

# CESR Assessor

## Guidance

### Introduction

The CESR (Certificate of Entry to the Specialist Register) Faculty evaluate applications for GMC (General Medical Council) specialist registration, from doctors who are not eligible for specialist registration either through a CCT (Certificate of Completion of Training) or through EEA (European Economic Area) rights. A successful application results in the award of a CESR.

For the award of a *CESR in Ophthalmology*, applicants must demonstrate that their specialty training and/or experience and/or specialist qualifications (from the UK and/or overseas) are equivalent to a CCT in Ophthalmology (that is, what's set out in the CCT curriculum as required to complete training).

For the award of a *CESR in a non-CCT specialty*, applicants must demonstrate that their specialty training and/or specialist qualifications and/or experience gives a level of knowledge and skill consistent with practice as a consultant in the NHS in that non-CCT specialty. This route is open only to those who have had a period of overseas training or who have an overseas specialist qualification in a non-CCT specialty.

For the award of a *CESR in academic and research medicine*, applicants who have not followed conventional specialist training, have focused on a specific area of narrow research and have made a significant contribution to their academic field, may apply for entry onto the Specialist Register with a CESR through the academic or research application type.

### Process

The application evidence is collated by the GMC and forwarded to the Royal College of Ophthalmologists for a specialist evaluation, in accordance with a process set down by the GMC. The process is subject to change from time to time. At present, CESR applications are evaluated against the standards set out in the four Domains of the GMC's Good medical practice guidance and the current specialty training curriculum (or the relevant parts of it for a CESR in a non-CCT specialty).

The College has been involved in a pilot with the GMC and evaluations have also been assessed against the 180 learning outcomes. The pilot has now closed but applications are still coming through. The College are currently working with the GMC on how to take this forward.

The College works closely with the GMC to ensure that a robust system of assessment is established. The College is obliged to assess all applications that are submitted via the GMC, regardless of whether they will be a pass or a fail.

### Responsibilities of the CESR Assessor

Assessors are required to evaluate the application against the standards set down by the GMC.

Assessors should ensure that the best interests of the patient are protected, and that the applicant receives a fair assessment of their application, in accordance with relevant legislation, current process and advice.

Assessors have a duty to ensure that discussions are conducted in a fair and transparent manner and in accordance with relevant legislation, the current process and advice. If any Assessor is concerned about how an application has been dealt with, or about the decision making process, such concerns should be raised with the Head of Education and Training, or with the CESR Faculty Chair. Differences in opinions of assessors, if applicable, will be settled by the CESR Faculty Chair. It is the responsibility of the Lead Assessor to collate the information from other assessors and appropriately record this on the final evaluation form.

Assessors must sign a Confidentiality Agreement before participating in the work of the CESR Faculty, and are expected to take appropriate steps to ensure confidentiality of the application.

If any assessor has personal knowledge of an applicant in respect of whom an application has been sent for assessment, they should inform the Head of Education and Training or Education and Training Co-ordinator immediately. A decision will be taken as to whether it is necessary for the assessor to withdraw from the assessment.

### **Evaluation process**

Assessors will go through the paperwork submitted as evidence in detail and this is followed by a teleconference with a second assessor to discuss the application prior to completing an evaluation form.

There will be an experienced lead assessor matched with a less experienced non-lead assessor in order to maintain the high standard required during the assessment process and also to help with the training of the non-lead assessor.

The completed evaluation form is then returned to the College and checked by the College staff before it is forwarded to the GMC for final approval. Assessors should ensure they are available throughout the whole process of the application, including time for any returns from the GMC (see below). The evaluation form needs to be completed fully giving details of evidence submitted and what areas the evidence is relevant to.

CESR Faculty Chair or the Chair of the Training Committee will liaise with the assessors if there is any concern with the decisions of the assessors as the College and GMC are extremely keen to maintain consistency in their evaluation process. This is important as the applicants are invariably from overseas training background with variable qualifications and experience.

It is envisaged that no more than 2 initial assessments will be required per year. Please note this may be dependent on the demand of the applications.

A Training Day at the College will be provided for new assessors prior to an initial observation of the process and then finally involvement in an application as a non-lead assessor. Only when the assessor is competent and experienced in the process will he or she be required to take on the role of lead assessor. If required you may be invited to a further training or a refresher training day at a later date.

### **GMC requirements for evaluations**

The College's evaluation activities may extend to new applications, reviews of rejected applications and appeals against a decision.

The **mandatory** instructions from the GMC state that the Royal College of Ophthalmologists will:

- Provide an evaluation for all applications sent from the GMC and advise the GMC if for any reason it is not possible to undertake an evaluation;
- Provide a recommendation for approval or rejection of an application;
- Provide recommendations for additional training, examinations, assessment or other tests of competence where the recommendation is to reject an application for specialist registration
- Record the recommendation using GMC administrative arrangements and evaluation forms
- Provide the recommendation within seven weeks of receipt from the GMC

All mandatory guidelines are adhered to in evaluating an application. The Education and Training Co-ordinator will pre-populate the evaluation form to assist the assessors in the completion of the evaluation form. This information must be thoroughly checked.

If for any reason the seven week deadline cannot be met the Education and Training Co-ordinator will advise the GMC at the earliest opportunity.

The GMC also **recommends** best practice guidelines which state that:

- The College should use a minimum of two assessors for each application
- College assessors should complete their evaluations independently
- College assessors should separately record the outcome of their evaluations
- College assessors should separately record recommendations for additional training, examinations, assessment or other tests of competence where the recommendation is to reject an application for specialist registration

A comments sheet is sent to each assessor with each application, for the assessor's use in their initial assessment of the application. The final decision will be arrived at through discussion at their teleconference call. It will be the lead assessors' responsibility to put the evaluation together before submitting this to the College.

### **Reviews**

An applicant who has had an application rejected may ask the GMC to review it within 12 months of the original decision, and submit additional comments and evidence to enable it to do so. The GMC will ask the Royal College of Ophthalmologists to review the application in accordance with the process above, in the light of additional information. The review may include any assessor who previously considered the application. Where possible the review will include an assessor who was not party to the original decision, but the absence of such an additional assessor will not prevent evaluating the application and making a recommendation.

### **Appeals**

The Royal College of Ophthalmologists may also be asked by the GMC to respond to appeals. These will be dealt with by the CESR Faculty Chair and the Head of Education and Training, involving other

assessors or other parties at the CESR Faculty Chair's discretion, following any guidelines set by the GMC for appeals.

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