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

Out of Programme

Approval Policy Document

June 2022

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 HEIW recognises there are a number of reasons a trainee may wish to take a period of time Out of Programme (OOP) e.g. to obtain clinical training (OOPT), clinical experience (OOPE), research in a different setting (OOPR) or a career break (OOPC).
- 1.2 This policy does not supersede those arrangements set out in the current version of the [Gold Guide](#) but adds further clarity and support for those wishing to undertake time Out of Programme (OOP) and deals with the strict requirements for application and approval. The Gold Guide details duration periods for OOP.
- 1.3 These requirements must be adhered to and failure to follow this process and the timescales set out within this document are likely to result in a request for OOP being rejected. HEIW recommend those wishing to undertake a period of OOP thoroughly read this document and if there are any specific queries relating to the proposed OOP contact the respective HEIW team:
Secondary Care: heiw.changingmytrainingprogramme@wales.nhs.uk
General Practice: heiw.gptraining@wales.nhs.uk

2. PRINCIPLES

- 2.1 Trainees may go Out of Programme (OOP) only with prior written agreement from the Wales Postgraduate Dean.
- 2.2 Applications for OOP must be made using the HEIW Application Form and by following the process documented on the HEIW website or as detailed below.
Secondary Care: [Out of programme - HEIW \(nhs.wales\)](#)
General Practice: [Out of programme - HEIW \(nhs.wales\)](#)
- 2.3 Time out of programme will not normally be agreed until a trainee has been in a training programme for at least one year and will not normally be allowed in the final year of training other than in exceptional circumstances.
- 2.4 Occasions where OOP is granted to core trainees are likely to be exceptional given the shorter length and nature of their training.
- 2.5 Those wishing to apply for a period of OOP are required to be in possession of an Outcome 1. Only in exceptional circumstances will discretion be applied for trainees with other outcomes. OOP applications are often made several months after the award of an ARCP outcome and, because of this, doctors in training should be aware that a planned period of OOP may still be delayed or withdrawn if achievement against curricular/ training objectives (including progress/ attainment of exam competencies) is not demonstrated.
- 2.6 Doctors in training will retain their National Training Number (NTN) for the duration of their OOP. OOP cannot extend post CCT. Doctors in training wishing to spend time out of programme post CCT are required to relinquish their NTN on reaching their CCT thereby waiving their period of grace. This will need to be confirmed in writing prior to the OOP commencing.
- 2.7 Prior to requesting OOPT or OOPR the approval of the appropriate Royal College/Faculty is required. The College/Faculty will indicate the length of time the OOPT/R will count towards to the CCT.

2.8 The General Medical Council (GMC) is the only body that can educationally approve OOPR/T to count towards a trainee's CCT and this must be done prospectively. Where required HEIW will submit this request on behalf of the trainee. If prospective approval is not sought or granted, the OOP cannot count towards training. Retrospective approval will not be issued.

3. PROCESS

3.1 Prior to making an application, trainees must discuss their plans with their Educational Supervisor and their Training Programme Director. This discussion will determine the suitability of the proposed OOP and ensure that the proposed post will meet the educational needs of the trainee. We recommend that this discussion takes place at the earliest opportunity and at least **six months** in advance of the OOP start date.

3.2 Doctors in training need to be aware of their own College requirements regarding the OOP application and approval process and must ensure that they provide information to support their application as and when required

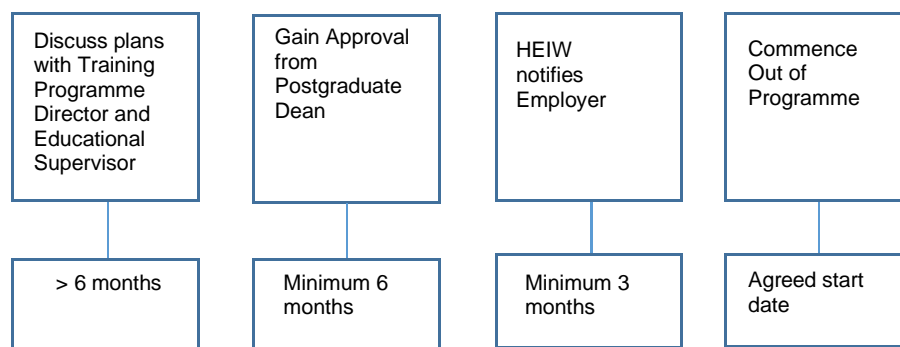
3.3 There are set timescales that must be adhered to when making a request to undertake a period of OOP. These timescales are in place to ensure there is sufficient time for requests to be considered and where required, provide more information. Consideration will also be made on the impact to the wider training programme, ensure that contractual notice periods are met and appropriate backfill arrangements are in place, and to safeguard against any potential detrimental impact on patient safety.

3.4 If the number of trainees planning to go out of programme potentially weakens either the adequacy of the education programme or compromises patient-facing services, or where an "over subscription" of eligible OOP requests is received, consideration will be given to prioritising requests. This may include a discussion with individuals regarding flexibility over dates or giving priority to exceptional personal issues (OOPC) on compassionate grounds. However, the threshold for this will be dependent on the specialty, programme and deanery arrangements.

3.5 Timescales are as follows (also see figure 1):

- The application form is submitted to HEIW a minimum of six months in advance of the intended start date of the OOP
- If approved by the Postgraduate Dean, a minimum of three months' notice is provided to the current employer and host organisation.

Figure 1 illustrates the key time bound milestones when making an OOP request.



- 3.6 Those wishing to make an OOP application must be aware of these timescales and factor these in when planning a period Out of Programme. Failure to meet these timescales is likely to result in an application being rejected. Those with concerns regarding the ability to meet these timescales should contact their respective HEIW Team to discuss at the earliest opportunity.

Secondary Care: heiw.changingmytrainingprogramme@wales.nhs.uk

General Practice: heiw.gptraining@wales.nhs.uk

- 3.7 When requesting OOP, doctors in postgraduate training should be cognisant of the date they wish to commence in relation to their current contractual obligations and the rotation date of the wider programme, with as much alignment as possible. If necessary, the Postgraduate Dean may approve eligible applications with the caveat of an amended start date to ensure compliance with programme commitments.

- 3.8 In some exceptional circumstances, the Postgraduate Dean may exercise discretion with regard to the timing of submitting a request for approval, but only where there are reasonable extenuating circumstances. For example, those wishing to undertake an OOPC due to an unforeseen personal or health related matter. The timing of a research grant being awarded will not normally equate to an exceptional circumstance.

4. ARCP AND REVALIDATION

- 4.1 Doctors in training on OOP are still required to engage in the ARCP and revalidation process. Trainees must maintain their licence to practice while on OOP as well as their connection with HEIW as their Designated Body for revalidation.
- 4.2 The ARCP panel will review documentation submitted by the trainee detailing what they have been doing during this OOP time if it is NOT recognised for training:
- OOPE – annual OOP report
 - OOPR – a research supervisors report and OOP report. If the OOPR is to count towards training then formal assessment documentation must be submitted.

- 4.3 An ARCP Outcome 8 will be awarded for trainees who:
- Are undertaking an OOPE to gain clinical experience that will not count towards training programme competences.
 - Are undertaking an OOPR (unless prospective approval has been sought and the OOPR will contribute towards the trainee's competences and CCT).
 - OOPC career break.
- 4.3 Where the trainee is on a prospectively approved OOPT/OOPR counting towards their training time, a routine assessment of the trainees progression should be made and an ARCP outcome 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 awarded.
- 4.5 Doctors in training should ensure whilst they are OOP they continue to meet all of the requirements of the revalidation process i.e. they regularly engage with their TPD, submit information as required for the ARCP, complete the Form R and declare their wider scope of practice i.e. detail any work within their scope of practice that falls outside of the training programme or OOP (e.g. locums, voluntary work etc.).

5 RETURN TO THE TRAINING PROGRAMME

- 5.1 The Postgraduate Dean cannot guarantee the date or the location of the trainee's return placement. It is therefore important that both the Postgraduate Dean and the TPD are advised well in advance of a trainee's wish to return to clinical training. Postgraduate Deans 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.
- 5.2 All doctors in training returning from an OOP should have a return to practice programme planned for them which may involve a phased return to clinical practice.

6 EXTENSION TO EXISTING OOP APPLICATION

- 6.1 Extending time out of programme relates to trainees who are currently on a previously agreed OOP. Trainees may wish to apply for an extension to their previously agreed OOP must submit the appropriate documentation ([see 2.2](#)) at least 6 months prior to their original planned end date and be aware of the OOP time limits as detailed in the Gold Guide.
- 6.2 The following documentation will be required by HEIW.
- Extension to OOP form signed by Training Programme Director and Educational Supervisor.
 - Educational Supervisor Report from OOP Educational Supervisor.
 - Statement detailing reasons for requesting an extension.

7 ACTING UP AS A CONSULTANT (AUC)

- 7.1 Trainees may Act Up as a Consultant (AUC) in their final year of training if permitted in their relevant Specialty Curriculum. Where the AUC is in the same training programme e.g. within Wales then prospective approval is not needed from the GMC. However, if it is in a different training programme the usual Out of Programme for Training (OOPT) process applies and trainees should complete the HEIW OOP form in this instance.
- 7.2 Trainees wishing to Act Up as a Consultant in Wales will be required to complete the HEIW AUC form and follow the timescales and process as outlined on the [website](#).

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 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.