

Maximising Potential of a Successful Exam Result through Engagement with Support of the PSU, Wales Deanery

The Wales Deanery is responsible for all doctors and dentists in training throughout Wales (c.2700) and for any issues that may arise and prevent progression throughout the training process. To ensure good quality management the Deanery has developed systems to respond quickly to any concerns raised.

Progression through postgraduate training is often challenging. A range of complex factors can affect a person's ability to complete a training programme.

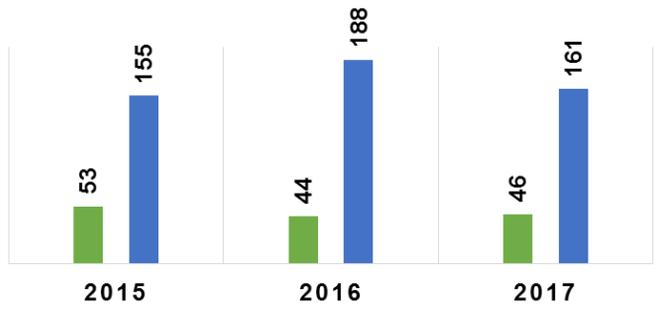
All Speciality training programmes entail a series of examinations. These usually consist of written/theory and clinical components. Often, progress from one examination to the next depends on passing the current examination. Similarly, passing an examination is essential to progressing to the next stage of training or to training completion.

The Professional Support Unit (PSU) receives approximately 175 trainee/residents referrals per year. The highest proportion (35%) of referrals relates to exam failure/difficulties; 35% in 2015, 23% in 2016 and 28% in the first 9 months of 2017.

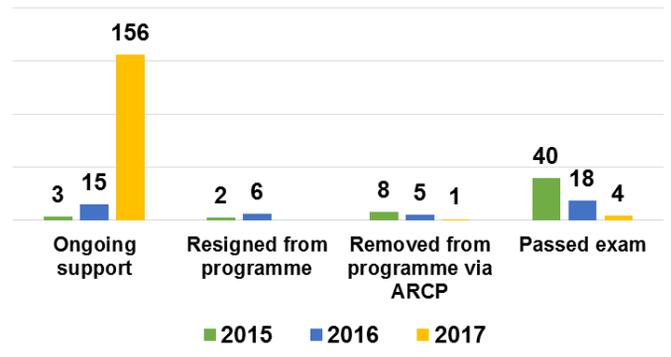
The Professional Support Unit (PSU) was established in 2008 to support all doctors and dentists in training in Wales whose performance has been affected. The PSU provides guidance and information according to GMC, 'Training Doctor', Domain 6, to all parties involved in postgraduate medical and dental training.

To date the PSU has provided support for over 1436 doctors and dentists in training. Overall 291 cases are currently active and of the 1145 closed cases, 89% had positive outcomes.

■ Total referred for Exam Support
■ Total referred for the period

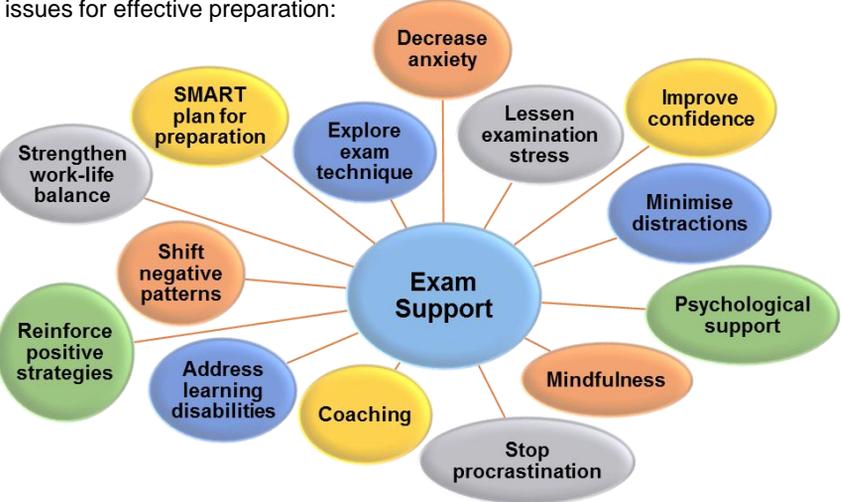


Exam Support Referrals



In general there are several causes for the failure: lack of preparation, personal issues, capability, 'natural disasters'. Most report never having failed anything before and therefore often cope poorly with the recurrent failure. The reasons for failure may be straight forward for the majority. However for many, the underlying causes are complex: work-life balance, complicated home life, loss of confidence, underlying learning disabilities, anxiety and fear. Often, a combination of factors may be present. The effect of failure can resonate through the entire fabric of the trainee/resident and impact on their family, work and environment.

To enable progression, the PSU address the nontechnical issues for effective preparation:



In the two year period 2015-16 60% passed their exam with 18% receiving ongoing support and re-sitting and only 13 failed having to leave their programme. The PSU team have improved expertise in exam support and are confident of positive results for the 156 trainees/residents with support plans in place in 2017.

Our records indicate that PSU support is effective in supporting trainees/residents experiencing exam challenges and enables them to address their needs in order to successfully pass.