

CPD Review Policy for Pharmacists

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Reviewed By:	Áine Barrett, ePortfolio Review Project Lead	Date: 12/02/2026
Internal IIOB Approval By:	Sonya Saéinz Saralegui, IIOB Operations Manager	Date: 12/02/2026
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Abbreviations

CPD	Continuing Professional Development
IIOP	Irish Institute of Pharmacy
PSI	Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland
RCSI	Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland

Definitions

ePortfolio Extract	The set of CPD cycles which a participant chooses to submit as part of the ePortfolio Review Process.
ePortfolio Review Standards	These are the measures against which submitted ePortfolio extracts are reviewed. The standards for ePortfolio Review incorporate the legislative requirements and what would reasonably and practically indicate appropriate CPD engagement. The standards consist of System Based Standards and Manual Review Standards.
Manual Review	This is where the submission is manually reviewed by a reviewer against the Manual Review Standards.
Manual Review Standards	These refer to the standards applied to the written content of submitted cycles. A selection of submitted ePortfolio extracts will be reviewed against these standards.
Outcomes	<p>There are four possible outcomes for ePortfolio Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard Met – assigned to participants who meet the ePortfolio Review Standards. • Standard Not Met (Year 1) - assigned to participants who do not meet the ePortfolio Review Standards at the end of the first year of undertaking ePortfolio Review. They are afforded the opportunity to participate in the following year’s ePortfolio Review as a Year 2 Participant. • Standard Not Met (Year 2) - assigned to participants who do not meet the ePortfolio Review Standards for two consecutive ePortfolio Reviews. In these instances, the IIOP has a statutory obligation to refer the participant to the PSI. • Non-Engagement - assigned to participants who do not submit an ePortfolio extract for review i.e. do not engage with the process. In these instances, the IIOP has a statutory obligation to refer the participant to the PSI.
Random Sample	A sample of submissions which is chosen at random to undergo manual review for quality assurance purposes.

Risk-Based Cohort	A cohort identified and selected by PSI for manual review in accordance with PSI’s risk-based criteria.
Submission	The process by which pharmacists provide the IIOp with their ePortfolio extract for review. Pharmacists submit cycles through their ePortfolio dashboard.
System-Based Review	This is where the submission is reviewed by the IIOp ePortfolio system against the System-Based Standards.
System-Based Standards	These standards specify the number and types of CPD cycles pharmacists are required to submit. Every ePortfolio extract submitted will be reviewed against the System Based Standards that are pre-set within the IIOp ePortfolio system.

Background

This IIOp CPD Review policy replaces the previous IIOp ePortfolio Review policy. This policy will evolve over the coming years to give effect to the changes introduced in the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (Continuing Professional Development) (Amendment) Rules 2025 and to deliver on the ambitions for the ongoing evolution of the CPD system, as outlined in the ‘*Review of the CPD Model for Pharmacists in Ireland*’ carried out by Mazars’. A staged approach will be taken to the development of the system and associated policies and processes.

The first stage of development will facilitate transitioning to an annual review cycle for ePortfolio Review and expanding the process to include all pharmacists registered with the PSI before 1 January of the year prior to submission (for ePortfolio Review 2026/27) and pharmaceutical assistants (from 2027/28). A separate CPD Review policy will be developed for pharmaceutical assistants.

Once the changes associated with the first stage of development have been embedded, a second phase of development will focus on the longer-term aspiration to develop new approaches and standards for evaluating pharmacists’ CPD activity. At that point this policy will be updated, or a separate policy will be developed to reflect any necessary changes.

Introduction & Scope

The IIOp manages the continuing professional development (CPD) system for pharmacists in Ireland. The Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI) has contracted the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) as the management body for the IIOp.

Legislation requires that pharmacists undertake CPD. The Pharmacy Act 2007 introduced mandatory CPD for pharmacists in Ireland. Furthermore, the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (Continuing

Professional Development) Rules 2015 (as amended) set out the CPD obligations for pharmacists. The Rules provide for a requirement to maintain a record of CPD and to demonstrate evidence of this to the IIOp on request. The IIOp aims to support pharmacists in meeting the requirements of this legislation, through the provision of the IIOp ePortfolio, facilitation of the ePortfolio Review process and through additional support as required.

Overview of ePortfolio Review Process

The ePortfolio Review process, the details of which are outlined in this CPD Review policy, enables pharmacists to demonstrate their ongoing engagement with CPD, in line with the legislative requirements.

ePortfolio Review Standards

Standards for ePortfolio Review ('the Standards') are developed by the IIOp in consultation with peer pharmacists and incorporate two elements; System Based Standards and Manual Review Standards. All submitted ePortfolio extracts are reviewed against the System Based Standards by the IIOp ePortfolio system, and a sample of ePortfolio extracts are also reviewed against the Manual Review Standards.

For each ePortfolio Review the Standards will;

- Set out what would reasonably and practically indicate CPD engagement in line with the legislation;
- Facilitate objective systematic review; and
- Be feasible for the IIOp to implement.

The IIOp will publish the Standards on the IIOp website each year in advance of communication to all eligible pharmacists. For the first stage of development, the current standards will be adapted to facilitate phase 1, in the following ways:

- Removal of the requirement to submit cycles from previous years, as it is no longer relevant for annual review
- Expansion of the requirement for self-evaluation having regard to the Core Competency Framework for Pharmacists, and/or any other competency frameworks that may be in force, and/or the Code of Conduct.

In the second stage of development, the standards will be developed to include new approaches to review, in line with longer-term ambitions for CPD review.

Pharmacist Selection Process

Pharmacists will be included in the review if they are registered with the PSI before 1 January of the year prior to submission. For the 2026/27 ePortfolio Review pharmacists will be included if they are currently registered and joined the PSI register before 1 January 2026. Pharmacists joining the register on 1 January 2026 or later in 2026 will not be included until the following 2027/28 ePortfolio Review.

Application for Exemption from Participation

The PSI manages requests from pharmacists who wish to be exempt from ePortfolio Review on the basis of extenuating circumstances. The PSI Exemption Policy and information about the process that pharmacists need to follow is available on the PSI website. If a pharmacist believes that they have grounds to be exempted from a review on the basis of extenuating circumstances, they must seek this exemption directly from the PSI.

If a pharmacist is successful in their application, the PSI notifies the IIOIP of the outcome. The IIOIP then removes them from the ePortfolio Review process. The exemption is valid for that specific Review period only. If a pharmacist requires an exemption for a subsequent review, they must make a further application.

ePortfolio Review - Indicative Timeline

Please also refer to Appendix 2: Indicative Timelines for ePortfolio Review Process

Initial communications

All eligible pharmacists without an approved exemption from the PSI, will receive an email from the IIOIP with information about the upcoming ePortfolio Review. At this time, the IIOIP also communicates with those pharmacists who received an outcome of 'Standard Not Met (Year 1)' in the previous year's ePortfolio Review. Full guidance on the process, including the Standards for the ePortfolio Review, is communicated at this stage.

First submission period opens

The IIOp sends an email to alert the pharmacist that they may submit their ePortfolio extract for review via the ePortfolio dashboard. This email provides a closing date for submission of their ePortfolio extract.

First submission period ends

The IIOp sends an email to any pharmacist that has not submitted their ePortfolio extract for review to alert them that the closing date for submission has passed and that they have one final opportunity to submit.

First ePortfolio extract review period

This is the time period in which all ePortfolio extracts submitted in the first submission period are reviewed against the System Based Standards by the IIOp ePortfolio system. During this review period, a pharmacist may be requested to submit additional cycle(s) in line with the requirements of the System Based Standards. Pharmacists will be advised via an email to the address registered on their IIOp account of the specific action(s) required along with a closing date for resubmission.

Second submission period of ePortfolio extracts for review

In this time period, pharmacists may resubmit their ePortfolio extract for review in line with feedback received. Pharmacists who missed the closing date of the first submission period may also submit their ePortfolio extract for the first time for review but will not be afforded an opportunity for a further resubmission.

Referral of non-engagement to PSI

If a pharmacist fails to submit before the second submission period closes, or fails to engage with the process, the IIOp is unable to provide assurance to the PSI that the pharmacist is meeting their statutory obligation to demonstrate evidence of CPD.

IIOp will refer those who have not engaged with the ePortfolio Review to the PSI. The IIOp will issue a communication to affected pharmacists prior to referral to the PSI.

Second ePortfolio extract review period

All resubmitted ePortfolio extracts and new ('late') submissions are reviewed against the System Based Standards by the IIOp ePortfolio system. In this review period, pharmacists will not be afforded an opportunity for a further resubmission.

Manual Review

All ePortfolio extracts submitted in both windows will be available to be selected for manual review against the Manual Review Standards. A sample of participants will be selected. The sample to undergo manual review will also include:

- a risk-based sample of registrants identified by PSI;
- those who received an Outcome of Standard Not Met Year 1 in the preceding Review;
- those who do not meet the System Based Standards upon submission in the second submission window;
- those who resubmitted in the second submission window following receipt of feedback on system-based standards;
- a random sample for quality assurance purposes;

or a proportion thereof subject to capacity limits agreed.

In the event that an ePortfolio extract does not meet the Standards in this review period, the final outcome will be assigned as 'Standard Not Met'. Feedback on why the ePortfolio extract did not meet the Standard will be available to the pharmacist on their ePortfolio dashboard at the final outcomes publication stage, as described in the 'Final Outcomes & Delivery of Results' section below.

Manual review will be carried out on 5% of the cohort included in the review each year up to a maximum of 450 ePortfolio extracts.

Selection for risk-based sampling

The PSI manages the selection of the risk-based sample to be included in the cohort to undergo review against the Manual Review Standards and communicates the list of these pharmacists to IIOP prior to the opening of the first submission window. The risk-based sample will be identified according to the PSI's criteria.

Quality assurance process

The quality assurance process represents the final stage of the review process. The process involves 5% of ePortfolio extracts that were reviewed against the Manual Review Standards being selected for quality assurance review by an external examiner. The external examiner's remit is to ensure that reviewers have followed the process appropriately when conducting manual reviews, and that all manual reviews have been applied in a consistent and standardised manner. It is not a separate qualitative review.

Final outcomes

In this period, all pharmacists selected for review (except those who received a final outcome of Non-Engagement) are sent an email via the ePortfolio notification system detailing the outcome of

their review. There are four possible review outcomes as listed in 'Final Outcomes & Delivery of Results' section below.

Issuing of Certificates of Engagement and Compliance with CPD Requirements

Pharmacists who submit an ePortfolio extract receive a **Certificate of Engagement** following the closure of the relevant submission window. Pharmacists who submit an ePortfolio extract that meets the Standards will be issued with a **Certificate of Compliance with CPD Requirements** at the end of the review process. As the review process includes opportunities for resubmission and a quality assurance review, it may be several months before the communication containing the Certificate of Compliance with CPD Requirements is issued.

Participant Communication & Feedback

IIOP will issue all communications to pharmacists via email.

Confidentiality

Along with the requirements under Data Protection legislation, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and in line with the Code of Conduct for Pharmacists, pharmacists should ensure that both patient and colleague confidentiality and privacy is respected in their ePortfolio extract submissions to the IIOP.

This includes ensuring that no patient identifiable information is included in the submission e.g., patient names, DPS numbers, copies of prescriptions, receipts or vaccination records, photographs, etc.

The communications and information resources provided to pharmacists that have been called for review will clearly lay out their responsibilities in this regard.

In the event that a breach of confidentiality is identified within an ePortfolio extract, the ePortfolio extract will not be reviewed.

In the event that an ePortfolio extract raises concerns regarding a patient safety issue, or fitness to practise, the IIOP is required to take whatever steps necessary in the interests of safeguarding patient safety. The IIOP will always endeavor to communicate with the pharmacist in instances where there is referral to the PSI.

Quality Assurance within the ePortfolio Review Process

The IIOB implements a quality assurance system to demonstrate that the Standards are consistently applied across the ePortfolio Review process.

- All submitted ePortfolio extracts are automatically reviewed by the ePortfolio system against the System Based Standards.
- A sample of ePortfolio extracts that have met the System Based Standards are reviewed against the Manual Review Standards.
- A maximum of 5% of ePortfolio extracts will be reviewed against the Manual Review Standards annually.
- A maximum of 5% of the ePortfolio extracts reviewed against the Manual Review Standards will be subject to Quality Assurance review by an external examiner.

Final Outcomes & Delivery of Results

There are four potential final outcomes which may result from the ePortfolio Review:

1. Standard Met

Pharmacists that meet the Standards receive an email advising them they can download their Certificate of Compliance with CPD Requirements from their ePortfolio dashboard.

2. Standard Not Met (Year 1)

Those pharmacists who do not meet the Standards for the first time in a particular year of ePortfolio Review are assigned an outcome of 'Standard Not Met' for that year. They may avail of support from the IIOB on how to address their development needs including information on the next steps for participation. They will be referred to as a Year 2 participant in the following year's ePortfolio Review. No referral is made to the PSI at this point.

As annual submission progresses, a pharmacist may be assigned an outcome of Standard Not Met (Year 1) at some point again in non-consecutive years.

3. Standard Not Met (Year 2)

This category represents pharmacists that have been assigned a final outcome of 'Standard Not Met' for two consecutive ePortfolio Reviews. The PSI is provided with a list of PSI registration numbers for this cohort of pharmacists in the IIOB ePortfolio Review Report.

4. Non-Engagement

This category represents pharmacists that have not engaged with the process. The PSI is provided with a list of PSI registration numbers for this cohort of pharmacists following the closure of the second submission window.

If a pharmacist receives an outcome of 'Standard Not Met (Year 1)' and subsequently receives an outcome of 'Non-Engagement' in Year 2 (because they have not re-engaged with the process in Year 2), reference will be made to both outcomes: Standard Not Met (Year 1) and Non-Engagement (Year 2) at the point of referral to the PSI.

Where a pharmacist receives an outcome of non-engagement, and no extenuating circumstances exist, the PSI Council will propose to refuse their continued registration application when they make an application, following that year's ePortfolio Review, in accordance with Rule 12(3) of the PSI (Registration) (Amendment) Rules 2025.

Appeals Process

The IIOP has a mechanism in place to allow pharmacists to appeal an outcome of 'Standard Not Met (Year 2)' or 'Non-Engagement'. Pharmacists wishing to appeal should refer to the IIOP CPD Review Appeals Policy. The procedures laid out in the appeals policy apply to all pharmacists undertaking ePortfolio Review.

Pharmacists who receive an outcome of 'Non-Engagement' will be referred to PSI, however they retain the right to appeal the outcome after the referral in line with the CPD Review Appeals Policy. Post referral, the PSI manages the follow-up with those pharmacists who have received an outcome of 'Non-Engagement'. The PSI will accept updated information in relation to a pharmacist if an appeal is subsequently upheld.

Plagiarism

The IIOP aim to foster a culture of authentic learning and development underpinned by integrity and honesty, and to this end does not condone intentional plagiarism. It is possible that pharmacists may encounter similar learning experiences and therefore have significant similarities in their ePortfolios for the action, and perhaps self-appraisal and planning stages of the CPD cycle. However, it would be expected that there would be differences in how this is reported, and particularly, that the evaluation of impact on practice would yield different reflections for different pharmacists.

Plagiarism will be suspected in cases where cycles or ePortfolio extracts demonstrate similarities which cannot be explained by shared learning experiences.

If a pharmacist is in doubt as to what constitutes plagiarism, they are encouraged to seek advice and guidance from a member of the IIOP team.

If the IIOP receives evidence that an ePortfolio extract for review has been plagiarised, there is a statutory obligation to report the matter to the Registrar of the PSI.

Falsification and Third-Party Involvement

If the IIOP receives evidence that an ePortfolio extract for review has been falsified, or obtained through a third party, there is a statutory obligation to report the matter to the Registrar of the PSI.

Appendix 1: The 2026/27 ePortfolio Review Standards

System-Based Standards	
The IIOP ePortfolio system checks that the following MINIMUM system-based standards are met in your submitted ePortfolio extract:	Minimum Number Required
Total number of CPD cycles required <i>(Please note these must be created in the current year i.e., 2026 - to include cycles created up until the end of the submission period)</i>	4
CPD cycles which you created in the current year* which originated from: EITHER: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • your self-assessment(s) against the PSI Core Competency Framework (CCF) <li style="text-align: center;">OR • your self-reflection(s) on the PSI Code of Conduct – Professional Principles, Standards and Ethics for Pharmacists <li style="text-align: center;">OR • your self-assessment(s) against another competency framework <i>*The current year is 2026 - to include cycles created up until the end of the submission period).</i> <i>Please note that a minimum of one cycle originating from any of the above will be sufficient to meet this standard.</i> <i>You must review and meet all of the System Based Standards.</i>	1
CPD cycles that you started at the Self- Appraisal stage	2
Different ways in which you identified your learning needs* <i>(Self- Appraisal stage)</i>	2
Different learning resource types that you used* <i>(Action stage)</i>	3
Different practice impact types that you identified* <i>(Evaluate Impact on Practice stage)</i>	2
Different Core Competency Framework (CCF) domains that you addressed* <i>(CCF domains are identified in the Self-Appraisal stage of each cycle, for those cycles started at Self-Appraisal. Otherwise, they are identified in the Evaluate Impact on Practice stage of the cycle)</i>	2
<i>*Please note that these criteria apply to the submitted extract as a whole and not to individual CPD cycles</i>	
Manual Review Standards	
If referred for manual review, a SAMPLE of your ePortfolio extract will be reviewed to ensure that a systematic approach has been adopted in recording your CPD in line with the standards outlined below. Your description for each cycle stage should be in your own words.	
Please ensure that you can answer YES to each of the following for EACH CPD cycle submitted:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Are the contents of each stage relevant to the overall topic of your CPD cycle?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Have you described the ways in which you identified your learning needs? <i>(For each CPD cycle starting at the Self-Appraisal stage)</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Have you described your plan for your learning? <i>(For each CPD cycle that contains a Develop a Personal Plan stage)</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Have you described the actions you took? <i>(Action stage)</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Have you described what you learned? <i>(Document your Learning stage)</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Have you described the impact(s) on your practice, which may include identification of future action(s)? <i>(Evaluate Impact on Practice stage)</i>	
<i>Please note that duplicated CPD cycles will be disregarded</i>	

Appendix 2: Indicative Timelines for ePortfolio Review Process

