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Addysg a Gwella Iechyd
Cymru (AaGIC)
Health Education and
Improvement Wales (HEIW)

Out of Programme Policy

July 2024

1. Introduction

- 1.1. HEIW support applications to take time Out of Programme for trainees wishing to; obtain clinical training (OOPT), clinical experience (OOPE), undertake a period of research (OOPR) or a career break (OOPC).
- 1.2. This policy must be read in conjunction with the most recent version of the [Gold Guide](#).

2. Purpose and Scope

- 2.1 The purpose of the policy is to provide guidance on the OOP process to all trainees in Wales on a Welsh Training Programme (including WCAT) outlining the key OOP principles, application process and timelines and trainee stakeholder responsibilities.
- 2.2 For trainees wishing to undertake opportunities to develop a broader career portfolio at the same time as their clinical training an application should be made to alter their %WTE status through the LTFT policy. The exception to this is where the opportunity will count towards training time and this should be applied through via this OOP policy.
- 2.3 This policy is not for LAT trainees as they cannot request time out of programme as per the Gold Guide.
- 2.4 This policy is not for trainees undertaking sub-specialty training as part of their training programme in Wales (i.e. PHEM, PEM, Stroke). Instead trainees will receive formal written confirmation of their appointment which they can share with the respective College. If you intend to complete your sub-specialty out of Wales then the OOP Policy must be adopted.

3. Principles

- 3.1 OOP applications can only be agreed if they have formal prospective approval by the Postgraduate Dean or a nominated deputy.
- 3.2 Applications must be submitted using the [HEIW application form](#) and sent to:

Secondary Care : heiw.secondarycare@wales.nhs.uk
General Practice : heiw.gptraining@wales.nhs.uk
- 3.3 If the OOPT/OOPR is to count towards training time the Trainee must seek prior approval of the appropriate Royal College/Faculty.
- 3.4 If the OOPT/OOPR is not already in a GMC approved training site, then HEIW will seek prospective approval from the GMC on behalf of the trainee.
- 3.5 Applications will not normally be agreed until a trainee has been on a training programme for at least one year.
- 3.6 Occasions where OOP is granted to core trainees are likely to be exceptional given the shorter length and nature of their training.
- 3.7 Trainees may be approved for more than one OOP per training programme however it is unlikely that OOPs would be approved to run consecutively. The Postgraduate Dean has discretion to consider exceptional circumstances and can approve where there are sound educational reasons to do so.
- 3.8 Doctors in training will retain their National Training Number (NTN) for the duration of their OOP. OOP cannot extend beyond the CCT date and any Doctor in training wishing to spend time out of programme post CCT will be required to relinquish their NTN on reaching their CCT thereby waiving their period of grace.
- 3.9 HEIW will oversee and manage OOPs to ensure that the period of time does not compromise clinical skills.
- 3.10 Doctors in training on OOP are still required to engage in the ARCP and revalidation process (see Annex 1). Trainees must maintain their licence to practice while on OOP as well as their connection with HEIW as their Designated Body for revalidation.

4. Application process and timescales

4.1 The timeline below should be followed to ensure timely approval of your application. The Postgraduate Dean may exercise discretion in some exceptional circumstances :

Before OOP start date	Action
>6 months	Discuss plans with Educational Supervisor and Programme Director.
>6 months	Check College requirements if applicable.
6 months minimum	Submit fully completed application to HEIW for approval.
3 months	Confirmation of OOP

4.2 Prior to making an application, the trainee should speak to their ES and Programme Director to determine the suitability of the proposed OOP and to ensure the post meets educational needs.

4.3 Trainees should make themselves aware of their College requirements regarding the OOP application and approval process and must ensure that they provide information to support their application as and when required.

4.4 Trainees should be cognisant of the date they wish to commence the OOP in relation to their current contractual obligations and the rotation date of the wider programme, with as much alignment as possible.

4.5 All application forms must be completed in full and received a minimum of **6 months** before the proposed start date of the OOP. Trainees are advised to check if there are any local deadlines specific to their School/Specialty.

4.6 HEIW will only consider applications that have been completed fully with supporting evidence attached. If any further details are required HEIW will contact the trainee directly to try and resolve the query within the timescales outlined above (4.1).

4.7 The approval process will:

- Consider the wider impact on the training programme.
- Ensure contractual notice periods are met and appropriate arrangements are in place to safeguard against any potential impact on patient safety.
- Consider prioritising requests where there is “over subscription” giving priority to exceptional personal circumstances. If applicable trainees may be asked for flexibility around OOP dates to facilitate requests.
- Will be dependent on the specialty and deanery arrangements.

4.8 Written confirmation will be sent to trainees and other relevant key stakeholders 3 months before the OOP is due to start assuming all application deadlines and requirements have been met.

5. Extension to existing OOP Applications

5.1 Trainees who wish to apply for an extension to their previously agreed OOP must submit the appropriate application form at least **6 months** prior to their original planned end date.

5.2 There are time limits to which an OOP can be extended which are detailed in the Gold Guide.

6. Return to the Training Programme

6.1 HEIW cannot guarantee the date or the location of the trainee's return placement. It is therefore important that both HEIW and the TPD are advised well in advance of a trainee's wish to return to clinical training. HEIW will attempt to identify a placement as soon as possible but trainees should indicate their intention and preferred time of return as soon as they are able to do so and this may even be before they leave to undertake their OOP.

6.2 All doctors in training returning from an OOP should have a return to training programme planned for them which may involve a phased return to clinical practice.

7. Acting Up As A Consultant

7.1 Trainees who are within one year of their anticipated CCT are eligible to 'Act-Up' as consultants, to a maximum period of three months (pro rata for LTFT). Trainees will retain their National Training Number (NTN) during the period of acting up.

7.2 When in post the term 'Acting-Up' and not 'locum' must be applied and time spent 'Acting-Up' may be recognised towards a training programme leading to the award of a CCT.

7.3 Before 'Acting-Up' trainees must obtain formal approval from the Postgraduate Dean or Deputy and the Training Programme Director. Applications must be sent to HEIW a minimum of 8 weeks before the proposed start date.

7.4 Trainees are NOT eligible to "Act-Up" after the CCT date. In these cases trainees would be required to resign their National Training Number (NTN).

7.5 We will only accept applications for acting up within Wales (Trainees cannot act up outside of Wales)

8. Employment status and Continuous Service

8.1 Trainees are advised to seek clarification from their employer about whether OOP time will impact upon their:

- Continuous employment
- Incremental progression
- Maternity leave entitlement
- Employer's contribution to superannuation
- VISA status and impact - it is important that doctors in training from overseas are aware of the impact that undertaking OOP, and therefore leaving the training programme, may have on their visa and right to return to work in the UK
- Any other employment issue

8.2 Trainees are not entitled to relocation/excess travel or study leave funding from HEIW during the OOP period.

8.3 Any doctor in training taking parental leave whilst OOP will need to liaise with their relevant employing organisation to confirm salary and leave arrangements relevant to their circumstances. Where this extends the OOP period an extension application should be submitted to HEIW at the earliest opportunity.

Annex 1

	OOPC	OOPE	OOPR	OOPT
Purpose	To take a planned Career Break.	To gain professional skills and experience that would enhance future practice.	To undertake a period of research	To undertake clinical training that is not part of the training programme.
Duration	No more than one year	No more than one year	No more than three years	No more than one year
Time counted towards training	No	No	If requested. The Royal College will indicate the length of time that will count towards CCT.	Yes. The Royal College will indicate the length of time that will count towards CCT.
ARCP requirements and outcomes	Outcome 8	Appropriate Supervisor Report. Outcome 8	Appropriate Academic Supervisor Report. Outcome 8 or standard outcome if time is counted towards training.	Educational Supervisor Report & standard required portfolio evidence. outcome 1,2,3,4,5 or 6 depending on circumstances
Revalidation	Annual submission of a completed Form R.	Annual submission of a completed Form R and	Annual submission of a completed Form R	Annual submission of a completed Form R