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Royal College of General Practitioners
Revalidation for General Practitioners Consultation

The Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) is seeking the views of the general practice profession on proposals for the revalidation of General Practitioners.

Background

In 2009 the General Medical Council (GMC) will introduce licensing. All registered doctors will be entitled to a licence to practise. From then it will be the license rather than a registration that will signify to patients that a doctor has the right to practise. General Practitioners will need a licence to practise if they work as a doctor, either in the NHS or in the independent sector on a permanent or sessional basis. GPs will remain on both the general medical register and the GP register. Only licensed doctors will be subject to revalidation. In common with all doctors, GPs will need to be relicensed and recertified (for the GP register) periodically.

- Revalidation is a unified system composed of the twin components of relicensure and recertification
- Relicensure will demonstrate that licensed doctors continue to practise in accordance with the generic standards set out by the General Medical Council.
- Recertification will confirm that GPs on the GP register continue to meet standards that apply to the discipline
- Every doctor in the UK will be required to achieve revalidation every 5 years
- The processes for revalidation of GPs will be piloted in 2009 in preparation for commencement of revalidation in 2010.

The Key Purposes of Revalidation

The purpose of revalidation is to ensure that doctors are up to date and fit to practise. Revalidation will improve and demonstrate the quality of care that all GPs provide to patients

The College is committed to maintaining and improving the quality of care and is ideally placed to set standards, design programmes and quality assure the revalidation system for GPs.

- Revalidation will reassure individual patients, the public, colleagues and the NHS that individuals GPs are up to date and fit to practise.
- Revalidation will serve as a development tool and will provide continuing professional development for all GPs.
- It will encourage, develop and support improvement in the quality of care, patient safety, team-working, communications and other skills needed by doctors
- This system can effectively identify GPs for whom there are concerns about their fitness to practise and detect deterioration in performance. This will lead

to further investigation and possible future measures including remediation, appropriate support and if necessary restrictions on a doctor's ability to practise.

Role of the Royal College of General Practitioners

The RCGP has the responsibility, on behalf of members and non-members, to propose the standards and methods for the revalidation of general practitioners.

The criteria for the revalidation of all doctors are based on the *Framework for Appraisal and Revalidation*¹ founded on the General Medical Council's *Good Medical Practice*. Earlier in 2008 the RCGP published its revision of *Good Medical Practice for General Practitioners*², following consultation with the profession, which sets out examples of an exemplary and an unacceptable general practitioner.

The RCGP is leading the way in the medical profession in developing a range of tools to support revalidation in a practical and effective way. Systems such as the RCGP e-Portfolio, a continuing professional development scheme, knowledge updates and other tools are being designed to be used by GPs to build up folders of evidence for their continuing professional development, appraisals and revalidation. Following this consultation the RCGP will be working up detailed documents to help GPs prepare for revalidation..

The Revalidation for General Practitioners consultation document

The RCGP is now consulting on the evidence required for the majority of general practitioners and for those who will find the normal process challenging; and the process for revalidation as set out in the *Revalidation for General Practitioners consultation document* can be found on our website. This includes the criteria that will be used, the standards that will apply and the evidence expected.

Feedback on the document

We welcome your feedback on this important document to enable the work to be taken forward. You can find the consultation document which sets out proposals for the revalidation process online at www.rcgp.org.uk along with a consultation response form. You can also obtain copies of the document by emailing responses@rcgp.org.uk or by calling 0207 344 3160. Responses can be emailed, completed online, faxed or posted (details online)

Closing deadline for responses: Friday 9 January

Yours sincerely,

Dr Maureen Baker
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¹ http://www.gmc-uk.org/about/reform/gmp_framework.asp

² RCGP and GPC. *Good Medical Practice for General Practitioners: 2nd Edition*. London: RCGP, 2008 http://www.rcgp.org.uk/PDF/GMP_web.pdf