



# Royal College of General Practitioners SPECIALIST TRAINING FOR GENERAL PRACTICE NEWSLETTER

March 2006

No. 2

## Introduction



Bill Reith, Chair  
Postgraduate  
Training Committee

This second newsletter from the RCGP Postgraduate Training Committee focuses on certification. It is timed to be of maximum benefit to the large number of doctors who will finish training this summer. It really does have a lot of useful information which should make the whole process of getting a certificate of completion of training in general practice a lot easier and quicker – provided you follow the advice! The RCGP has had almost 3,000 applications for the May sitting of the examination – and, as we expect all of these doctors to apply for a CCT, the Certification Unit is going to be pretty busy.

### ACT NOW – AND REGISTER!

If you are due to finish training and wish to work in general practice in any capacity, you must have a CCT (or Statement of Eligibility of Registration under Article 11). In addition, from April 2006 you must be included on the General Medical Council's GP register.

I am grateful to Lesley Hawsworth, Director of Certification at PMETB and Jill Edwards, Medical Director of Certification and Standards, and Fiona Erasmus, Head of Certification, at the RCGP Certification Unit for their contributions to this newsletter.

Dr Bill Reith  
Chair, RCGP Postgraduate  
Training Committee

## Update

The Certification Unit has been receiving applications for Certificates of Completion of Training (CCTs) since October 2005. The processes for CCT applications are now established and the first real test of the new system came in January when many trainees completed their programmes. By the end of

February 2006 the Certification Unit had received 1,766 applications and 619 CCT recommendations had been passed to PMETB by the RCGP. This is an increase on the numbers for the same time last year. All but 32 of these recommendations were processed by the RCGP within 10 working days of receipt of a complete and correct application, and the average turn around time was seven working days.

We have recruited extra staff to ensure that applications can be dealt with in the timescale. We know that there have been concerns responding to the large number of telephone enquiries and the telephone system is being overhauled so that it should be easier to contact the Unit. Do remember that the unit is based at Buckingham Street (020 7930 7228) and not Princes Gate.

During the first three months of operation, the Certification Unit was much busier than would normally be expected at that time of year. This is encouraging because it demonstrates trainees are registering with the Unit in advance of the completion of their training programme. The advantages of registering with the RCGP early in your training programme are explained in the following 'Dos and Don'ts'.

## Making an Application : Dos & Don'ts

### DO register with the Certification Unit early

Trainees should register with the RCGP Certification Unit at the beginning of their three year training programme, ideally three months into their first post (normally April or October). The advantage of registering early is that you will then be able to receive advice and assessment of your training throughout the programme. We recommend that registered doctors submit a VTR form to the Unit on completion of each post so that it can be checked for completeness and so that your training programme can be monitored to ensure that it conforms with regulation. This will be an advantage when you come to make your application for a CCT because only your final VTR form will need to be checked and your formal application can be processed more quickly.

The other significant advantage of registering early is that you will benefit from Associate Membership of the College at no additional cost during your training. As the registration fee is a single payment you will also avoid any increases in the registration fee that might be made in the future.

### DO ensure that your application is correct and complete

The published RCGP turnaround time for processing a CCT application and sending a recommendation to PMETB is 10 working days. However, this assumes that the application is complete and correct. If any of the paperwork submitted is incomplete or requires clarification or amendment the process will take longer. You should read the application checklist which can be found on our website ([www.rcgp.org.uk/certification](http://www.rcgp.org.uk/certification)) before submitting any paperwork to the Certification Unit. If you have any questions about completing your application and VTR forms we recommend that you seek advice from the Certification Unit.

## RCGP STATISTICS

1ST OCTOBER 2005 TO  
28TH FEBRUARY 2006

Written enquiries  
received : 1357

Applications received : 1766

CCT recommendations  
sent to PMETB : 619

Telephone enquiries answered  
(weekly average) : 288

Average turnaround time :  
7 working days

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### **DON'T have your VTR forms signed more than six weeks before the end of the post**

Prior to September 2005 VTR forms could only be signed a maximum of four weeks before the end of a post. Since September 2005, this timeframe has been extended to six weeks to help ensure that applicants receive their certificates before their training programme ends. This timeframe is now strictly enforced, so please ensure that your VTR forms are not signed any earlier than this by your consultant, trainer or deanery.

### **DON'T apply under the wrong Article of the General and Specialist Medical Practice (Medical Education, Training and Qualifications) Order 2003**

The processes for a CCT application (Article 10) and an equivalence application (Article 11) are different. If you have any doubt about which is the correct route for you please refer to our website or telephone the Certification Unit. Although there are transitional provisions for those who began training before September 2005 the regulations have changed. We strongly recommend that you confirm whether or not you are eligible for a CCT. Guidance is available on our

#### **TOP TIPS**

*from a recently certified GP Registrar who has been through the application process for a Statement of Eligibility for Registration*

- Think about your certification process well in advance.
- Ascertain whether you will be Article 11 or Article 10.
- From the outset, be aware of what the RCGP / PMETB will need from you.
- If you are going to be an Article 11 applicant, then keep every detail of your training - job contracts, appraisals, courses attended, hand-outs from in-house education etc, **EVERYTHING**, no matter how banal it might seem!
- Apply early and read the small print!

website or in booklet form from the Unit. If you are not eligible for a CCT you will need to apply directly to PMETB for your certificate and you should ensure that you use the appropriate form. The Article 11 application form is available on PMETB's website [www.pmetb.org.uk](http://www.pmetb.org.uk)

*Dr Jill Edwards  
Medical Director of Certification and Standards*

*Ms Fiona Erasmus  
Head of Certification  
RCGP Certification Unit*

**For more information visit :  
[www.rcgp.org.uk/certification](http://www.rcgp.org.uk/certification)**

### **GP Certification Arrangements - A report from PMETB**

Since 30 September 2005 the work of the JCPTGP has been split between PMETB and the new Certification Unit at the RCGP. GP certification procedures have changed and guidance on these can be found on the websites at [www.pmetb.org.uk](http://www.pmetb.org.uk) or [www.rcgp.org.uk/certification](http://www.rcgp.org.uk/certification)

This change generated much speculation about the procedures and the ability to issue certificates on time. However, PMETB is pleased to be able to confirm that the vast majority of certificates were issued within 10 working days where the documentation was complete.

Since 30 September PMETB has issued certificates to GPs listed below.

It is clear, however, that the new procedures are still not widely understood. Therefore, the following briefly sets out the new certification procedures and the pathways for entry to the GMC's new GP Register to be introduced from April 2006.

### **Certificates of Completion of Training (CCT) / Article 10**

Doctors on Vocational Training programmes will need to enrol with the RCGP Certification Unit at the beginning of their 3 year programme. Trainees should submit VTR forms to the Unit at the end of every approved training post. Their progress can then be monitored and any concerns raised well in advance of their completion date. The final VTR form can be completed 6 weeks prior to the end of the training programme. When this is submitted, the Unit will undertake a final evaluation, issue a CCT application form to the trainee, and submit a recommendation with the doctor's training details to PMETB so that a certificate can be issued. PMETB will check the applicant's details against the programme it has approved and monitor College recommendations for consistency and fairness. It aims to issue CCTs within 10 working days once it has both the application form and College recommendation.

When doctors sign the CCT application form they can also sign to have their name included on the GMC GP

		2005			2006	
Certificates Issued		October	November	December	January	February
PMETB applications	CCTs (general practice)	7	30	16	317	208
	Article 11	0	3	4	61	67
	Acquired rights certificate					1
JCPTGP Prescribed applications transferred to PMETB	Experience certificate	36	0	0	0	0
	Equivalent experience certificates	22	79	6	4	0
	Acquired rights certificate	1	1	0	0	0
	Equivalence experience rejected (partial assess)	20	40	23	27	48
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>86</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>409</b>	<b>324</b>

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Register to be introduced in April 2006. If they sign for this, PMETB liaises directly with the GMC who will then include the doctor's details on the Register and write to them to confirm that it has done so.

During this transitional period, many doctors registering with the RCGP Certification Unit will have already completed some of their training programme. They may also have a previous assessment for the prescribed experience certificate from the JCPTGP which PMETB will honour. However, these GP trainees will still need to enrol with the Certification Unit to obtain a CCT application form and to submit their final VTR forms.

### **Application for equivalence : Statement of Eligibility for GP Registration (SER) / Article 11**

Doctors who consider they already meet the standards for Article 11 should apply directly to PMETB. Depending on the quality of the application submitted the complete process starting from scratch could take between 3 to 6 months. Article 11 application forms can be downloaded from PMETB's website together with guidance about how to complete the form and the process. Once the application is received it will be checked by PMETB, any additional documentation will be requested and references sought. Once this information is received the complete application will be sent to the RCGP Certification Unit for an evaluation for equivalence to CCT standards. PMETB requires a recommendation from the Certification Unit within 7 weeks. Once this has been received it will aim to issue its decision within 10 working days. Doctors who are approved are issued with a statement of eligibility for GP Registration (SER). PMETB liaises directly with the GMC who will then include the doctor's details on the new GP Register and will write to them to confirm that it has done so.

There are a number of doctors who will already have a previous assessment from the JCPTGP and who are now undertaking additional training.

If the JCPTGP decision confirming the additional training / assessment

needed for a certificate of equivalent experience is included with the Article 11 application form, PMETB will take this into consideration. Such doctors need only submit documentary evidence that they have successfully completed the additional requirements i.e. a duly completed VTR form(s). They should also include a covering letter stating that PMETB can obtain their previous JCPTGP application papers for use as part of the evaluation. They do not need to register or enrol with the RCGP. Providing their application is in order, and they did the JCPTGP required training exactly within the timeframe, then PMETB will honour the previous JCPTGP assessment and process the application.

Once the application is received we will request the applicant's previous JCPTGP file. If all the necessary information is there, including references, we will process the application. This should take no longer than 15 working days. If there is insufficient information available, in accordance with PMETB's certification rules, we reserve the right to request further information from the applicant and at that stage approach their referees.

Doctors who complete an Article 11 application form are strongly advised to include details of six referees of which at least two should be from their last / current GP Registrar post. For doctors with a previous JCPTGP formal decision PMETB will accept applications forms with only 2 referees listed in relation to their additional JCPTGP required training. However, this is on the understanding that if, in the unlikely event PMETB does not accept the previous JCPTGP decision, PMETB will go back to the applicant to complete the form in full which will result in the application taking longer to process. So far PMETB has had no hesitation in accepting all the JCPTGP previous decisions for these applicants. Doctors who do not submit a previous JCPTGP decision will have to provide all the necessary documentation they wish to rely on with their application form.

### **Summative Assessment**

Summative assessment is an integral part of the current GP Vocational Training programme and a requirement for the award of a CCT under Article 10. Applicants applying for equivalence under Article 11 must satisfy PMETB that their training and / or qualifications, plus any additional experience, is equivalent to a CCT in general practice. Applicants who cannot demonstrate these standards will be advised of the additional training and any examination, assessment or test of knowledge that must be completed to the Board's satisfaction. The current CCT requirement is summative assessment and this will almost certainly be a requirement for any doctor undertaking additional training in the UK for an Article 11 certificate of equivalence.

### **Appointment to UK GP training schemes**

Many doctors will be appointed by the regional postgraduate deaneries to three year UK training programmes leading to the award of a CCT. However, doctors with previous training in the UK or overseas can apply for a shortened scheme and undertake training which will be equivalent to a CCT programme for Article 11 equivalence purposes. At present the Certification Unit at the RCGP is offering free informal advice about the additional top-up training needed based on a detailed CV. A more formal process for advice should be set up in 2006. As further information becomes available it will be published on our websites.

If doctors have any enquiries about the above they should contact :

**GP CCT applications :**  
gpct@pmetb.org.uk or  
certification@rcgp.org.uk

**Article 11 applications :**  
art11@pmetb.org.uk or  
certification@rcgp.org.uk

*Miss L A Hawksworth,  
Director of Certification, PMETB*

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### Frequently Asked Questions

#### **I wish to apply for a Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT). How do I go about this?**

If you are nearing the end of your general practice training programme and wish to apply for a CCT you will need to register with the RCGP's Certification Unit, if you have not already done so. You will need to complete the registration form and submit it to us together with a fee of £350, a copy of your current annual GMC registration certificate and VTR forms to document each of your hospital and general practice training posts. If you have already sent original VTR forms to the RCGP or the JCPTGP you will not normally need to send them again. You will also need to make an application for a certificate to PMETB. More information about the application process can be found on PMETB's website. You can obtain a PMETB application form from the RCGP's Certification Unit. The RCGP has also produced an information sheet and application checklist which can be found on our website.

#### **I wish to apply for a Statement of Eligibility for Registration (SER) under Article 11 of PMETB Order. How do I go about this?**

You will need to make an application to PMETB for a Statement of Eligibility for Registration and more information about this can be found on PMETB's website.

#### **I have received a formal assessment from the JCPTGP in the past. How will I be affected by the new system?**

**CCT applicants** – If you were assessed under the Vocational Training Regulations governing prescribed experience and you now meet the criteria for a CCT the JCPTGP's evaluation of your previous training will normally be accepted. This is provided that your overall training programme is at least 36 months in duration, that all of the training was undertaken within the seven years preceding the date of your application for a certificate, that the posts had formal prior approval for general practice training, that all training was satisfactorily completed, and that the

mix of specialties is broad, balanced and complies with the Order. You will need to complete an RCGP registration form, as described at Question 1. You will need to submit VTR form(s) for the further training posts which you have completed according to the JCPTGP's advice.

**Article 11 applicants** – You will need to apply directly to PMETB for a Statement of Eligibility for Registration under Article 11 of the Order. The application form is available on PMETB's website.

We received the following advice from PMETB :

*If a doctor completes an Article 11 application form and includes a previous decision from the JCPTGP confirming the additional training / assessment they need to complete for a certificate of equivalent experience then PMETB will take this into consideration and the doctor need only submit the additional documentary evidence to demonstrate to PMETB they have successfully completed those additional requirements i.e. duly completed VTR form(s). They should also include a statement in a covering letter, that PMETB can obtain their previous JCPTGP application papers for use as part of the evaluation. Providing their application is in order, and they did exactly the JCPTGP required training within the time-frame, then PMETB will honour the previous JCPTGP decision.*

#### **I was accepted onto the JCPTGP's 'accelerated route'. How will I be affected by the new system?**

The situation for accelerated route applicants is the same as for Article 11 applicants who have had a JCPTGP recommendation (please see Question 3), provided that you have already had the full, formal evaluation from the JCPTGP. When you make your formal application for a Statement of Eligibility for Registration you will be evaluated against PMETB's specialty specific guidance for general practice (which can be found on their website) and the JCPTGP's recommendation will be taken into account and, normally, honoured. If you did not receive a formal evaluation from the JCPTGP your training, qualifications and experience will be evaluated for

the first time by PMETB and it is possible that PMETB's decision will differ from the JCPTGP's informal view.

#### **How long will it take to process my application?**

The RCGP Certification Unit will normally process complete and correct applications for CCTs within 10 working days. If you are seeking an evaluation of a partially completed CCT training programme the assessment will normally be made within 10 working days, but it may take a further week to send our written decision out to you

#### **I understand that I will benefit from Associate Membership of the RCGP when I register with the Certification Unit. Will I receive a refund if I have already paid for Associate Membership?**

If you have already paid your Associate Membership fee you will be refunded. However, you will need to complete and submit the Certification Unit's membership form in order to obtain a refund.

*This is an extract from the more comprehensive list of Frequently Asked Questions that can be found on our website :*

[www.rcgp.org.uk/certification](http://www.rcgp.org.uk/certification)

*If your question is not answered call the Certification Unit for advice every weekday between the hours of 2pm and 5pm.*

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