

Anaesthetic Training Update 16/04/2020

This guidance is intended as a summary of developments in training due to the covid-19 pandemic. Please note that this information is correct at the time of publication but some areas may be subject to change over the coming weeks.

Recruitment

Recruitment to Core Anaesthetic Training and ACCS has taken place and we expect to welcome successful applicants to their programmes in August as planned, in line with national policy.

Recruitment to ST3 posts has been significantly disrupted with the cancellation of all interviews. The Medical and Dental Recruitment and Selection committee (MDRS) have produced a proposal that encompasses all specialties which have been unable to complete recruitment. Discussions in order to reach this decision included representatives from the RCoA, the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges (AoMRC) and the BMA JDC and AoMRC trainees' committee. The resulting decision has the support from medical leaders across each of the four nations.

The process will consist of allocation to full 5 year training rotations based upon applicants' portfolio self-assessment score with an agreed methodology for separating tied scores. This is obviously a significant compromise and was not the College's preferred option. However, there has been a strong demand from other parties, including those representing doctors in training, to proceed with full programme allocation.

Please note that there is ongoing discussion regarding allocation of programmes in Scotland. It is expected that this will be resolved shortly.

Further details regarding recruitment can be found [here](#)

ARCP

We recognise that the arrangements for managing the COVID-19 pandemic will affect both curriculum coverage for anaesthetists in training and also the process for running ARCPs. Again, there is four nations agreement that the process should go ahead, outlined [here](#) (see 7th April update).

It is the College's firmly held view that nobody should be penalised by the changes to their working patterns if at all possible. In line with GMC guidance we will allow schools to defer Units of Training and postgraduate examinations by a period of up to 12 months. Please note the following points:

- An ESSR should still be completed for all doctors in training unless by direct agreement with the Head of School and Postgraduate Dean
- If mandatory elements of training have not been completed due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic an ARCP outcome 10 (COVID) should be used with an action plan developed outlining the areas that need to be completed in the next year of training.

- This will also apply for those progressing from CT2 into ST3 who will be allowed to commence their programme without disruption. If the Initial Assessment of Obstetric Competence has not been completed at the time of commencing an ST3 post doctors must not be placed onto obstetric on call rotas until it has been completed.
- We strongly request that those who are coming to the end of CT2 and in particular ST7 are given priority in accessing the areas of training that they will need to complete the Core and Higher programmes over the next 3 months. Any ST7 who requires additional time must be allocated to the appropriate area of training with immediate effect.
- We will allow the optional completion of 8 months of Advanced Training rather than the usual 12 if preferred for the next year providing all learning outcomes are met. In the case of advanced pain training a letter from the Regional Advisor in Pain Medicine will also be required. In all cases doctors who complete less than 12 months should be given the opportunity to undertake additional time for experience during a Period of Grace.
- We encourage schools to make use of the specified Learning Outcomes for the completion of Units of Training with minimal further requirements (such as logbook numbers and other WBAs) for Units of Training affected by service reconfiguration.
- We will also support progression without undertaking an MSF (unless specifically indicated) if a letter is provided by the College Tutor confirming that there are no concerns within the domains covered by the MSF.
- We advocate a reduced requirement for logbook numbers, WBAs and CPD activity as deemed appropriate by TPDs.
- Trainees may continue to progress on an outcome 10 in order to sit examinations which have been cancelled. We will allow an extension of up to 12 months for those at the end of CT2 to pass the Primary FRCA. For the final FRCA we will allow until the end of ST5 to complete the exam. In both cases additional time will be allowed with an ARCP outcome 3 as per guidance from the Gold Guide.
- Many decisions will need to be made on an individual basis taking specific circumstances into account. The College will provide advice to support the decision making process when requested.

Transition to the 2021 Curriculum

In view of the significant disruption to training we have amended our plans for transition to the new curriculum. Specifically, in light of the problems with ST3 recruitment this year we will delay transition to an additional year of Core Training for a further 12 months. We will therefore continue to run ST3 recruitment in August 2021 and a final round in February 2022. **It is important to note that those who are currently in CT1 or ACCS CT2 will complete a 2 year Core Training programme rather than 3 which had previously been proposed.**

We will move those in CT1 and CT2 posts (and ACCS equivalents) to the new curriculum as planned in August 2021 to ensure alignment with the ACCS programme which is also due to commence with its new curriculum at that time.

In August 2022 we will introduce CT3 posts with no further ST3 recruitment from that time and ST4 recruitment commencing in 2023. We expect the timeframe for transition across all grades to be completed by the end of 2023 and will provide more information for transition timelines for each year of training in due course. We have also requested that the new curriculum henceforth be known as the '2021 Curriculum' to reflect the anticipated date of its introduction.

Morale and Welfare

We understand the incredible challenges that are being experienced by both anaesthetists in training and also trainers. There are a number of resources that may be of use on the joint website icmaesthesia/covid-19.org which may be accessed [here](#) . We would urge anyone who is experiencing difficulties to seek help and also discuss any support that your local department can offer. As ever, our College Tutor network will remain an important local point of contact for accessing support.

On behalf of everyone involved in training at the College we would like to thank everyone for their hard work, commitment and support in the midst of the current crisis. We have worked hard to be as careful as we can to ensure that the decisions that have been made regarding recruitment, ARCPs and curriculum transition do not add to the burden that colleagues are experiencing at this difficult time. We will continue to advocate and work hard on your behalf and will send out further information as it becomes available.

Chris Carey

Chair of RCoA Training, Curriculum and Assessment Committee