

Board Statement

29 May 2019

Revalidation of UKPHR's specialists: relationship between annual professional appraisal and revalidation

As registrants will know, UKPHR's revalidation requirements for specialist registrants became mandatory on **01 April 2019**. The first revalidations have already been successfully completed.

Our introduction of revalidation for specialist registrants is a major step forward for UKPHR and its registrants, marking a new stage in the register's development and the assurance of ongoing competence and quality of service of the public health workforce.

For public health specialists, UKPHR's revalidation scheme ensures as close an equivalence with the revalidation required of medical practitioners registered on the General Medical Council's public health specialists register as possible.

To get to this point, where we feel that we can say that revalidation has been launched successfully, is due to the efforts of many people and organisations. We are grateful to registrants for their forbearance and we are grateful to the public health agencies in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales who have helped us with annual professional appraisal, a key requirement of our revalidation scheme.

In these early days of operating revalidation, we have received some feedback in relation to annual professional appraisal which the Board wishes to address straightaway. We do, however, wish to make clear that we are collecting feedback and other evidence from the outset about all aspects of our revalidation scheme. We intend that this will inform a first evaluation of our revalidation scheme, which we will carry out once revalidation has been in operation for a year.

The specific matters about annual professional appraisal which we wish to address now fall into two categories, namely:

1. Some of the language of the annual professional appraisal clearly reflects clinical practice rather than multidisciplinary public health practice; and
2. Some of the GMC (General Medical Council) requirements for professional appraisal are not reflected in the mandatory elements of UKPHR's revalidation scheme.

The Board responds to these as follows:

1. Clinical language in professional appraisal

The GMC's statutory revalidation scheme for registered medical practitioners was first to be developed. Inevitably, the language of the professional appraisal requirement will reflect clinical practice. We readily acknowledge that not all this language accurately reflects multidisciplinary public health practice.

Over time, we will develop more appropriate language but, in the meantime, we are grateful to the national public health agencies who have added to their existing workloads of appraising GMC registrants by also appraising UKPHR registrants. We ask appraisers and appraisees to interpret clinical-specific terms flexibly. For example, where a registered medical practitioner might be asked at appraisal about *patient feedback* or *clinical quality reviews*, a UKPHR registrant might be asked about feedback from service users and/or partner organisations or a service review.

2. Mandatory requirements

Without doubt, there are some GMC revalidation requirements that are not included in UKPHR's revalidation scheme. The differences reflect our early learning from GMC's experience of operating revalidation and the difference in legal status of the two schemes. UKPHR does not have recourse to the statutory system of "Responsible Officers" who review revalidation evidence and make a recommendation to GMC.

For GMC, annual professional appraisal is an integral part of the revalidation process. For UKPHR, we carry out the revalidation process in-house via an online module which we control, but we effectively contract out the annual professional appraisal to the four nations' public health agencies (in most cases).

Our mandatory requirements apply to our revalidation process. Practical examples of what this means include:

- In the online module, registrants do not have to inform UKPHR of the scope of their work; and
- In the evidence they produce to UKPHR via the online module, one way of evidencing compliance with our mandatory CPD requirement is to present the Faculty's annual certificates of satisfactory CPD activity including audit.

Some individuals have said to us that they conclude from this that in annual professional appraisals an appraiser may not ask:

- about scope of practice; or
- to see examples of CPD activity that has been undertaken.

We are grateful to the national public health agencies for extending their offer of annual professional appraisal to cover UKPHR's specialist registrants (a majority but not all of them in England). It is not our intention to add to their burden by making different requirements for the appraisals of UKPHR registrants than those applicable to GMC registrants. We support these agencies, and the volunteer appraisers that they have recruited and trained, in carrying out the professional appraisals in the most convenient, and effective, manner possible.

As with the first issue, we think that with a reasonable approach and flexible interpretation of the appraisal requirements, appraisers and appraisees can complete satisfactory professional appraisals of UKPHR's specialist registrants.

It should be noted that in the online module, registrants do have to provide a copy of the summary of a professional appraisal held within 12 months of their revalidation date.

Anecdotally, we hear that appraisers and appraisees are making sense of the appraisal requirements and engaging constructively in carrying them out in a manner appropriate to public health practice in accordance with the *Good Public Health Framework 2016*.

We hope that this statement is helpful.

We will issue a call for evidence when we start our preparations for the first evaluation of our revalidation scheme for specialists next year, and individuals and organisations will be welcome to submit evidence and representations to us at that time to inform the evaluation. We will publish our findings after the evaluation has been carried out.

For further information,

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