



FAQs about the changes to the physician associate recertification process

Why is the recertification assessment no longer required?

When the physician associate (PA) profession becomes regulated by the General Medical Council (GMC), PAs will not be required to sit the recertification assessment.

The GMC will have their own process through which registered PAs will demonstrate they remain up-to-date and fit to practise – it's called revalidation and won't generally include an exam.

I have already taken and passed the recertification assessment – will the GMC want to see the evidence?

The GMC will require evidence that you have passed the PANE but will not require evidence of passing a recertification assessment.

For initial registration, the GMC will require PAs to:

- > hold a qualification in PA studies or physician assistant studies, awarded by a UK university at the level of postgraduate diploma or above
- > have passed both parts of the PA national examination (PANE)
- > have the knowledge and skills to work safely as a PA in the UK
- > have no outstanding concerns about fitness to practise.

When will the recertification assessment cease?

The recertification assessment will no longer be required from May 2023.

I was due to sit my recertification assessment in May 2023 – what should I do now?

PAs due to sit the recertification assessment from May 2023 will no longer be required to take it. Instead, you will be required to ensure you keep up to date with your CPD, curriculum competence and engage with the ePortfolio when this is launched. You should continue to log your CPD via the CPD diary until you are advised otherwise.

I have applied for extension for my recertification assessment – what happens now?

If you have applied for an extension to your recertification assessment or have had an extension approved, you will not be required to sit the recertification assessment from May 2023 onwards.

However, all FPA members are still required to adhere to the FPA code of conduct, maintain their generalist skills, meet the CPD requirements set out by the FPA and, from October 2023, engage with the FPA CCPC via the ePortfolio, in line with other PA members.

As the GMC is due to implement regulation from Q4 of 2024, what is the recertification process in the meantime?

Following the launch of the FPA ePortfolio (due to launch in October 2023), the FPA Core Clinical Practice Curriculum (CCPC) will be released. The CCPC will cover the core areas of practice in which a PA is expected to maintain knowledge and include the areas that have traditionally been assessed in the PA recertification assessment.

The ePortfolio, in combination with the CCPC, will form a new way in which qualified FPA members will record CPD, log evidence of their knowledge in core areas of practice, maintain a record of their developing specialty-related clinical knowledge, clinical competencies and feedback – all in one electronic platform.

In the lead up to the launch of the ePortfolio and CCPC, the FPA will share additional guidance and resources to help prepare qualified members for the ePortfolio.

How will the FPA ensure that those PAs who were due to pass the recertification assessment by September 2023 still meet the expected standards?

The FPA will conduct a thorough audit of all PA members who are due to have sat and passed the recertification assessment by September 2023 to ensure they are keeping up to date with generalist skills and maintaining their CPD. All PA members are then required to engage with the FPA ePortfolio and CCPC from October 2023.

How should PAs continue to ensure they are fit to practise between May and October 2023, leading up to when the FPA ePortfolio is launched?

To remain listed on the PA Managed Voluntary Register (PAMVR) and in good standing, all qualified FPA members are required to:

- > continue adhering to the FPA code of conduct
- > maintain their CPD – 50 hours per calendar year
- > maintain their generalist skills and knowledge.

What will the recertification process be when the profession is regulated?

Once the GMC starts regulation, all PAs will need to follow its revalidation process to remain registered. There will not be a recertification process with the GMC. Revalidation will follow a similar format to the process for doctors, in that PAs will be expected to evidence their ongoing competency, engagement with CPD, appraisal and employer assurance.

The FPA aims to support its members to ensure that they meet the expected outcomes of the GMC's revalidation process. As such, we have been developing the FPA ePortfolio and Core Clinical Practice Curriculum (CCPC) as ways to log evidence of CPD and ensure up-to-date competency in clinical practice in the core areas of practice in which PAs are expected to maintain knowledge.

Can I still sit the recertification assessment if I wanted to?

No, the recertification assessment will no longer run as a mandatory requirement to remain on the PAMVR and individuals will not be able to sit a recertification assessment.

The professional standards committee, as part a conduct procedure, may require an individual to sit the PANE if insufficient evidence is logged as part of a member's engagement with the CCPC on the FPA ePortfolio, or as an outcome of a conduct hearing where this is felt necessary.