

The 2017/18 ePortfolio Review

The Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI) Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Rules 2015 (SI No 553 of 2015) came into effect on 1 January 2016. These rules set out the legal framework to give effect to the PSI's CPD model including a system of quality assurance of pharmacists' CPD.

The system of quality assurance known as the ePortfolio Review process is carried out by the Irish Institute of Pharmacy (IIOP). The ePortfolio Review is the process by which pharmacists are required to submit an extract from their ePortfolio which demonstrates that they are appropriately engaging in CPD. Pharmacists can expect to be called by the PSI to participate in an ePortfolio Review once in every five year period.

The first statutory ePortfolio Review was completed in May of this year. Over 90% of pharmacists participating in the review demonstrated compliance with the review standards and the IIOP reported that the feedback from participants was broadly

very positive. This is an impressive result and gives a very positive early indicator for the level of engagement and commitment of the profession with CPD.

The PSI has now completed a random selection of over 1,300 pharmacists for the second ePortfolio Review and notified the selected pharmacists by email on 25 July 2017. Pharmacists selected for review will be invited to submit their ePortfolio extract for review by the IIOP in January 2018.

In the early stages of this second review, Liz Hctor, Professional Development and Learning Manager, IPU, sat down with Katherine Morrow, ePortfolio Review Project Lead, IIOP, to discuss some of the commonly asked questions.



1. How does the review work?

The IOP ePortfolio Review process enables pharmacists to submit extracts from their ePortfolio for review by the IOP. These extracts are then objectively reviewed against a pre-determined set of standards, which are published on the IOP website for all pharmacists to view. This ensures a fair and transparent process for pharmacists.

The standards for this review were set by a group of 'real' pharmacists, working day-to-day in a range of different practice settings. Therefore, the standards set are representative of what this group consider to be reasonable engagement with CPD for everyday working pharmacists, in line with the specific requirements of the legislation.

2. I have been recording my cycles in a notebook, not online. Now that I have been selected for the ePortfolio Review, I am going to record them in my ePortfolio next weekend, so it will look like I completed all my CPD on the same date. Will this matter?

The standards for the 2017/18 review require that you submit at least four cycles that you created in 2017 (or in 2018 during the current review process) and at least one cycle that you created in the previous four years (i.e. 2013 – 2016 inclusive). This is to reflect the legislative requirement to record your CPD in your IOP ePortfolio on an ongoing basis. Therefore, if you have been using a notebook, it is very important that you familiarise yourself with the ePortfolio and start using it now. You can transfer your cycles from your notebook to your ePortfolio and record the cycle

creation date retrospectively. For example, if you wish to record a learning cycle from November 2016, simply select this date at the 'Cycle Start Date' stage.

3. I started using my ePortfolio in 2015. Can I select entries from 2015, 2016 and 2017 for review?

It is important that the cycles in your extract meet the standards for the current review. For this year, the standards stipulate that at least four cycles from 2017(18) and at least one cycle from the previous four years (i.e. from 2013 – 2016 inclusive) must be submitted. So yes, you can select cycles from all years as long as you include four from 2017(18). Remember, however, that the number of cycles represents just one part of the review requirements, so check your extract carefully against the other standards for review. The standards can be accessed by a link from the homepage of the IOP website (www.iop.ie). When the time comes to submit your extract, you will be able to avail of a 'ready reckoner' tool which allows you to check if your extract meets the requirements of the system-based standards. In the event that further action is required, you can submit additional cycles as long as this is done within the specified timeframe.

4. Since 2015, I have been recording entries in my ePortfolio but I haven't finished any CPD cycles. I have been selected for the 2017/18 ePortfolio Review. Can I finish a 2016 cycle now and submit this as a cycle created last year?

Yes, you can. Whilst you may not have 'finished' or 'completed' your cycle, the cycle still demonstrates evidence of learning that

you undertook in 2016. It is possible that in some instances cycles may remain open for several years, e.g. if the learning is linked to a long-running educational programme, such as a diploma or a Masters, which is perfectly reasonable and appropriate. This is one of the reasons that the system-based review recognises cycle creation dates and not cycle completion dates.

5. I wasn't selected this year and I am going to travel for 2018. If I am selected next year for the 2018/19 ePortfolio Review, can I select entries from 2017?

If you are selected in 2018, it is likely that you will need to submit evidence of ongoing learning. As pharmacists, we need to be able to demonstrate to our patients, our colleagues and the general public that we are continuously learning and developing in order to stay up-to-date in our knowledge and skills, which is why the legislation requires that CPD is recorded contemporaneously. Whilst the standards for the 2018/19 review have not yet been set, it is likely that there will be a requirement to provide evidence of CPD from the current year (i.e. 2018), as well as from previous years.

Remember, the ePortfolio is accessible via all mobile electronic devices so you can add to your ePortfolio as you travel. There are likely to be ways in which travelling experiences can add to your professional development.

6. Do I have to complete the CCSAT?

The CPD legislation for pharmacists requires that all pharmacists regularly self-assess against the PSI's Core Competency Framework for Pharmacists. The CCSAT provides a record of this self-assessment and is a good tool

to use to prompt reflection.

The standards for the 2017/18 review require that pharmacists submit at least one CPD cycle which has originated from their self-assessment against the Core Competency Framework for Pharmacists. For the purposes of the review, this can be done in one of two ways:

- By undertaking a CCSAT self-assessment, exporting the suggested cycle topics into your ePortfolio, then completing and submitting at least one cycle for review; or
- By selecting the tick box under the Self-Appraisal stage of the relevant cycle, 'Completing self-assessment against the Core Competency Framework'.

Further instructions on this will be included in the online ePortfolio Review support resources, which will be available to pharmacists from mid-September.

7. I completed the Core Competency Self-Assessment Tool (CCSAT) in August 2016 and completed a CPD cycle based on the outcome in 2016. Can I submit this as a cycle which originated from my self-assessment against the PSI's Core Competency Framework for Pharmacists for assessment in the 2017/18 ePortfolio Review?

No, as this does not reflect evidence of recent self-assessment. The standards for this year's review stipulate that you must provide evidence of self-assessment against the PSI's Core Competency Framework for Pharmacists in the current year. This is in line with the legislative requirement to

regularly self-assess against the framework. For this review, there are two ways that you can demonstrate evidence of this self-assessment, as described above.

8. How much information should I record in my CPD entries?

There is no right or wrong answer to this; it depends on the cycle itself and what it is you are recording. For example, recording a cycle based on a discussion with a colleague or a cycle based on learnings from a work-related incident may differ from one based on a formal course of study. It all depends on the basis for the cycle and the stage at which the cycle was started (e.g. the Self-Appraisal stage, Develop a Personal Plan stage or Action stage). Each pharmacist will have his or her own style; some choose to use bullet point information, while others prefer to be more detailed. What is important, however, is that you sufficiently detail what you have learned and how that learning has contributed to your understanding, benefited your practice, improved patient outcomes or advanced your continuing professional development. You will find some sample CPD cycles on the IOP website, in IOP newsletters or by attending ePortfolio Review information events. You should write in a way that works for you and allows you to reflect on what you have done.

9. I go to IPU Academy courses and have completed some of the IOP online courses; are there other activities that I could record in my ePortfolio?

Many pharmacists are surprised to realise the breadth of what counts as

CPD. Traditionally, many pharmacists focus their CPD on their clinical expertise. The PSI's Core Competency Framework for Pharmacists indicates that pharmacists must be competent across six domains of practice: Professional Practice, Personal Skills, Supply of Medicines, Safe and Rational Use of Medicines, Public Health and Organisation & Management Skills. It is important to aim to keep upskilled across all six domains, not just those domains relating to medicines. This requires engaging in a breadth of learning.

Consequently, there are many different types of activities that can be recorded in your ePortfolio as CPD.

Attending IPU Academy lectures, for example, is a very valuable means of undertaking CPD and also offers opportunities to engage with your colleagues which may lead to other opportunities for CPD. Other examples of activities that can be recorded in your ePortfolio as CPD include:

- Completing an eLearning course;
- Attending a live learning course;
- Reading an article;
- Having a discussion with a colleague;
- Attending a conference; and



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- Researching a new drug that has been prescribed for a patient.

However, it is important to remember that recording any learning activity may be appropriate as long as you can demonstrate how it has contributed to your professional development.

It may be helpful to refer to the standards for this year's review to see types of criteria within the scope of the review. The standards can be accessed by a link from the homepage of the IOP website.

10. I have been selected for the ePortfolio Review and have some CPD cycles recorded. I have just been involved in an accident and will be unable to work for the next six months. Can I now apply for an exemption due to extenuating circumstances?

The PSI manages all applications for exemptions from the review under its Extenuating Circumstances process. If circumstances apply to you which would have an impact on your ability to submit an extract from your ePortfolio, you should contact the PSI. The PSI's Extenuating Circumstances Policy and the relevant application form are available on the PSI website. All applications submitted will be managed by the PSI on a confidential case-by-case basis. As per the PSI's initial communication, applications for exemption on the basis of extenuating circumstances should have been made before 25 August 2017. In situations where unforeseen extenuating circumstances arise outside of this timeframe but during the review process, applications should still be made to the PSI and should include evidence as to why it was not possible to submit in advance of the specified deadline.

11. When I was selected for the ePortfolio Review, I didn't apply for an exemption due to extenuating circumstances but my circumstances have now drastically changed and I will be unable to submit my ePortfolio. Is it too late to apply for an exemption?

If you missed the application deadline for extenuating circumstances and your circumstances have now changed, you can still submit an application to the PSI. Applications will be managed by the PSI on a case-by-case basis in strictest confidence and should be submitted in writing either by post or by email to cpd@psi.ie. Application forms are available on request from the PSI.

12. I was granted an exemption to the ePortfolio Review last year but have been selected for ePortfolio Review again this year and my circumstances have not changed. Can I get another exemption?

Your application for exemption would need to be submitted to the PSI in line with the PSI's Extenuating Circumstance Policy. The IOP has no remit over selection or exemption of pharmacists for review.

13. I was selected for the ePortfolio Review for 2016/17 but the IOP found that I did not meet the required standard. I am now automatically included in the 2017/18 ePortfolio Review. Can

I submit cycles from 2016/17 that met the standard?

In the event that you do not meet the standard in your first review, you are automatically carried over into the next review, where you will be given a second opportunity to meet the standards for the review. The standards are subject to change on an annual basis so it is very important that you familiarise yourself with the current year's standards as they may differ from the previous year. In the event that you are required to submit cycles from previous years, it is perfectly acceptable to submit a cycle which you have previously submitted but you will need to add the required number of cycles from 2017/18.

14. I was selected for ePortfolio Review for 2016/17 but did not submit my ePortfolio. I was in treatment for a serious illness and due to an oversight, I did not apply for an exemption due to extenuating circumstances nor reply to any correspondence from the IOP. In May, I received a letter from the IOP stating that they had referred me to the PSI as they were unable to ascertain that I had met the standard. Now that I am feeling better, why can't I submit my ePortfolio this year?

In the event that the PSI calls a pharmacist for review and that pharmacist does not apply for extenuating circumstances and subsequently does not submit an ePortfolio extract for review within the specified timeframe, the IOP will refer the pharmacist back to the

PSI. This is in line with the ePortfolio Review Policy, which you can view on the IOP website. In these cases, the PSI will engage directly with the pharmacist and the IOP is no longer involved in the process.

15. What happens if my ePortfolio is not considered adequate?

It is worth remembering that the remit of the ePortfolio Review is not to grade your CPD on a scale. The remit is to allow pharmacists to demonstrate evidence of appropriate and ongoing engagement with CPD, in the interest of outcome-focused professional development. All pharmacists' ePortfolio extracts are reviewed against the specific standards, mapped to the legislative requirements which have been set for the review.

All pharmacists in the review process who submit their cycles within the specified timeframe in January 2018 have the opportunity to avail of feedback on their ePortfolio extract, should one or more of the standards not be met in the first instance. This feedback can then be incorporated and the pharmacist has one more opportunity to submit.

In the event that a pharmacist does not meet the standards at the end of the review process, they are automatically entered into the following year's review. The PSI is not informed at this stage. However, if at the end of the second review, the pharmacist does not meet the standard, the IOP is obliged by the terms of the ePortfolio Review Policy to refer the pharmacist to the PSI.

16. Will the PSI be aware of how I perform in the review process?

The IOP undertakes the ePortfolio Review process to allow pharmacists to demonstrate evidence of CPD, in line with the legislation.

Whilst the PSI is responsible for selecting pharmacists for review, the IOP undertakes the review process itself, at arm's length from the PSI. The IOP will not share any aspect of a pharmacist's ePortfolio with the PSI.

In the event that the IOP cannot ascertain that a pharmacist is meeting his or her CPD obligations (i.e. if the standard is not met at the end of two years or if the pharmacist fails to submit an ePortfolio extract for review within the timeframe provided), the IOP has a statutory obligation to refer the pharmacist to the PSI.

17. Where can I get more information?

There is a useful ePortfolio Review resource on the IOP website (www.iop.ie), including the review standards for this year, information on getting started and the timelines for the review. In addition, further online support resources including 'how to' guides will be available from mid-September. You may be interested in our programme of webinars and live events that will be held throughout the autumn months; these information events have been specifically designed to support pharmacists through the review. The events proved very popular last year so if you are interested, please book via the IOP website, under the Courses & Events tab.

Remember also that the IOP team are always happy to hear from you by phone or email with any queries you may have on 01 402 5112/ info@iop.ie.