

# Portfolio pathway - policy on the currency of evidence

## Summary of policy

- 1 Doctors making an application for specialist or GP registration using the Portfolio pathway will usually be required to provide evidence from their most recent five years of practice. Applicants may be able to provide some older evidence as part of their wider portfolio documentation. This is likely to require additional supporting evidence in order to be accepted.

## Background

- 2 Requirements for entry onto the Specialist and General Practice registers are set out in the Eligibility and Registration of General Practitioners and Specialist Medical Practitioners (Amendment) Order 2022 and General Medical Council (Applications for General Practice and Specialist Registration) (Amendment) Regulations 2022. Both the Order and Regulations sit beneath the Medical Act 1983.
- 3 The legislation sets out that the doctor must demonstrate that they have the knowledge, skills and experience (KSE) required for practising as an eligible specialist or general practitioner in the UK.
- 4 Doctors who have completed training outside of an approved training programme in the UK can apply for specialist or GP registration via the Portfolio pathway by providing a range of evidence about their previous training and experience. This contributes to the overall assessment of their KSE in that specialty. If that assessment is successful and the doctor's application is granted, they can be entered onto the Specialist Register or GP Register.
- 5 Research shows that knowledge and skills fade if not practised over time, therefore we require portfolio pathway applicants to provide sufficiently recent evidence to support their application for registration and demonstrate that their knowledge and skills are up to date.
- 6 The average length of specialty training of five years is indicative of the time taken to acquire the necessary KSE.
- 7 Some applicants may have had time out of practice or have worked less than full time, for example because of ill-health, maternity, parental leave, or a career break. For these applicants it can be difficult to demonstrate competence across the breadth of the curriculum within the five years preceding the application. Therefore, clinical evaluators and decision

makers have the flexibility to consider applicants most recent five years of practice, rather than the five years directly preceding an application.

## What is the policy?

11. Doctors making an application for specialist or GP registration using the Portfolio pathway need to demonstrate that they have the KSE to practice as an eligible specialist in the UK.
12. When evaluating evidence submitted as part of applications, clinical evaluators and decision makers will consider the following:
  - a) Recent evidence provides assurance that the applicant meets the standard for specialist or GP registration. Applicants will usually be required to provide evidence from their most recent five years of practice.
  - b) Applicants may need to provide some older evidence to demonstrate they have the knowledge, skills and experience and have met the curriculum outcomes.
  - c) Some applicants may not be able to provide evidence from within a five year period due to personal circumstances. We do not require an explanation nor any evidence from applicants about the reason for their break in practice.
    - i. When considering evidence which is drawn from a period longer than five years, clinical evaluators and decision makers should consider which competency the evidence relates to, and what proportion of evidence is older. They should do this for the specific competency and across the application as a whole.
    - ii. Some evidence which is drawn from a period longer than five years may be acceptable. Older evidence is more likely to be considered as acceptable when accompanied by current evidence which demonstrates maintenance of the competency.
  - d) Some evidence types may need to be more recent than the applicant's most recent five years however this should be by exception and only where this can be justified based on the specialty requirements.
13. Clinical evaluators and decision makers will make a judgement about evidence which has been provided and consider what level of assurance it provides of the doctor's knowledge, skills and experience. If they are not satisfied that it provides sufficient assurance, they will have the discretion to request clarification or further evidence.

**Policy draft and date: V 0.1 15/09/23**