

Guidance on the Peer-Review

Peer review of learning and teaching (PRLT) is an essential component of developing an individual's teaching practice and, it follows, improving students' learning experiences and ultimately patient care. Reflection on peer review is essential if individuals are to build on their skills, identify areas for improvement and plan further professional development activity within their educational practice.

This document gives basic guidance for applicants for Membership or Fellowship by Recognition of the Academy of Medical Educators (AoME) and their peer reviewers on what we are looking for by requesting (a) evidence of peer review and (b) a short reflection by the applicant on the feedback received.

Note to applicants: if you have recently completed a formal PRLT as part of your continuing professional development (either as part of a performance development activity or a teaching course), you do not need to undertake a special exercise for the benefit of this application. The information supplied is not mandatory but for guidance only. However, if your organization does not have a PRLT scheme you are welcome to make use of part or all of this guidance to help you prepare your application.

What is the PRLT process

PRLT is a four-stage process which feeds into a reflective learning cycle. We therefore encourage applicants to:

1. identify the activity or educational product to be reviewed;
2. ask the reviewer to attend, observe or examine the activity or educational product;
3. receive the reviewer's written feedback;
4. reflect on the feedback and identify actions to be taken based on the PRLT with a view to undertaking further PRLT to continue to develop professionally.

Who can I ask to be my reviewer?

The reviewer is expected to provide constructive critical comments relating to the educational activity he or she has observed. It is helpful if the reviewer is an experienced peer reviewer. Existing Members or Fellows of the Academy of Medical Educators are particularly well placed to make comments and give constructive feedback based on the AoME Professional Standards but any experienced medical educator may fill the role of reviewer.

We would normally expect PRLT to take place in face-to-face settings so it helps to ask a colleague in your organisation or institution to observe you directly as you go about your work. However other means of PRLT may be sought (such as online review of educational products, review of videotapes or podcasts, peer review of educational research etc.) particularly where face to face review is not possible.

Reviewers should not have any conflicts of interest such as financial, family or intimate connections with the applicant. Reviewers are expected to maintain confidentiality unless the applicant gives explicit permission for any aspect of the process to be shared.



What will be reviewed?

Applicants may ask for any educational activity to be reviewed. The AoME Professional Standards will help you to identify which particular aspects of the five domains of activity you would like to consider under the broad categories:

Domain 1 Design and planning learning activities

Domain 2 Teaching and facilitating learning

Domain 3 Assessment of learning

Domain 4 Educational research and scholarship

Domain 5 Educational management and leadership

Before the review takes place, it is up to the reviewer and the applicant to identify which particular areas for development will be concentrated upon. We would expect that most reviews would involve a teaching encounter, but some applicants may request a review of, for example, their ability to design learning (perhaps focussing on a distance learning event they facilitated); their skills as an assessor (perhaps focussing on their work in item-writing or as an OSCE examiner); their scholarship (perhaps focussing on a peer review of their academic work); or their educational leadership skills (perhaps focussing on their skills in managing change or leading meetings).

For every area reviewed, it is important to bear in mind the core values of the Academy of Medical Educators. As the applicant undertakes the activity, how is he or she demonstrating a commitment to promoting quality and safety of care, professional identity and integrity, scholarship and reflection in medical education, and respect for others?

The feedback

- Feedback must be given in writing for the purposes of assessing an applicant's suitability for the award of Membership or Fellowship of AoME. However, this by no means precludes the applicant and reviewer from meeting to discuss the reviewer's report and we would encourage face to face meetings to take place wherever possible.
- The reviewer's feedback does not need to be more than one page of A4. Regular short peer reviews are likely to be more useful than lengthy infrequent ones.
- Feedback should be constructive and developmentally framed (e.g. telling an individual that in their lecture "your slides were impossible to read" will not help the individual. Reviewers should try wherever possible to make their comments positive, precise and focused: "some of the students in the back row seemed to be having difficulty reading your slides. How do you think you could make them easier to read?")
- Reviewers should aim at all times to be helpful and impartial; when offering written feedback it helps to write as if the individual is actually in the room. It is particularly important when giving feedback to avoid making any hurtful, rude, prejudiced or biased comments.
- Reviewers and applicants are reminded that feedback which is wholly uncritical is NOT helpful to the applicant, as areas for additional consideration and improvement will not have been identified and the applicant is thus unlikely to be able to develop a convincing action plan.
- A reviewer who does not feel he or she can offer impartial, helpful and timely feedback is expected to withdraw from the process at the earliest possible opportunity.



The reflection

Following receipt of the feedback, the applicant is asked to consider it carefully and prepare a very short 250 word reflective statement outlining what they have learned from the process and what further actions they plan to take in light of the feedback they have received.

What next?

The peer review documentation and reflective statement must be uploaded to the AoME website along with the application. We will not seek or chase peer reviews on your behalf. Applications not accompanied by a peer review and reflective statement will be returned to the applicant.

A suggested format for the review in MS Word is available on our [website](http://www.medicaleducators.org/Guidance-for-Applicants-Referees-and-Reviewers)
<http://www.medicaleducators.org/Guidance-for-Applicants-Referees-and-Reviewers>

