

The new GMS contract explained

Focus on...

Postgraduate Education after The Postgraduate Education Allowance

GPC

General Practitioners
Committee

This guidance note covers how postgraduate education will take place and be funded after Postgraduate Education Allowance (PGEA) ceases to operate under the new GMS contract. It has been produced by the General Practitioners Committee to help GPs and Local Medical Committees. We would advise all GPs to read the contract document and supporting documentation, available on the BMA website at www.bma.org.uk. The GPC has also produced a list of commonly asked questions and answers which can be found at the website address. Some of those questions and answers relating to PGEA have been reproduced below.

Although there may be some differences in process in each of the four countries of the UK, the principles of this guidance apply to all.

PGEA and the new GMS contract

PGEA as provided for under the former Statement of Fees and Allowances (Red Book) will be paid until 31 March 2004. PGEA payments will be abolished under the new GMS contract and mapped into the global sum payments received by all practices. GPs will no longer need to earn PGEA points as PGEA arrangements will be replaced by appraisal and Personal Development Plans (PDPs).

In the past, GPs had to get points from attending meetings and courses to trigger a PGEA payment to an individual GP. Under the new contract it is likely that after an annual appraisal, the appraiser will sign off a GP's PDP and that the role of GP tutors will move away from approving courses towards supporting continuing professional development more broadly. However, GP tutors will continue to have a role in ensuring that appraisers satisfactorily sign off PDPs.

PGEA payments until 31 March 2004

Final PGEA payments due in respect of the quarter ending 31 March 2004 will be paid after 1 April – the exact timing of payments may vary depending on local agreements. These payments will be based on the record of accredited postgraduate training that the practice's GPs have to their credit as set out in the former SFA (Red Book). GPs who wish to claim for PGEA until 31 March 2004 will need to submit their application as soon as possible. They should keep a copy of this information as it will be used to inform their first appraisal after April 2004.

PGEA payments after 1 April 2004

The money that was previously paid for PGEA will be subsumed into the global sum (global sum equivalent). The monthly payments that practices will receive will include funding for continuing professional development.

What happens after 1 April 2004?

Although GPs no longer need to collect points they will still have to continue their ongoing education for appraisal and PDP purposes. Under the new contract the emphasis on education remains as important as ever and GPs' learning plans for continuing professional development will emanate from appraisal and PDPs.

The Committee for General Practice Education Directors is currently negotiating with PCTs to quality assure learning through the PDP process; it will not accredit providers. COGPED also hopes to work with the Royal College of General Practitioners and others to develop a quality assurance process for education providers whether they are organisations or individuals.

Overseas educational activities will no longer be accredited by the International PGEA panel but should be personally justified at appraisal.

The lack of international accreditation systems means that GPs proposing to study abroad must discuss with their accountant the issues concerning tax allowability of such expenses as the lack of international accreditation will make the process less straightforward.

Appraisal and Revalidation

All GPs will be required to keep evidence of their on-going education and learning plans for GMC revalidation purposes and GP tutors and other educators will be key mentors in this activity. While engagement in appropriate learning will be the responsibility of the individual GP, deaneries* are attempting to liaise with PCTs to ensure a robust and fruitful provision of education.

*Website addresses and contact details for all UK deaneries can be found on the Conference of Postgraduate Medical Deans of United Kingdom's website (COPMeD) as follows:

www.copmed.org.uk/deaneries/index.html

Deaneries commission postgraduate medical and dental education to standards set by the General Medical and Dental Councils and the Postgraduate Medical Education & Training Board (formerly the Specialist Training Authority and the Joint Committee on Postgraduate Training for General Practice).

Queries with PGEA payments

If GPs have any queries with their PGEA payments they are advised to speak with their PCT (or national equivalent) and have to hand any relevant documentation as evidence of the number of hours of accredited education completed under the old PGEA arrangements.

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Frequently Asked Questions

Job share and the PGEA

If the PGEA is now included in the global sum, has there been any correction applied to job share?

If the PGEA payments for job-sharing doctors were received in the baseline year (i.e. the data used to calculate a practice's income) then PGEA payments will be mapped into the global sum equivalent /Minimum Practice Income Guarantee (MPIG).

PMS and the PGEA

Does PGEA continue for PMS practices under the new contract?

As for GMS practices, PGEA will no longer continue for PMS practices. For PMS practices, PGEA should already be part of the PMS practice's budget. If it isn't, then it should be added as it forms part of the global sum/MPIG for GMS practices.

Late claims for PGEA

If a PGEA is claimed late and therefore not in the MPIG calculation year/return, can it be included in that year as an exceptional payment?

In cases of late claims, the PGEA should be added as an exceptional payment, as it was due in the accounting twelve months. However, PCT discretion will play a part in this and it therefore may be necessary to take this issue to local appeal.

Useful sources of information:

- ✓ <http://www.appraisaluk.info>
- ✓ The GP's Guide to Personal Development Plans, Radcliffe Medical Press

Enquiries and information

Please send enquiries on postgraduate education to the GPC office at: Info.gpc@bma.org.uk

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