The General Pharmaceutical Council is asking for opinions on its proposed changes to continuing professional development as it moves towards a revalidation model. We look at what is being proposed.

- The GPhC is consulting on its move to revalidation.
- The deadline for feedback is July 17.
- From next year, registrants should use the new CPD recording system for four entries per year, undertake a peer discussion about their practice, and write a reflective account of how their work demonstrates adherence with the GPhC standards.
- The GPhC will start reviewing “new” CPD records in 2019 and the peer discussion and reflective account in 2020, by which time pharmacy professionals will be expected to submit all three elements as part of...
Revalidation is the process by which a supervisory body – in this case the GPhC – confirms that the professionals it regulates (pharmacists and pharmacy technicians) are up-to-date and fit to practise.

Doctors have been subject to revalidation by the General Medical Council since late 2012, while the Nursing and Midwifery Council introduced revalidation in April 2016.

Is this the same thing as continuing fitness to practise?
Yes. The GPhC has been monitoring continuing fitness to practise (CFtP) for several years but many people felt the term sounded very similar to the processes used to investigate pharmacy professionals when concerns are raised. To avoid confusion, the term “revalidation” is now being readopted.

So what’s changing?

At the moment, pharmacy professionals make a declaration when renewing their GPhC registration that they meet set standards and are fit to practise. That is staying the same under the current proposals. What is changing is the way in which CPD is recorded and reviewed and how often it is submitted.

Is it more complicated?

The GPhC says that the proposed new CPD recording requirements in its revalidation model are less onerous and simpler than those currently. Each year all registrants will have to undertake, record and submit four CPD activities, a peer discussion and a reflective account against one of the GPhC standards.

Will there be more paperwork to complete?

Again, the GPhC says this is not the case. Recording CPD entries will be simpler, with the aim of making them more focused on learning and development activities that matter to pharmacy professionals and the people using their services, freeing up time to do the peer discussion and reflective account elements.
What does that involve?

Pharmacy professionals will be expected to identify someone – a colleague, manager, mentor or even expert patient – they can talk to about their practice, in particular how it benefits the public. This can be done in person, by phone or another way, and the GPhC will only want to know that it has taken place, not the full details of what was discussed.

The GPhC says this will help pharmacy professionals reflect and improve upon their practice, and reduce the sense of isolation that many feel.

The reflective account is basically a case study that demonstrates how a registrant incorporates the GPhC’s standards into their work. It will comprise a brief summary of what they have done over the last year, how a certain standard has been met, and some supporting examples. The GPhC standards and guidance will be simplified to make this easier.
How to make and submit your CPD records

You can make records on the GPhC’s online portal or elsewhere

You renew your registration on the online portal and submit your records to the GPhC

The GPhC checks to make sure there are the right number and type of records

Your records might be selected for review either randomly or in a targeted way

If you are selected for review, the GPhC will tell you about it and afterwards you will receive personalised feedback. You can use the learning for your next submission

If you are not selected for review, you will receive summary feedback from the GPhC based on the reviews it has done. You can use this feedback before your next renewal date for your next submission

Source: GPhC consultation

Will everything be reviewed every year?
The GPhC will select a certain number of records to review – some targeted and others randomly – and says this approach will ease the stress and workload many feel when their records are called for review every few years. The process will involve lay reviewers to enhance the voice of patients and the public, and better quality feedback will be provided to registrants.

**What if I can’t submit each year?**

That’s fine – if there is a good reason (for example, maternity leave or long-term sickness), in which case it will be possible to renew your registration without submitting your records.

Under some circumstances, partial records will be accepted or an extension may be granted. However, if there is not a good reason for not submitting records, the GPhC will start the “remediation process”, which gives pharmacists another opportunity to submit their records. Failure to do so will be followed by a process known as “administrative removal”.

It is possible to be reinstated to the register after this, as long as a pharmacist submits their continuing professional development, peer discussion and reflective account records, and they are accepted.

**When will the changes be brought in?**

A staged introduction is planned to allow registrants to get used to the new system, but pharmacy professionals are advised to start using the new approach from next year (March) as reviews of the new CPD recording system will start in 2019, and a year later for peer discussion and reflective accounts.

**What do I need to do now?**

The full consultation document can be downloaded by clicking [here](#). Comments and suggestions can be submitted to the GPhC until July 17, 2017.
What will I have to do and submit to the GPhC?
Each year you will be expected to undertake, record and submit a total of six records: four CPD entries, of which a minimum of two must be planned learning activities – one peer discussion and one reflective account.

When should I submit my records?
Each year, and by the time you renew your registration, you will be expected to submit records of your CPD, peer discussion and reflective account to the GPhC. If your CPD is called for review, the regulator will send you details of how to submit it and how long you have to respond.

What does the term ‘reflective practice’ mean and how do I do it?
For the purposes of revalidation, the GPhC has chosen to use this definition: ‘The critical evaluation of practice and learning to find ways to improve outcomes for patients or service users’. You may find the following questions helpful in prompting reflection:
• What happened?
• What was I trying to achieve?
• What went well and why?
• What didn’t go so well and why?
• How did it affect others? (particularly people using your services)
• What were/are the consequences of me doing or not doing what I did?
• What could be done differently next time?
• What have I learnt from this that will change how I approach this situation next time?

How long will it take me to complete my records?
GPhC research suggests that most pharmacy professionals complete their records within about 4.5 hours. In most cases it will take under an hour to complete each of your planned and unplanned CPD entries. The time to complete a peer discussion, including time to identify a peer, to make arrangements for the discussion, prepare for and hold the discussion and write up the entry, is variable. Evidence collected by the GPhC suggests that in many cases it takes between two and five hours, and the actual
discussion takes between 30 minutes and an hour. The time taken to complete a reflective account is variable too, and may take between 30 minutes and an hour.

**What is a peer discussion?**
A peer discussion is a learning and development activity that encourages you to engage with others in your reflection on learning and practice. Research indicates that having an external view can help pharmacy professionals to reflect on their practice and can also reduce the potential for professional isolation. To be most effective, these discussions should be formative, open and honest with someone who you trust and respect and should relate to your activities over the past year.

**How is a reflective account different from a CPD entry?**
Your reflective account is a type of learning activity that has a focus on how you meet one or more of the GPhC’s standard(s) for pharmacy professionals. Your CPD entries do not need to focus on the standards, but should be relevant to safe and effective pharmacy practice and relate to the context of your practice including any specialisations.

*Source: GPhC*