

One professional evidence system, several career purposes

Maintain a credible portfolio that supports appraisal, development and future roles while preserving the requirements of each separate process.

- ✓ 12 min reading
- ✓ Full teaching, practical next steps and reflection
- ✓ Six practice questions with answers and explanations
- ✓ Complete source list and jurisdiction notes

Prepared for SAS, locally employed and other UK doctors

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Using this module

Independent education

This is general professional information, not individual clinical, legal, employment, immigration, regulatory, tax or pensions advice. Current official instructions and the circumstances of the individual case remain controlling. Practice scores do not establish professional competence or accreditation.

The short answer

Keep reliable source evidence and a clear index, then prepare purpose-specific summaries. Reusing genuine evidence is sensible; assuming that different decisions use the same standard is not.

Three next actions

- Identify the audiences and purposes for your evidence.
- Separate source records from application-specific summaries.
- Plan a regular review of scope, development and evidence access.

Learning objectives

- Reuse evidence without conflating assessment standards.
- Demonstrate contribution and impact honestly.
- Maintain a sustainable portfolio through career change.

Reuse the source, adapt the explanation

A single improvement project may inform appraisal, a leadership application and a specialist-registration evidence map. Keep the source record and its provenance, then explain its relevance to each purpose. Appraisal may focus on learning; an appointment may examine role suitability; a registration application may require evidence against a particular current standard and verification process.

Do not copy a large narrative indiscriminately between systems. Identify the question being answered, the relevant part of the evidence and any additional requirement. This avoids both duplication and overclaiming. A document that is suitable for an annual conversation may need different authentication, redaction or supporting material for a formal application.

Describe work with evidence rather than status

State the problem, your responsibility, your action, the contribution of others and the outcome that can be supported. Distinguish an output from an impact. A new policy, teaching session or rota is something produced; its effect requires further evidence. Seniority and a familiar title do not remove the need to explain what you actually did.

For example, “led a successful service redesign” may be too broad. A more useful account explains the decision you coordinated, the constraints, the team’s contribution and what the available evaluation shows. If the outcome remains uncertain, say so and identify the next review. Accurate limitations make a professional account more credible, not less valuable.

Keep progression routes distinct

Progression within a SAS career, appointment to a Specialist grade post, entry to the Specialist Register and appointment to a consultant role are different processes. This site has separate career, national regrading and Portfolio Pathway guidance. Use the current requirements of the specific route rather than treating appraisal as a general certificate of readiness for all of them.

A development discussion can identify a desired direction, the evidence already available and the support needed. It cannot promise a post or a registration outcome. Remaining in a substantive SAS career is a valid professional choice. A worthwhile PDP may deepen current practice, improve supervision or make work more sustainable without being directed towards a change of grade.

Make non-clinical medical work visible

Teaching, supervision, leadership, governance and research may be important parts of your medical practice. Explain their scope, the standards or expectations relevant to the role and how you review your work. Avoid treating them as decorative additions after the clinical portfolio. They can generate meaningful evidence of learning, feedback and improvement.

For an educational role, a useful evidence set might include the purpose of teaching, learner feedback, a change you made and a later review. For leadership, it might include a decision record and proportionate evaluation. Keep learner and colleague information appropriately protected. Do not add identifiable feedback to a public portfolio or assume that permission for an internal appraisal also permits publication.

Maintain the system with a small routine

Choose a routine that fits your work: a short periodic update of the role map, evidence index and development actions. Record learning close enough to the experience to remain accurate. Keep filenames clear, dates meaningful and versions controlled. Secure access and a recoverable record are more useful than elaborate formatting that becomes too difficult to maintain.

At each review, ask what has changed in your work, what evidence was added, what action remains open and what access may soon end. A simple index can be maintained across systems without duplicating confidential documents. Follow organisational retention requirements and keep only what you are authorised to hold. The website's downloads are blank educational resources, not a secure archive for your records.

Use the annual review to choose the next useful step

Bring together the year's learning, the current scope and future responsibilities. Decide what to sustain, develop, stop or seek support for. This is also a chance to examine workload and whether the plan depends on unrealistic unpaid effort. Link to job planning and wellbeing support when those issues affect development, keeping the purpose of each conversation clear.

A strong finish to the programme is a practical plan: a confirmed appraisal route, an honest scope description, an evidence index with visible gaps, a small agreed PDP and a review calendar. None proves that revalidation is guaranteed. Together they make the next professional conversation better informed and reduce the need to reconstruct a year of work from memory.

Common mistake

Avoid this

Using one undifferentiated portfolio to claim that appraisal, promotion and specialist registration have all been satisfied.

Pause and reflect

What is the next realistic development step for your career, and what evidence would show that it helped?

Takeaways

- Preserve sources and adapt explanations.
- Distinguish contribution, output and impact.
- Choose development that fits your own career.

Knowledge check

Choose one best answer. These practice questions support reflection; they do not assess a real case or confer accreditation. Answer positions match the browser edition.

1. One project will support appraisal and a registration application. What is best?

- A. Create different outcome claims for different audiences.
- B. Duplicate the narrative without checking the receiving process.
- C. Retain the source and adapt the explanation and verification to each purpose.
- D. Assume appraisal acceptance proves the registration criteria are met.

2. A doctor introduced a new policy. What should an impact account explain?

- A. That the doctor's grade establishes the importance of the work.
- B. That no limitations should be mentioned in a career portfolio.
- C. That publication of the policy proves improved patient outcomes.
- D. The contribution, the team's role and what evaluation supports about its effect.

3. A doctor wants to deepen a substantive SAS career without changing grade. Is that a valid PDP direction?

- A. Only if the doctor stops collecting clinical evidence.
- B. No, every PDP must target specialist registration.
- C. Yes, development can strengthen current practice and sustainability.
- D. Only if the responsible officer promises a future consultant post.

4. A doctor supervises learners alongside clinical work. How should this appear?

- A. As an activity outside appraisal because it is not direct patient care.
- B. Only as a title in the CV, without supporting information.
- C. As a defined role with relevant learning, feedback and review.
- D. As permission to publish identifiable learner feedback.

5. Which portfolio routine is most sustainable?

- A. A short regular review of scope, evidence, actions and future access needs.
- B. Keeping every duplicate attachment indefinitely.
- C. Renaming old evidence to make it appear current.
- D. Reconstructing the entire year from memory before appraisal.

6. What is the strongest end product of this programme?

- A. An accredited certificate of professional competence.
- B. A replacement for the designated body's appraisal system.
- C. A guarantee that the GMC will revalidate the doctor.
- D. A confirmed route, honest scope, evidence index, draft PDP and review plan.

Answers and explanations

1. C — Retain the source and adapt the explanation and verification to each purpose.

Evidence can be reused honestly, but each process asks a different question and may require different verification or supporting material.

Review the named teaching section, then explain the next step in your own words.

2. D — The contribution, the team's role and what evaluation supports about its effect.

A product and its effect are different. Credible accounts connect claims to evidence and recognise shared work and uncertainty.

Review the named teaching section, then explain the next step in your own words.

3. C — Yes, development can strengthen current practice and sustainability.

Career development need not mean a grade change. A relevant plan can strengthen the work the doctor chooses to continue.

Review the named teaching section, then explain the next step in your own words.

4. C — As a defined role with relevant learning, feedback and review.

Non-clinical medical responsibilities can be important parts of scope. Appropriate evidence and confidentiality still matter.

Review the named teaching section, then explain the next step in your own words.

5. A — A short regular review of scope, evidence, actions and future access needs.

Small, regular updates support accuracy and continuity. Good maintenance protects source provenance rather than manufacturing recency.

Review the named teaching section, then explain the next step in your own words.

6. D — A confirmed route, honest scope, evidence index, draft PDP and review plan.

The programme prepares the doctor for the real professional process. It cannot grant regulatory decisions, accreditation or official portfolio status.

Review the named teaching section, then explain the next step in your own words.

Official and professional sources

Confirm the current source version and applicable nation, contract, scheme or specialty. A source list is not a statement that every rule applies to every reader.

GMC: supporting information and declarations

UK · <https://www.gmc-uk.org/registration-and-licensing/managing-your-registration/revalidation/guidance-on-supporting-information-for-revalidation/guidance-on-supporting-information-for-revalidation>

GMC: continuing professional development

UK · <https://www.gmc-uk.org/registration-and-licensing/managing-your-registration/revalidation/guidance-on-supporting-information-for-revalidation/continuing-professional-development>

GMC: quality improvement activity

UK · <https://www.gmc-uk.org/registration-and-licensing/managing-your-registration/revalidation/guidance-on-supporting-information-for-revalidation/quality-improvement-activity>

GMC and partners: reflective practice principles

UK · <https://www.gmc-uk.org/education/standards-guidance-and-curricula/guidance/reflective-practice/the-reflective-practitioner---guidance-for-doctors-and-medical-students/ten-key-points-on-being-a-reflective-practitioner>

GMC: revalidation requirements for doctors

UK · <https://www.gmc-uk.org/registration-and-licensing/managing-your-registration/revalidation/guidance-for-doctors-requirements-for-revalidation/revalidation-requirements-for-doctors>

Edition and verification

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