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**RADIATION PROTECTION ADVISER CERTIFICATION SCHEME**

**RPA2: Instructions and Guidance for the Creation of a Portfolio of Evidence for RPA Certification**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- (i) The assessment process is designed to determine whether you are capable of giving appropriate advice with respect to compliance with IRR17 (and where appropriate REPP19).
- (ii) All portfolios of evidence must comply with these instructions; no other construction of a portfolio is acceptable to RPA2000. Portfolios that do not closely reflect these instructions will be returned to applicants. The objective is to create a portfolio through which the assessors can easily navigate and obtain the necessary information to enable them to reach a decision with regards to certification.
- (iii) You are required to provide sufficient evidence from education, training, knowledge and practical experience to meet the requirements of the scheme. Your portfolio of evidence should therefore contain details of your training and relevant examples of your work that together provide evidence to demonstrate your core competence to act as a Radiation Protection Adviser

## 2. HSE REQUIREMENTS FOR RPAs

- (i) These instructions for the compilation of a portfolio of evidence satisfy the requirements of the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) for the assessment of competence of persons seeking to gain recognition as Radiation Protection Advisers
- (ii) The demonstration of competence depends on a combination of knowledge and experience. Applicants seeking to gain recognition as an RPA must provide adequate evidence to demonstrate the appropriate level of competence for each topic in the syllabus. This will consist of knowledge-based evidence and experience-based evidence.

## 3. PRESENTATION OF THE PORTFOLIO

### 3.1 Content

The portfolio should include the following:

- The completed **application form** (Document RPA1), including authentication by a suitable referee and your signed declaration.
- A comprehensive **contents list**, detailing and indexing all the items of evidence included.
- A **summary section**, not exceeding 5-6 pages in length, in which each of the major items of evidence is summarised into a short contextual paragraph that clearly identifies the competencies and experience(s) that it supports.
- **EITHER -**  
Evidence of exemption from the need to provide evidence of knowledge of GA & BU topics  
**OR-**  
Cross Reference Table Nos. 1 & 2 linking the relevant pieces of evidence to the topics of the underpinning knowledge syllabus for RPAs, followed by the appropriate evidence.
- **Cross Reference Table No. 3**, linking the relevant pieces of evidence to the required practical competencies/experiences followed by the appropriate evidence. Each piece of evidence

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should be preceded by **Linking Notes**, explaining why it is relevant to the syllabus elements it is used as evidence for.

- **Cross Reference Table No 4** Demonstrating advice given to employers and Duty Holders, followed by the evidence.

The flow chart at the end of this document demonstrates the process flow for compiling a portfolio.

### 3.2 Evidence of GA or BU topics

- (i) Applicants who are full members of AURPO, IPEM or SRP, or are Chartered or Incorporated Radiation Protection Professionals (CRadP or IRadP), or are a certificated Radioactive Waste Adviser (RWA) or Medical Physics Expert (MPE) are exempt from the requirement to provide evidence to support underpinning knowledge of GA or BU topics; all that is required is the appropriate evidence to demonstrate exemption. Please see the flow chart at the end of this document for detail.
- (ii) If you are not exempt, evidence of GA and BU competence can be provided either from education and attendance at training courses or from work experience, or from a mixture of both. The onus is on you to describe how your evidence meets the HSE requirements.

### 3.3 Construction

The sole way to present the portfolio is to place the various items of evidence, suitably numbered and indexed, in an A4 ring folder. It is helpful to separate the various sections of the portfolio using a simple system such as numbered, tabbed dividers.

### 3.4 Length

- (i) The exact length of the portfolio clearly depends on the amount and type of evidence being presented. However, the expectation is that you should be able to provide sufficient evidence in a single A4 ring folder.
- (ii) The emphasis should be on the quality of the evidence rather than its quantity. Remember that the assessors may have to read carefully through each piece of evidence presented in the portfolio several times. For the DU topics, you should be able to demonstrate competence as an RPA with less than 20 pieces of evidence, and certainly no more than 25.
- (iii) In general, one 'significant' item of evidence may well be sufficient to demonstrate knowledge and/or practical competence in a Basic Syllabus topic. *A good item of evidence may well cover several of the competences listed.* Figure 1 provides an indication of how individual pieces of evidence, supported with detailed linking notes, could be used to support several competences in the DU topic areas in Cross Reference Table 3.
- (iv) The term 'significant' is related to both the nature of the evidence and the ease with which an Assessor can judge the relevant competence of the applicant from that evidence.

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Evidence		Radiation Risk assessment	Local Rules	IRR Compliance Audit	Radiation monitoring programme	Shielding Calculation	Review of new facility plans	Personal dosimetry report
		Radiation Risk assessment	Local Rules	IRR Compliance Audit	Radiation monitoring programme	Shielding Calculation	Review of new facility plans	Personal dosimetry report
DU Topic								
I.	Radiation Risk Assessment	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
II.	Notification, registration and consents	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
III.	ALARP / SFAIRP	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
IV.	Dose Limitation / Restriction of exposure	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
V.	Maintenance of engineering controls etc.	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
VI.	Contingency Planning	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
VII.	The role of the RPA	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
VIII.	The role of the RPS	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
IX.	Information, instruction and training	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
X.	Designation of areas	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
XI.	Local Rules	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
XII.	Personal dosimetry (external, real time, internal, biological etc.)	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
XIII.	The classification of workers	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
XIV.	Radiation Monitoring	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
XV.	Accounting for radioactive materials	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
XVI.	Notification of occurrences	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
XVII.	Cooperation between employers	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

**Figure 1: Showing how individual pieces of evidence can support more than one Detailed Understanding competence in the HSE syllabus.**

### 3.5 Navigation

- (i) Good navigation aids are essential, since aiding the assessors in their navigation through the portfolio is beneficial for all parties. Each piece of evidence must have an associated linking note that explains which competences it addresses and how.
- (ii) Essential items of evidence may be contained within a larger document to give context, in which case the relevant parts of the larger document should be clearly identified in the linking notes attached to the item of evidence.
- (iii) The essential navigational elements of the portfolio are included in the list of portfolio contents described above in section 3.1.

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## 4. FURTHER GUIDANCE

### 4.1 Introduction

Please note that the RPA certificate will not identify any particular work sector. It is up to employers to choose suitable RPAs to support their work activities and it is the responsibility of RPAs to provide advice within their own sphere of suitability.

### 4.2 Items of evidence

- (i) To determine the appropriateness of a potential piece of evidence, examine it and ask yourself ***‘How does this evidence show that I have the basic knowledge/competence/ experience?’*** This will help in determining what material to include to ensure adequate coverage of all the requirements. Evidence can be generated specifically to demonstrate knowledge, understanding and competence. The evidence should consist of advice you have given or contributed to on compliance with the IRR17 and/or REPPIR for DU elements. If there are DU elements that you struggle to find evidence for then simulated evidence is acceptable (see section 4.5).
- (ii) Evidence of practical competence must be from your own work and predominantly from work undertaken within the last five years: the date of the work should be included. Evidence of training and education may precede the five years, as may some unique pieces of evidence of practical competence and workplace experience. However, in such situations you should submit additional evidence that knowledge and skills have not been lost, for example by having been kept up to date through professional development and practical application.
- (iii) An item of evidence consisting of workplace documentation (eg a final set of local rules) alone is unlikely to provide an adequate demonstration of performance. It will need some “linking notes” written by you, which will explain the thought process you went through at the time and perhaps the background and details of the situation involved.
- (iv) Some individual items or types of evidence may demonstrate more than one DU topic. A single item can be referenced by more than one sub-topic. See Figure 1 above.
- (v) Items of evidence that include contributions by other people should be annotated to clearly show the extent of your contribution to the work and your relationship to the others (e.g. if you are a trainee under supervision, or the Head of a group).
- (vi) Evidence should not disclose personal details relating to any individual or employer.
- (vii) Evidence should not contain information which compromises any sensitivities relating to the employer’s business or its employees. Should you have concerns on such matters, you should blank out names or other details that it is not appropriate to disclose.

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(viii) Evidence should never contain information that could compromise the security of radioactive materials. Details of high activity source strengths, quantities of bulk radioactive materials, storage facilities and source security should always be omitted. If you are uncertain about the confidentiality of the evidence you intend to submit, you should discuss the matter with your employer and, if necessary, the RPA 2000 Assessment Secretary.

#### 4.3 Demonstration of Detailed Understanding (Cross-Reference Table 3, application form – RPA1)

- (i) You must provide evidence to demonstrate practical competence and workplace experience in the topic areas indicated in Cross-Reference Table 3.
- (ii) For each of the DU areas identified in Cross-Reference Table No.3, you need to provide evidence to convince the assessors that you have sufficient practical competence and workplace experience to satisfy the requirements for certification as an RPA – i.e., that you are capable of giving the appropriate advice on compliance with the IRR17 and/or REPPiR. The practical evidence should come preferably from within your sphere of work, but simulation and/or mentored practical exercises may be used where such practical experience has not been available to you (see section 4.5. for more information).
- (iii) The advisory notes included in Cross-Reference Table 3 are designed to assist applicants to adopt a pragmatic approach towards the evidence that they could submit. Your evidence should be sufficiently wide-ranging to indicate familiarity with the breadth of situations implied by the topic area and should concentrate on quality rather than quantity. Evidence must be provided for all topics in Cross-Reference Table 3.
- (iv) You do not, however, need to provide evidence to cover every element in the advisory notes in Cross-Reference Table 3. These are only indicative suggestions of evidence that might be provided. Assessors are looking **for no more than 25 pieces** of good evidence only, and the evidence should be easy to navigate.
- (v) As a general principle, and where appropriate, it is acceptable for one significant item of evidence to be used to demonstrate more than one competence. Where this is the case you must be careful to maintain clarity in the presentation of the evidence.
- (vi) Items of evidence may also include lectures or presentations that you have prepared these should be clearly annotated to identify those elements of the lecture/presentation that are dependent on your *practical competence* as opposed to knowledge.
- (vii) When using minutes or notes of meetings as evidence, you should ensure that they are from meetings where you made a significant contribution and are detailed enough to clearly identify that contribution.
- (viii) Linking notes are required as a means of enabling you to identify the extent to which you contributed towards an item of evidence or to provide additional background in support of what might otherwise appear as a less significant item of evidence. The linking note should identify how the evidence relates to advice to the employer.

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- (ix) Cross-Reference Table 3 has been specifically designed as a convenient format for:
- you to cross-reference all items of portfolio evidence to the appropriate practical experience; and
  - RPA 2000 to easily identify where further evidence is required.

#### **4.4 Demonstration of Ability to Give Advice (Cross-Reference Table 4, application form – RPA1)**

The ability to give appropriate advice on compliance with the IRR17 and/or REPIR is a key theme in HSE’s RPA Statement. Whilst Cross-Reference Table 3 relates to demonstration of Detailed Understanding of the topics, Cross-Reference Table 4 requires you to show how you have used, or would use, this evidence to formulate advice to an employer or duty holder. Items of evidence may well include actual advice to the employer, but other evidence (such as operating data or documentation produced in the workplace, reports, minutes or notes on meetings, schedules, programmes, objectives/goals achieved, details of work on special projects, images, plans, drawings) needs a narrative in Table 4 demonstrating how you would formulate advice based on it. For example, if your evidence item is a set of Local Rules which you have drafted/reviewed/specified the content of, the linking note for this evidence could indicate how and why you would advise the employer/duty holder to adopt them.

#### **4.5 Simulation**

- (i) HSE recognises that some applicants may have difficulty in obtaining practical experience in some areas and encourages the use of simulation in place of, or to supplement, “real-life” evidence.
- (ii) Simulation involves the creation of a realistic workplace scenario incorporating relevant radiation protection and regulatory issues that an RPA would be expected to address. The applicant submits evidence to demonstrate the necessary practical competence to resolve those issues.
- (iii) RPA Certification can only be awarded to applicants who have accrued significant levels of practical competence in advising on compliance with the IRR17 and/or REPIR in workplace situations. Even high levels of knowledge may not be considered to be sufficient, without an appropriate level of actual workplace experience. However, the Board recognise the importance of simulation, as an aid to meeting RPA certification requirements in certain situations, and offers the following guidance regarding the use of simulation:
- Evidence from simulation should only be used when the applicant’s employment is unable to provide the opportunity to demonstrate the competency.
  - In all cases, the reason for submitting this type of evidence should be fully explained.
  - All applicants should be able to submit some actual workplace evidence for most in Cross-Reference Table 3. Simulated evidence may be used to supplement this; for example, regarding DU area XV, “Accounting for radioactive materials”, where the applicant’s employer may not be involved the use of radioactive materials.
  - With regard to the quantity of simulated items which are acceptable, there should not be a problem awarding certification if a ‘good portfolio’ includes no more than one quarter of the competencies being demonstrated by evidence from simulation (i.e. at least three quarters are from direct work experience). However, it is unlikely that certification would

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be awarded if more than one third of the competencies are demonstrated by evidence from simulation (i.e. less than two thirds are from direct work experience). In all situations, the award of certification will be greatly influenced by the quality of both the practical evidence and the evidence from the simulation, together with the reasons for having to use simulation.

#### **4.6 Applicants from Outside the UK**

Any person may apply for a Certificate of Competence to act as an RPA, irrespective of where they live or work. All evidence submitted must be in English and must relate to IRR17. A translation from an original document is acceptable.

## **5 Annexes**

### **5.1 Annexe 1: Example Linking Note**

This is a fictitious linking note that shows how one piece of evidence can be used to address more than one DU area in Cross Reference Table 3. We have used the word “Trust” to describe the employer in this example. We could equally well have used “Health Board”.

#### ***Evidence 4 – Review of plans for a new facility***

Elements addressed in Cross Reference Table 3:

*DU1 Radiation Risk Assessment*  
*DU2 Notification, Registration, and Consents*  
*DU3 ALARP /SFAIRP*  
*DU3 Dose Limitation*  
*DU5 Maintenance of Engineering Controls*  
*DU7 Role of the RPA*  
*DU10 Designation of Areas*  
*DU13 Radiation Monitoring*  
*DU17 Cooperation between Employers*

Evidence 4 is a report I authored concerning the plans for the installation of a new PET/CT suite in the City Hospital. The City Hospital, whilst providing an in-house Nuclear Medicine unit, supplied with radiopharmaceuticals from the University Hospital in the same Trust (employer), had not previously delivered a PET/CT service. PET radiopharmaceuticals were to be supplied by another Trust.

I was asked by the RPA to provide draft advice for the project team on behalf of the Trust regarding regulatory compliance in terms of the plans. My brief was also to identify issues that would need to be addressed before the project could go ahead, including the need for further risk assessment and development of Local Rules. I was specifically not asked to consider contingency planning at this stage and did not consider issues of staff training.

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An initial shielding brief had been developed for the project team by the Radiation Physics Group of which I am a member; however, I had not been involved in the shielding design and my brief included a requirement to provide a critique of the shielding design. I was asked to pay particular attention to the design constraints, consequent implications for designation of staff, requirements for monitoring of staff and areas, adequacy of warning lights.

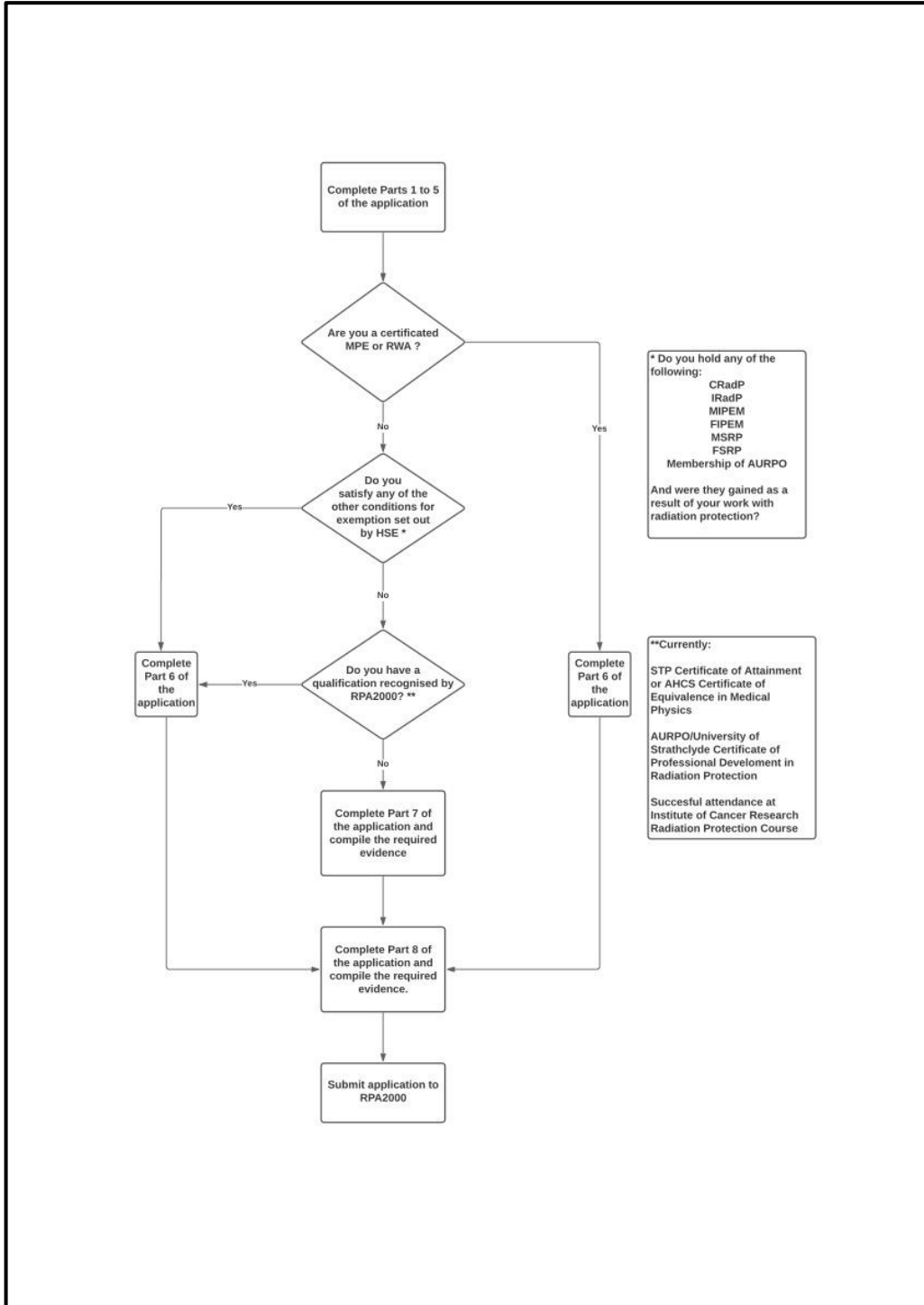
Because the work involved liaison with another Trust, the review addresses some aspects of the requirements for cooperation between the two Trusts. It only makes brief mention of arrangements for the control of radioactive substances, which form part of a separate piece of work.

In terms of IRR17, the report addresses the requirements of Regulations 5 through 9, Regulations 11 and 12, Regulation 14 and 16. Regulations 17 to 20, Regulations 21 and 22 and to some extent Regulations 29 and 30. It was used by the appointed RPA to advise the Trust as the employer on how to ensure this facility complies with these Regulations.

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## 5.2 Annexe 2: Flow chart for completion of form RPA1

The flow chart below shows the process for completing form RPA1



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