MARS is an all-Wales system provided by Health Education & Improvement Wales and funded by Welsh Government to facilitate the appraisal and revalidation of doctors.

MARS user guide for Clinical Practitioners

Evidencing a practitioner’s level of practice through the use of a portfolio has been recommended in several key documents over the last decade. The latest document to support this is the *Professional Framework for Enhanced, Advanced and Consultant Clinical Practice in Wales (HEIW 2023)* which describes how clinical practitioners can evidence their work across the pillars of practice through a portfolio. This document also includes a guide to support Clinical Practitioners (CPs) in preparing their portfolios.

This guide has been developed to meet the needs of Clinical Practitioners when using MARS, which was originally developed to manage the appraisal arrangements of doctors in Wales as directed by the GMC. At present use by CPs is in a trial phase, over the next year and following feedback, HEIW will be looking at the needs of CPs and this will be supported further in the future.

Some areas within MARS may **not** be relevant for the needs of the CPs using the system, including:
- *Revalidation* sections and functionality including Revalidation Progress page
- *Selecting an Appraiser* functions
- *Current PDP* tab
- *Declarations* tab

This guide covers the functions that **are relevant**.

Please be aware that some of the terminology embedded within the system (and therefore cannot be removed) will also not be relevant to CPs but a glossary of these terms can be found in the appendix e.g. references to 'Doctor’ or General Medical Practice (GMC).
Recommended Browser & Contact Us

**BROWSER:** We recommend you use up to date browsers and operating systems when using MARS, using the latest versions is more secure and provides better compatibility with key features on the site. You can use the ‘check my browser’ button from the MARS dashboard.

**CONTACT US:** If you are experiencing issues with MARS please use the ‘MARS Help & Support’ link (this can be found on the top of the screen). This will open a new window and you can use the ‘Contact Us’ button to input your query which will be sent to the MARS email inbox.

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Registration & Login

Please visit [https://medical.marswales.org](https://medical.marswales.org) and use the ‘Register now’ button.

When registering, in the ‘GMC Number’ field you can enter your professional registration number.

For ‘Health Board’ choose Clinical Practitioner

For ‘Consultant Status’ you can choose ‘Consultant Clinical Practitioner’, ‘Advanced Clinical Practitioner or Enhanced Clinical Practitioner’
Your registration will be processed by the Revalidation Support Unit (RSU) at HEIW and your account activated within 5 working days. Should this not be the case, please contact the MARS service desk on heiw.mars@wales.nhs.uk

When registered you will be allocated the ‘Doctor’ role and be assigned an ‘Allocated Quarter (AQ)’. MARS automatically assigns these, but yours will be set to 2030 so that you don’t receive any auto-notifications from the system.

**Personal & Professional Information**

You can enter your personal and professional information by clicking on ‘Doctor’ and then the ‘My Details’ page on the left hand menu. Once on the ‘My Details’ page you can add or update the appropriate information.

To add or change information, click on the red text (or existing text you wish to edit) and another box will appear, you can then enter information into this box, and ensure you have clicked on the blue tick box to save.

You can also add your current employment by selecting ‘Add Hospital’ in the Hospital Employment Details section.

From there, you need to use the drop down boxes to choose your hospital/location, including a start date. You can leave the end date blank if this is your current employment.
You need to select the **Primary** column to choose which record is your primary employment. An archive of your previous posts and employment will remain in the second tab within this area (only you can see this).

### Activities Tab

The **Activities** tab allows you to add further professional information.

When you click in the comments box it will bring up a text box, enter your information and then select the blue tick box.
On the next tab you can also upload your own job plan (as outlined below) – please insert the job plan as agreed with your directorate manager. This file will automatically be saved to the ‘Files Area’.

If you would like to upload your CV and/or Job Description to your profile, we would advise you to upload it in the ‘Upload Job Plan’ section. Also, if you would like to upload relevant Professional Certificates e.g. evidence of registration, qualifications etc, please do so in this section.

Please note, any files uploaded here will be added into your ‘Files Area’, more information below.

Enter Information

You can begin entering information as soon as your account is activated.

To do this please click on the ‘Appraisal Information’ button, you can find this on the left hand menu or the first box on the ‘My Appraisals’ page. When entering information please remember to anonymise personal, colleague or patient identifying markers.

Once on the Appraisal Information page, please click on the green ‘+Add Information’ button to begin adding content to your appraisal.
From the first Appraisal Information column, please select ‘Clinical Practitioner’ from the ‘Category’ menu.

Then choose one of the 6 options from the Type menu.

For each Type there is a descriptor in the shaded box which gives an explanation of the differing areas of information.

Once you have entered your information you can edit or delete the information using the action column to the right.

You are encouraged to input a title for each piece of information you enter. This aids navigation around the information for both you and your Assessor.

Should you wish to download your information to send to your Assessor, use the blue button to the top right of the table.
When entering information, there is also a drop-down menu where you can select appraisal attributes that you think are relevant to each piece of information you have input. This is optional and would not usually apply to Practitioners.

You will also have the opportunity to upload supporting information. To do this;

1. Click ‘Add File’ (this is at the bottom of the Add Information template)
2. Click ‘Upload File’
3. Browse and select the file from your device
4. Click the green ‘+Add button’
5. Enter a document title and any Optional Information
6. Click the green ‘Save Information’

Should you wish to take printed material to an assessment meeting that has not been uploaded onto MARS, in the ‘Add Information’ template you can choose ‘+Add Printed Material’ (this is at the bottom of the Add Information template).

This will inform your Assessor that you intend to provide material supplementary to what you have entered into MARS.
Give it a title and description and your Assessor will then be aware of the additional paperwork you are bringing. If you are to use this feature, we suggest keeping printed material to a minimum.

**Constraints, Insights and Reflections**

You can use these sections to add in your key goals, objectives and challenges.

**Constraints Tab**

Each section has a different list of constraints, specific to each sub section.

You can click on ‘+Add/Edit Constraints’ and then search in the drop down menu or you can scroll through to find the appropriate area. Click to the left of the title heading and it shows the sub headings, select which ever option is applicable.
When you have chosen the constraint you can add ‘Notes’

(Please note: You cannot add ‘Notes’ until you have chosen the constraint)

**Insights and Reflections Tab**

You can add in information here regarding your ongoing development and can summarise the last 12 months. Click on the green boxes to add in the text. The PDP section may not be relevant to you.

**Files Area**

The files area can be found on the left navigation bar, or you can access it from the pull-down menu in the top right hand corner;

This is where you will find the supporting information you have uploaded to MARS.

There is a 200mb limit to this area. If you need to create space you can either save the uploaded files back to your computer or just delete them.

Be cautious uploading images to MARS - images alone can be larger than 2MB. To check the file size, right click the file, select properties and the size will be displayed (1024KB = 1MB). To reduce picture file size, you can reduce picture resolution, crop your images to make them smaller, or you can discard unwanted information, such as the crop parts of a picture that are not relevant.

Word documents are generally smaller than PDF’s – further information on reducing file sizes when working with Microsoft Office (including images within Word) can be found on the Microsoft website.

If you go to ‘Files Area’, which can be found from the pull down menu in the top right hand corner of the screen, you will see all your files listed. If you click on the header of the ‘SIZE’ column, you can order the files largest-to-smallest or vice versa. You can then delete any files you want by clicking on the ‘X’ in the extreme right hand column against each entry.

If you want to save files back to your device, click on the icon within the File Name column which will open the file and you can save it. Once saved back to your device you can still delete it from MARS as outlined above.

**Data Protection and confidentiality**

MARS has been built to ensure user information is protected in line with relevant legislation. Trained MARS Service Desk staff are provided with account access when supporting user queries. Should Service Desk staff require access
to your account, your consent will be required to do this (usually to support complex or ongoing queries).

Aggregated, anonymised engagement data e.g. how many Practitioners have registered with MARS, will also be sent to HEIW’s Workforce Modernisation Team on a routine basis as part of this trial. At no stage will any appraisal information you’ve entered into your profile be shared.

**Undertaking an Appraisal**

You’re welcome to undertake an appraisal on MARS, should you wish. Please note however that this will need to be actioned manually by the Service Desk Team. Please do not attempt to arrange this yourselves on MARS. Once you have secured an Appraiser and an agreed meeting date outside of the system, inform the MARS Service Desk and they will be able to arrange this on the system.

**Changing your password**

Once logged in you are able to change your password in the top right hand corner, under ‘My Account’ - select the white drop down arrow and the first option is to change password.

You will then see another screen which prompt you to enter a new password and re-enter, then select the green ‘Save’ button.
Further Information

MARS Help & Support - https://marshelp.heiw.wales

Email - heiw.mars@wales.nhs.uk

Appendix

Appraiser – Assessor

Hospital – base location / place of work

Doctor – this would be you the Clinical Practitioner

General Medical Practice (GMC) – this is your governing body