

A guide to entrustable professional activities

Entrustable professional activity

A critical part of professional work that can be identified as a unit to be entrusted to a trainee once sufficient competence has been demonstrated.

EPAs: critical tasks of a discipline

The new curricula for clinical radiology and interventional radiology are based around high level learning outcomes known as capabilities in practice, or CiPs. Each CiP describes the clinical activities and critical tasks carried out by a day 1 radiology consultant, which trainees can be trusted to perform once they have demonstrated sufficient competence. These tasks are known as entrustable professional activities (EPAs).

Assessing the CiPs

Judgments about a trainee's ability to safely perform a task, and the level of supervision they require when doing so, are routinely made in the workplace. These are based on the observations and experience of the supervising consultant and form the basis of assessing each CiP.

Trainees will be assessed using a 4 point 'entrustment scale' which identifies where a trainee is entrusted to observe only (level 1), to act with direct or indirect supervision (level 2 and 3 respectively) and where they are entrusted to act independently (level 4).

As a trainee progresses, they will be assessed in this way multiple times, by multiple people and in various contexts. This will be recorded in their eportfolio and reviewed by their educational supervisor and an ARCP panel, who will make a judgement about when the trainee is ready to progress to the next stage of training.

When we assess a CiP, we are automatically assessing the underlying knowledge and skills that allow a trainee to competently perform that task. This makes EPAs a manageable way of using one assessment to judge a range of knowledge, skills and behaviours without resorting to an extensive tick list of competencies.

Using EPAs to support trainee progression

The clinical radiology and interventional radiology curricula include progression grids that specify which entrustment level trainees must reach for each CiP at each stage of training. This makes the expectations for trainee progression very clear. Trainees should achieve the entrustment level given in the progression grids for their stage of training as a minimum, although they may achieve above this level in some CiPs.

By the end of training a doctor must be trusted to undertake all the critical tasks needed to work as a consultant radiologist and that becomes the outcome and end point of training.

If a supervisor judges that a trainee can perform a CiP independently, then the knowledge and skills that underlie that task will have been demonstrated. If not, then the trainee is still working towards achieving that CiP. In this case, the descriptors associated with each CiP can be used to help identify the underlying knowledge, skills or behaviours that require improvement and to provide the trainee with targets for further learning. This supports supervisors to plan teaching and provide feedback.

Summary

- Entrustable professional activities are the critical tasks carried out by consultants, described by the CiPs
- They allow a range of underlying knowledge, skills and behaviours to be assessed at once
- They are an effective tool for supervisors to plan teaching, provide feedback and assess progress
- Progression grids provide a clear expectation of what tasks trainees should be capable of performing at each stage in their training and provide a framework for decisions on progress through training