

Revalidation FAQs

How does revalidation work?

Revalidation is the process by which licensed doctors are required to demonstrate on a regular basis that they are up to date and fit to practise. Revalidation aims to give extra confidence to patients that their doctor is being regularly checked by their employer and the GMC.

Licensed doctors have to revalidate, usually every five years, by having regular appraisals with their employer that are based on our core guidance for doctors, [Good medical practice](#). Patients can help their doctors improve their practice by providing them with regular feedback about the care they have received.

Only doctors who have a [licence to practise](#) will need to revalidate.

The GMC has set out its generic requirements for good medical practice and appraisal in three main documents. These are supported by guidance from the medical royal colleges and faculties, which give the specialty context for the supporting information required for appraisal and revalidation. You should therefore ensure that you are familiar with the following documents:

- [Good Medical Practice](#)
- [Good Medical Practice Framework for appraisal and revalidation](#)
- [Supporting information for appraisal and revalidation](#)
- [Supporting information for appraisal and revalidation: guidance for physicians](#) from the RCP

You should also have regard for any guidance that your employing or contracting organisation may provide concerning local policies.

A doctor will be recommended for revalidation to the GMC by their responsible officer (RO), normally every five years, based on:

- information provided from the five annual appraisals, signed off by their appraiser
- a completed portfolio of supporting information
- an absence of concerns about their practice raised through local clinical governance routes.

An RO will be able to make one of three statements to the GMC:

1. That the doctor is up to date, fit to practise and should be revalidated
2. That the recommendation should be deferred while more information is obtained - for example where a doctor has taken a career break
3. That the doctor has failed to engage with any of the local systems of processes (such as appraisal) that support revalidation.

In the last case the doctor will be referred to a fitness to practise (FtP) panel of the GMC for consideration of whether the licence to practise should be revoked. It is only the GMC that can give or remove the licence to practice.

Revalidation is not about 'pass or fail'. Appraisal is the backbone of revalidation and appraisals should remain supportive and developmental, enabling doctors to identify areas for improvement at an early stage within a structured approach.

What happens if I do not engage in appraisal and revalidation?

If you choose not to engage, by not providing the required supporting information or failing to participate in an annual appraisal process, you will not be recommended for revalidation. If your responsible officer (RO) makes a statement to the GMC that you have failed to engage, you will be referred to a fitness to practise (FtP) panel of the GMC for consideration of whether the licence to practise should be revoked. It is only the GMC that can give or remove the licence to practise.

Gathering supporting information is a cumulative process over the five year revalidation cycle, and not one that should be left until the last minute. Appraisers will want assurance at each appraisal that you are developing an appropriate portfolio for revalidation. If there are circumstances that will affect the collection of supporting information (such as maternity leave, work abroad etc), please speak to your appraiser and RO at the earliest opportunity.

Does revalidation affect my specialist registration or GMC registration?

No. Revalidation is required to maintain a licence to practise in the UK only. Revalidation is not required to maintain GMC registration or specialist registration.

The specialist register is a historical document recording the specialties in which you have trained. If you no longer work in the specialty for which you were originally listed on the register you will not lose your registration if your revalidation is based on supporting information from practice in another field. Revalidation is not about demonstrating that you are up to date in your registered specialty (in which you trained), but that you are up to date and fit to practice in your current fields and across your scope of work.

There is an option for doctors in some situations (eg working abroad) to relinquish their licence to practise (and therefore not revalidate), but remain registered with the GMC and maintain their entry in the specialist register. This provides confirmation that their qualifications have been recognised and that they are in good standing with the GMC. Licences can be reinstated if the doctor wishes to practise in the UK. Further information is available on [the GMC website](#).

I am unable to confirm my connection to a designated body. What should I do?

If you are in this situation, you should make the GMC aware of your circumstances by updating your details using your [GMC online account](#) or by calling 0161 923 6602 and stating that you do not have a designated body.

In some circumstances, the GMC will recognise (following a process of approval) a 'suitable person' to make recommendations about licensed doctors instead of a responsible officer. The GMC will not allocate you a suitable person. Please see the [GMC FAQs for doctors seeking a suitable person](#), which also links to a list of approved suitable persons.

In exceptional circumstances where a suitable person cannot be identified, doctors will be able to submit information to the GMC directly for their revalidation. More information on this process can be found [here](#). If you are in any doubt please contact the GMC on 0161 923 6277 or revalidation@gmc-uk.org.

For further information see the GMC's summary document: [Revalidation - what you need to do](#).

In the meantime it is important that you keep up to date with CPD and the other aspects of supporting information in preparation for appraisal and revalidation. Please see our [guidance for physicians on the supporting information for revalidation](#).

I have been given my revalidation date. What should I be doing now to prepare for my first revalidation cycle?

Regardless of when your revalidation date is, you need to actively engage in appraisal and prepare for revalidation. You should be having annual appraisals for revalidation based on *Good Medical Practice* with a suitably trained appraiser (your Responsible Officer can advise), and starting to collect the relevant supporting information in line with guidance. This information should be kept in a portfolio and it is recommended by the GMC that information is managed electronically for revalidation.

The RCP recommends doctors take the following steps to prepare:

1. Use your [GMC online account](#) and check that your current employment details and designated body are correct. State if you do not know who your designated body is and describe your current circumstances.
2. Identify your appraiser and familiarise yourself with any local changes or processes in relation to appraisal and revalidation.
3. Review your appraisal documentation from the last few years to identify where there are gaps.
4. Check what aspects of your personal development plan (PDP) have been achieved and what have not; if there are uncompleted elements, identify reasons for this and record them.
5. Familiarise yourself with the [Supporting information for appraisal and revalidation: guidance for physicians](#), and ensure that relevant supporting information is collected and in your files.
6. Review and document any changes to your job plan or professional work and confirm that you have undertaken some [CPD](#) in those areas.
7. Undertake a colleague [\(MSF\) and patient feedback exercise](#).
8. Participate in [quality improvement activity](#), including reflection on what you have learned, and how you have improved your practice over the past year as a result.
9. Collect information in support of any other clinical or non-clinical work you may have undertaken (eg independent or voluntary practice, education, research etc).

The GMC has also published guidance on [how the first revalidation cycle will work](#).

How will I revalidate as a trainee?

The GMC has published comprehensive [information on revalidation for doctors in training](#).

I am a junior doctor in a non-training grade post. How do I revalidate?

If you are not undertaking a GMC or Deanery/LETB approved training programme then you will need to meet the revalidation requirements for all licensed doctors. You will link to the responsible officer for your employing organisation and should get access to a trained appraiser. You should speak to your clinical supervisor about what specific information might be required locally, and your information should include details of your career progression.

The Joint Royal Colleges of Physicians Training Board (JRCPTB) provides an [eportfolio for doctors in training](#). This portfolio can be made available for non-training grade doctors as well (for a fee), however any information collated in the portfolio cannot be counted towards a training qualification. For further information please contact ePortfolio@jrcptb.org.uk or call 0203 075 1440.

I practise abroad. Do I need to revalidate?

The GMC has confirmed that doctors who are based exclusively overseas do not need a UK licence to practise. The licence to practise gives doctors legal rights and privileges in the UK that do not apply in any overseas country. Doctors who are based overseas must abide by whatever regulatory requirements exist in the country in which they practise.

Non-UK organisations should therefore not require their doctors to hold a UK licence to practise. You can remain registered with the GMC and maintain your entry on the specialist register without a licence. This provides confirmation that your qualifications have been recognised and that you are considered in good standing with the UK regulator. You can relinquish your licence to practise whilst working abroad and reinstate it on return to the UK. Further information on this process is available on [the GMC website](#).

Once your licence is restored, you would need to link to a designated body, participate in annual appraisal in the UK and provide supporting information in line with guidance. Any relevant information gathered while working abroad, as well as evidence of ongoing CPD, should be brought to your first appraisal on return to the UK.

If you choose to continue to hold your licence while practising abroad, you will have to revalidate in the same way as doctors practising in the UK, and link to a UK designated body. If your employer or contractor is based within the UK it may be that they will be able to provide you with a link to a responsible officer (RO), and you should discuss your revalidation with them at the earliest opportunity.

If you practise in the UK but work for periods of time abroad, eg voluntary work, it should be possible for you to collect the supporting information, participate in appraisals and link to an RO through your practice in the UK. You should discuss management of your appraisal and supporting information (including additional supporting information to support your practice abroad) while in the UK with your RO and appraiser.

If you have not already done so, you should confirm your current circumstances with the GMC through your [GMC online account](#) or by calling 0161 923 6602, so that the GMC can provide you with appropriate advice.

How do I relinquish/reinstate my licence to practise?

Further information on the process of relinquishing and reinstating the license to practice is available on [the GMC website](#).

How do doctors revalidate in Scotland/Wales/Northern Ireland?

The revalidation process and requirements are the same across all countries of the UK, but different appraisal policies apply in each country.

Revalidation in England

The NHS Revalidation Support Team (RST) has developed the [Medical Appraisal Guide](#). There is no single electronic appraisal and revalidation system that has been adopted across England and a number of independent systems are currently available.

Trainees: Your designated body changed on 1 April 2013 from your local deanery to one of the [13 new Local Education and Training Boards \(LETBs\)](#). Your updated details should automatically be available through your GMC online account.

Revalidation in Scotland

Scottish Online Appraisal Resource (SOAR): The [SOAR for secondary care doctors](#) provides a national information resource for medical appraisal in Scotland and a database for use by doctors and appraisers for managing appraisal information.

[The Guide to Appraisal for Medical Revalidation](#) has been developed to provide guidance on the implementation of appraisal to support revalidation of career grade doctors in NHS Scotland and its partner organisations.

Trainees: If you are a trainee in Scotland, your responsible officer is the medical director for [NHS Education for Scotland](#) in combination with the dean of postgraduate medicine for NHS Education for Scotland's (NES) South East Region.

For more details of revalidation guidance and support for doctors in Scotland, please contact the [Royal College of Physicians Edinburgh](#) on revalidation@rcpe.ac.uk and [Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons](#)

[Glasgow](#) on revalidation@rcpsg.ac.uk. The Royal College of Physicians Edinburgh has produced a useful step by step [process map](#) for doctors revalidating in Scotland.

Revalidation in Wales

The [All Wales Appraisal Policy](#) has been designed for designated bodies and is applicable to all doctors employed by the designated body, as well as to all medical independent contractors on the performers list, doctors in training, and locums.

[Medical Appraisal Revalidation System \(MARS\)](#): Wales has adopted a single revalidation system for all doctors, and the MARS has been designed to support and guide doctors through the entire revalidation process.

Trainees: If you are a trainee in Wales, your responsible officer is the postgraduate dean of the Wales deanery.

The [Wales Deanery](#) provides comprehensive information and resources on appraisal and revalidation for both doctors and appraisers.

Revalidation in Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety provides [information on appraisal and appraisal forms](#).

Trainees: If you are a trainee in Northern Ireland, your responsible officer is the postgraduate dean of the [Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency \(NIMDTA\)](#).