ePortfolio Review Policy

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Author:	Claire Murphy, Irish Institute of Pharmacy		
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1 Abbreviations

CPD   Continuing Professional Development
Director Executive Director of the Irish Institute of Pharmacy
IIOP   Irish Institute of Pharmacy
PSI   Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland
RCSI   Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland

2 Introduction & Scope

The Irish Institute of Pharmacy (IIOP) manages the continuing professional development (CPD) system for pharmacists in Ireland. The Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI) has contracted the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) as the management body for the IIOP.

Legislation requires that pharmacists undertake CPD. The Pharmacy Act 2007 introduced mandatory CPD for pharmacists in Ireland. Furthermore, the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (Continuing Professional Development) Rules 2015, S.I. 553 of 2015 sets out the CPD obligations for pharmacists, and provides for a requirement to maintain a record of CPD and to demonstrate evidence of this to the IIOP on request.

The IIOP's aim is to support pharmacists in meeting the requirements of this legislation, through the provision of the IIOP ePortfolio, facilitation of the ePortfolio Review process and through additional support as required.

3 Overview of ePortfolio Review Process

The ePortfolio Review process enables pharmacists to demonstrate their ongoing engagement with CPD, in line with the legislative requirements. Standards for ePortfolio Review ('the Standards') are developed in consultation with peer pharmacists and incorporate two elements; System Based Standards and Review Standards. All submitted ePortfolio extracts are reviewed against the System Based Standards by the IIOP ePortfolio system, and a sample of extracts are also reviewed against the Review Standards.

For each ePortfolio Review the Standards will;

- Set out what would reasonably and practically indicate CPD engagement in line with the legislation
- Facilitate objective systematic review
- Be feasible for the IIOP to implement

The IIOP will publish the Standards on the IIOP website each year in advance of the PSI's communication to the selected cohort.

4   Pharmacist Selection Process

The PSI selects participants at random from the register of pharmacists. Following this selection process, the PSI communicates with the pharmacist by email advising them of their inclusion in the current year's ePortfolio Review. This communication reiterates the importance of the pharmacist ensuring that their IIOP email communication address is valid and current. The PSI selection process includes managing requests from pharmacists who wish to be excluded on the basis of extenuating circumstances. The PSI Extenuating Circumstances Policy and application form is available on the PSI website.

The legislation states that pharmacists are eligible for selection when they are three years post-qualification, and can be expected to be called for ePortfolio Review once in every five year period.

5   ePortfolio Review - Indicative Timeline

Call for participation in review
Pharmacists will receive a communication by email from the PSI advising them that they have been selected for the current year's ePortfolio Review. Pharmacists are advised in the email that they must ensure that they have the correct email address registered with the IIOP, as all communications will be via email.

When confirmed as eligible, pharmacists are issued with an email from the IIOP advising them that they are included in the upcoming ePortfolio Review. At this time, the IIOP also communicates with those pharmacists who received an outcome of Standard Not Met (Year 1) in the previous year's ePortfolio Review as detailed in Section 12. Full guidance on the process, including the Standards for the ePortfolio Review, is communicated at this stage.

First submission period opens

The IIOP sends an email to alert the pharmacist that they may submit their ePortfolio extract for review via the ePortfolio dashboard. This email provides a closing date for submission of their ePortfolio extract.

First submission period ends

The IIOP sends an email to any pharmacist that has not submitted their ePortfolio extract for review to alert them that the closing date for submission has passed and that they have one final opportunity to submit. This ePortfolio extract will automatically be reviewed against the Review Standards during the second submission review period.

First ePortfolio extract review period

This is the time period in which submitted ePortfolio extracts are reviewed against the Standards for the review.

All submitted ePortfolio extracts are reviewed against the System Based Standards by the IIOP ePortfolio system, and extracts that do not meet these Standards are then reviewed against the Review Standards. A random selection of extracts that meet the System Based Standards are also reviewed against the Review Standards for quality assurance purposes.

During this review period, a pharmacist may be requested to submit additional cycle(s) in line with the requirements of the Standards. Pharmacists will be advised via the ePortfolio notification system of the specific action(s) required along with a closing date for resubmission.

Second Submission Period of ePortfolio extracts for review

In this time period, pharmacists may resubmit their ePortfolio extract for review in line with feedback received. Pharmacists who missed the closing date of the first submission period may also submit their extract for review, but will not be afforded an opportunity for a further resubmission.

Second ePortfolio extract review period

All resubmitted ePortfolio extracts and new ('late') submissions are reviewed against the System Based Standards by the IIOP ePortfolio system and against the Review Standards. In the event that an ePortfolio extract does not meet the Standards in this review period, the final outcome will be assigned as 'Standard Not Met'. Feedback on why the extract did not meet the standard will be available to the pharmacist on their ePortfolio dashboard at the final outcomes publication stage.

Quality Assurance process

The quality assurance process represents the final stage of the review process. The process involves at least 5% of extracts that were reviewed against the Review Standards being selected for QA review by an external examiner.

Final Outcomes

In this period, all pharmacists selected for review are sent an email via the ePortfolio notification system detailing the outcome of their review. There are four possible outcomes as listed in Section 12.

6 Participant Communication & Feedback

- Pharmacists initially receive a communication from the PSI advising them that they have been selected for the current year's ePortfolio Review.
- When confirmed as eligible, pharmacists are sent an email from the IIOP advising them that they are included in the upcoming ePortfolio Review. At this time, the IIOP also sends an email to pharmacists who received an outcome of Standard Not Met (Year 1) in the previous year's ePortfolio Review as detailed in Section 12. Full guidance on the process, including the Standards and timelines for the review, are communicated at this stage. Following submission, pharmacists are sent a confirmation by email via the ePortfolio notification system that their submitted cycle(s) have been successfully transmitted.
- If a pharmacist does not submit their ePortfolio extract before the closing date of the first submission period, they are sent an email via the ePortfolio notification system advising them that they have one final opportunity to submit, and that their extract will be reviewed against the Review Standards in the second submission period.
- In the event that an ePortfolio extract that was reviewed in the first submission period does not meet the standard, pharmacists will receive feedback and guidance on how to resubmit.
- In the event that an ePortfolio extract that was reviewed in the second submission period does not meet the standard, pharmacists will receive feedback on the reasons for their final outcome at the end of the process.
- Pharmacists that submit an ePortfolio extract that meets the standard will be issued with a certificate at the end of the review process. As the review process includes opportunities for resubmission and a quality assurance review it may be several months before the communication containing the certificate is issued.

- In the event that a pharmacist has failed to meet the standard at the end of the review process they may avail of support from the IIOP on how to address their development needs, including the next steps for their review.

7   Late Submissions

ePortfolio extracts received after the first submission period has closed will be reviewed in the second submission review period, which means that they are automatically reviewed against the Review Standards, regardless of whether or not the submission meets the System Based Standards. Late submission will also remove the opportunity for future resubmission.

8   Extenuating Circumstances

The PSI communicates by email with the pharmacist if they have been selected for ePortfolio Review. If a pharmacist believes that they have grounds to be exempted from a review on the basis of extenuating circumstances, they must seek this exemption directly from the PSI.

The PSI notifies the IIOP of the outcome of the application for exemption on the basis of extenuating circumstances. If a pharmacist is successful in their application for exemption on the basis of extenuating circumstances, the IIOP removes them from the ePortfolio Review process.

The PSI provides the IIOP with a list of pharmacists that are eligible for review.

9   Non-engagement

Pharmacists participating in the ePortfolio Review are sent a number of communications throughout the process, as described in Section 6. All communications from the IIOP is by email and is sent to the recipient in line with the contact details that they have registered to their IIOP account.

In the event that an ePortfolio extract is not received within the first submission period, the pharmacist is sent an email informing them that they have one final opportunity to submit, which must be done before the second submission period closes.

If a pharmacist fails to submit before the second submission period closes, or fails to engage with the process, the IIOP is unable to provide assurance to the PSI that the pharmacist is meeting their statutory obligation to demonstrate evidence of CPD.

10 Confidentiality

Along with the requirements under Data Protection legislation, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and in line with the Code of Conduct for Pharmacists, pharmacists should ensure that both patient and colleague confidentiality and privacy is respected in their ePortfolio extract submissions to the IIOP.

This includes ensuring that no patient identifiable information is included in submission e.g. patient names, DPS numbers, copies of prescriptions, receipts or vaccination records, photographs, etc.

The communications and information resources provided to pharmacists that have been called for review will clearly lay out their responsibilities in this regard.

In the event that a breach of confidentiality is identified within an extract, the extract will not be reviewed.

In the event that an extract raises concerns regarding a patient safety issue, or fitness to practise, the Executive Director is required to take whatever steps necessary in the interests of safeguarding patient safety. The IIOP will always endeavor to communicate with the pharmacist in instances where there is referral to the PSI.

11 Quality Assurance

The IIOP implements a quality assurance system to demonstrate that the Standards are consistently applied across the ePortfolio Review process.

- All submitted extracts are automatically reviewed by the ePortfolio system against the System Based Standards.
- Any submitted extracts that do not meet the System Based Standards will be reviewed against the Review Standards.
- A random sample of extracts that have met the System Based Standards will be reviewed against the Review Standards.
- At least 20% of extracts will be reviewed against the Review Standards annually.

- At least 5% of the extracts reviewed against the Review Standards will be subject to QA review by an external examiner.

12 Final Outcomes & Delivery of Results

There are four potential final outcomes which may result from the ePortfolio Review:

1. **STANDARD MET**

Pharmacists that meet the Standards receive an email advising them they can download their ePortfolio Review Certificate from their ePortfolio dashboard.

2. **STANDARD NOT MET (Year 1)**

Those pharmacists who do not meet the Standards at the end of the first year of undertaking ePortfolio Review are assigned an outcome of 'Standard Not Met'. They may avail of support from the IIOP on how to address their development needs including the next steps for review. They are afforded the opportunity to participate in the following year's ePortfolio Review as a Year 2 Participant. No referral is made to the PSI at this point.

If a pharmacist receives an outcome of Standard Not Met (Year 1) and subsequently receives an outcome of Non Engagement in Year 2 (because they have not re-engaged with the process in year 2), reference is made to both outcomes: Standard Not Met (Year 1) and Non engagement (Year 2) at the point of referral to the PSI.

3. **STANDARD NOT MET (Year 2)**

This category represents pharmacists that have been assigned a final outcome of 'Standard Not Met' for two consecutive ePortfolio Reviews. The PSI is provided with a list of PSI registration numbers for this cohort of pharmacists in the IIOP ePortfolio Review Report.

4. **NON ENGAGEMENT**

This category represents pharmacists that have not engaged with the process. The PSI is provided with a list of PSI registration numbers for this cohort of pharmacists in the IIOP ePortfolio Review Report.

If a pharmacist receives an outcome of Standard Not Met (Year 1) and subsequently receives an outcome of Non Engagement in Year 2 (because they have not re-engaged

with the process in year 2), reference will be made to both outcomes: Standard Not Met (Year 1) and Non engagement (Year 2).

13 Appeals Process

The IIOP has a mechanism in place to allow pharmacists to appeal outcomes of the ePortfolio Review Process that result in a referral to the PSI. Pharmacists wishing to appeal should refer to the IIOP ePortfolio Review Appeals Policy. The procedures laid out in the appeals policy apply to all pharmacists undertaking ePortfolio Review.

14 Plagiarism

The IIOP aim to foster a culture of authentic learning and development underpinned by integrity and honesty, and to this end does not condone intentional plagiarism. It is possible that pharmacists may encounter similar learning experiences and therefore have significant similarities in their ePortfolios for the action, and perhaps self-appraisal and planning stages of the CPD cycle. However it would be expected that there would be differences in how this is reported, and particularly, that the evaluation of impact on practice would yield different reflections for different pharmacists.

Plagiarism will be suspected in cases where cycles or ePortfolio extracts demonstrate similarities which cannot be explained by shared learning experiences.

If a pharmacist is in doubt as to what constitutes plagiarism, they are encouraged to seek advice and guidance from a member of the IIOP team.

If the IIOP receives evidence that an ePortfolio extract for review has been plagiarised, there is a statutory obligation under SI 553 of 2015 to report the matter to the Registrar of the PSI.

15 Falsification & 3rd Party Involvement

If the IIOP receives evidence that an ePortfolio extract for review has been falsified, or obtained through a 3rd party, there is a statutory obligation under SI 553 of 2015 to report the matter to the Registrar of the PSI.

16 Disclosure of information to 3rd parties

The ePortfolio Review process is managed by the IIOP, and should be considered a quality assurance process for the profession. Information submitted by pharmacists to the IIOP will be treated in the strictest confidence.

The IIOP makes every reasonable effort to ensure that all pharmacists are supported and engaged throughout the ePortfolio Review process. However, in the event of a pharmacist being assigned a final outcome of;

1. Non-engagement (Year 1)
2. Standard Not Met (Year 2)
3. Standard Not Met (Year 1) and Non-Engagement (Year 2),
4. or evidence of plagiarism or falsification is presented,

the IIOP will be required to refer to the PSI, as the IIOP is unable to provide assurance to the PSI that the pharmacist is meeting their statutory obligation to demonstrate appropriate CPD. The IIOP will issue a communication to affected pharmacists prior to referral to the PSI.