

Appraisal & Revalidation During Covid-19

Appraisal and revalidation were temporarily suspended in March 2020 but are now restarting. This is accompanied by a new emphasis on support for **doctor's wellbeing** and their **continued development**. The new process allows for 'local creativity' e.g. upskilling appraisers to use a coaching style rather than focusing on process, and how to signpost resources and additional support.

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide some easy access information to answer key questions relating to the restarted process.

My revalidation date:

The GMC changed revalidation dates for all doctors (extending by 12 months) due before the end of September 2020 on 17 March 2020. This has now been extended to all revalidation due between 1 October 2020 and 16 March 2021. If these revalidation dates apply to you, it means you can carry on practising and have an additional year to meet all the requirements for your revalidation decision.

You may, under local arrangements have been an 'approved missed appraisal due to COVID-19'. There is a pathway in place for the GMC to make a decision to defer your recommendation to enable you to collect more supporting information for your appraisal. If in doubt please speak to your Trust Revalidation Support Team, who will be up to date with your own Responsible Officer's response to COVID-19. **This authority to make local decisions on dates based on local service demands during the pandemic is in place.**

My next appraisal date:

Your Revalidation Support Team will have been managing postponed appraisal dates and will let you know when it is considered appropriate to start scheduling dates (if you have any doubts, you should contact them).

Generally, if you missed your April to March 2019-20 appraisal your next appraisal will be January/February 2021 to avoid an increase in year end bunching and pressure on appraisals, and to ensure you do not miss a second appraisal year.

If you missed your April to September 20 appraisal your next appraisal will be probably fall in your normal appraisal month.

NB: If you really want/need an appraisal, speak to your Responsible Officer, who may either be able to arrange one, or signpost you to support in the meantime. The key message here is that support is not a once a year intervention.

Remote Appraisal

It may well be that your appraisal is undertaken remotely due to the local risks of doctors being vectors of infection between healthcare settings. This will be decided locally, but you can ask for this if you are concerned. There is no change to the documentation used. No particular video conferencing platform is defined, but you should be aware of safeguarding your personal information and GDPR, in the same way as you would for your patients.

Approved missed appraisal:

If you missed an appraisal in 2019-20 e.g. for long term sickness or maternity, and you have now missed your appraisal for 2020-21 please do not worry – there will be no repercussions for you. Your next appraisal will cover the whole period since your last appraisal – even if there is a two-year period. Your Responsible Officer may however, decide to prioritise your appraisal to offer you support.

I am not currently working:

If you have a license to practise then you must continue to engage in the appraisal process. You may find it easier to proceed with your planned appraisal, as the new focus and the reduction in the need for written reflection may well help. You can also undertake your appraisal remotely if you are shielding.

I do not feel I am mentally/physically able to cope with an appraisal:

If you are well enough to work clinically, you will be expected to participate in appraisal, particularly as the rebalanced process has an increased focus on supporting your health and wellbeing. If you consider your ability to care for your patients is impaired, it is critical you are supported in receiving the help you need. This should be noted and you can then seek advice from the Revalidation Support Team regarding your circumstances and what can be put in place regarding your appraisal dates.

My appraiser:

If you miss an appraisal, it does not affect the count for the number of consecutive appraisals with the same appraiser. Of course, you can still choose to change appraiser, and you should be aware that their may be some local disruption to appraiser availability.

Supporting information in my electronic portfolio:

You should continue to build your portfolio, ensuring you have the most appropriate and up to date information in there i.e. quality not quantity, and that you have included your reflections. COVID may have given you the opportunity to collect very different evidence of your practice than usual, however, it is recognised that you may not have had the time to collect supporting information in your usual way.

NB. Strong emphasis in the new appraisal process will be placed on a focused written reflection provided pre-appraisal. It is estimated that this should take no longer than 30 minutes to write.

If you have not added anything to your portfolio of supporting information – remember you cannot ‘fail’ an appraisal. Engage in the process actively and undertake a focused written reflection. Be prepared to discuss in a reflective way with your appraiser each area, and expect them to support you in identifying gaps and reflecting these in your Personal Development Plan for your next appraisal.

Continuous Professional Development:

- Remember the GMC has never mandated the amount of CPD or the number of credits – this is a Royal College requirement. There is therefore no expectation that you will ‘catch up’ on CPD. You are expected to be able to discuss HOW you have key up to date with what you do – focusing on what you have learnt since your last appraisal.

- COVID-19 may have presented you with a unique opportunity to demonstrate your professionalism and learn from your colleagues or to refresh long unused skills. Remember to reflect on this as CPD.
- Verbal reflection with your appraiser on your CPD is perfectly OK. You can also keep a diary or log or download your record from the Royal College

Quality Improvement Activity:

A good example of QIP is the system redesign and alterations to work during the pandemic. A verbal reflection is acceptable during your appraisal as long as it focused on the driver, the activities and most importantly the impact and what has been learnt to carry forward.

Multi Source Feedback from patients/colleagues:

This is administered by your Trust and they should have adjusted their processes to fit in with your new dates. Please do not worry, but seek advice from the Revalidation Support Team.

Remember you should also be collecting evidence of informal feedback from patients and colleagues and reflecting on what you have learnt and how this has impacted on your practice.

Face to Face Workshop recommendations:

- Annual Update for Appraisers: Core Coaching Skills (0.5 day)
- Medical Appraiser Upskilling: Coaching Skills (1 day)
- Managing your Appraisal and Revalidation (1 day)
- Good Practice in Revalidation, Portfolios & PDPs for Doctors (0.5 day)
- Appraisal Skills for Medical Appraisers (1 day with e-learning or 2 days as a workshop)
- Reflective Practice for Doctors (0.5 day)

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