



The Royal College of Pathologists
Pathology: the science behind the cure

WORKPLACE-BASED ASSESSMENT (WPBA) WORKING GROUP

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1 College's mission statement

- 1.1 The Royal College of Pathologists' mission is to promote excellence in the practice of pathology and to be responsible for maintaining standards through training, examinations and professional development.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Postgraduate Medical Education and Training Board (PMETB) took up its full statutory responsibilities in September 2005, replacing the Specialist Training Authority and the Joint Committee on Postgraduate Training for General Practice. The vision that the PMETB has set itself is to achieve excellence in postgraduate medical education, training, assessment and accreditation throughout the UK to improve the knowledge, skills and experience of doctors and the health and healthcare of patients and the public. Following discussions with PMETB, it was concluded that workplace-based assessments for pathology trainees are currently under-utilised and not adequately documented.

The 'Modernising Medical Careers' (MMC) initiative supports the development and use of valid, reliable and feasible assessments for pathology trainees. The Workplace-Based Assessment (WPBA) Working Group will seek to build upon the work already undertaken by foundation programmes. Existing workplace-based assessments developed for trainees in ward-based clinical medicine may not be suitable for the assessment of trainees in pathology without adaptation.

Current workplace-based assessments are not adequately linked to the Record of In-Training Assessment (RITA) system. Robust evidence from the completion of a range of workplace-based assessments will strengthen the RITA system and provide clear details of progress in training.

3 Rationale for the WPBA Working Group

- 3.1 Workplace-based assessment is set to become an essential and significant element of specialist medical training over the next few years. The Working Group will look at the design, development, piloting and implementation of a range of workplace-based assessments for pathology trainees.

4 Reporting structure

- 4.1 The WPBA Working Group will be accountable to and relate directly to College Council. The Chair will report on its activities to College Council in writing and/or oral reports.
- 4.2 No power or authority will be held by the WPBA Working Group to implement any decisions. Decisions will be recommended to College Council for approval.

5 Primary aim of the WPBA Working Group

- 5.1 To design, develop, pilot and implement workplace-based assessment procedures for pathology trainees. This work is necessary to fulfil PMETB's standards and requirements in the specialties whose training falls within the remit of the Joint Committee on Higher Pathology Training (JCHPT), namely chemical pathology, histopathology, medical microbiology and virology. However, assessments developed for these specialties may well be appropriate for others, for example those under the Joint Committee on Medical Pathology Training (JCHMT).

6 Objectives of the WPBA Working Group

- 6.1 To identify and develop workplace-based assessments that are mapped to the relevant curriculum, underpin the MMC initiative and meet the standards and requirements for assessments set by PMETB.
- 6.2 To ensure that workplace-based assessments in pathology are well structured, transparent, fair and consistent with examinations and training policies in chemical pathology, histopathology, medical microbiology and virology.
- 6.3 To identify and develop appropriate systems for the delivery of the workplace-based assessments.
- 6.4 To ensure consistency of approach in all specialties (chemical pathology, histopathology, medical microbiology and virology) and to identify levels of assessments that are appropriate to the stage of training for the trainee.
- 6.5 To ensure all assessments developed are submitted to PMETB for approval.
- 6.6 To work and share ideas and good practice with external bodies or fora.

7 Specific issues to be addressed

The WPBA Working Group will:

- 7.1 look at ways to pilot and subsequently implement appropriate workplace-based assessments in chemical pathology, histopathology, medical microbiology and virology
- 7.2 ensure all workplace-based assessments are mapped to the curricula
- 7.3 ensure channels for communication are formed and maintained with relevant departments, committees, panels and organisations dealing with similar assessments
- 7.4 ensure that the proposed workplace-based assessments are the most appropriate and effective methods of continuously assessing the knowledge, skills and attitudes of the trainee and that these complement their major summative assessments (e.g. the MRCPATH examination)

- 7.5 establish quality-assurance measures to adequately test and maintain the reproducibility, reliability, validity and feasibility and to ensure the overall quality of the assessment system in line with PMETB's standards and requirements
- 7.6 issue necessary guidance on training for ensuring that workplace-based assessors possess appropriate knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviour for conducting workplace-based assessments for pathology trainees.

8 Desired outcomes

With guidance from the PMETB, MMC, General Medical Council (GMC) and other bodies, the desired outcomes are to:

- 8.1 devise and recommend reproducible assessments for each specialty (chemical pathology, histopathology, medical microbiology and virology) that meet the standards and requirements set by the PMETB.
- 8.2 ensure specific workplace-based assessments for trainees are put in place in a timely manner.

9 Membership of the Working Group

Dr Trevor Gray (Chair)	Director of Examinations and Assessment
Dr Ruth Ayling	Chemical Pathology
Dr Philip DaCosta	Histopathology
Ms Sandra Dewar	Workplace-Based Assessment Manager
Dr Peter Johnston	Histopathology
Dr Dinakantha Kumararatne	Immunology
Mrs Stella Macaskill	Head of Educational and Professional Standards
Dr Hani Zakhour	Director of Training and Educational Standards

Chemical pathology representative – College Advisory Training Team (CATT)

Member – Dr Alan Jones

Deputy – Dr Patrick Twomey

Histopathology representative – CATT

Member – Dr Mary Thompson

Deputy – Dr Sarah Hill

Lay representative – Lay Advisory Committee (LAC)

Member – Ms Elizabeth Livingston

Deputy – Mr Neil Formstone

Medical microbiology representative – CATT

Member – Dr John Hood

Deputy – Dr Marina Morgan

Trainee representative – Trainees Advisory Committee (TAC)

Member – Dr Paul Simcock (Histopathology)

Deputy – Dr Jennifer Logue (Chemical Pathology)

Virology representative – CATT

Member – Dr David Carrington

Deputy – Dr Ken Mutton

Observers

Mr Peter Anderson

Examinations Manager

Miss Joanne Brinklow

Training and Educational Standards Manager

10 Timeframes

- 10.1 The life of the WPBA Working Group will begin in February 2006 and run until January 2008, during which time all the above objectives should have been met.

11 Meetings

- 11.1 Meetings will be held on a quarterly basis at The Royal College of Pathologists, 2 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AF.
- 11.2 In consultation with the Chair, agenda items, minutes and action points will be prepared by the Workplace-Based Assessment Manager. Minutes and action points will be circulated 10–14 working days after the date of each meeting.
- 11.3 Dates of meetings will be planned in advance by prior mutual agreement, so that members' attendance can be maximised.

12 Resources

- 12.1 Travelling and other expenses will be paid to members of the Working Group in line with the College's expenses policy. The expenses policy and claims form are available on the website at www.rcpath.org/index.asp?PageID=732 and hard copies can be provided upon request.
- 12.2 Administrative support will be provided by the Workplace-Based Assessment Manager.

Sandra Dewar

Workplace-Based Assessment Manager

wpba@rcpath.org

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