

2025 vs 2026 SOP Comparison

Full suite comparison | NHS England PGMDE

20 SOPs in the 2025 uploaded set; 21 SOPs in the 2026 uploaded set

Scope and approach

This document compares the SOP suite supplied for 2025 and 2026. It distinguishes routine annual/version-control changes from reference updates, minor wording changes and substantive operational changes. Where the 2026 review-cycle covering paper explicitly identifies suite-level changes, these are reflected below.

Suite-level changes

- Two new SOPs were added for 2026: Managing Allegations of Sexual Misconduct from Trainees and Managing Allegations of Sexual Misconduct from Educators.
- The Medical Training Initiative (MTI) process for Deanery sign-off SOP was removed for 2026 following closure of the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges scheme effective 31 March 2026.
- The 2026 covering paper describes Rotational Management as substantially updated.
- Across the continuing suite, cover-sheet terminology was standardised to a multiprofessional statement using “trainee” as the catch-all term, and most annual versions carry 2026 implementation/version-control updates.

SOP	Overall assessment	Headline comparison
Acting Up as a Consultant	Minor / reference update	Gold Guide 11 references replace GG10; small clarifications to acting-up wording and application-form detail. Core approval process is retained.
ARCP Process	Substantive	Updated throughout for Gold Guide 11. Changes include portfolio notice wording, post-panel feedback references, Outcome 5 wording/process and removal of Outcome 10s from the list of cases requiring a Dean representative.
ARCP Appeals	Substantive	Updated Gold Guide 11 withdrawal/appeal references; appeal-panel minimum increases from 3 to 4 with first four roles treated as essential; transcription and reasonable-adjustment checks added.
Managing Complaints	Substantive	Scope expands to pharmacy; new written-communication and records requirements; clearer out-of-scope rules; revised ToR/non-engagement process; new investigation-report template.
Dental IDT	Administrative / minimal	Implementation/version and related-document wording updated. No material process change identified in the supplied text.
Educator Development	Minor	Standard multiprofessional cover text/reference update; annual appraisal sentence now states this would normally be within full-scope-of-practice appraisal.
Lay Representatives	Substantive	Recruitment model and reimbursement administration materially revised, including PPV guidance, ESR/EASY arrangements, session limits/payment timing and changed mandatory-training list.
LTFT	Substantive	Defines LTFT as below 40 hours, distinguishes compressed hours, changes application timing, adds exceptional/health-condition guidance and expands progression arrangements.
Management of Documents in TIS	Substantive	Adds detailed Appendix 1 for SharePoint trainee-file structure, retention and deletion process, including governance/approval steps and automation support.
Management of Fellowships	Minor to moderate	Adds fellowship examples and refreshes Gold Guide references; strategic-alignment material is retained. 2026 version history explicitly notes alignment to the 10-Year Plan and strategic direction.
MTI process for Deanery sign-off	Removed in 2026	Present in 2025 set; 2026 covering paper says it was proposed for removal because the AoMRC scheme closed on 31 March 2026.
NTN Withdrawal	Moderate	Gold Guide 11 withdrawal criteria/references updated; exception for non-medical public-health trainees added to GMC registration criterion; explicit statement added that resignation from employment also means resignation from training.
OOP Guidance	Moderate	Gold Guide/reference refresh; academic-award permission changes from NIHR-specific wording to funder permission; study-leave/sponsorship text rewritten; OOPC annual-review wording changes.

Period of Grace	Moderate	Key entitlement wording changes: timely notification moves from usually “guaranteed” a POG post to usually “allocated” one if availability exists. Gold Guide and terminology updates throughout.
Principles for ARCP/Appeals Training	Administrative / minor	Standardised cover text, current-guide references and light editorial changes. Core training requirements remain materially the same.
Professional Support	Moderate	Adds consent wording around educator updates, qualifies self-referral “where available”, and replaces LTFT as a specifically listed support group with repeated exam failure/extensions to training.
Quality Reporting	Substantive	Scope broadens to all learners; national/regional framing updated; ISF rating added; provider statement becomes a required publication component; templates/sign-off and publication workflow materially revised.
Recruitment of Clinical Faculty	Minor	Standard multiprofessional/reference updates; 2025 requirement that all candidates meeting essential criteria should be interviewed is removed from 2026 shortlisting section.
Revalidation	Moderate	Form R wording changes to completion “in its entirety”; OOP/new-starter submission requirements expanded; Trainee Self Service communication added; disconnection and LEP reporting wording updated.
Rotational Management	Major / substantive	Extensively expanded with clinical-faculty responsibilities, preference/travel principles, LTFT management, detailed exceptions, KPIs, monthly compliance methodology and rotation principles; request point changes from ~17 to ~18 weeks.
Sexual Misconduct: Educators	New in 2026	New England-wide SOP for allegations naming educators, covering safeguarding, risk assessment, communication, educational restrictions, investigation interfaces, support and closure.
Sexual Misconduct: Trainees	New in 2026	New England-wide SOP for allegations naming trainees, defining PGD/LEP/Lead Employer responsibilities, 48-hour notification/risk assessment, joint case review, information sharing, support and closure.

Detailed substantive differences

ARCP Process

Area	2025	2026
References and feedback	GG10 references and feedback meeting described as separate from panel decision.	GG11 references throughout; feedback language updated to after the panel decision.
ARCP date notice	Trainees informed of ARCP dates with sufficient notice; dates usually at least six weeks prior.	Explicitly says trainees must be given at least six weeks notice of the date by which the educational portfolio is required.
Outcome 5	Framed around failure to submit complete Form R/SOAR and maximum eight-week review.	Uses “unable to submit”, updates GG11 references and says review must not cross a progression point.
Panel representation	Dean representative for possible Outcomes 3, 4 and, where appropriate, 10s.	Dean representative specified for possible Outcomes 3 or 4.

ARCP Appeals

Area	2025	2026
Panel size	No fewer than 3 individuals.	No fewer than 4; first four listed roles should be regarded as essential.
Externality wording	College/faculty representative from outside locality.	College/faculty/Senior educator representative from outside locality.
Hearing records	Electronic recording normally not permitted, subject to chair discretion.	Retains this and adds that transcription may be used to summarise panel discussions for accuracy.
Chair checks	Chair checks documentation and agreement to proceed.	Adds explicit check that agreed reasonable adjustments have been implemented and confirmation that panel members reviewed all evidence.

Managing Complaints

Area	2025	2026
Scope	Medical and dental education.	Medical, dental and pharmacy education; pharmacists

		explicitly included in the multiprofessional purpose wording.
Correspondence	Named contact and general written complaint process.	Complaint typed not handwritten; complainant communications in writing using letters sent as attachments in corporate template; titles/roles used consistently.
Records	General accurate recording requirements.	All complaint correspondence/documentation must be securely saved using a consistent filing convention and retention policy.
Scope boundaries	List of complaint categories not handled under the SOP.	Adds explicit LEP/employment out-of-scope section and consent rules for sharing mixed-scope complaints.
ToR / engagement	No response within 28 days leads to pause; closure after further 12 months.	Normally 7 working days to agree ToR, two reminders, pause after 28 working days; separate two-reminder/non-engagement process once investigation has begun.
Investigation report	Investigator reports to Case Manager.	Adds Appendix 3 investigation-report template and points to it in the process.

Lay Representatives

Area	2025	2026
Recruitment	Standardised TRAC recruitment, three-year agreement extendable to six years.	Recruitment tied to NHS England PPV guidance; generic JD retained; engagement described as employed-for-tax-purposes rather than employee.
Claims/payment	Invoice via EASY; flat fee £150 day / £75 half day.	Added ESR/EASY set-up, session terminology, maximum two sessions/day, local approval, and monthly payroll timing.
Mandatory training	EDI every 3 years and information governance annually.	Mandatory list becomes information governance/data security, fraud awareness and safeguarding; EDI is strongly encouraged rather than listed as mandatory in this section.

LTFT

Area	2025	2026
Definition	All doctors/dentists including academics may apply; no explicit hours definition.	LTFT explicitly defined as working less than 40 hours; compressed hours treated via employer work scheduling rather than this SOP.
Application timing	At least 16 weeks before proposed hours change or next rotation change, depending on local process.	At least 16 weeks before the next Code of Practice deadline for the programme for new applications or changes to approved hours.
Exceptional / health cases	General exceptional-circumstances handling in approval section.	Adds Dean discretion for shorter timescale for personal/catastrophic circumstances and employer reasonable-adjustment route for a new health condition before normal LTFT application.
Progression	Core LTFT ARCP, extensions, rotations, consultant interview/acting-up and POG principles listed.	Adds fixed-term extension option for educational reasons, possible longer placements, ability to bring CCT forward, and fuller acting-up flexibility.

Management of Documents in TIS

Area	2025	2026
SharePoint files	Says additional-support files can continue on SharePoint pending national approach.	Retains this and adds an extensive Appendix 1 covering legacy trainee files, folder structure, retention review, disposal certificate/approval and deletion workflow.

NTN Withdrawal

Area	2025	2026
Gold Guide basis	Uses GG10 paragraph 3.100/3.107 wording.	Uses GG11 paragraph 3.99/3.106 wording and updated national-body terminology.
Registration criterion	Does not hold GMC registration with a licence to practise.	Adds exception for public-health training with a background other than medicine.

Resignation	Resignation process and partial-year ARCP described.	Adds explicit statement that resignation from employment also resigns the trainee from the training programme.
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OOP Guidance

Area	2025	2026
Academic awards	Continuing ACF/ACL requires applying to NIHR.	Continuing ACF/ACL requires permission from the funder before agreement.
Study leave	Long detailed paragraph on OOPT exception and discretionary curriculum funding.	Rewritten into clearer OOPT curriculum-need criteria plus Postgraduate Dean discretion for other OOP types.
Sponsorship	States NHSE can continue sponsorship during OOPT/specific OOPE and withdrawal for other OOPs.	Directs users to current sponsorship guidance and reporting form rather than retaining the same categorical wording.
OOPC annual process	Yearly OOPC request sent to panel with intended return date.	Resident doctor should maintain contact with TPD; duration rules retained and employment impacts should be clarified.

Period of Grace

Area	2025	2026
Timely request	If notified within timeframe, trainee should usually be guaranteed a POG post.	If notified within timeframe, trainee should usually be allocated a POG post if there is availability.
References/terminology	GG10 and "Junior Doctor Contract" wording.	GG11 and 2016 terms-and-conditions wording, with resident-doctor terminology in quoted guidance.

Professional Support

Area	2025	2026
Confidential support	Listed simply as confidential support.	Adds that educators will be updated on some PSW support aspects with the doctor's implied/explicit consent/agreement.
Self-referral	Trainee self-referral.	Trainee self-referral "where available".
Specific support groups	Includes Less Than Full Time trainees.	This entry is replaced by repeated exam failure and extensions to training time.

Quality Reporting

Area	2025	2026
Applicability	Applies to doctors and dentists in training.	Cover sheet says applicable to all learners in training across NHS England.
Scope of interventions	National, regional and local quality interventions.	National and regional education quality interventions; wording throughout is reframed around education quality.
Executive summary	Overview, key findings and next steps.	Adds ISF rating where applicable and makes 250-word limit stronger.
Provider statement	Provider factual-accuracy sign-off only.	Provider must supply a statement for publication alongside the report; template and publication workflow updated accordingly.
Publication/governance	Regional governance, regional comms and national quality publication process.	Updates escalation/publication roles, includes provider statement and CEO-office approval, and adds monitoring after publication.

Revalidation

Area	2025	2026
Form R	Form R Parts A and B; Part B captures full scope.	Uses Form R "in its entirety" in documentation section and expands the list of information that must be captured.
OOP/new starters	Annual Form R Part A/B during OOP.	Adds initial Part A/B on onboarding as a new starter, another closer to ARCP, then annually.
Trainee communications	Responsibilities listed without specified delivery route.	Adds that communications about trainee responsibilities will come from Trainee Self Service.

Outcome 4 disconnection	Requires discussion around timing of disconnection.	Says trainee will usually be disconnected if Outcome 4 is undisputed or upheld.
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Rotational Management

Area	2025	2026
Purpose/scope	Short SOP focused on rotation timescales, 12-week Code of Practice and TIS.	Purpose expands to curriculum/quality, IDT and broader rotational governance.
Clinical faculty	No dedicated section.	New section sets TPD/HoS/Dean responsibilities, preferences, travel, allocation fairness, supervision and quality oversight.
Information request	Approximately 17 weeks before rotation.	Approximately 18 weeks, with local escalation of late information.
LTFT	Only referenced as information affecting rotations.	New dedicated LTFT management section with indicative administration stages.
Code of Practice exceptions	General statement to familiarise with exceptions.	Detailed exception categories covering training requirements, personal/health circumstances, exams and IDT reserve lists.
Performance/reporting	Records maintained for assurance.	Adds KPIs and a detailed monthly compliance-snapshot methodology.
Rotation principles	Not present as dedicated principles.	Adds longer placements, reduced geographical movement, extended LTFT placements and two-centre models where curriculum allows.

SOPs with limited change

SOP	Comparison
Dental IDT	No substantive process difference identified in supplied texts beyond annual/version and related-document presentation updates.
Principles for ARCP and ARCP Appeals Training	Core training cycle, EDI requirements, panel-member knowledge and chair-training requirements remain materially the same; cover wording and current-guide references are refreshed.
Educator Development	Core recruitment, induction, development and NHS England responsibilities remain; notable content addition is that educator appraisal would normally form part of full-scope-of-practice appraisal.
Acting Up	Core eligibility, approval and application structure remains; changes predominantly update Gold Guide references/wording and add "job description/learning objectives" to the suggested post information.
Recruitment of Clinical Faculty	Process is largely retained; a notable deletion is the 2025 shortlisting statement that all candidates meeting essential criteria should be interviewed.
Management of Fellowships	Most operational text is retained; examples and GG references are refreshed, with Clinical Entrepreneurship and Regional workforce development added to the fellowship examples.

New and removed SOPs

Status	SOP	What changed
NEW 2026	Managing Allegations of Sexual Misconduct from Trainees	New SOP with coordinated PGD, LEP and Lead Employer framework, including 48-hour notification/risk assessment and continuing oversight.
NEW 2026	Managing Allegations of Sexual Misconduct from Educators	New SOP covering educator allegations, employer risk assessment, educational restrictions, information sharing, support and closure.
REMOVED 2026	Medical Training Initiative (MTI) process for Deanery sign-off	2026 review covering paper says the SOP was proposed for removal following closure of the AoMRC scheme effective 31 March 2026.

Overall conclusion

The 2026 cycle is not simply an annual date/version refresh. The most extensive operational change is Rotational Management, and there are substantial revisions to ARCP, ARCP Appeals, Complaints, Lay Representatives, LTFT, TIS document management and Quality Reporting. Other continuing SOPs range from moderate targeted changes to largely administrative/reference updates. The suite also adds two new sexual-misconduct SOPs and removes the MTI SOP.

Verification note

This comparison is based on the uploaded 2025 and 2026 SOP texts in this conversation and the 2026 review-cycle covering paper. It focuses on differences that change wording, scope, requirements, timescales, responsibilities, references or operational process. Pure formatting differences have not been catalogued line by line.