Revalidation evaluation -
Help shape the future of revalidation

In 2014 we commissioned a group of independent researchers and experts known as UMbrella to undertake a long term independent evaluation of revalidation. The evaluation is due to report in 2018. As part of the evaluation, the researchers are seeking views from doctors through a series of surveys being carried out later in 2016.

Frequently asked questions

Q1. What are the 2016 surveys for?

Revalidation is now in its fourth year of operation and it's important that we understand how well it's established and how it's impacting on practice. The surveys are part of a study being carried out by an independent UK wide collaboration of researchers.

Drawing on the results of the evaluation so far, the researchers have identified groups of doctors whose experience of revalidation appears to be different and whose views they would like to explore further. Views shared in the surveys will help us understand how revalidation should be shaped in the future.

Q2. Who has been approached to take part?

The researchers want to hear from groups of doctors who, from their analysis of their research so far, appear to have a different experience of revalidation such as locums, doctors working primarily in independent practice, doctors with no prescribed connection and SAS/associate specialist and staff grade doctors.

The information we hold does not allow us to definitely identify such groups of doctors. We have used the type of designated body that doctors are connected to, or not, in order to help us identify who should be approached to participate.

The email and letter from us lets you know about the survey and offers you the opportunity of opting out of receiving the survey from the researchers if you don’t want to take part.
Those we don’t have an email address for will have received a letter from us, explaining that they will need to contact us and provide an email address if they want to be involved.

All licensed doctors, except trainees, were contacted last year about the researcher’s first survey, so you may have also received that original survey last summer if you didn’t opt out. The researchers would still like to hear from you, as this survey differs from last year’s.

**Q3. Who is carrying out these surveys?**

The surveys are part of a study being carried out by an independent UK wide collaboration of researchers, UMbRELLA (UK Medical Revalidation Evaluation coLLAboration), led by Plymouth University Peninsula Schools of Medicine and Dentistry.

**Q4. How will these surveys be different to the one that was carried out in 2015?**

The survey in 2015 was for all licensed doctors (excluding doctors in training). These surveys are aimed specifically at doctors who may have a different experience of revalidation such as locums, doctors working primarily in independent practice, doctors with no prescribed connection and SAS/associate specialist and staff grade doctors.

The researchers wanted to hear more from these groups of doctors as part of their evaluation and we are helping to facilitate this. The surveys will contain some of the same questions as last year’s, but there will be some additional ones too.

**Q5. Do I have to take part?**

No – it’s completely your choice. However, the more doctors who do, the better we’ll be able to understand how to improve revalidation for the benefits of patients and the profession. In the case of these particular surveys, we can establish any specific challenges that doctors in these groups might have and allow us to identify improvements.

**Q6. What will you do with my contact details if I don’t opt out?**

We will pass your contact details on to the researchers carrying out the survey (unless you opt out). The data will be held in strictest confidence by the researchers.

**Q7. What data will you pass over to the researchers if I don’t opt out?**

For you to take part in the survey, we’ll need to share your name and email address with the researchers.

To help with the researchers’ analysis, we will also provide them with background information including gender and age, revalidation outcomes and fitness to practise activity. This information, along with your answers, will be pseudonymised – this means
that the researchers will remove all identifying information apart from your GMC number. The GMC number will then be transformed using a mathematical function or set of mathematical functions to provide a unique, identifiable number in the securely stored data set. The details of this procedure will be stored securely and separately from the data. This will allow, for example, survey responses to be linked by the researchers to the stored data via this unique number.

We won’t know individual doctor’s responses and the researchers analysing the data will not know the procedure undertaken to pseudonymise the data.

The researchers are also required to hold all this information securely and dispose of it once the study has finished.

Q8. How will the researchers contact me about the survey?
They will contact you via the email address you have previously given us. You will receive an email with the subject line ‘Help shape the future of revalidation’.

Q9. How do I opt out of the survey?
You can contact us by 17 August to opt out by emailing researchoptout@gmc-uk.org. Please quote your name, your GMC reference number and the postcode of your registered address.

If you received a letter from us (as we don’t have an email address for you) and don’t want to take part, then you don’t have to do anything.

If you don’t opt out by the deadline, you can still choose not to respond to UMbRELLA’s survey when you receive it by email.

Q10. Why is a third party company carrying out the research?
It’s vital that this research is independent and objective. This helps to encourage a positive response rate amongst participants and confidence in the research findings.

Q11. Did the survey go through ethical approval?
Yes - the study received ethical approval from the Plymouth University Faculty Research Ethics Committee (Health & Human Sciences Research).

Q12. Why are you asking people to opt out rather than opt in?
We carefully considered the arguments for and against before agreeing this approach. Because revalidation is such an important issue to us we want to encourage as many doctors to take part as possible. In the past, some ‘opt-in’ research has had a low response rate, making it harder to be sure that we are getting a good picture.
If you don't opt-out, you can still choose not to fill in the survey.

**Q13. Will the GMC know who has taken part in the survey?**

No, we won’t know this.

**Q14. I don’t have an email address, can I still take part?**

You will need an email address to take part, as the survey will be an online questionnaire. If doctors haven’t given us their email address and they want to take part in the survey, they can call us so we can update our records. This will enable them to be included in the survey.

If you’re not able to access an online version, for example, because you have a disability, please contact the GMC Contact Centre on 0161 923 6602 if you are inside the UK or +44 161 923 6602 from outside the UK.

**Q15. Will the results be made available publicly?**

The results of these surveys will form part of the overall study (data will be aggregated). The final research report is likely to be publicly available in 2018.

**Q16. How can I and/or my organisation take part in the evaluation?**

The researchers are responsible for designing and carrying out the evaluation. If you wish to find out more, please contact UMbRELLA directly via their website or by emailing contact@umbrella-revalidation.org.uk

**Contact us**

If you need further advice or have more questions about the survey then please contact us.