ePortfolio Review Policy

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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) was established by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI) with a mandate to oversee the management and delivery of the new system of continuing professional development (CPD) for pharmacists in Ireland, and to promote excellence in patient care and professional standards.

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 are developed in a peer led process on an annual basis and set out the minimum requirements for pharmacists to demonstrate their engagement with CPD.

The IIOP will publish these standards on the website in advance of the PSI's communication to the selected cohort.

The standards are reviewed on an annual basis, in line with the evolving CPD model, and therefore should be considered subject to change.

4   Standards Setting

The Standard Setting Group is sought from the register of pharmacists by the IIOP through a call for expression of interest. The IIOP endeavours to ensure that the group comprises a range of pharmacists from different practice backgrounds and of mixed age and gender. Terms of reference for this group are set by the Executive Director of the IIOP and reviewed on an annual basis.

The role of the Standard Setting Group is to determine, for the coming year, the standards for the review. The group is required to set standards which:

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

The Standard Setting Group must agree the standards as a group. The group will compromise an odd number of members to ensure that a majority position is always reached.

The Standards are circulated to peer reviewers for final comment prior to publishing.

5   Peer Reviewers

Peer Reviewers are sought from the register of pharmacists by the IIOP. The IIOP endeavours to ensure that the group comprises a range of pharmacists from different practice backgrounds and of mixed age and gender. Terms of reference for this group are set and reviewed on an annual basis by the Executive Director of the IIOP.

Peer reviewers undertake standardisation training on an annual basis. Training resources are provided and an MCQ assessment is used to validate learning.

Peer reviewers review extracts that have not met the standards, and also those that are randomly selected for peer review. The IIOP will support the peer reviewers in

undertaking their role by providing a quality assurance function whilst also acting as a support/referral point.

In the event that a peer reviewer identifies an issue within an extract that raises concerns regarding a patient safety issue, or fitness to practise, they shall refer this directly to the IIOP. As pharmacists, peer reviewers have a duty under their code of conduct to raise any concerns relating to patient safety. By informing the IIOP this duty is transferred and the Executive Director is required to take whatever steps necessary in the interests of safeguarding patient safety. The first step involves communication with the pharmacist, with any communication to the PSI being undertaken with the knowledge of the pharmacist.

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

7   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 review.

When confirmed as eligible, pharmacists are issued with a letter and an email from the IIOP advising them that they are included in the upcoming ePortfolio Review. Pharmacists are advised in the letter that they must ensure that they have the correct email address registered with the IIOP, as all communication from that point will be via email. Full guidance on the process, including the standards for the review, is communicated at this stage.

Submission window opens

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

Submission window of ePortfolio extracts for review

This is the time period in which the pharmacist must submit their ePortfolio extract for review.

Submission window closes

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 subject to review by a peer reviewer during the resubmission 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 subject to review against the standards by the IIOP ePortfolio system, and extracts that do not meet the standards are then subject to review by a peer reviewer. A random selection of extracts that satisfy the requirements of the standards are also sent for review by a peer reviewer for quality assurance purposes.

During this review period, peer reviewers may request that additional cycle(s) are submitted in line with the requirements of the ePortfolio Review standards. Pharmacists will be advised via the ePortfolio notification system of the specific action(s) required along with a closing date for resubmission.

Resubmission window of ePortfolio extracts for review

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

Second (Resubmission) ePortfolio extract review period

All resubmitted ePortfolio extracts (to include new ('late') submissions) are reviewed against the standards by peer reviewers. 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 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 a system driven random selection of at least 5% of submissions for QA review by the IIOP.

Final Outcomes
In this period, all submitted and resubmitted ePortfolio extracts that have met the standards for review are communicated. In the event that a pharmacist has failed to meet the standard at the end of the review process, they may avail of support and guidance from the IIOP on how to address their development needs, including the next steps for their review.

8   Participant Communication & Feedback

- Pharmacists initially receive a communication from the PSI advising them that they have been selected for the current year's review.
- When confirmed as eligible, pharmacists are issued with a letter and an email from the IIOP advising them that they are included in the upcoming ePortfolio Review. Pharmacists are advised in the letter that they must ensure that they have the correct email address registered with the IIOP, as all communication from that point will be via email. Full guidance on the process, including the standards and timelines for the review, are communicated at this stage.
- Following submission, pharmacists receive an automatic confirmation by email that their ePortfolio extract has been successfully transmitted.
- If a pharmacist does not submit their ePortfolio extract before the closing date of the first submission window, they will receive an email advising them that they have one final opportunity to submit, and that their extract will be reviewed by a peer reviewer in the resubmission review period.
- In the event that an ePortfolio extract that was submitted in the first submission window does not meet the standard, pharmacists will receive feedback and guidance on how to resubmit.
- In the event that an ePortfolio extract that was submitted in the resubmission window 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 process it may be a 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 and guidance from the IIOP on how to address their development needs, including the next steps for their review.

9   Late Submissions

ePortfolio extracts received after the first submission window has closed will be reviewed in the resubmission review period, which means that they are automatically subject to review by a peer reviewer, regardless of whether or not the submission meets the standards. Late submission will also remove the opportunity for future resubmission.

10   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. This includes situations where extenuating circumstances arise during the review process.

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.

11   Non-engagement

Pharmacists participating in the ePortfolio review will receive a number of communications throughout the process, as described in section eight. The first communication from the IIOP is by letter and by email and is sent to the recipient in line with the contact details that they have registered to their IIOP account. This letter

clarifies that that all subsequent interactions relating to the process are managed exclusively online and that pharmacists should ensure that their IIOP email address is current and correct.

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

If a pharmacist fails to submit before the resubmission review window 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.

12 Confidentiality

Along with the requirements under Data Protection legislation, and in line with Principle Three of the Code of Conduct for Pharmacists, pharmacists should ensure that patient 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 reviewer identifies patient sensitive information within an extract, they are instructed to advise the IIOP.

All peer reviewers working on behalf of the IIOP sign a confidentiality undertaking prior to commencement of their duties.

13 Quality Assurance

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

- Peer reviewers are required to complete standardisation training to ensure consistent interpretation of standards and consistent feedback. Peer reviewers will undertake this on an annual basis.

- Training resources are provided which will include an MCQ assessment to validate learning.
- A random sample of extracts that have met the standards will be forwarded for review by a peer reviewer.
- At least 20% of extracts will be subject to review by a peer reviewer annually.
- At least 5% of the peer reviewed extracts will be forwarded for QA review.

14 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 review standards receive an email with a link to open and then download their certificates

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 and guidance 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 review.

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.

15 Appeals Process

The IIOP takes very seriously its responsibility to have a mechanism in place to allow pharmacists to appeal outcomes of the ePortfolio Review Process. Pharmacists wishing to appeal should refer to the IIOP ePortfolio and Practice Review Appeals Policy. The procedures laid out in the appeals policy apply to all pharmacists undertaking ePortfolio Review.

16 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.

17 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.

18 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 Non-engagement or Standard Not Met (Year 2), 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. Any communication with the PSI will be with the full knowledge of the pharmacist.