

July 2012

**RCGP Trainee ePortfolio and Workplace Based Assessment (WPBA) Code of Conduct: Statement from RCGP and COGPED**

There has been increasing concern in recent years about substantiated evidence of misuse of the RCGP Trainee ePortfolio which clearly breaches GMC guidance about probity. In response to this, and following requests from Deaneries, we have updated and amplified the RCGP Trainee ePortfolio & WPBA Code of Conduct and attach the new Code with this statement.

This document seeks to give examples of misconduct and the sanctions that are likely to be taken by Deaneries and the RCGP should such misuse of the Trainee ePortfolio be confirmed after investigation.

We would like to stress that the vast majority of both trainees and trainers undertake assessments and use the Trainee ePortfolio entirely appropriately and it is to support the majority who adhere to GMC standards and guidance that we wish to highlight the Code of Conduct for the small numbers who do not.

We would be grateful for Deanery help in cascading both this statement and the revised Code of Conduct to educators and trainees.

Barry Lewis, Chair of COGPED

Sue Rendel, RCGP Chief Examiner

## **RCGP Trainee ePortfolio and Workplace Based Assessment (WPBA):**

### **Code of Conduct for All Users**

This Code of Conduct applies to all users of the RCGP Trainee ePortfolio – Trainees, Trainers, Clinical Supervisors, Educational Supervisors, Deanery Administrators and Assessment Leads, and ARCP Panel Members and Chairs.

#### **Duties of a doctor**

All registered medical doctors have a duty placed on them by the General Medical Council (GMC) to be honest and trustworthy. Trainee performance in Workplace Based Assessments is reviewed by doctors who themselves have a duty to notify the GMC if they have concerns.

Misconduct before, during or after assessments or evidence of lack of competence may be referred to the GMC. Trainees whose GMC registration (or its equivalent overseas) is subject to suspension, referral or any condition must provide the RCGP with full details.

#### **General Principles for All RCGP Trainee ePortfolio users**

The College expects all users to conform to acceptable and appropriate standards of behaviour when using the Trainee ePortfolio and undertaking Workplace Based Assessments.

This guidance is given in the expectation that users will exercise an approach consistent with standards expected by the General Medical Council (or the appropriate regulatory body) and your employing organisation.

Fraudulent misuse of the Trainee ePortfolio is an extremely serious offence. This would include any form of impersonation and also making entries that are deliberately misleading or malicious, particularly those that relate to assessments.

All allegations of misconduct and fraudulent misuse will be dealt with in accordance with a Deanery's Misconduct Procedures.

## Examples of unacceptable conduct

1. Assessment Tools:
  - a. Falsifying assessment reports
  - b. Asking peers/friends/spouse/partner or other relative to complete reports
  
2. PDP
  - a. Plagiarism of entries
  - b. Falsely claiming to have completed stated educational aims
  
3. Clinical Supervisor report
  - a. Fabricating report
  
4. Learning Log
  - a. Plagiarism/Sharing work
  - b. Asking someone else to write Learning Log Entry and presenting it as own original work
  - c. Fabricating details within a Learning Log Entry
  - d. Falsely claiming to have undertaken eLearning Modules
  - e. Falsely claiming to have performed OOH session
  - f. Falsifying OOH record sheets/course certificates
  
5. Multisource Feedback (MSF)
  - a. Fabricating responses to MSF request and inserting false responses into Trainee ePortfolio
  
6. Patient Satisfaction Questionnaire (PSQ)
  - a. Falsely filling in PSQ forms pretending that it was done by a patient
  - b. Trainee uploading own PSQ forms and editing out any PSQ forms containing adverse patient comments
  
7. Direct Observation of Procedural Skills (DOPS)
  - a. Filling out own DOPS assessment sheet
  - b. Arranging for peer/friend/spouse/partner to complete DOPS assessment form
  
8. Health and Probity declarations
  - a. Making false declarations
  
9. Educational Supervisors/Deanery Employees/RCGP Employees
  - a. Inappropriately deleting evidence from or adding false evidence to a Trainee's ePortfolio
  
10. General
  - a. Giving false information when asked to explain suspicious actions

This list of examples is not exhaustive. Any fabrication, plagiarism, false claim or fraudulent action that occurs during the collection of evidence for the WPBA part of the MRCGP examination will lead to investigation, local action and referral to the GMC.

## Possible penalties for misconduct

Penalties for those failing to comply with the guidance given above, or behaving in an unprofessional or disruptive manner will depend on the nature of the offence.

Most WPBA misconduct will be identified by an Educator or Administrator working within a Deanery. Once discovered this misconduct will be reported to the Deanery's Director of General Practice Education and subsequently managed under the Deanery's misconduct procedures.

Those misusing the WPBA must understand that penalties may include:

1. Removing particular assessments and/or entries from the Trainee ePortfolio;
2. Notification of proven misuse to the RCGP examination department who will consider whether sanctions relating to other components will be applied;
3. Referral to the General Medical Council and the Trainee's employing organisation;
4. Referral to the NHS Fraud Unit with possible prosecution and criminal record.

It should be emphasised that if the GMC suspends or otherwise applies sanctions to a trainee or if the RCGP bar a trainee from taking part(s) of the MRCGP that this could lead to removal from the GPST programme.

Similarly, fabricating evidence and falsely claiming to have done work for which a doctor has been paid (including OOH sessions) is fraud. This can result in a Police conviction and GMC referral with the loss of a licence to practice in the UK.

It is likely that the GMC will be consulted in all cases of WPBA misconduct. All case of misconduct in WPBA will be regarded as Significant Events and, as such, will be considered under Trainee Revalidation processes with potential referral to the GMC.