

## Professional Competence Scheme

Please see below for information from the Medical Council on overseas practitioners and trainees. Please note that the overseas regulations apply to those practitioners who wish to remain on the Medical Council Register in Ireland.

### Overseas Practitioners

#### What overseas doctors need to know about professional competence

If you wish to retain your registration with the Medical Council, you must maintain your professional competence in line with its standards regardless of whether you practise medicine in Ireland or practise overseas. Practising medicine outside the State while retaining registration with the Medical Council does not exempt a doctor from the legal duty for medical practitioners registered with the Medical Council to maintain professional competence. If you practise more than 30 days in the State, we regard this as being established in Ireland and you should be enrolled in a professional competence scheme operated by a recognised postgraduate training body.

#### Information for doctors practising outside of the State

All doctors registered in Ireland are legally obliged to maintain their professional competence by enrolling in professional competence schemes and following requirements set by the Medical Council. This duty applies to doctors who are registered with the Medical Council and therefore retain the right to practise medicine, regardless of whether or not they practise medicine in the State. **Practising medicine outside the State while retaining registration with the Medical Council does not exempt a doctor from the legal duty to maintain professional competence.**

Doctors registered with the Medical Council but practising medicine outside the State must maintain their professional competence and follow requirements set by the Medical Council - i.e. it is expected that you will follow Standards for Maintenance of Professional Competence set by the Medical Council, which can be viewed here: <http://www.medicalcouncil.ie/Information-for-Doctors/Professional-Competence/PC-Rules.pdf>, and engage in a minimum of 50 hours of continuing professional development activity and one clinical audit per year. The Medical Council requires doctors to pursue an established structured maintenance of professional competence programme to be supported in following these Standards and has established professional competence schemes with recognised postgraduate training bodies in Ireland for this purpose. These schemes are applicable for doctors practising in the State. However, it is recognised that pursuit of a structured maintenance of professional competence programmes outside the State may be more practical for doctors practising medicine overseas and it is also recognised that some doctors practise in health systems where they cannot pursue a structured maintenance of professional competence programme.

There now follows guidelines for how the Medical Council will satisfy itself that doctors practising overseas are observing the new legal duty to maintain professional competence.

## **Doctors who plan to work overseas for less than one year**

If you usually practise medicine in Ireland but plan to take a short break to practise medicine overseas, you should enrol in a professional competence scheme. In general, a short break (less than one year) will be easy to accommodate by continuing to engage in maintenance of professional competence activities while practising overseas and making up any deficit on return to usual practice in Ireland.

## **Doctors who usually practise medicine outside of Ireland OR Doctors who intend to take a long break to practise medicine overseas**

A doctor based overseas will maintain their professional competence in line with requirements set by the Medical Council.

Doctors practising medicine in countries where there are already established structured maintenance of professional competence type programmes in place (e.g. Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, the United Kingdom, the United States of America) can pursue requirements to maintain competence in the jurisdiction in which they are practising medicine using such an established local structured maintenance of professional competence type programme. Engaging in activities to maintain professional competence in line with requirements set by the Medical Council will be straightforward and doctors pursuing this approach will find that the requirements set by the Medical Council are very similar to the requirements of other structured maintenance of professional competence type programmes.

Alternatively, doctors may wish to contact a professional competence scheme operated by a recognised postgraduate training body. Continuous professional development activities engaged in while in another jurisdiction may be recognised and accredited by the postgraduate training body, while the doctor may avail of the scheme's facility for planning, recording and managing professional competence activities. As with all doctors enrolled in professional competence scheme operated by a postgraduate training body, doctors may be required to participate in a verification process to provide evidence to support your recorded activities.

A doctor practising medicine outside the State will make a declaration to the Medical Council regarding maintenance of professional competence when applying annually to retain registration. Failure to make this declaration will place your continuing registration at risk. If a doctor is selected for audit, the Medical Council may seek supporting evidence to demonstrate you are not practising medicine in the State and that you are engaged in maintenance of professional competence through a local structured maintenance of professional competence programme. In exceptional situations where a local structured maintenance of professional competence programme is not available, you will be asked to provide appropriate evidence. Please do not submit evidence of CPD activity to the Medical Council unless you are requested to do so through. Further details will issue to you if you are selected for audit.

**A doctor practising overseas pursuing this approach to maintenance of professional competence who comes to practise medicine in Ireland will enrol in a professional competence scheme operated by a recognised postgraduate training body in Ireland when a cumulative total of greater than 30 days per year has been spent in the practise of medicine in Ireland.**

If an EEA State citizen is fully established to practise medicine in another member State, the doctor may practise medicine in Ireland on a temporary and occasional basis without having to take out specialist or general registration. Further information is available in the Medical Council's [Guide to Registration.pdf](#)

A doctor may choose to voluntarily withdraw from the Medical Council's register and seek restoral upon return to practice in the State.

## **Trainees**

Doctors registered on the Trainee Specialist Division of the register in Ireland are deemed to be meeting their professional competence requirements as they are enrolled in a recognised training programme.

## **Overseas Fellowships**

If a doctor goes overseas as part of their fellowship and if they were in a training post in Ireland, their name will revert back to the general division of the register. Consequently as a general division doctor, they would be required to provide evidence of their professional competence activity through participating in a professional competence scheme. They can do this by participating in similar CPD structures in the Country they are practising in and recording CPD activity in line with Medical Council requirements.

In terms of evidence of CPD activity, only if a doctor is selected for audit will they be requested to submit evidence of same. All doctors will have to submit a declaration to the Medical Council as part of the annual registration process. For doctors on fellowships and if selected for audit, the Medical Council will be requesting evidence of their CPD activity. The Council may accept a letter from the corresponding college in the Country they are practising in to confirm participation in programme. However depending on the level of information on the letter, they could be asked for additional evidence of their CPD activity so it is important that they keep records of their activities to date.

If doctors are working in countries where there is limited availability to professional competence schemes, then doctors would be requested to provide evidence of the CPD activity in relation to their area of practice so again it is important that they retain evidence of activity whilst working overseas.