

Procedures for Deanery Staff at ARCP signoff in ePortfolio

Background

It has become apparent that it is possible for a series of errors committed by a single person or a series of people to result in a trainee being inappropriately signed off at ARCP panel without anyone noticing. Following problems that arose within Summative Assessment we know that, although unlikely, when such things are possible, such errant outcomes do sometimes happen within complex processes. Although highly unlikely, should the risks be actuated, the potential damage caused to patient safety and Deanery reputation cannot be underestimated.

The situation arises because panel chairs often have access to ePortfolio as clinical supervisor, educational supervisor and deanery admin (under the same personalised login), panel member (under a generic login) and panel chair (as a second personalised login) – and because any deanery administrator can name themselves as a clinical supervisor, educational supervisor, panel member and indeed panel chair even though they are not medically qualified or registered as a trainer. There have been reports of near misses when two candidates have similar names and educational histories. The risks are particularly high when the ARCP panel is conducted electronically, or the panel allows chairs action when trainees are asked to submit further evidence before signoff.

Advised procedures

If not written and submitted live during panels (something that is time-consuming during panels, necessitates the viewing of all portfolios rather than 10%, and which could still be altered later if the panel chair requests the RCGP to unlock the report), then:

1. ARCP reports should only be submitted and signed off in the presence of another person who was present at the panel*, and with reference to minutes of panel discussions and outcomes agreed by the panel and recorded real time.
2. If the panel is held electronically, then ARCP reports should only be submitted and signed off in the presence of another person* who was part of the electronic panel and with reference to confirmation of approval by the other panel members. If the two people approving submission and signoff are in different locations, then it should be done with the express consent of both, either by email or by telephone, and whilst both are looking at the evidence at the same time.

3. If the chair is exercising chair's action over late-submitted evidence, then ARCP reports should only be submitted and signed off in the presence of another person* who was present at the original panel with reference to minutes of panel discussions and outcomes agreed by the panel and recorded real time, the provisional report and evidence that the requested evidence has been submitted.
4. The panel chair should only access the panel chair view and sign off the ARCP Review in the presence of the Assessment Coordinator or Manager and the relevant minutes/confirmation of approval from other panel members/late submitted evidence.

In addition, the creation of any ES review or ARCP for administrative purposes only should be witnessed and who was present and why it was created should be documented in the ARCP report.

* this can be a clinician, a lay member, or a deanery administrator.

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