

Clarification regarding DOPS assessments of procedures

Reason for issuing clarification

Confusion has arisen because different DOPS assessors have had different interpretations of the rating scales on ePortfolio, both regarding particular elements of procedures, e.g. technical ability, and in terms of level of independent practice. Different ARCP assessors and Training Programme Directors (TPDs) have also been variable in what they will accept as satisfactory ratings to allow completion of CMT and/or GIM. This situation is unfair to trainees and unacceptable.

The current confusion

The DOPS rating scale on ePortfolio notes that scoring should reflect the performance of the trainee against that which would reasonably be expected at their stage/year of training and level of experience. Within the marking grid for different elements of the procedure, e.g. technical ability, post procedure management, the trainee's performance must be rated as:

- Under direct supervision/assistance
- With limited supervision/assistance
- Competent unsupervised and deal with complications

And overall summary of 'level of independent practice' as:

- Unable to perform procedure
- Able to perform the procedure under direct supervision / assistance
- Trained and competent in skills lab (this does not equate to clinical competence)
- Able to perform the procedure with limited supervision / assistance
- Competent to perform the procedure unsupervised and deal with complications

Some assessors have read 'deal with complications' with the literal interpretation of 'can personally sort out all complications' and have therefore declined to record any trainee as 'competent unsupervised and deal with complications' for some elements of life threatening procedures, or overall as 'competent to perform the procedure unsupervised and deal with complications'.

Some ARCP assessors and Training Programme Directors have insisted that trainees must have DOPS signed off as 'competent to perform the procedure unsupervised and deal with complications'.

Resolution of confusion

The CMT Advisory Committee and GIM SAC have confirmed the following guidance.

For DOPS assessors:

- 'Deal with complications' should not be interpreted as 'can personally sort out all complications', but as 'able to recognise complications and respond appropriately if they arise, calling for help from colleagues in other specialties when necessary.'
- A trainee's level of independent practice should be rated as 'competent to perform the procedure unsupervised and deal with complications' if they have performed to procedure in a satisfactory manner and are able to describe the common complications and how they would detect and respond to these in an appropriate way.

For ARCP assessors and TPDs:

- If elements of DOPS assessments have been recorded as 'with limited supervision/assistance' or the level of independent practice as 'able to perform the procedure with limited supervision/assistance', these should not be regarded as unsatisfactory for competency sign off without further enquiry. If these ratings have been given by DOPS assessors who have interpreted the descriptors literally, then they will probably be sufficient for competency sign off. In cases of doubt it may be useful to look at the narrative in the DOPS record, and it may also be useful to ask the trainee's Educational Supervisor to provide guidance
- Trainees should not be asked to ask DOPS assessors to re-grade assessments that they have already made on ePortfolio.

The CMTAC and GIM SAC are seeking to have the DOPS forms on ePortfolio amended (but this is not likely to be achieved soon).

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