

Regulatory Issues – The Medical Council

Professor Bill Powderly - Chair of the Professional Development Committee of the Medical Council began with an explanation of the 2007 Medical Practitioners' Act which gives the Medical Council a pivotal role in the education and training of doctors in Ireland. Its responsibility is best understood when it is realized that it is the authority in Ireland that sets standards in medical education, accredits bodies that provides the education (both basic medical degrees and post-degree professional training), accredits the programmes of education those bodies provide and inspects and approves the facilities in which education is provided.

The Council has approached this role from the perspective of ensuring that Ireland's medical educational structures provide a guarantee of competence to the public. If professional competence assurance is about providing the public an assurance that doctors registered in Ireland are maintaining their professional skills and knowledge, then medical education and training is about ensuring that those professional skills, knowledge and competencies are developed in a satisfactory manner in the first place.

Professor Powderly emphasised that this all-encompassing role cannot be delivered solely by the Council and it will need the co-operation of all interested parties – medical schools, post-graduate training bodies and the HSE to ensure that Irish medical education remains at the highest quality and continues to be internationally recognized.