

## IMMIGRATION DIRECTORATES INSTRUCTIONS

### CHAPTER 3 SECTION 7

#### DOCTORS TAKING THE PLAB TEST

##### 1. INTRODUCTION

Before any doctor can practise medicine in the United Kingdom they must register with the General Medical Council (GMC). Doctors who qualify overseas and wish to register must first pass the test of the Professional and Linguistic Assessment Board (PLAB) to demonstrate their knowledge of English and their medical expertise. The PLAB test has two parts – part one can be taken in the UK or abroad, but part two can only be taken in the UK. Applicants can apply for leave to enter to take either or both parts of the test in the UK.

Doctors who come to the UK to take the PLAB Test may also undertake periods of clinical attachment during their leave. There is no need to apply separately for leave to remain to undertake a clinical attachment, unless the period of the clinical attachment goes on beyond the expiry of the doctor's leave in the UK to take the PLAB Test. Clinical attachments involve observation only and not treatment of patients and so do not breach the prohibition on employment. They are unpaid and so cannot be used by the doctor to support themselves or their dependants.

Doctors who pass the PLAB Test are allowed to switch into certain other categories. They may apply for leave to remain to undertake a period of clinical attachment, as a postgraduate doctor or trainee general practitioner, as a doctor employed in the UK with a valid work permit, or as a General Practitioner under the highly-skilled migrant programme.

##### 1.2. TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

This category was incorporated into the Immigration Rules on 15 March 2005, having previously operated as a concession outside the Rules. As the main conditions of entry have not changed, any doctors who have valid leave as a visitor, where this was specifically granted to take the PLAB Test, should be treated in line with doctors granted leave under paragraphs 75A-75F of the Immigration Rules.

This means that doctors who have valid leave as a visitor, granted before 15 March 2005, to take the PLAB Test are eligible for an extension of stay to take the PLAB Test under the Immigration Rules, up to the 18 month maximum stay. They would have to meet all the requirements of paragraph 75D (ii) – (v).

This transitional arrangement only applies to those doctors who have been granted leave as a visitor ***specifically to take the PLAB Test***. It does not apply to doctors granted any other leave, including standard leave as a visitor, whether or not they have chosen to take the PLAB Test during this leave.

##### 2. ENTRY CLEARANCE

Entry clearance is not mandatory for individuals seeking to enter the UK to take the PLAB test

### 3. LEAVE TO ENTER

The requirements to be met by a person seeking leave to enter the UK to take the PLAB test are set out in paragraph 75A of HC 395. All these requirements must be met and **must** be referred to when reading the following advice.

#### 3.1 Key Points

Although **all** the requirements of paragraph 75A **must** be met, the main points on which the immigration officer needs to be satisfied are that the passenger:

- is a graduate from a bona fide medical school and intends to sit the PLAB Test; and
- can provide documentary proof of a confirmed test date or of his eligibility to apply to sit the test; and
- meets the relevant Rules relating to visitors (paragraph 41 (iii) – (vii) of these Rules) including:
  - they will be able to maintain and accommodate himself and any dependants adequately without recourse to public funds; and
  - they will not take employment during their leave under this category (as above, clinical attachments do not count as employment for these purposes)

#### 3.2 Granting Leave to Enter

Leave to enter should be granted as a person coming to take a PLAB test for a maximum of six months on Code 4.

#### 3.3 Landing Code

STS Short term student

#### 3.4 Refusal of Leave to Enter

Leave to enter should be refused if all the requirements of paragraph 75D are not met.

A visa national seeking entry without a valid United Kingdom visa falls to be refused under Paragraph 320(5). See **Chapter 9 Section 2** to these instructions.

Where a passenger seeking entry in this capacity holds an entry clearance for this purpose, refusal may only be considered under paragraph 321. See **Chapter 9 Section 3** to these instructions

In the case of a person returning to the United Kingdom from a temporary absence abroad, within a period for which he was previously given leave, reference **must** be

made, before refusal, **to Chapter 1, Section 9, "Persons returning to resume previous leave"**.

### 3.5 On Entry Refusal Codes

- A4 Unsatisfactory or unacceptable arrangements for proposed study
- A5 Not a genuine student
- E4 Lack of required visa or entry clearance
- S5 Not enrolled on course

## 4. LEAVE TO REMAIN

The requirements to be met by a person seeking entry clearance to take the PLAB Test are set out in paragraph 75D of HC 395. All these requirements **must** be met and **must** be referred to when reading the following advice.

### 4.1 Granting Leave to Remain

If the requirements of paragraph 75D are met, the applicant should normally be granted six months leave to remain at a time.

The maximum amount of leave an individual can be granted in this capacity is 18 months.

### 4.2 CID Code

V1X Visitor Extension (Other)

### 4.3 Refusal of Leave to Remain

Leave to remain should be refused if any of the requirements of paragraph 75D are not met.

**Chapter 9, Section 1 "Adverse decisions – General Guidance"** provides important advice about the decision making process and should be consulted whenever an application falls to be refused.

### 4.4 CID Code

V9