

MSc courses available at Royal Postgraduate Medical School

- immunology
- infectious diseases
- surgical science
- human reproductive biology
- toxicology
- neuroendocrinology*
- haematology
- histopathology
- nuclear medicine*
- molecular medicine

*These MSc courses are run in conjunction with other Institutes of the University of London

Box 2

The second question to address is the funding of the courses. Currently most clinicians on MSc courses (at least in our institution) fund themselves by taking locum appointments. This clearly is not satisfactory. One solution would be for MSc courses to be recognised as part of clinical postgraduate training, and central funding be provided, for example, through Postgraduate Deans. Moreover, this type of training programme might be more attractive to both clinicians and National Health Service Trusts if MSc courses were developed that could be taken on a part-time basis by doctors in the unified training grade, with suitable study leave provision made both for attendance at lectures and for an extended period of research. This may eventually lead to the development of rotations that incorporate an MSc course as an integral part of the whole training programme.

There is a clear need for a scientific component to the postgraduate training of hospital doctors. The current use of the MD and MS, which has sprung up in an *ad hoc* manner, is unsatisfactory and unlikely to survive the changes instituted by the Calman report. Masters courses,

1 Working Group on Specialist Medical Training. *Hospital doctors: training for the future*. London: Department of Health, 1993.

Summary points

- the introduction of the unified training grade will reduce the incentive for clinicians to work towards a research degree as part of their training
- MSc degrees, which offer both formal teaching and research experience, could provide the scientific and research components of postgraduate clinical education
- the increased development of part-time MSc courses, possibly included as an integral part of a training rotation, may increase the popularity of these courses
- it will be necessary to identify suitable funding for clinical MSc courses

Box 3

which are being seen as having an increasing role to play in the training of scientists, have the potential to provide clinicians with an efficient but highly comprehensive training in both scientific theory and research.

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Accepted 13 November 1995

2 Office of Science and Technology. *Realising our potential: a strategy for science, engineering and technology*. London: HMSO, 1993.

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