

Approaching the final 6 weeks of training - How to Prepare for the Future

During the last 6 weeks as a GP Specialty Trainee, after your e-portfolio has been signed off, you have a chance to look to the future and plan how you will approach life as a fully qualified GP working as an independent practitioner. We suggest that being appraised and producing your PDP could be fitted into your remaining tutorials before you complete your ST3 or ST4 year.

NHS Appraisal in the GP Registrar year

It is important that all doctors in training have an appraisal according to the standard NHS appraisal format that can be found by going to Google and typing in Appraisal for Doctors in Training to find http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Managingyourorganisation/Humanresourcesandtraining/EducationTrainingandDevelopment/Appraisals/DH_4031937 Alternatively you can go to the NHS Appraisal Toolkit on <https://www.appraisals.nhs.uk/> for all the necessary information about registering with the Toolkit and completing the forms on line.

How does appraisal differ from the e-portfolio?

All GP registrars complete their e-portfolio to demonstrate that they have reached the competencies for independent practice. Your appraisal is then an opportunity for you to familiarise yourself with this new process, hear from your trainer about their experiences with appraisal and for you to reflect on your strengths and weaknesses and applying that to how you think you will be working in the future. The result of the appraisal will be a Form 4, the summary of your discussions with your appraiser, and a Personal Development Plan to guide you learning throughout your first year in independent practice. In addition if you have been able to do your appraisal through the Toolkit or looked at the Toolkit with your trainer you will begin to familiarise yourself with this format which is increasingly being taken as the standard approach to annual appraisal by PCTs.

Does the e-portfolio link with the NHS Appraisal Toolkit?

No – sadly not at present although in time it will. If you decide to use the Toolkit you will be able to register on-line by following the instructions. As a GP registrar you will be on your local PCT GP Performer list and part of the Toolkit registration will include clicking on that PCT's name on a drop-down menu of PCTs and Acute Trusts on the Toolkit. If your trainer (or whoever has been nominated to do your appraisal) is an appraiser in that PCT you will be able to click on their name under the list of appraisers to complete the set-up. If your trainer (or whoever has been nominated to do your appraisal) is not an appraiser for the PCT and you wish to go ahead with using the Toolkit the person doing your appraisal should discuss with the PCT Appraisal Lead about how to make arrangements within the Toolkit.

How does this link with revalidation?

It is very likely that appraisal will be at the cornerstone of revalidation and you will need to demonstrate that you have participated in this activity throughout your revalidation cycle. At the end of your first year you will need to produce the PDP that you have been working on throughout that year with a reflection on what you have achieved. So it's best to set out with that PDP already in place.

How can the Deanery support me in this activity?

You need to find out from your trainer about how Registrar appraisal is being organised locally. Some schemes arrange it that trainers swap about in their group so that registrars are appraised by someone that has not been working closely with them. In other schemes your trainer appraises you. Once you have embarked on life as a fully-fledged GP then our GP tutor network will be able to advise you on how to approach your personal development if you continue to be based in London. If you move away from London then some Deaneries do have a tutor network so try to find out what is available locally.

How do the Primary Care Trusts fit into all this?

The PCTs in London are all expecting you to be appraised as a registrar and hence if you stay on that PCT Performer List post-completion of training they will assume you to have a completed form 4 and PDP. Some PCTs are going to ask to see this information as part of their planning for educational provision. If you change PCT list and apply to another they likely to ask to see your form 4 and PDP as part of the application process. So it is best to be prepared.