



The UK Benchmarks

The College delegation to Glasgow in March 2004 learnt at firsthand the three benchmarks of GP training in the United Kingdom viz. the Vocational Registration administered by the National Health Services (NHS), the Membership examination of the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) and the revalidation exercise of the General Medical Council (GMC) recently introduced on 1st April 2004. These are shown in the table below.

The Singapore delegation noted the emphasis on consulting skills as assessed by video consultation and also the active promotion of a quality assurance culture. There was however no summative assessment on clinical skills like that of the OSCE used in the Graduate Diploma in FM examination in Singapore and the 'MRCP'-style of short and long clinical cases assessment of our Master of Medicine examination.

Every doctor who wishes to practise as a general practitioner in UK must pass the summative assessment and be vocationally certified. Doctors must first apply to the NHS and be designated a 'registrar' (equivalent to what is the term 'trainee' in Singapore) and though paid by NHS are assigned to work under supervision for a year in GP training practices. Usually the GP registrars are young doctors who choose to pursue careers in general practice. Occasionally,

there are specialists and hospital doctors switching careers undergoing the 1-year programme as every doctor must be vocationally certified under the 1-year programme before assuming general practice.

About two-thirds of doctors who are vocationally certified in addition pass the membership examination of the RCP after at least 3 years of independent general practice. Membership is a certification of professional excellence and a pre-requisite for appointments to trainers and supervisors.

As the system of mandatory vocational certification and majority collegiate membership has been in place for 3 decades and the culture of quality assurance ingrained, the GMC is beginning to introduce revalidation of the license to practice once every five years.

The UK Government funds the development & implementation of all three exercises. We learnt that in the jurisdiction we visited under the "NHS Education Trust for the West of Scotland", serving a population of three million people (two-thirds living within 20 miles of Glasgow) the operational budget of the Trust just for training GPs is 3 million sterling pounds per year. A total budget of eighty million is allocated if research grants & other NHS funding for salaries for doctors in training (registrars) are included.

Table of the three Primary Care Benchmarks in UK

National Health Services Vocational Training Summative Assessment	Royal College GP MRCGP – professional recognition & development	General Medical Council (GMC) Maintenance of competency
Independent GP Practice	Professional excellence GP Trainer	License to practise medicine
1 year as registrar under supervision (paid by NHS)	1 yr each HO & SHO 3 yr GP practice	Revalidation every 5 yrs
Audit Project	MCQ Paper	Quality Assurance: Peer Appraisal Prescription Review Significant Event Analysis Audit activities
Written Paper	Written Paper	
Video Consultation	Video Consultation	
Trainer's report	Oral Examination	

MCFP (S) by Assessment

INTRODUCTION

There is a need to upgrade the present criteria for the award of the Collegiate membership to bring it in line with international standards and the global trend of award by objective assessment and validation. **The College Professional Development Programme (CPDP)** seeks to fulfill this need by introducing a training programme as well as a summative assessment process.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

The minimum entry requirements are: GDFM or recognized equivalent, professional good standing and ordinary Member of the CFPS for at least 2 years.

PROGRAMME

The programme consists a course of three modules, each with a summative assessment. The order for the modules may be completed in any order. The normal duration is two years but completion within a year is allowed.

The 3 modules to be completed and the required standards are:

1. Consulting, Communication & Counseling Skills Course. Standard: Candidates will be required to submit 6 video consultations for assessment;
2. Clinical Quality Skills Course - Pass in clinical quality project assessment. Standard: Candidates will be required to submit 3 case studies of significant events analysis **OR** conduct an audit project in his or her clinic of practice; and
3. Professional Development Project – which may be organization and conduct of a modular CME course or other teaching programmes; publish a paper in a medical journal such as the Singapore Family Physician or its equivalent or other professional development projects approved by the College Council. Standard: A satisfactory supervisor's report and pass in the candidate's report of the professional development project.

AWARD

The successful completion of the summative assessment of all the three modules will satisfy the conditions for award of the Collegiate Membership of the College of Family Physicians (MCFP) Singapore.