



Revalidation Update 16 October 2009

On 16 November 2009 the General Medical Council will introduce the licence to practice as the first step towards the introduction of revalidation. This update is to inform occupational physicians about the progress the Faculty of Occupational Medicine has made in its preparations for supporting them in revalidation.

The nature of revalidation

The GMC's UK Revalidation Programme Board has prepared the following statements to describe revalidation.

Revalidation is the process by which doctors will regularly demonstrate to the GMC that they remain up to date and fit to practise. Revalidation has three elements: To confirm that licensed doctors practise in accordance with the GMC's generic standards (relicensing). For doctors on the specialist or GP register, to confirm that they meet the standards appropriate for their specialty (recertification). As a backstop, to identify for further investigation, and remediation where appropriate, doctors whose practice may be impaired.

A shared responsibility for revalidation

The successful implementation of revalidation is a shared responsibility involving the GMC, Department of Health (England), devolved administrations, the medical Royal Colleges, employers and the medical profession.

The Faculty has been working hard with the other medical Royal Colleges and Faculties on various aspects of revalidation in order to fulfil its responsibilities. The following is an update on the relevant key areas.

Standards for Revalidation in Occupational Medicine

The Medical Royal Colleges and Faculties have been tasked by the GMC to develop standards and supporting information for revalidation of doctors in their respective specialties. Several iterations of this have appeared on the Faculty website and input from many members has been gratefully received and incorporated. A considerably pruned version of the original occupational medicine standards document is currently being collated with similar products from all the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges (AoMRC) members into one publication that will be owned by the GMC. Much of the pruning results from an Academy decision to produce four separate standards for various non-clinical roles that were originally included in the OM standard. Several Faculty members have commented during the Academy's consultation exercise and those concerns are being addressed. Many of the comments were about the lack of guidance for the non-clinical aspects of their work!

Subject to getting GMC approval of the final standards document it is anticipated that it will be made available to Faculty members who wish to start using it as a guide for appraisals from February 2010. The next challenge will be to produce a more detailed guide to Revalidation in Occupational Medicine which will serve as a single reference document for our specialty.

CPD Diary

The Faculty has received development funding from the Academy's revalidation fund to develop an electronic CPD diary which will simplify recording, certification and audit of CPD and be compatible with any subsequent electronic revalidation portfolio. It will be based on the tried and tested system already used by the RCP and the intention is to phase it in from April 2010, ending the current paper version in April 2012.

CPD Framework

The Academy of Medical Royal Colleges has a CPD group which has developed a common framework for CPD schemes, intended to make them fit for revalidation. It introduces some changes to the way we record CPD, including the creation of a category of internal CPD that will allow reading and searching the evidence base to inform clinical decision making to count towards CPD totals. The new framework will be introduced with the electronic CPD diary whilst the existing guidance will continue to apply to those using the paper version for as long as it continues.

Responsible Officer

The role of the responsible officer is to provide the crucial recommendation to the GMC on revalidation. NHS trusts and other larger managed medical organisations will be required to appoint their own RO. The original Department of Health proposal was that doctors working outside such managed environments would need to relate to the RO of the appropriate PCT. The Faculty has successfully argued that such an arrangement would not be in the best interests of our members and we will be authorised by DH as to appoint a responsible officer of our own.

Detailed consultation on the RO proposals is available for comment on the DH website at http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/Liveconsultations/DH_104587.

We are working with the Faculties of Public Health and Pharmaceutical Medicine on a joint approach to developing the scheme.

e-Portfolio

The Faculty is part of a RCP-led consortium which is tasked by the AoMRC with producing a specification for an e-portfolio to support the specialist element of revalidation. Preliminary discussions have taken place with potential providers and it is hoped to have a version available for the start of revalidation pilots in 2010.

Role of RSAs

RSAs across all specialties are increasingly seen as having a key role in providing local specialist support to responsible officers working within the NHS. The work load for our RSAs is likely to be minimal as each RSA will have a limited number of NHS consultants in their region, who will each revalidate once every five years, though it will be kept under review. RSA terms of reference are being updated to add this additional responsibility.

Piloting Revalidation

It is generally agreed that proposals for revalidation must be subject to piloting before they are finally introduced. DH has indicated its intention to fund a number of non-NHS pilots (it has already sought bids

for pilot sites within the NHS). The FOM will lead on a joint proposal with the Faculties of Public Health and Pharmaceutical Medicine to obtain funding for a pilot that will cover specialists in all three faculties. Early in 2010 we will seek expressions of interest from volunteers wishing to take part in the pilot, aiming to cover a full range of employment environments across the NHS, military, Civil Service, commercial providers and independents. The incentives to take part will include being able to test the preparedness of both individuals and organisations for revalidation and, for those who elect to use the SOM Quality Approved Appraisal Scheme, reimbursement of fees.

FAQ

A small number of FAQ's have been produced for the website from the questions that have been posed by members and others working in occupational medicine. They are available at

www.facocmed.ac.uk/library/docs/r_faqs.pdf.

Most of the questions we have received have been of a general nature and can be answered by referring to the GMC FAQ's at http://www.gmc-uk.org/news/docs/GMC_Revalidation_FAQs_June%202009.pdf.

Any remaining questions can be addressed to professionaldevelopment@facocmed.ac.uk.

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