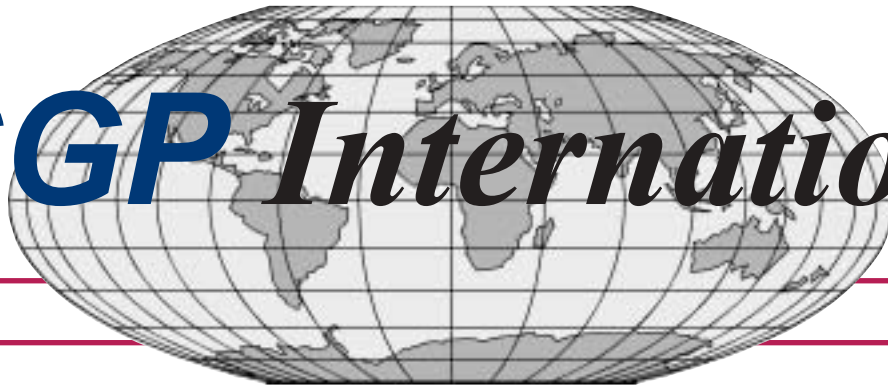


RCGP *International*



MRCGP INTERNATIONAL: MRCGP[INT]

Dr John V Howard, FRCGP
Chairman, RCGP International Committee and MRCGP [INT] Board

They said it could not be done!



A group of Omanis in Muscat

The College has responded to colleagues in many parts of the world who wished to develop an internationally recognised postgraduate qualification for general practice/family medicine, equivalent in status to qualifications in hospital-based specialist disciplines. The College has become increasingly aware of the need for high quality postgraduate assessments to be developed at national or regional level in different parts of the world, tailored to local needs, culture, practice, health and educational systems.

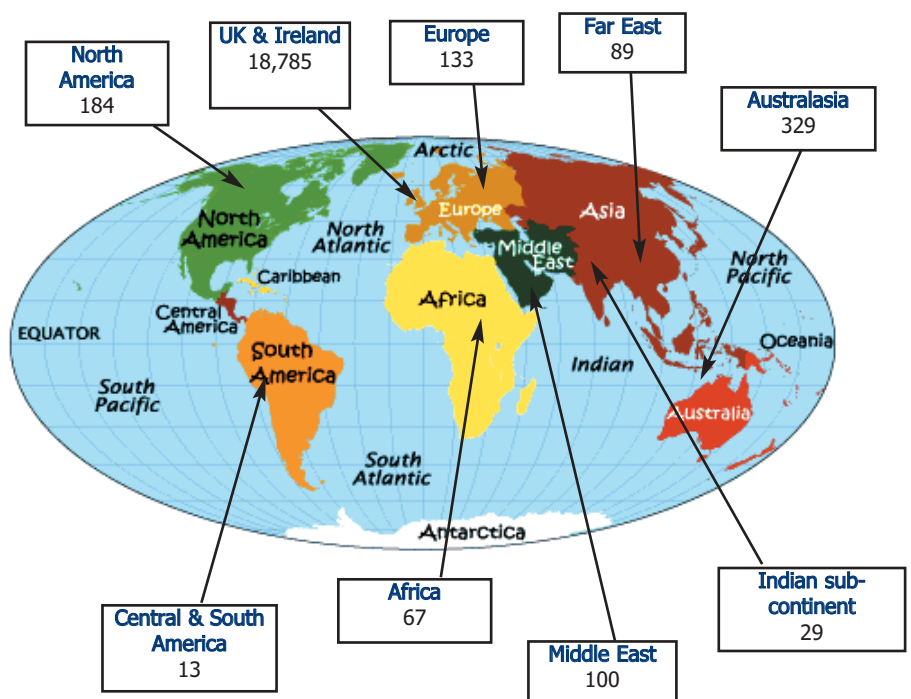
The development of MRCGP[INT] was undertaken on the premise that it is inappropriate to export the UK MRCGP examination. A more suitable alternative is to provide a clear framework for the development of locally relevant assessments, with the availability of RCGP advice and support.

This is followed by College accreditation, once the new assessment has fulfilled all the criteria and is of equivalent academic rigour to MRCGP, within the countries or regions concerned. Successful candidates receive the award of MRCGP [INT] in addition to that of their local examination. The College has agreed partnerships with the Ministries of Health and national examination bodies in pioneering sites which include Oman, Brunei, and Egypt.

RCGP International Department - Who Are We?

WHO	The RCGP International Committee, plus International Department staff.
WHAT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support overseas members as their Faculty Board and represent them at RCGP Council • Aid educational exchange • Represent the interests of General Practice at European and World level via WONCA, ESGP/FM, UEMO, WHO, etc. • Manage the International Family Medicine Development Programme (IDP)
HOW	Through Curriculum Development, Courses and Seminars, Quality Assurance Programmes, Training, Accreditation and Assessment Visits, Research, Study Visits, Travel Scholarships and the Development of Educational Materials.
WHERE	Royal College of General Practitioners, 14 Princes Gate, Hyde Park London, SW7 1PU, United Kingdom Tel: +44 (0)20 7581 3232 Fax: +44 (0)20 7973 0056 Website: www.rcgp.org.uk Email: international@rcgp.org.uk

Members around the world



President of WONCA Europe

Dr Philip R Evans, FRCGP

"The RCGP is the largest member organisation within the European region. The College has been a strong supporter of WONCA as a world organisation since its development 30 years ago and was particularly involved in the development of the European region of WONCA in 1995. At that time, the former College President Dr Lotte Newman FRCGP was Regional Vice President for Europe and with others helped to bring together all the disparate academic organisations throughout Europe to form one body. WONCA Europe now includes network organisations for:

Research - The European General Practice Research Workshop

Education - The European Academy Of General Practice Teachers

EQuIP - The European Working Party on Quality Assurance

It also has close collaborative relations with the rural practice network EURIPA and the network group for health promotion and preventive activities EUROPREV. All these organisations hold regular twice yearly meetings at different venues in Europe. Full details of how to make contact with them can be obtained from the International Department at the College.

The aims and goals of WONCA Europe are:

- To provide a forum for knowledge and information exchange between member organisations in general practice / family medicine.
- To initiate activities to foster general practice as a scientific discipline.
- To encourage and support the development of academic organisations of general practice in Europe.
- To represent with other European general practice organisations the academic aspects of general practice in European forums concerned with health and medical care.



The Atomium, Bruxelles

International Visits and Exchanges

Dr Dagmara Kazlauskienė & Dr Neil Bennett, MRCGP

One of the roles of the International Department of the College is to facilitate educational exchanges and visits. The aims of these are to promote international understanding, education, and friendship with a view to promoting high standards of general practice and family medicine.

An example of such a visit is that of Dr Dagmara Kazlauskienė from Vilnius, Lithuania. She spent four months in an urban practice in Walton on Thames in England and two months in a rural training practice on the West coast of Scotland near Oban as a part of her postgraduate training.

Her aims were to study the following:

1. NHS - Primary Care

- (i) Practice team work in rural and urban areas in GP partnership and single-handed GP medical practices
- (ii) GP education and career structure
- (iii) Dispensing practice

2. Health in UK

- (i) Major health problems at the start of 21st century and their links with deprivation strategies for improving health and health care.

Following this visit she wrote " This was a great time, highly interesting and enriching, and a highlight in my personal and professional development".

Dr Neil Bennett from the Scottish practice " She has been a breath of fresh air to us all. We hope that she has learnt as much from us as we have learnt from her..."



Lithuanian traditional dress

International Development Programmes

Dr Garth Manning, MRCGP
Medical Director,
International Family Medicine Development
Programme (IDP)

The Royal College of General Practitioners has long had a commitment to foster the development of general practice/family medicine internationally. For many years it has responded to numerous requests for collaboration and assistance, and in 1998 expanded its efforts by creating a dedicated International Department which reports to the College's International Committee.

Interest in primary health care (PHC) has blossomed in recent years, as governments struggle to manage increasing medical demands and technologies with more limited budgets. A health care system, based on PHC, is often seen as providing an answer to the enigma, offering as it does a more cost-effective way of delivering health care within the cash constraints most countries face.

The College has been able to provide advice on undergraduate and postgraduate curricula and training programmes, advice on examination methodologies and assessment mechanisms, and has provided a whole range of technical assistance to a host of overseas countries. More recently, we have exported our International Teachers' Course to a number of countries, with others in the pipeline.

Where in the World are We?

Latin America

Many Latin American countries are moving away from their more secondary based system to one based on PHC. Some input has already taken place in **Argentina**, whilst discussions have been held with officials in **Brazil**, **Colombia** and **Mexico**, with a view to College collaboration.

Asia

Long term associations continue with Aga Khan University **Pakistan** (Karachi) and with Tribhuvan University in **Nepal** (Kathmandu). A collaboration has begun with the Apollo Hospitals Group in **India** (Hyderabad, Chennai and Delhi), whilst **Brunei** is a pioneer site for MRCGP[INT]. Discussions continue with officials in both **Bangladesh** and **Thailand**.

Europe



Riverboats Bangladesh

College representatives have provided training inputs in **Kosovo** and we have begun our International Teachers' Course in **Malta**. Discussions are being held with colleagues in **Russia** regarding possible College collaboration. Previous very

successful programmes in **Ukraine** and **Karelia** have now concluded, but one in Kazakhstan continues as does a long term exchange programme with **Portugal**.

Middle East

Apart from **Oman** and **Egypt**, which are MRCGP[INT] pioneer sites, and now the **United Arab Emirates**, the College also has long term links with **Kuwait** with the RCGP Diploma Kuwait. In addition we have worked with Medical Aid for Palestinians to provide input into GP training in **Palestine** (both Gaza and West Bank) and the **Lebanon** though regrettably this has ceased temporarily due to the present security situation.

RCGP International Course For Teachers of General Practice "Promoting Excellence in General Practice"

Dr John V Howard, FRCGP
Chairman, RCGP International Committee
and MRCGP [INT] Board

Drawing on the College's experience of helping colleagues in many countries and cultures, the course demonstrates that there are common themes that underpin all good teaching. The course is designed around four modules: The Learning Process; Planning to Teach, Appraisal, Assessment and Evaluation, and Developing a Teacher Identity.

The structure of the course is modular with intensive residential blocks and assignments before, during and after the modules. They are designed for those who have a role and responsibility for teaching General Practice / Family Medicine at all levels and stages of learning. The course promotes an "open " model of teaching, where participants are encouraged to gain an insight into the educational concepts and their practical application in teaching General Practice and

Family Medicine. Through the process of reflection, experimentation and rehearsal, the participants are encouraged to develop their own identity as a GP teacher, underpinned by sound educational principles. What is more, the course is enjoyable and participants benefit greatly from fellowship and mutual support, building networks of like minded teachers who may be working in isolation.

The academic rigour of the course is ensured by a UK University validation, and with further work, it can achieve a professional teaching qualification, the Postgraduate Certificate in Education and then onto higher qualifications.

Successful courses have been held in England, Nepal and Pakistan and one is currently taught in Malta.

Contact the International Dept. of the College for details of future courses.



Spinola Bay - St. Julians, Malta

International Travel Scholarships

Dr Majid Jalil, Division of Family Medicine,
Aga Khan University, Karachi, Pakistan

The following is a reflection on a travel scholarship from Pakistan to England.

Observing and sharing experience of professionals working in different countries has always been acknowledged to contribute to further the development of not only the individual, but also the home country of the individual.

I came to know about the International Travel Scholarship through the College's web site and people working with the international department who came to visit Pakistan. Very few experiences over a very short period of time can change one's life and I feel the ITS visit is proving to be one such experience in my life.

Not only is the International Department at the College supportive, but the general practitioners in the UK also provide an open opportunity to learn about the system. They presented to me not only the positive side of the picture, but also the areas which need further development.

I could clearly see the support system available to GPs for progressing their knowledge and experience, also the social, political and educational challenges which face them in the future.

Observing the new ideas of education, research and primary care delivery has been an invigorating, challenging and learning time for me.

Observing one of the World's oldest, and therefore well-tested systems, has given me an opportunity to learn not only from good experiences, but observe the mistakes which could be avoided in the future development of primary care in my own country.

I congratulate the RCGP on such a wonderful initiative and encourage my fellow GPs in the developing world to take this golden opportunity and expand on their experiences.



RCGP, 14 Princes Gate, London

RCGP International Travel Scholarships

Our International Travel Scholarships are designed: to assist any general practitioner/family doctor in the world to undertake personal study of an aspect of primary health care in an international context.

The awards are open to members and non-members from the UK and overseas. They enable GPs travelling to or from the UK to study an aspect of primary health care internationally which is relevant to their country's needs, or to help develop systems of primary care.

The application form can be downloaded from the website. Further information is available from the International Department (contact details on front page).

Closing Dates

The second Friday in August and January each year – for projects of up to one year in duration starting in the year from the following October or March respectively.

The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of The Royal College of General Practitioners or its International Committee. While the latter has taken every care with regard to the accuracy of the material, it cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions contained therein.

Editor Dr Mike Thompson, MRCGP

European Union of General Practitioners – UEMO

UEMO was founded in 1967 to represent general practitioners in Europe with the aim of promoting the highest standards of training, practice and patient care. UEMO also seeks to defend the role of general practitioners within the diverse health care systems across Europe and to secure the freedom of general practitioners to practice in the interest of the patient.

I have had the extraordinary privilege of serving as the RCGP representative on the UK delegation to UEMO.

UEMO's most substantial achievement to date has been its campaign to secure a minimum duration for specific training for general practice across Europe. The 1986 EC directive set the minimum duration for specific training at two years. However, with the expansion and development of general practice across Europe, this was rapidly exceeded in many individual member states. In 1990, UEMO adopted a policy that the minimum duration of GP training in Europe should be raised to three years and after a very prolonged campaign, involving an enormous amount of hard work and intense lobbying, the directive was amended accordingly in 2001.

Policy statements cover a wide variety of areas including palliative care, telematics, continuing medical education, 'out-of-hours' work and prescribing.

The process of building consensus between general practitioners working in very different health care contexts across Europe is slow, painstaking and, ultimately, immensely rewarding. The whole endeavour is sustained by the huge amount of experience which is held in common by all who work in general practice whatever the setting.

