

PLAN questions answered

RACGP QI&CPD

Looking at some of the common queries from GPs currently using PLAN.

GPs from all walks of professional life have undertaken a planning learning and need (PLAN) activity since it was introduced to the RACGP Quality Improvement and Continuing Professional Development (QI&CPD) Program at the beginning of the 2017–19 triennium. A number of common themes and areas of discussion emerged when collating their feedback.

How many QI&CPD points do I get when I complete PLAN?

As a Category 1 quality improvement activity, PLAN attracts 40 QI&CPD points upon completion.

Senior GP, city practice

There is no doubt as to the benefits the contents of the QI&CPD 2017–19 Program will offer towards maintaining and improving our professional knowledge as GPs.

The new PLAN activity is an 'added bonus'. It is obvious the thought and work that went into it.

When I was first introduced to the concept of the PLAN activity, my initial thought was that, in my 80th year, I was perhaps 'overdoing it'.

Fortunately, I applied to participate in the webinar conducted earlier in the year and after listening to Dr Kaye Atkinson and her colleagues, my initial fears were subdued and ... it made me confident to now proceed on the remaining path towards completion of this learning exercise.

How do I complete a PLAN activity?

GPs can log in to myRACGP, click on 'myCPD' and select PLAN. They must then follow a five-step process:

1. Complete a practice profile analysis and self-reflection in order to identify learning needs.
2. Review the report that is generated.
3. Identify at least five learning areas on which to focus, and state learning outcomes and strategies to achieve them.
4. Complete the activities relevant to the areas that have been identified.
5. Complete the final section of the PLAN activity – reflect and plan ahead.

Is the PLAN activity available in a paper-based version?

PLAN is an online-only tool and not available in a paper-based version.

Can someone help me complete my PLAN if I am not confident using a computer?

Each RACGP state office has trained QI&CPD staff members available to assist GPs in commencing their PLAN activity.

How many PLAN activities do I need to complete in a triennium?

GPs are only required to complete one PLAN activity for the 2017–19 triennium.

The PLAN activity must be completed and submitted by 31 December 2019, and it is recommended that the practice profile and self-reflection section be completed early in the triennium.

As GPs work through the stages of PLAN, their learning strategy can be developed into a structured set of goals and activities for the triennium.

Do I have to complete a PLAN activity if I am not in active clinical practice?

The PLAN activity caters for GPs who have been out of clinical practice for an extended period. It may prove especially helpful for GPs who are not currently in practice but are planning to return within the triennium.

Given the unique nature of work in general practice, GPs will need to develop their own distinctive learning program based on individual experiences and needs.

Experienced GP, rural practice

General practice is rapidly changing and, as such, the need to continually reflect on my learning is of paramount importance. PLAN easily enables me to determine my practice profile and search for activities that meet my learning needs and the needs of my patients, and those topics in which I have special interest.

I would strongly recommend PLAN to all GPs looking to link relevant CPD activities more efficiently. PLAN has been rewarding and very educational.

What is the benefit of completing a practice profile?

PLAN uses reflection to help GPs tailor lifelong learning to their own distinctive situation within the context of Australian general practice.

Documenting a practice profile provides a point of comparison between the practice and its local community, and helps GPs consider the unique needs of their patients and local community when planning learning activities.

As GPs work through their practice profile, PLAN asks a series of questions that prompt reflection on current patients, enabling GPs to identify learning areas tailored to their community's needs.

Do I have to complete a practice profile if I am not in active clinical practice?

GPs who are not in active clinical practice have the option to skip the practice profile section of the PLAN activity. In the event a GP chooses not to complete this section themselves, a profile based on the Australian general practice average will be generated automatically.

What does the self-reflection section entail?

As part of developing their learning needs, PLAN asks GPs to assess their level of confidence in terms of knowledge and skills against a series of criteria:

- The five domains of general practice and curriculum contextual units of the *RACGP curriculum for Australian general practice 2016*
- Common general practice conditions
- Procedural skills relevant to general practice

Does PLAN tell me in which areas I need to improve?

The series of questions asked as part of the PLAN activity are designed to allow GPs to reflect on their confidence levels in different parts of the curriculum for general practice. After this initial reflection, GPs can choose the learning areas on which they want to focus and tailor their PLAN activity to their own needs.

What happens to the information?

Continuing professional development (CPD) information will be held in GPs' QI&CPD portfolios, allowing them to refer to it as needed. GPs have requested this structure, particularly in relation to previous cycles.

Who marks the PLAN activity?

Reflection is the key emphasis of the entire PLAN journey, and GPs thus assess their own performance throughout.

Can I add, for example, an interest in eHealth as a learning area in PLAN?

PLAN features an option to insert additional learning areas that are not stipulated in the curriculum. This is where GPs can add their own study and improvement in these types of areas.

What if I have a specific interest?

The PLAN activity caters for all types of GPs, including those with a specific interest such as dermatology or addiction medicine. However, GPs with specific interests may have particular QI&CPD requirements, and these will still need to be met.

All GPs undertaking clinical practice can complete a profile on their patient demographic and consider their learning needs based on the curriculum. In addition, the variety of common conditions and procedural skills means that each GP should be able to self-reflect on their specific learning needs.

What if I have not completed an accredited activity to link as evidence of an identified learning area?

When uploading evidence for a learning area, GPs have the option to link an accredited

Experienced GP, city practice

I have started my PLAN and am currently working on doing activities to meet my learning objectives, and I have found it very useful to think about what I was going to do in the next three years. I think I probably tended to do this in the past, but I like that I have a more definite record and structure to what I want to do and what I need to do over the next three years.

Although there was some repetition in some of the sections, I didn't find it particularly onerous and there were some areas that I hadn't thought about before, so the exercise was useful from that perspective.

activity they have completed on their myCPD statement.

Alternatively, they can upload a document detailing any other activity they have completed in order to meet the learning outcomes. This could be evidence of reading or cases they have completed. 📄

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