Trainer reappointment FAQs

What are the Trainer Standards based on?
The standards were introduced in 2008 and based on the set of standards produced by the RCGP and COGPED (the GP deans’ national strategic body). The standards build on the GMC generic training standards which are found in their document Promoting Excellence. The majority of these requirements are mandatory and are laid out in the Gold Guide (Department of Health guide to the statutory requirements for medical education & training).

Why do I have to be reappointed every 5 years?
The GMC is required by the Medical Act to approve GP trainers and the RCGP standards state this should be for two years initially and at least every three years thereafter. All LETBs follow this timescale for appointments. The School office notifies the GMC after each initial appointment and reapproval via the GMC Connect online portal. Your name, GMC number and appointment dates are shared with the GMC.

What information is required for reappointment?
We ask you to complete a questionnaire which will provide the appropriate evidence that you are meeting the standards for training. The questionnaire will also check that you are well supported in your role and that you are able to access education & training for your development in your role as a trainer.

Will I receive a visit?
The School does not visit trainers routinely, as in the past. We believe we have a light touch in comparison to other deaneries, whilst remaining able to satisfy the GMC requirements to quality manage standards for training. The time and resource saved has been redirected to supporting the trainer appraisal process and supporting trainers in need of additional assistance.

Why do we need to repeat the information that has already been submitted for trainer appraisals / trainer development visits?
There may have been changes to the standards since your last appointment, to your personal circumstances or the practice’s circumstances so it is important to update the form fully.

What information does the Training Programme provide?
The Training Programme will supply a report to the central School office providing information on the number of trainee feedback questionnaires received and if any issues are current e.g. with regard to trainee feedback received or resulting from the trainer appraisal process. The reappointment panel does not routinely receive copies of trainer appraisal or trainer development visit reports.

Will I be interviewed?
We interview a random sample of 10% of each cohort due for reappointment. If you are called for interview randomly this is a quality control exercise on the part of the School. We also interview trainers if it has been requested as a follow up from a previous panel or where there has been an issue identified that the panel would like to explore further. Therefore it is unlikely you will be interviewed and the whole process can be conducted as a paper exercise. We may seek to interview a trainer if the process has not been followed correctly i.e. you have submitted late or there is missing information – if it’s too short notice we may carry requests for interview forward to the next panel.

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You will be informed if you are being interviewed as part of the random sample or not.

**Who sits on the reappointment panel?**
The panel will consist of an educationalist, a lay person, a trainer and a trainee representative. We do our best to avoid conflicts of interest. A training programme director (TPD) from your own training programme may attend either at your request or if the panel has requested it.

**What might be asked at the panel?**
If there are no specific issues to investigate the panel will ask a selection of questions based on the trainer competencies and standards. The interview should last about 25 minutes.

**How often do I need to do Equality & Diversity training?**
Trainers are required to refresh their training every 5 years with an interactive module every 9 years. Details are in the Trainer Standards, Appendix 1. Please, please ensure you have kept this up to date as we will not be able to reappoint you if it has lapsed.

**What qualifies as significant changes to the practice?**
This would include moves, extensions, takeovers and mergers. Visits will not be made routinely. All such changes should be notified to us at the time on an organisational change form (please email Angela Johnson to obtain a form).

**What if I have a conditional reappointment?**
Some trainers are reappointed without conditions but many have some conditions set out in their formal letter of reappointment. We ask you to provide some additional information within a set timescale, or confirm to us that you have worked towards meeting a particular standard. Once satisfactory information has been received, or you can confirm the standard is met, then you can consider the conditional status of your appointment lifted.

**Is my appointment legally binding?**
A trainer appointment is not a binding or formal employment contract in any way. We are required to notify the local NHS area team of your appointment so they know to allocate trainer grants and trainee salaries. We advise as appropriate.

**What do I do if I want to resign from training?**
We would greatly appreciate six months’ notice of your plans to resign or retire. You should ensure that both the training programme and the central office have been made aware.

**What if I have not been training recently?**
If you have been “fallow” for 2 years or more you will become inactive – please let us know if this has happened. We are happy to facilitate your return to active training and can arrange tailored refresher training as required. There is more information about this on the

**Can I appeal against a decision made by the panel?**
Decisions about the appointment of a trainer are made by a panel. Decisions are normally unanimous but if not, this will be recorded. In the event of an evenly split decision, the Chair will have the casting vote. Appeals may be made on the grounds of:
- Failure to follow the agreed process
- An (evenly) split panel decision
A trainer, or intending trainer, wishing to make an appeal should write to the Director of School who will investigate and report back to the trainer concerned within 28 days. If the Director of School has been involved in the Panel, a nominated deputy will investigate.

**Will there be changes to the approvals process in future?**
The GMC Education Strategy has formed the basis for an approvals framework for all trainers of undergraduate and postgraduate learners, building on the process for selecting, training and appraising GP trainers. So it seems our model will require little amendment as it’s the preferred one!
The GMC has also been tasked to investigate approval of the learning environment. It's not clear how much impact this would have as we already assess the standards relating to your practice from your questionnaire, but in future we might be required to validate this with random visits for example. All future developments are of course subject to change in the current climate.

Do you have a query that is not answered in this FAQ? Email Tammy Middlemiss for assistance.

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