Take some time out to reflect

Engaging in the online revalidation process gave Stella Gay a sense of achievement and pride, and was surprisingly straightforward.

AS A participant in the revalidation pilot at Guy’s and St Thomas’ NHS Foundation Trust, I began the process by registering online at the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) website.

I familiarised myself with the revalidation requirements using the NMC document How to Revalidate with the NMC and the guide supplied by my trust. I also attended one of several revalidation workshops held by the trust.

To revalidate, NMC registrants need to provide evidence that shows they remain fit to practise. I collated evidence of my continuing professional development (CPD) using the NMC template.

Where relevant I included attendance certificates or written evidence of attendance at meetings and conferences. Other CPD evidence included undertaking a conference presentation, individual e-learning and mandated training specific to my scope of practice.

Five accounts
A revalidation requirement is to write five reflective accounts based on CPD activity and practice-related feedback over the past three years. These need to link with the four themes of the NMC code.

At first, it took time to link my reflections to the code’s themes, but this became easier as I became familiar with the wording of the Code.

My portfolio includes reflective accounts that cover a variety of issues from my practice and professional development. For example, a poster presentation, my master’s dissertation on mindfulness in Parkinson’s, patient and carer feedback and feedback on delivering a talk.

I enjoyed writing these reflections as they left me with a sense of achievement and pride.

Examples of evidence of practice-related feedback included emails, cards and letters received from patients and carers, and emails and evaluation forms sent to me after I had delivered presentations or organised meetings.

I did not have enough time to send an online questionnaire to colleagues and patients, but I intend to do this in future.

I had a discussion about my reflective accounts and CPD record with a senior nurse working in a different service. This was valuable: she provided objective and useful advice and comments on my portfolio. My annual appraisal and revalidation confirmation discussion with my line manager followed soon after. Linking the revalidation process to the annual appraisal worked well.

After everything was confirmed I submitted my declaration of revalidation via the NMC website. Online submission was surprisingly straightforward and quick, which was a relief.

My advice to others about to embark on revalidation is not to leave it to the last minute. It helps to get into the habit of writing small reflective accounts and to keep your evidence filed.

Having been through the process, it is clear that revalidation will bring many benefits. For example it will help to embed the NMC code into everyday nursing practice, which will improve patient care.

Importance of feedback
Time spent reflecting was valuable to acknowledge the positive aspects of nursing practice and identify areas for improvement. It reinforced the significance of receiving feedback and I am determined to give constructive feedback to colleagues more often.

Revalidation also highlights the importance of professional development and peer working. Overall, the process should encourage a stronger feeling of professionalism in nursing.

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Find out more
Visit RCNi’s online revalidation zone, which provides nurses and midwives with everything they need to know about the Nursing and Midwifery Council’s revalidation requirements for remaining on the register. Go to www.rcni.com/revalidation