



Professional Competence Scheme (PCS) advice for locum, sessional and out of hours (OOH) GPs

Issued by ICGP PCS Department on 30th April 2019

Under the Medical Council requirements, all registered doctors are obliged to enrol on a PCS annually and to meet the minimum requirements of 50 CPD credits and one clinical/practice audit, regardless of working status. Based on feedback received, ICGP is aware that GPs working as locums, working in out of hours or doing sessional work may have specific challenges in fulfilling these requirements.

We have provided below some suggested solutions to some of the more common issues:

External CPD credits

Issue: Difficulty attending conferences or meetings due to providing cover for other doctors.

Suggested solution: You are recommended to get your external credits from a range of sources and this can include:

- eLearning with assessment/MCQ element
- Live webinars (1 CPD credit)
- Offsite eLearning

You can view a full list of activities that have been recognised for external CPD by clicking [here](#)

Issue: *Can non-College members access ICGP webinars and eLearning?*

Suggested solution: All GPs enrolled on the PCS can access ICGP live webinars. Doctors who are not members of the College can access eLearning from any source where it has been recognised for external CPD.

Internal CPD credits

Issue: Inability to participate in practice meetings and case discussions

Suggested solution: You can record any activity where you reflect on your own practice for internal credits; generally 1 hour of activity equals 1 CPD credit. Examples include:

1. Discussions with a pharmacist, counsellor, practice nurse or other health professional about patient care, these can take place in person or by phone over the internet
2. Handover meetings between locum doctors and other GP colleagues
3. Forming a clinical club or journal club with other GP colleagues in similar situations
4. Identification and implementation of an improvement to your practice
5. Significant event analysis (template available [here](#))
6. Joining a relevant committee. You can record up to 6 committee/business meetings per PCS year (1 meeting = 1 CPD credit)
7. A full list of internal CPD activities is available [here](#)

Clinical/Practice audit

Issue: Difficulty carrying out an audit without access to the original patient cohort

Suggested solution: Audit is about changing how you practice and measuring that change, rather than measuring an outcome change in a patient cohort. Therefore, you do not need to see the same group of patients that you saw for your initial measurement. Sample audits include:

- Asthma audit. Check your audit to see if you are advising all patients with moderate to severe asthma about the influenza vaccination, as one of the criteria is that these patients should receive this vaccination every year. You could then check to see if your rate of advising patients has increased rather than whether the initial group of patients have since gone on to receive the vaccination.
- Smoking cessation audit. You could review your approach to smoking cessation by checking to see if you have provided relevant advice to all patients who are smokers. You can measure your improvement by checking whether you increased your rate of providing patient advice.
- Audit of your Doctors' Bag. A useful way to ensure that the contents of your Doctors' Bag are relevant and up to date
- Check out how to adapt an audit to different working circumstances [here](#).

Important – Plan Ahead!

It is useful to plan your learning at the beginning of each PCS year, particularly if you anticipate a challenge in meeting the requirements. Use the Professional Development Plan (PDP) to plan how you intend to achieve your credits and audit.

While the last thing you might want to consider in May is CPD, putting a plan in place early can help put you in a confident position facing into the new PCS year. [Here](#) is a Professional Development Plan (PDP) template to assist you. Where you complete this plan, discuss it with a colleague and add it to your ePortfolio before the 31st of October, you can record it for 3 internal CPD credits. You can record subsequent review of your plan before the 30th of April for a further 1 internal CPD credit. By reviewing your PDP against the previous year's plan, you can record an additional 1 credit.

Other tips for planning your PCS year include:

- If you form a journal or clinical club, agree a regular day and time to meet at the start of each PCS year.
- Plan to engage in more activity than you need, to allow for extenuating circumstances.
- You could attend the ICGP Annual Conference and AGM in May. This takes place over two days and participation will provide you with more than half your annual external CPD requirement. It is also a great opportunity to meet and network with your peers.
- Decide on your audit topic at the start of each PCS year. According to Medical Council guidelines, your audit should take approximately 12 hours of work over the year so by starting it in May, you can allow time to carry out all the steps of the [audit cycle](#) before the end of April.

NB: Remember to ensure that you have evidence to support all your recorded CPD activity, including:

- External: CPDR code or certificate of attendance
- Internal: notes regarding the activity (e.g. number of people in attendance, topics discussed)
- Personal learning: name of the journal/textbook/website, date of issue/access and topics covered
- Research and teaching: published paper, slideshow used, course program
- Audit: detailed summary or audit report