

## Professional Competence – FAQs

### General Registration

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## GENERAL

### What are Professional Competence Schemes?

Professional Competence Schemes are the formal structures provided for under Part 11 of the Medical Practitioners Act (MPA) 2007 to ensure that all doctors registered and working in Ireland maintain their education, knowledge and skills (competence) at an acceptable level. A Professional Competence Scheme is recognised by the Medical Council for the purpose of maintaining professional competence.

While the term “Professional Competence Schemes” is new, many of the activities that the schemes will involve are already in existence for example; the activities accredited in the voluntary CME programmes.

### Who do Professional Competence Schemes apply to?

Professional Competence Schemes, once in full operation, will apply to all doctors whose names are entered in the General and Specialist Divisions of the Register. It is anticipated that trainees, including interns, will not be required to provide evidence of participation in Professional Competence Schemes as long as they can provide evidence that they are enrolled in a formal training programme supervised by a Postgraduate Training Body.

### What is involved in Professional Competence Schemes?

Professional Competence Schemes are designed to promote self directed and practice-based learning activities rather than supervised training. As well as promoting personal professional development the Schemes aim to promote activities that maintain and develop the competencies e.g. professionalism, knowledge skills and attitudes of the individual practitioner, which are essential for meeting the changing needs of patients and the healthcare delivery system. The Schemes will also encourage participants to plan, record and reflect on professional development needs, as part of their pursuit for lifelong learning.

The Schemes will consist of two elements initially:-

- Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
- Clinical Audit

Multi-Source Feedback will be added to the Schemes at a later stage in accordance with IMC guidelines.

### What kind of activities will be accredited for CPD?

As a general rule, educational activities that are sponsored by Postgraduate Training Bodies will automatically generate CPD credits. These will include regional and national scientific meetings, conferences, workshops, personal learning and international conferences organised by equivalent bodies in other countries. Postgraduate Training Bodies are responsible for attributing CPD credits to various professional activities.

### When will it be mandatory to participate in a Professional Competence Scheme?

The Minister for Health & Children, Ms Mary Harney T.D., has signed an order bringing Part 11 of the Medical Practitioners Act, 2007 – Maintenance of Professional Competence, into effect from Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2010.

This means that all registered medical practitioners will have a legal duty to demonstrate that they are maintaining their professional competence. In practice this means that practitioners on the Specialist and General Divisions of the Register must enrol on an accredited Professional Competence Scheme and begin a process of engagement in Professional Competence activities such as Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and Clinical Audit. **Practitioners must be registered onto a Scheme by 1<sup>st</sup> May 2011.**

### How protected/confidential will the data collected through professional competence process be? Will this information be legally privileged? Will it be subject to FOI requests or requests for legal disclosure, either through the PGTB or through the Medical Council?

The data collected through Professional Competence Schemes will be used for the purpose of carrying out any reasonable activity for the efficient administration, monitoring and audit of the Professional Competence Scheme. The data will only be disclosed to a third party to meet statutory obligations.

### What are employers obliged to do?

Part 11 of the Medical Practitioners Act 2007 places a duty on the HSE and other employers to facilitate the maintenance of professional competence.

## REGISTRATION

### I am on the Specialist Division. How do I register with a Professional Competence Scheme?

You should contact your Postgraduate Training Body (PGTB) to begin the process of enrolling in a Professional Competence Scheme. Please [click here](#) for the PGTBs contact details.

If you are not aligned with a PGTB, please contact directly the PGTB which you feel is most appropriate to your area of practice. Please [click here](#) for the PGTBs contact details.

### **I am not on the Specialist Register - where do I register for PCS?**

If you are registered on the General Division of the Register you should contact your Postgraduate Training Body (PGTB) to begin the process of enrolling in a Professional Competence Scheme. Please [click here](#) for the PGTBs contact details.

If you are not aligned with a PGTB, please contact directly the PGTB which you feel is most appropriate to your area of practice. Please [click here](#) for the PGTBs contact details.

### **If I don't register within 12 months what will happen?**

According to the Medical Practitioners Acts (MPA) 2007 practitioners have a legal duty to enrol in a Professional Competence Scheme by May 2011. There are provisions within the Act for complaints to be made in relation to failures to observe this duty. The Medical Council has yet to determine the actions which will arise pending failure to enrol in a Professional Competence Scheme.

### **Do I need to tell Medical Council that I have registered with a training body?**

No. The PGTBs will submit regular reports to the Medical Council confirming the practitioners who have registered to participate in their Professional Competence Scheme.

### **I am a Consultant in 'X Specialty' and have been for many years. I am not registered on the SDR can I register with the 'X Specialty' Scheme?**

No, only practitioners on the Specialist Division can register with the Professional Competence Scheme for that specialty. In this case, the doctor will be on the General Division of the Register and should contact the appropriate Postgraduate Training Body (PGTB).

You should contact the PGTB you feel is most appropriate to your area of practice to begin the process of enrolling in a Professional Competence Scheme. Please [click here](#) for the PGTBs contact details.

### **I am on the General Division and not a member of a particular PGTB and don't particularly want to join a PGTB – can I enrol on the PGTB PCS?**

Practitioners who are not Members or Fellows of a particular PGTB can align themselves with the body appropriate to their medical specialty for the express purpose of enrolling in a Professional Competence Scheme. An annual fee will be payable and you should contact directly the PGTB which you feel is most appropriate to your area of practice for further information. Please [click here](#) for the PGTBs contact details.

### **I am not aligned to any PGTB. How can I get aligned with one?**

If you are not registered with a Postgraduate Training Body (PGTB), please contact directly the PGTB which you feel is most appropriate to your area of practice. Please [click here](#) for the PGTBs contact details.

If you require any further assistance or information please contact the Professional Competence Section of the Medical Council at 01 4983136 or email [professionalcompetence@mcirl.ie](mailto:professionalcompetence@mcirl.ie)

### **What if my specialty is not recognised by any of the PGTBs? What if none of the PGTBs want to accept me?**

If you are not aligned to any PGTB, you should contact the Training Body which is most relevant to your area of practice. You need not necessarily be a Member or Fellow of a Training Body to participate in its Professional Competence Scheme.

If you have any difficulty in aligning with a PGTB please contact the Professional Competence Section of the Medical Council at 01 4983136 or email [professionalcompetence@mcirl.ie](mailto:professionalcompetence@mcirl.ie)

### **Will there be a cost involved in enrolling in a Professional Competence Scheme?**

Yes. There will be a cost for enrolling and recording of compliance with a Professional Competence Scheme. Precise figures have yet to be determined and will be communicated to registered medical practitioners as soon as possible.