Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland

Professional Competence Scheme
**INTRODUCTION**

On May 1st 2010, the Minister for Health and Children signed an order commencing Part 11 of the Medical Practitioners Act 2007. Under Part 11 of the Act, all practising doctors must enrol in a recognised Professional Competence Scheme by May 2011 and fulfil requirements set by the Medical Council (unless they are in a recognised training post). These schemes will allow doctors to accurately record continuing professional development activities and participation in clinical audit.

RCSI has recently been accredited by the Medical Council as the body to administer the Professional Competence Scheme as defined under Part 11, to doctors in the following disciplines:

- Surgery (all specialties)
- Emergency Medicine
- Sports & Exercise Medicine
- Ophthalmic Surgery & Ophthalmology

While the majority of doctors have undertaken continuing professional development activities on a voluntary basis for many years, the activation of Part 11 of the MPA 2007 now makes this a requirement.

RCSI wish to make it as easy as possible for medical practitioners to meet the requirement of the Medical Council. To this end we have developed a new section within our “Colles Portal” that will make it easy for doctors to record their CPD activities and store certificates and other evidence of their participation in those activities. There will be an easily accessible dashboard that will show the doctor how many credits they have accumulated both in the current year and over the previous five year period. A summary annual statement will be issued each year to demonstrate that they are enrolled in a scheme, and that they have accumulated sufficient credits to satisfy their requirements under the Act.

It is the individual responsibility of each registered medical practitioner to enrol under an approved scheme and to maintain their CPD record therein.

**SCHEME REQUIREMENTS**

The Professional Competence Schemes that have been set up under the MPA 2007 will involve two elements initially:

1. Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
2. Clinical Audit

**1 CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD) REQUIREMENTS**

The cycle of accreditation will be over a five year period and will commence in May 2011:

- 50 credits per year
- 250 credits per five year cycle

**Categories:**

- **Category 1:** External – 20 credits per year minimum
- **Category 2:** Internal – 20 credits per year minimum
- **Category 3:** Personal Learning – 5 credits minimum
- **Category 4:** Research or Teaching – two credits per year desirable
Category 1: Category 1: This refers to external activities (i.e. outside the hospital or clinic) and is concerned with the maintenance of knowledge and skills. This would include attendance at international conferences, national conferences as well as college, specialist society or academy meetings. Credits obtained for pursuing a higher degree or diploma or participating in approved online course would also be recorded under this heading. Evidence of attendance at these activities would usually be in the form of an official certificate/document. A minimum of 20 credits annually is required in this category.

Category 2: This refers to internal activities (within the hospital or clinic) and is concerned with practice evaluation and development. Activities that would come under this heading include participation in Morbidity & mortality meetings, clinical audit meetings, case presentations, chart reviews, hospital grand rounds, and structured multi-disciplinary meetings. Evidence would usually be in the form of an annual summary of official attendance records. The minimum requirement in this category is 20 credits annually.

Category 3: This refers to personal learning and would include participation is personal learning and this would include participation in self directed education, training or assessment activities (e.g. journal reading, researching clinical information). It might also include small group activities such as journal clubs. The minimum requirement in this category is 5 credits annually.

Category 4: This refers to research and teaching activities. This would include teaching on programmes or courses. Participation in hospital inspections for Colleges or the Medical Council. Documented time spent mentoring and counselling surgical trainees or acting as an examiner at postgraduate level would also come under this category. Ideally, you should accumulate at least 2 credits per year in this category but most will accumulate considerably more.

(2) Clinical Audit Requirements:
Each doctor is required to participate in at least one clinical audit annually. This would normally be of an aspect of clinical practice such as outcomes from a procedure, compliance with guidelines (such as thromboprophylaxis), and evaluation of processes. It is assumed that this would equate to about one hour per month of audit activity but it may not be evenly spread through the year. You will need to specify what the audit was, when it was completed and upload (or keep) a summary – for example an abstract if the audit is presented (either externally or internally) or published.

Verification
The required supporting documentation for each CPD category must either be uploaded digitally or kept safely in hardcopy by the medical practitioner should they be required for audit purposes.

How to Enrol on the Professional Competence Scheme:
To enrol on the Professional Competence Scheme, surgeons or other practitioners will need to create an account by logging on to www.rcsi.ie/pcs. You are required to enter some new details including your medical council number, and some personal details.

If you are already registered with RCSI for teaching or other purposes you will still have to activate your PCS account using an online enrolment scheme. Your existing RCSI credentials (such as those used for library/email access or the Colles Portal) will allow you to log in for future use. To activate your account please log on to www.rcsi.ie/pcs
Using the Colles Portal, you will be able to

- maintain an accurate record of CPD activities
- access your CPD programme requirements
- have immediate access to CPD category scores matched to the schemes requirements allowing you to plan your professional development activities to meet these requirements.

If you attend an approved activity that is managed by RCSI – such as the Charter Day or the Millin meetings - the activity detail and its CPD category and credits will be automatically allocated to your record. For all other events or activities, you can log onto the portal and record the details of the activity including the category, the details of the event and the credits awarded for the activity. In this way, you are able to build your portfolio over time of all your CPD activities.

**Governance**

To ensure confidentiality, all data is stored securely and kept confidential in accordance with the Medical Practitioners Act and the relevant Data Protection and Freedom of Information Legislation. The RCSI Department of Surgical Affairs will be responsible for the provision of resources and administrative infrastructure to support the day to day operation and quality assurance of the Professional Competence Schemes. Individual Professional Competence Scheme records are only accessible to necessary specified personnel in the RCSI's Department of Surgical Affairs. Only these people will have access to your data and only for the purpose of ensuring that RCSI complies with all the requirements of the Professional Competence Schemes. The process is overseen by the RCSI Professional Development Committee.

Each year, the Medical Council requires RCSI to take a random sample and verify that those doctors have evidence to support the credits claimed on the scheme. Those who have been selected will be notified. Usually, this will involve reviewing the online material including uploaded certificates and attendance sheets. If you chose to keep the paper records, you will be asked to produce these for verification (so it would be easier if you were to upload them where possible).

At the end of each year (probably in May), an annual statement will be produced to prove you are enrolled in the scheme and to demonstrate that you have accumulated at least the minimum number of points in each category and recorded at least one clinical practice audit.

**The cost of the scheme** has been set by the RCSI at €275.00 per year. You will be required to pay this online when you enrol or activate your account.

For up-to-date information on enrolment on the Professional Competence Scheme, please view our website: www.rcsi.ie/pcs

Ms Marie O’Boyle  
*Manager, Professional Competence Scheme*

Mr Eunan Friel,  
*MD, Department of Surgical Affairs*

Professor Sean Tierney  
*Dean, Professional Development & Practice*

Department of Surgical Affairs, RCSI  
Email: pcs@rcsi.ie  
Tel: 353 (0) 1 402 2743