mycareerpath 3.0 project: client survey response report

Background

1. The survey's intention was to gauge the priorities and intentions of the 31 mycareerpath clients, in light of two clients having moved towards an alternative system during the past three years. The survey was open from 5-26 November 2020. The full set of questions and response options can be found in the appendix at the end of this paper.

Response breakdown

2. The first part of this paper makes a set of recommendations based on the survey responses and subsequent consideration by the mycareerpath governance panel (BCJ, PB, GP, NR). The second part goes question by question, highlighting the trends found, and any notable or dissenting responses. The full set of responses can be found on SharePoint. References to individuals have been stripped out, in line with the survey's privacy notice.

3. Thirteen responses were received, from thirteen clients. Some notable responses have been reproduced in part 2, and the full response spreadsheet gives the full picture of the clients' intentions.

Part 1 – Conclusions and recommendations

4. One of the concerns leading into this survey was that the departure of RAeS and IMarEST was the beginning of a general exodus of clients towards competing projducts. This has been allayed by the responses, particularly to question 3 (see paragraph 16). All respondents indicated an intention to continue to offer the system to members in the medium term.

5. While most respondents were receptive to the idea of increasing the flat rate of the licence fee or switching to a 'modular' payment structure, there was very little support for a 'per member' or project-based arrangement; nor for the Engineering Council handing the system and licences on to a third party. There also appears to be general recognition that there has been no increase in the fee for ten years, where most commercial equivalents would see at least an inflationary rise.

6. A 'modular' payment structure would involve clients paying a base rate for the basic system, to offer to clients. More than half of the clients use the standalone 'audit system' for sampling their members' CPD, and this represents the obvious 'optional extra'. However, charging institutions extra to use a part of the system that fulfils an Engineering Council licence requirement (CPD sampling) might be viewed unusually. A general increase to the licence fee avoids this problem.

7. There is a clear consensus that a commitment to future development of mycareerpath (over and above routine maintenance and support) is a requirement for ongoing support; and also recognition that an increase to the fee is likely a prerequisite for this. ['It is essential that the system is maintained and improved regularly or it will not be cost

effective for Institutions'].

8. As such, any announcement that the fee would increase from 2022 should be accompanied with a broad plan for how the system will be updated and future-proofed for the next 3-5 years. The key to this will be agreeing (with the clients and the software developers) a redevelopment path that would be covered, financially, by the increased income from the new fee. In other words, the increased fee, the renewal of the system's code base, and the plan for maintenance over the next 3-5 years, should all go hand in hand.

9. The indicative fee increase in question 5 was a doubling of the current fee, to £2,000. Only one response (from a professional affiliate) described this as unworkable. ['As a smaller institute in a mix of small to very large institutes an overall raise in the flat fee licence fee would exclude us.'] It may be that a fee increase that scales by the size of the institution is the most equitable approach (with a measure to be determined, e.g. number of members or registrants). This could result in the fee changing little or not at all for the 'smallest' clients. It should be noted that the grouping (A/B/C) of PEIs is in many cases a poor proxy for overall member size or financial resource.

10. The pilot exercise of offering mycareerpath to bodies licensed by the Society for the Environment, commenced in 2018, continues to bear fruit. It may be that further expansion of the potential client base is seen as desirable in the future. In any case, however, a refresh to the code base would be required for continued value-for-money to be demonstrated to clients or old. At present, the system has not received a significant overhaul for seven years, and this is reflected in the user experience.

11. Any decision taken by the Engineering Council should be considered in the context of two (out of four) 'Group A' PEIs having ended their licences for mycareerpath in the past 24 months. A decision now to end or curtail support for the system in the wake of this might contribute to a narrative of 'Group A-centrism'.

mycareerpath Survey Results

Part 2 – Survey questions, responses and commentary

Q1 How well does the current mycareerpath system meet the needs of your institution and its members, with regard to planning, recording, and reporting CPD?

12. 14 of 15 respondents responded positively: *fairly well*, *very well*, *meets our needs* or similar. The exception is the first reproduced in the paragraph below, and describes a specific feature set that most clients do not currently see as desirable.

13. Notable responses:
    a. *Not very well currently. I feel that the system can either do CPD or prof membership because if you change the wording for one it changes for both so it means if you use the system for both, you have to compromise on wording.*
    b. *The system is used extensively by our EC Registrants and we plan to extend its use to all our members over the next 2 years.*
    c. *The current MyCareerPath system meets the needs of [the client] and its Members well in regards to recording, and reporting of CPD; however, there is room for development in regards to the planning element.*
    d. *Very well. MCP gives us access to a CPD recording tool that would be either prohibitively expensive or resource intensive for an Institute of our size.*

Q2 What would your institution consider its highest priority for development of the system over the next 3-5 years? Would the institution be prepared to invest directly in the development work, singly or jointly with others?

14. A number of suggestions were made to the first part of this question. Two of these will be addressed as part of an ongoing project led by one of the clients directly with ap16. There is little agreement among the remainder, suggesting a challenge to future consensus for EngC-led development projects. This is picked up in question 4.

15. Notable responses:
    a. *To ensure the system is kept up to date and if this means investing into the development work I am sure [the client] would factor this into the annual budget.*
    b. *A general refresh to improve stability and 'look and feel' should, be the priority for MCP development.*
    c. *It suits our purpose. We would not consider investing directly.*

Q3 How likely is your institution to maintain its mycareerpath licence over the next 3-5 years, based on a strategy of maintenance and minimal or institution-funded development projects?

16. Responses to this question were more uniform and positive, though should be considered in the context of question 2: ongoing support may be contingent on a productive model for maintenance and development being found and put into practice. All respondents indicated that they were likely or very likely to continue to use mycareerpath over the timescale indicated.

17. Notable responses:
    a. *In the short term relatively likely as we have made as many tweaks as we can which has helped our user base grow. But in 5 years it would be hard to say not knowing what else may emerge. I think MCP needs to develop because it's clunky and dated - it needs to develop in order to remain relevant.*
    b. *As long as the system remains functional and easy to use then I can't imagine we'd be looking elsewhere.*

Q4 To what degree would an increase in the licence fee (i.e. beyond an inflationary rise and, for example, designed to enable future expansions in functionality) continue to represent value for the client institution?

18. While there was no consensus among respondents, there was no outright rejection of the premise in the question. A number mentioned a need to justify an increase in the licence fee.

19. Responses to this question, in particular, show some correlation with the same client's response to the question 2 [these can be seen in the full responses under columns N and P]. Where a client has indicated a clear priority for future development, they are more likely to be receptive to an increase in the licence fee beyond an inflationary rise.

20. It should also be borne in mind that while some clients who have been involved with the system for many years and have an appreciable portion of their members using the system; some are 'at the start of the journey' and will have taken up a mycareerpath licence in recent years on the basis of the current fee. This is reflected in some of the responses.

21. Notable responses:
    a. *We would support this, within reason.*
    b. *It's reasonable to expect an inflationary price rise annually and there's been no increase in this fee for some time, so we would be prepared to pay a little more. But finances are inevitably compromised by COVID and I would not expect to see an compulsory increase by a large percentage.*
    c. *This would lower the likelihood of maintaining the licence*
    d. *The proposed increase would still represent excellent value for money from [the client's] perspective.*
    e. *There is a danger in pricing us out of the market but I am sure that all the small institutions would work together to maintain the system as diversifying would be more costly.*

Q5 If the structure of the annual mycareerpath licence was to be reviewed with client institutions, which alternative model would best suit your institution over the next 3-5 years?

22. This question required selection from a list of options, plus the opportunity to specify a model. No other options were proposed; a number of comments were presented.

Response	Frequency
Modular licence fees (e.g. paying an additional fee for use of the CPD auditing module).	6
An increase in the flat licence fee (e.g. doubled to £2,000 per annum).	4
Per-user licence fees (clients paying a fee for each member holding an account on the system).	1
Development project funding (clients funding, singly or jointly, individual expansions in system functionality).	1
Outsourcing of mycareerpath maintenance and management to a third party.	0

Another option or comments:
    a. [Respondent selected Flat increase option] *Any potential increases should be phased. Per user licence fees may be an alternative option. Any increase in fee*

linked to additional functionality should be discussed / agreed with client institutions in advance of implementation.

b. [Respondent selected Flat increase option] *Without knowing how much the per-user licence fee would be, [flat increase] option is probably the best.*

c. [Respondent selected Modular fees option] *Also comfortable with funding projects/development that is beneficial.*

d. [Respondent selected Modular fees option] *I think several of these models may work - perhaps they all need costing before we can make a real choice of the type of system that would work for us?*

Q6 Any other comments.

23. All responses:

a. *We are disappointed that training in the use of MCP has been halted by Covid. We had thought that the training courses could easily be transferred to a virtual meeting / training environment. This would have the advantage of providing training to members based outside the UK.*

b. *As a smaller institute in a mix of small to very large institutes an overall raise in the flat fee licence fee would exclude us.*

c. *MyCareerPath & EngC go together and it would be a shame to outsource this to a third party if at all possible.*

d. *It is essential that the system is maintained and improved regularly or it will not be cost effective for Institutions, must be mindful of adding functionality that only serves the few.*

Appendix – Original survey questions

Initial questions asked for respondent's name, institution, and email address. Question numbers below match those in the response summary above.

1. How well does the current mycareerpath system meet the needs of your institution and its members, with regard to planning, recording, and reporting CPD?
   [Open-ended question]

2. What would your institution consider its highest priority for development of the system over the next 3-5 years? Would the institution be prepared to invest directly in the development work, singly or jointly with others?
   [Open-ended question]

3. How likely is your institution to maintain its mycareerpath licence over the next 3-5 years, based on a strategy of maintenance and minimal or institution-funded development projects?
   [Open-ended question]

4. To what degree would an increase in the licence fee (i.e. beyond an inflationary rise and, for example, designed to enable future expansions in functionality) continue to represent value for the client institution?
   [Open-ended question]

5. If the structure of the annual mycareerpath licence was to be reviewed with client institutions, which alternative model would best suit your institution over the next 3-5 years?
   a. *An increase in the flat licence fee (e.g. doubled to £2,000 per annum).*
   b. *Modular licence fees (e.g. paying an additional fee for use of the CPD auditing module).*
   c. *Per-user licence fees (clients paying a fee for each member holding an account on the system).*
   d. *Development project funding (clients funding, singly or jointly, individual expansions in system functionality).*
   e. *Outsourcing of mycareerpath maintenance and management to a third party.*
   f. *Another option/comments.*

6. Any other comments.
   [Open-ended question]

7. [GDPR consent confirmation question]
   [Tick box]

mycareerpath Survey Results