient care”***

1. INTRODUCTION

The Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency (the “Agency”) supports the Northern Ireland Deanery in the delivery of postgraduate and continuing medical and dental education and training. To reflect the different training pathways the Agency is divided into three functional departments for the delivery of training in general practice, dentistry and secondary care. Overall management responsibility rests with the Postgraduate Medical Dean/Chief Executive. The Agency’s organisational structure facilitates the delivery of postgraduate and continuing medical and dental education (Appendix 1).

The Agency has a significant role to play in deciding how best training can be delivered within the new organisational settings under the Review of Public Administration. It will be looking towards developing stronger partnerships across all the stakeholders involved in the planning and delivery of education and training and will work with the five new Trusts to develop an educational governance framework and supporting structures for medical and dental education. It is recognised that training and service are inextricably linked and training will continue to depend on active involvement in undertaking tasks necessary to provide a service. By the same token service provision must be complementary to the career development of junior doctors and dentists and training must not suffer because the service is driven by a desire to meet targets.

The training of doctors and dentists is an investment in the health and care of the population and as such should be highly valued. The Agency’s role is to provide a supply of appropriately trained doctors and dentists to meet future service needs. It will work with the local education providers to make sure that the duties, working hours and supervision of trainees are consistent with the delivery of high quality safe patient care and that there are procedures in place to address any concerns about patient safety. It will ensure that trainees are equipped with the communication skills to help patients share in the information available about their condition.

The Agency, in seeking to raise the profile of postgraduate medical and dental education and training, will create an environment that encourages training, maximises training opportunities and reflects the needs and aspirations of trainees. It will ensure that junior doctors and dentists receive and continue to receive the work experience and depth of training that they require to develop expertise. It will support trainees in developing a better understanding of primary care, secondary care and the health and social care systems in which they work.

Although responsibility for maintaining clinical standards rests with the chief executives of the Health and Social Care organisations the Agency will play its part in making sure that doctors and dentists are competent to carry out their work within a framework of clinical governance. It must endeavour to ensure that their training meets the requirements of the Postgraduate Medical Education and Training Board (PMETB), that the methods of assessing their

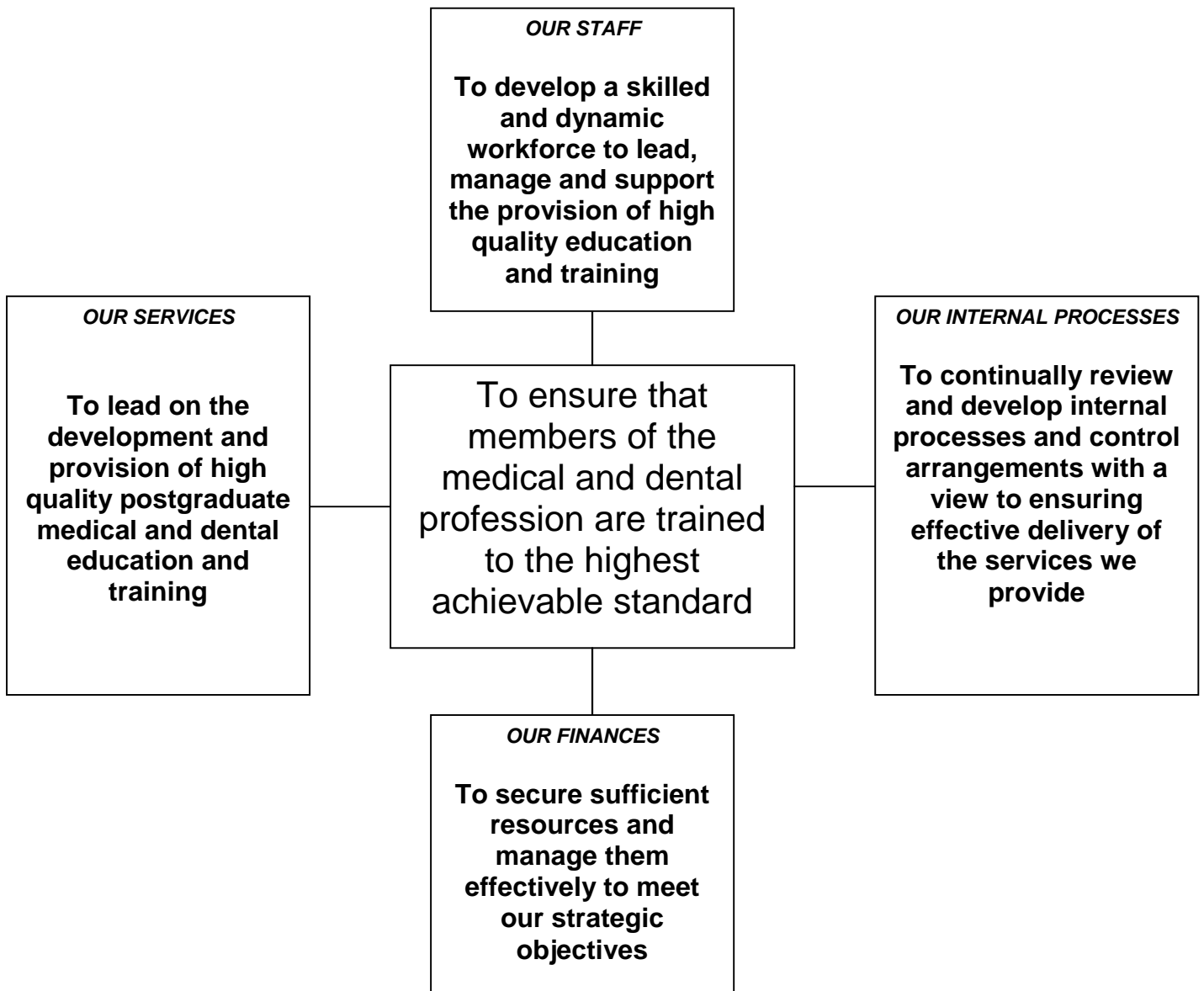
performance and their progress are timely, reliable and fair and that arrangements are in place for offering appropriate support to those who are not performing satisfactorily or have special needs.

The Agency, in meeting its statutory and regulatory obligations, recognises that there are risks. It will, however endeavour to identify, eliminate and control risks through a comprehensive and robust system of internal controls.

Over the next three years a number of factors will be instrumental in shaping the development of postgraduate medical and dental education and the Agency's ability to function as a public authority and fulfil its statutory obligations.

2. CORPORATE GOALS

The Agency has identified a set of corporate goals to guide us over the three years commencing April 2009. They will be the drivers of our future performance. The goals relate to our services, our internal processes, our staff and our finances.



3. OUR SERVICES

To lead on the development and provision of high quality postgraduate medical and dental education and training

Strategic Objectives

3.1 *Ensure structures and processes are in place to enable PMETB standards to be demonstrated for all training programmes and trainees*

3.1.1 Implementing Modernising Medical Careers

Modernising Medical Careers (MMC) is a programme of radical change that aims to drive up the quality of care for patients through reform and improvement in postgraduate medical education and training.

MMC aims to improve patient care by delivering a modernised and focused career structure for doctors through a major reform of postgraduate medical education. It aims to develop demonstrably competent doctors who are skilled at communicating and working as effective members of a team.

MMC aims to provide consistent national standards for training through better-structured and quality assured training programmes with competency-based curricula approved by the independent Postgraduate and Medical Education and Training Board (PMETB).

3.1.2 Quality Management Processes

The Postgraduate Medical and Education Training Board (PMETB) is the regulator for postgraduate medical education in the UK. It has set standards that must be met and is responsible for curriculum approval and assessment, quality assuring and evaluating the management of postgraduate medical training and setting the overarching principles against which selection into specialty training must operate.

The standards for training for the Foundation Programme have been agreed in collaboration with the General Medical Council (GMC), which is responsible for doctors in the first year of the Foundation Programme. PMETB and the GMC are jointly responsible for quality assuring foundation training through the QAFP (Quality Assurance of the Foundation Programme) process.

The Agency is responsible for quality managing the delivery and outcomes of postgraduate medical training and will work closely with the providers of education to ensure that the standards are met.

The PMETB “domains” that must be reflected in the Agency’s quality management processes and for which, through each Specialty School, the Agency will be accountable are:

1. Patient Safety – *the duties, working hours and supervision of trainees must be consistent with the delivery of high quality safe patient care.*
2. Quality assurance, review and evaluation – *postgraduate training must be quality managed locally by Deaneries working with others as appropriate but within an overall delivery system for postgraduate medical education for which Deans are responsible.*
3. Equality and Diversity and Opportunity – *postgraduate training must be fair and based on principles of equality.*
4. Recruitment, selection and appointment – *processes for recruitment, selection and appointment must be open, fair and effective.*
5. Delivery of curriculum including assessment – *the requirements set out in the curriculum must be delivered and assessed.*
6. Support and development of trainees, trainers and local faculty – *trainees must be supported to acquire the necessary skills and experience through induction, effective educational supervision, an appropriate workload, personal support and time to learn.*
7. Management of education and training – *education and training must be planned and maintained through transparent processes which show who is responsible at each stage.*
8. Educational resources and capacity - *the educational facilities, infrastructure and leadership must be adequate to deliver the curriculum.*
9. Outcomes – *the impact of the standards must be tracked against trainee outcomes and clear linkages should be reflected in developing standards.*

PMETB will require evidence from several sources to determine whether the standards have been met to include minimum dataset requirements, Agency self-assessments and action plans, reports of PMETB visits to the Agency and education providers, annual trainee and trainer surveys. To this end the Agency will need to ensure that the structures in place for the delivery of postgraduate medical education and training are sufficiently robust and that the performance of the education providers is assessed across all the domains in the PMETB standards.

The Agency will work with the education providers to enhance awareness of the new training structures and communicate regional policy on recruitment and selection.

The new Associate Dean for Secondary Care will be responsible for developing and implementing the Deanery's quality management processes in accordance with the standards and requirements of PMETB. He will work with the local education providers to ensure that structures are in place to support and develop all doctors who supervise trainees.

Educational contracts between the Agency and the providers of postgraduate medical and dental education will be drawn up and reviewed on an annual basis. The contracts will set out the numbers of training posts within the provider units, the standards to which postgraduate medical education must be delivered and the monitoring arrangements.

3.1.3 Appraisal

Over the next few years, the General Medical Council will be changing the way doctors within the UK are regulated to practise medicine.

The first change will come in the autumn of 2009 when the GMC will introduce licences to practise. All doctors will be required by law to hold a licence if they wish to exercise the privileges currently reserved for registered medical practitioners. After licensing, a new system called revalidation will begin that will require doctors to renew their licence to practise every five years.

The Agency will work with the DHSSPS and the Trusts to implement the appraisal arrangements and ensure that robust processes are in place to support revalidation. It will support doctors and dentists with their continuing professional development, in line with revalidation requirements, through the development of appraisal and the identification of educational needs.

The procedures in place for the assessment and appraisal of trainees are time-consuming and keeping up to date with the procedures and documentation requires considerable commitment from the trainers. Due allowance is currently not made for this and it is essential that time and resources are made available for the provision of teaching and the assessment and appraisal of junior doctors.

The General Dental Council (GDC) is also developing a revalidation system which will require all dental professionals to demonstrate periodically that they continue to meet the standard necessary to maintain their registration. The Agency is of the view that it is best placed to co-ordinate and manage an appraisal process in respect of

general dental practitioners and will be developing a business case to support the GDC's revalidation requirements for dentists.

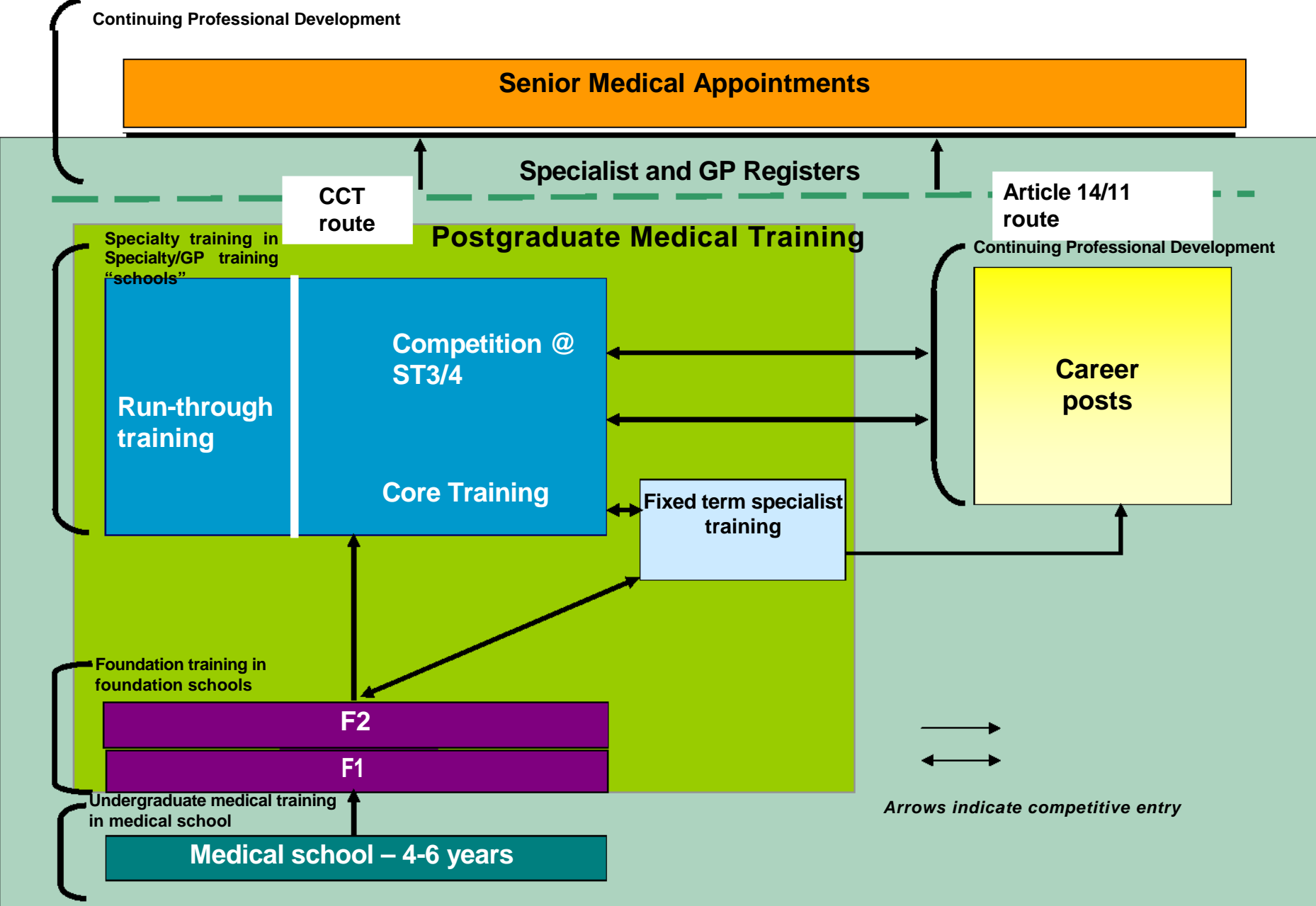
3.1.4 Workforce Planning

It is recognised that key service developments will only succeed if they are matched with effective planning to ensure a workforce with the necessary capacity, skills and diversity. In some specialties there is difficulty in linking the required number of trainees to anticipated consultant vacancies and there have been instances where no local candidates have been available to apply for consultant posts. It is important that the pool of training posts adequately reflects the numbers required to provide for consultant vacancies and new consultant posts. It is also essential that training and service demands are more effectively planned and managed particularly in light of the New Deal arrangements and our commitment to implement the European Working Time Directive (2009).

The Agency will need to be pro-active in engaging the health and social care organisations and the DHSSPS in partnerships to plan the future specialist workforce and determine training opportunities accordingly. It will also continue to work with the Medical School to develop academic training pathways.

The change in the gender balance of the medical and dental workforce also needs to be reflected in future workforce planning. As the ratio of females graduating from medical and dental schools continues to rise so do the number of women doctors/dentists in the workforce. It is anticipated that an increasing number will seek training opportunities, which are flexible and more family friendly. The Agency will aim to ensure that that doctors and dentists are provided, where possible, with the opportunity to train on a less than full-time basis and that different ways of working are explored.

UK MMC Career Framework



3.2 *Ensure that requirements set out in approved curricula are delivered and assessed and the systems in place for assessing competence are fit for purpose*

3.2.1 Foundation Training

MMC has led to the creation of two-year foundation schools that require doctors to demonstrate their abilities and competence against set standards and provide doctors with an opportunity to develop experience in a range of specialties. This offers doctors the chance to gain insight into possible career options and encompasses the generic professional skills applicable to all areas of medicine such as audit, team work, time management, communication and IT skills.

The Agency will work with all stakeholders ensure that there is no conflict between the provision of training and service delivery. The Foundation Board will continue to meet on a regular basis to review the regional induction and generic skills programmes and to select and review training opportunities and suitable placements within both hospital and general practice settings.

Foundation Programme Directors and educational supervisors will be selected through a formal recruitment process, remunerated by the Agency and jointly accountable to the Postgraduate Dean and the Trust Chief Executive. Foundation Programme Directors and educational supervisors will be assigned to individual trainees and their roles and responsibilities clearly defined. Job descriptions will be provided to Directors of Medical Education for dissemination within Trusts to ensure that their roles and responsibilities are clearly understood and factored into job plans.

As workplace-based assessment and feedback are central to the philosophy of foundation training, the Agency will ensure that both trainees and trainers are appropriately trained in the use of the assessment tools. It will also ensure that all foundation programme directors, educational supervisors and lay representatives involved in the recruitment of foundation doctors are fully trained in the national recruitment process and are trained in equality and diversity.

3.2.2 Specialty Training

Specialty and General Practice training will be streamlined to deliver specialists who are judgement-safe and able to deliver the care that is needed to treat patients, without compromising in any way on standards. Structured postgraduate medical training is dependent on having curricula which clearly set out the standard and competences, an assessment strategy to know whether these standards have been achieved and an infrastructure which supports a training environment within the context of service delivery. To support the introduction of

new specialty curricula and assessment methodologies the Agency will provide a structure for educational governance through the development of its postgraduate Specialty Schools. Ten Specialty Schools have been set up by the Agency to reflect the different specialty groups ie medicine; surgery; anaesthesia and intensive care, emergency medicine; psychiatry; paediatrics; obstetrics and gynaecology; radiology; pathology; and general practice. Heads and Deputy Heads have been appointed for each School and will take a proactive and strategic role in the development, delivery and quality management of postgraduate training across the Deanery. They will meet regularly as a forum to provide an exchange of information and identify the factors which impact on the development of postgraduate training and education.

The Agency will be responsible for the development and implementation of structures and processes to ensure that every trainee has a personal development plan and learning objectives, that the trainee's progress is assessed and measured using a range of validated assessment tools and that the outcomes are fed into the appraisal process. Educational supervisors will be responsible for bringing together the outcomes of the annual review and conducting the annual work place based appraisal.

Systems will be developed to monitor the progress of trainees and identify trainees who are not performing satisfactorily and who may need further careers advice and support. The Agency will also ensure that programme directors and educational supervisors are trained to carry out their duties effectively. A regional "Training the Trainer" programme will continue to be developed, refined and rolled out to consultants and specialty trainees.

3.2.3 Delivering the Medical Leadership Curriculum

A new curriculum has been developed by the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges that details the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours to be achieved and consolidated as the doctor progresses through postgraduate training. The leadership curriculum is awaiting approval by PMETB and if agreed will be introduced for all doctors in training in addition to the generic skills and management development programmes. This will be significant challenge for the Agency to deliver.

3.2.4 Implementing Modernising Dental Careers

Modernising Dental Careers (MDC) envisages improved care for patients where clinical governance and patient safety are central to modern practice. The introduction of a two year structured training programme will bring significant improvements to career pathways and will have significant advantages for the dental workforce within the UK.

The dental foundation programme curriculum will provide the framework around which an assessment process can be developed. The system of assessment will be underpinned by those directly involved in the foundation programme ie trainees, trainers and educational supervisors. The Guidelines for Dental Educators published by the Committee of Postgraduate Dental Deans and Directors (COPDEND) will provide a framework for developing the standards for educators of the dental team.

The Agency is encouraged by the recent investment in Dentistry within Northern Ireland and particularly the additional funding for vocational training allowances which will support the expansion of training places and help ensure an adequate supply of dental trainees into the Health Service.

3.3 *Ensure that careers information and advice is easily accessible and that support systems are in place for doctors and dentists in difficulty and those with disabilities or special needs*

3.3.1 Careers Information and Advice

The changes in the structure and governance of postgraduate medical and dental education have made it essential for medical students and foundation doctors to start planning their career pathway as early as possible. To enable them to make informed decisions about their future career they will need to have access to information regarding the various specialties, their programmes of training, competition ratios, entry requirements and the application process.

The Associate Dean for Careers and Personal Development will be instrumental in developing the Agency's careers management strategy and ensuring careers information and guidance is widely accessible through a variety of methods. These will include the delivery of a careers management module as part of the generic skills programme, the provision of career fairs and a handbook for senior medical students and foundation trainees.

3.3.2 Managing Doctors and Dentists in Difficulty

The Associate Dean for Careers and Personal Development will also provide a strategic lead on matters concerning doctors and dentists in difficulty. The Agency will work collectively with all stakeholders to ensure that support is available for trainees who are under-performing or who have special needs due to disability or ill-health. The Agency's policy in relation to the management of doctors and dentists in difficulty will be disseminated to all trainees and those involved in their training and supervision and management of their training programmes.

3.4 *Ensure that medical and dental practitioners and dental care professionals are supported in their learning and development*

3.4.1 Continuing Professional Development

The Agency has a responsibility for leading and co-ordinating the continuing professional development of general medical and dental practitioners and dental care professionals through the provision of continuing education courses, higher professional education programmes and master classes.

The Agency aims to develop its role in supporting and facilitating learning and development through the implementation of a course management booking and payment system.

4. OUR INTERNAL PROCESSES

To continually review and develop internal processes and control arrangements with a view to ensuring effective delivery of the services we provide

Strategic Objectives

4.1 ***To work in partnership with key stakeholders to manage the recruitment and selection of doctors in training***

4.1.2 **Recruitment and Selection**

The processes of recruitment continue to change and develop each year informed by feedback from the Agency staff, junior doctors and representatives of the medical profession.

The Agency will endeavour to ensure effective delivery of recruitment to foundation programmes in line with the national recruitment process.

Specialty Schools will be central to discussions about future approaches to the selection of specialty trainees and will contribute to the development and implementation of robust selection methodology. In managing the selection of doctors in training the Agency will need to ensure that the right number of doctors with the appropriate level of experience and skills are recruited to the specialties and that procedures conform to good recruitment practice, are fair, transparent and concur with the principles of equality and diversity.

Local recruitment arrangements, with the exception of general practice, will continue to be applied for selection into specialty training programmes. A number of specialities have indicated their desire to move to national recruitment in 2009 and 2010. It is not the intention of the Agency to be involved in national recruitment for specialty training although it recognises that participation in a nationally co-ordinated process with local selection may be appropriate in certain specialties.

The Agency remains concerned about the numbers of unfilled training posts. The reasons for this are manifold but are primarily due to the changes in the immigration rules which have prevented doctors from outside the UK/EEA from accessing postgraduate medical training. The continued increase in the number of female doctors entering the medical profession, resulting in vacancies arising due to maternity leave, and the increasing numbers of trainees taking time out of programme has further compounded the problem. The Agency will work with the Trusts to fill gaps in the system and advise on alternative recruitment arrangements. The Agency will also work with the DHSSPS in seeking to find a solution to the difficulties of recruitment

and attract good quality international medical graduates to Northern Ireland.

4.2 *To provide assurance to the audit committee and the Board that identified weaknesses have been addressed and that controls are operational across the organisation*

4.2.1 Risk Management

The Agency will need to ensure that systems are in place to provide assurance on standards and enable continuous quality improvement across the organisation.

The Agency, in meeting its strategic objectives, will seek to identify and minimise risks that have the potential to harm its staff and stakeholders or have serious financial or business consequences. This will be done through a robust system of internal financial and organisational controls and governance arrangements.

The Agency recognises the need to ensure that it has staff in place with the appropriate skills to identify and assess the potential for risk to arise and ultimately manage the risk.

4.3 *To review and develop the Agency's information systems*

4.2.1 Monitoring

The Agency must be able to ensure that it can respond swiftly and accurately to requests for information about doctors and dentists in training, their career plans and their training posts. It will need to ensure that an appropriate data base is in place for recording information on foundation and specialty trainees and their training record, to include posts, training providers, assessment outcomes and study leave approved, which is consistent with the minimum data set required by PMETB and which interfaces with both regional and national application systems for recruitment.

4.2.2 Processing of Information

IT controls will need to be in place for the protection of data and staff made fully aware of their responsibilities in relation to the handling of data and the processing of personal and sensitive information in line with the Data Protection and Freedom of Information Acts.

A number of initiatives are in place to provide greater access to information through the development of the NIMDTA website and the implementation of a centralised records management system

4.2.3 Equality and Diversity

The Agency understands that mainstreaming equality through Section 75 is an important statutory undertaking and will aim to ensure that equality is made a central and integral part of its policy making and functional activities and that its duties are performed by its staff in a manner that supports and promotes the Agency's commitment to equality and diversity.

Agency staff and others acting on behalf of the Agency will ensure that it promotes equality of opportunity and good relations in carrying out its business. It will continue to collaborate with other regional health and social care organisations to share resources and work jointly on the statutory equality obligations. The Agency will ensure that it seeks the views of stakeholders on any proposals or course of action that have relevance to its equality obligations and may have an impact on the nine groups of people specified within Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act.

It will make certain that training in equality awareness is provided for all staff within the organisation and will seek to identify areas of vulnerability to legal challenge and take appropriate action. In particular it will ensure that the recruitment process for junior doctors and dentists in training provides equality of opportunity and reflects best practice. It will also take account of trainees' specific needs to ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for those with health issues and disabilities and that requests for less than full-time training are considered and supported, where possible, in line with equality and fair employment legislation.

The Agency will ensure that all members of recruitment and selection panels have received training in recruitment and selection to include equality awareness and that Trusts are made aware that all consultants involved in the training of junior doctors and dentists are trained in equality, diversity and human rights legislation which is kept up to date and refreshed every three years.

5. OUR STAFF

To develop a skilled and dynamic workforce to lead, manage and support the provision of high quality education and training.

Strategic Objectives

- 5.1 *To strengthen capacity and capability within the Agency in line with its range of work and professional requirements***

5.1.1 Staffing Infrastructure

To meet the requirements of PMETB as the regulatory body, the Agency will need to develop a staffing infrastructure which is sustainable and that will deliver postgraduate medical education and administer the recruitment process for selection into foundation and specialty training.

Staffing levels will also need to be adequate to support the Agency in fulfilling its statutory obligations and achieving compliance with controls assurance standards.

5.1.2 Training and Development of Staff

We will need to ensure that all staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and are suitably qualified, skilled, adequately trained and appropriately managed to provide an effective service. Annual appraisal, incorporating the knowledge and skills framework for administrative staff, will be rolled out to all Agency employees and training and development needs identified and incorporated into individual personal development plans.

5.2 *To create a culture which facilitates openness and honesty, provides a harmonious and safe working environment and supports staff through organisational change*

5.2.1 Staff Welfare

The Agency is committed to the welfare of staff through the provision of flexible working opportunities to support work/life balance. A harmonious and safe working environment for Agency employees that conforms to health and safety standards, equality and disability legislation and which facilitates training is essential for the effective delivery of postgraduate medical and dental education.

5.2.2 Review of Public Administration

The Agency awaits clarification as to where it sits within the RPA process and the Regional Business Services Organisation (RBSO). The introduction of the RBSO may have implications for the Agency in relation to the delivery of its current functions.

The Agency is also concerned about the proposed job losses and the savings required to be made within Health and Social Care. This will impact on the Agency's ability to ensure that its infrastructure and staffing levels are adequate to deliver postgraduate medical and dental training to the standards required by PMETB and to fulfil the Agency's statutory requirements.

6. OUR FINANCES

To secure sufficient resources and manage them effectively to meet our strategic objectives.

Strategic Objective

6.1 To ensure that the Agency achieves a break-even position in 2009/10 in the context of its business and budgetary plans

6.1.2 Financial Management

The Agency will continue to operate a strict system of internal financial controls to include both internal and external audit scrutiny. The Audit Committee will review the work of internal and external audit and ensure that suitable arrangements are in place within the organisation to support value for money in the use of public funds and that risk management processes are embedded across the organisation.

6.1.3 Resources

Improvements in training will not be possible unless sufficient funding and protected time is identified to support those working on behalf of the Agency. The Agency will continue to work with the Trusts to ensure that educational supervisors are supported in the delivery of the new specialty training curricula and the implementation of assessment and appraisal and that consultant time and resources for delivering workplace based assessments are incorporated into job plans.

The Agency is concerned about the lack of appropriate accommodation to support the planned expansion of general practice training numbers to include GP placements for Foundation trainees. It is hoped that the planned development of large multi-purpose Health and Care Centres in Northern will address some of the problems in the long term. The Agency will continue to work with the DHSSPS and the profession to identify solutions for the next three years.

6.1.4 Efficiency Savings

The Agency, in line with all organisations funded from the Departmental budget is required to make efficiency savings of £158k in 2009/10 and £259K in 2010/11 from its operational budget. It will be drawing up an efficiency delivery plan, detailing the options for meeting its efficiency targets and the risks involved, for consideration by the Department and the Minister. The plans are expected to maintain or improve existing services. The Agency is concerned about its ability to deliver the changes without a reduction in staffing levels.

7. COMMUNICATING THE STRATEGY

The Agency will communicate its strategy both internally within the organisation and externally to a wide audience of its stakeholders through a variety of communication mechanisms, including staff training induction programmes, email and the internet.

The Agency recognises the need to continue to strive to improve communication with all stakeholders, including the local education providers, Queens University Belfast, the British Medical and Dental Associations and patient support groups. It will ensure that the information and communications material produced is widely available and easily accessible.

Appendix 1

Management and Accountability

