

Out of Programme Guidance

Health Education England working across Yorkshire and the Humber

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Document Status

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This document is not intended to be interpreted as a policy statement. This is a local guidance document for medical and dental trainees, HEE faculty and staff.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Overview

Trainees may seek to spend some time out of the training programme (OOP) to which they have been appointed. All such requests need to be agreed in advance by the Postgraduate Dean (PGD) or Postgraduate Dental Dean (PGDD) as applicable. Trainees are therefore advised to discuss their proposals with trainers as early as possible.

1.2. The purpose of this guidance

This guidance outlines the arrangements for the application and approval of OOP within Health Education England working across Yorkshire and the Humber (HEE YH).

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the following:

- *HEE Standard Operating Procedure for Out of Programme (OOP) Guidance Sept 2019 [1]*
- *A Reference Guide for Postgraduate Foundation and Specialty Training in the UK (The Gold Guide). v8; March 2020 [2]*
- *A Reference Guide for Dental Specialty Training in the UK (The Dental Gold Guide) June 2018 [3]*
- *Step on Step Off Training (SST) for GP Specialty Training (GPST) and Widening Out of Programme (OOP) Policy July 2020 [4]*
- *HEE YH Supported Return to Training (SuppoRTT) Guidance. V4; April 2019 [5]*
- *HEE OOP Sponsorship Guidance [6]*

1.3. Trainees are covered by this guidance

This guidance applies to all Dental Specialty trainees as defined within the Dental Gold Guide [3].

This guidance applies to all medical doctors appointed to General Medical Council (GMC) approved Specialty training programmes (Gold Guide 1.3) and includes:

- Foundation doctors;
- Core trainees;
- Higher trainees;
- GP Specialty trainees;
- Specialty trainees appointed to Run through Specialty programmes;
- Trainees appointed to higher and run through Specialty programmes who are OOP with the permission of the PGD;
- Clinical Academics appointed to higher and run through Specialty programmes (e.g. Academic Clinical Fellowships and Clinical Lectureships on these Specialty Programmes);
- Public health trainees with backgrounds other than Medicine.

1.4. Trainees not covered by this guidance and are not eligible for OOP

- Locum Appointments for Training (LATs);
- Doctors in stand-alone Foundation posts;
- Dental Foundation trainees;
- Dental Core trainees.

1.5. Equality and Diversity

HEE YH is committed to ensuring that the principles of equality and diversity are always applied in the delivery of education and training. This guidance is based upon the principles of natural justice, fairness, equality and reasonableness, as supported by legislation, and should be applied with those principles in mind.

2.OOP Categories

Trainees may apply for a period of OOP for varying reasons; within each category there are specific requirements for approval by HEE YH. The following principles apply to all trainees eligible for OOP.

2.1. OOP Experience (OOPE)

Trainees may undertake OOPE if they wish to gain professional skills which would enhance their future practice. This could include enhancing skills in medical leadership, academia, education or patient safety; or enhancing clinical skills related to (but not part of) the curriculum. Such experience may benefit the Trainee (e.g. working in a different health environment/country) or may help support the health needs of other countries, e.g. with Médecins Sans Frontières, Voluntary Service Overseas, global health partnerships.

Medical and Dental trainees appointed to HEE Leadership and Management Fellow positions should normally apply for OOPE.

2.2. OOP Research (OOPR)

This category is utilised when a Trainee wants to undertake a period of research, leading to an MD or PhD.

2.3. OOP Career Break (OOPC)

Trainees may apply for a planned career break (e.g. domestic responsibilities, travel, develop work in another industry).

2.4. OOP Training (OOPT)

This category may be utilised when a Trainee undertakes clinical training, which is not part of their training programme. Training time may be included with agreement (and in accordance) with processes defined within this document.

2.5. OOP Pause (OOPP)

This category has been introduced as a pilot to offer flexibility for trainees post-COVID, following a pilot in the Midlands.

This form of OOP may be utilised when a Trainee wishes to take time out of their Specialty (a “pause”), and during this time undertake work outside the training environment in NHS-related work. For example, to work in a different Specialty or in a non-training post. Competencies gained during the OOPP may be recognised upon re-entry to training at the next ARCP.

Applications for OOPP in HEE YH may be made during the 12-month application window (01 August 2020 to 31 July 2021). The maximum duration of an OOPP during the pilot is for 12 months.

An evaluation of the OOPP pilot is yet to take place.

2.6. OOP for General Practice Specialty Step-on Step-off Training

Please refer to Section 4 General Practice Specialty Training: Step-on Step-off Training for further details.

3. Principles for all OOP Applications

3.1. Application Form and Notice Periods

Trainees wishing to apply to take OOP must have the written agreement of the PGD/PGDD (or nominated Deputy). In HEE YH, applications will normally be considered by an Associate Dean. Requests should be made by downloading the application form from the [HEE YH website](#) and submitting it to the relevant Programme Support Team.

It is expected that trainees should discuss and apply to the PGD/PGDD and their Training Programme Director for any OOP. Applications to the PGD/PGDD should be submitted a minimum of **six months** in advance of the proposed start date. This is in order to meet the Code of Practice requirements.

Trainees who apply for OOP with less than 6 months’ notice, are required to submit a covering letter with their OOP application, explaining the reason(s) why their application is being submitted after the deadline. Applications which do not meet the 6-month deadline are only agreed in exceptional circumstances.

OOP Pause (OOPP) pilot applications normally require a minimum of 3 months’ notice.

3.2. Minimum Time in Training

Commencement of OOP will not normally be agreed until a trainee has been in a training programme for a least one year (with 2-years post-registration experience where applicable). OOPs may also be considered in the final year of training if the Trainee is on a trajectory for an ARCP outcome 6.

3.3. ARCP Outcomes

A Trainee whose annual review of progress is deemed unsatisfactory or with unmet objectives identified at their ARCP will not normally be granted a period of OOP.

3.4. Training Number Requirements

Trainees will retain their training number for the duration of the OOP, unless the Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT) / Certificate of Completion of Specialist Training (CCST) date falls within this time.

3.5. Maintaining Contact Details

Trainees must ensure that HEE YH has an up-to-date contact address, e-mail address and contact number throughout the period of OOP. The details must be provided on the application form.

3.6. Tier 2, Tier 4 and Immigration Arrangements

Trainees who have immigration requirements (including a Tier 2 or 4 visa sponsored by HEE) must ensure that they have referred to the HEE OOP Sponsorship Guidance [6]. The guidance is set out by the HEE National Overseas Sponsorship Team and impacts sponsorship arrangements based on OOP types. This includes sponsorship cancellations, alternative visa arrangements, cooling off periods and re-application requirements. Further information can also be found on our [website](#).

3.7. Withdrawal of OOP Application

Prior to a period of OOP being approved and/or commencing, where a Trainee wishes to withdraw their application, they should do so in writing to the Training Programme Director and HEE YH Programme Support Team at their earliest opportunity.

4. Medical Foundation, Core and Specialty Training

4.1. Approval of OOP for Core/Lower Trainees

Occasions where OOP is granted for core/lower trainees are likely to be exceptional, given the short length and the nature of the training programme.

Trainees are normally approved for one period of OOP per training programme, including dual CCT programmes (Gold Guide 3.149). Exceptional circumstances to approve further OOP periods for a trainee may be considered by the PGD when there are sound educational reasons.

OOPT will normally be for a period of up to one year (Gold Guide 3.165).

OOPR approval will not normally exceed 3 years. In exceptional circumstance, and with prospective approval by the PGD, applications may be extended for a further year up to a maximum of 4 years in total (Gold Guide 3.174). Trainees in their final year of training will not normally be granted OOPR (Gold Guide 3.178).

Trainees applying for OOPC should refer to the Gold Guide (3.182 i-xii), which details arrangements for the planning and management of a career break.

OOPP will normally be for a maximum of 1 year.

4.2. Royal College and/or Faculty Endorsement

Before requesting OOP Training or Research (OOPT/R), doctors in training must seek support for the application from the appropriate Royal College or Faculty and comply with their requirements (Gold Guide 3.164 and 3.173). The College/Faculty will indicate the length of time the OOPT/R should count towards CCT, where relevant. The Trainee's CCT date will be re-assessed on return to the programme in the light of educational progress and the time left in programme.

4.3. General Medical Council Endorsement

The General Medical Council (GMC) is the only body which can educationally approve OOPT/R to count towards the award of a CCT. HEE is required to apply for **prospective** GMC approval for any OOP which is to count towards a CCT or CESR(CP)/CEGPR(CP) on behalf of the doctor in training; this application is required to include support from the relevant College/Faculty.

If prospective approval for OOP is not sought from the GMC, then it cannot count towards a CCT or CESR(CP)/CEGPR(CP). Applications must be submitted to the GMC in advance of the OOPT/R; the GMC will not approve applications retrospectively.

Where OOPT is in a GMC approved programme within the same specialty, an application for further GMC approval is not required.

4.4. Academic Training

A doctor or dentist in training taking a period of OOP will end their academic award. If a Trainee wishes to continue their Academic Clinical Fellowship/Clinical Lectureship, then they will need to apply to the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR).

Trainees wishing to take OOP for research, or an appropriate higher degree, should seek the prospective agreement of the PG Dean. Trainees with agreement from the PG Dean will retain their training number (Gold Guide 3.147).

4.5. GMC Revalidation Requirements

Whilst on any OOP, the PGD remains the Responsible Officer.

Doctors in training should ensure that whilst on OOP, they continue to meet all requirements of the revalidation process. This should be confirmed prior to the OOP if any information is required by the local HEE Revalidation Team.

Those on OOP are advised to retain their license to practise with the GMC.

5. Medical Foundation Doctors

5.1. General Principles

Occasions when OOP is granted for Foundation trainees is likely to be exceptional given the length and the nature of their training. The duration of time out of the Foundation programme will usually be 12 months to avoid Foundation doctors becoming out of phase with the Foundation programme.

Foundation Schools will typically only approve OOP at the end of F1 so that the time out is taken between the end of F1 and the beginning of F2. Time out during F1 or F2 placements will only be considered in exceptional circumstances [Gold Guide 3.157].

OOPE is not normally available in Foundation Training (Gold Guide 3.150).

OOPR will be approved only in exceptional cases and usually restricted to one year (Gold guide 3.170).

5.2. GMC Provisional Registration

F1 doctors should be familiar with GMC regulations for provisional registration, in particular the maximum duration permitted. Further information is available on the [GMC website](#) (Gold Guide 3.159).

5.3. F1 and Overseas OOP

Foundation doctors who take time out of the Foundation programme during F1 to undertake training outside the UK, will require a Certificate of Experience from their Medical School confirming they have successfully completed the requirements of F1 in order to apply for full GMC registration. No other evidence will be accepted.

If the Foundation doctor cannot provide the evidence for the Certificate of Experience, they are not eligible for full registration and will be limited to applying for provisional registration on their return to the UK. Further guidance can be found on the [GMC website](#) [Gold Guide 3.159].

5.4. Locum Appointments for Training / Stand-alone Foundation Posts

Trainees undertaking LAT/stand-alone Foundation posts cannot request time out of their post. Where time needs to be taken away from work (e.g. following bereavement or for illness), the service gap may be filled, but the Trainee's fixed-term appointment contract will not necessarily be extended.

6. General Practice Specialty Training: Step-on Step-off Training

6.1. Overview

Step-on Step-off Training (SST) for General Practice Specialty trainees is designed to give GP specialty trainees more flexibility to take time out from their training. Trainees are advised to review the HEE Policy on SST which is available online [4].

SST gives GP specialty trainees the option of "stepping off" to benefit from a range of opportunities such as clinical fellowships and academic opportunities secure in the knowledge they can return to the programme to the stage of training at which they left. OOP for SST will be for a minimum period of 6 months and a maximum of 12 months.

SST may only be used once in the course of a GP specialty training programme (4.1).

6.2. OOP for SST Criteria

Trainees may apply for OOP for SST part-way through ST1, or between ST1 and ST2. Trainees will normally be required to provide 6 months' notice of their proposed date for OOP commencement. Trainees are expected to have normally been in the Programme a minimum of 6 months (whole time equivalent) at ST1 level before applying for OOP for SST.

Trainees applying for OOP for SST must have:

- Satisfactory completion of ST1;
- ARCP Outcome 1 at end of ST1; or if applying for OOP part way in ST1 **must** have as a minimum satisfactory progress at interim educational supervisor's review;

- The timing of OOP is to be aligned to start dates for placements in programmes and should **not** affect service delivery;
- Trainees are required to confirm a return to programme at least 6 months before the planned return date (or 3 months where the period off programme is less than 6 months).

All OOP opportunities beyond the end of ST1 are facilitated according to the guidance delineated within the Gold Guide and this guidance.

6.3. Application Process

Trainees applying for OOP for SST should follow the process and timescales outlined within this guidance Section 8 The Application Process.

7. Dental Specialty Training

7.1. Approval of Dental Applications

All applications for OOP will require approval from the PGDD, who will also consider (where relevant), what time counts towards training.

Where an OOPE has taken place outside the UK, the PGDD (in conjunction with the Specialty Advisory Committee [SAC]) will consider the value of the training and its contribution to competences within the curriculum.

All trainees are encouraged to undertake research, and a period of OOPR may not be necessary for placements under 6 months. The PGDD (in conjunction with the SAC) will determine whether OOPR is necessary and advise the Trainee accordingly.

Trainees in their final year of Dental Specialty Training will not normally be eligible for OOPR.

7.2. Acting Up/Locum Consultant Applications

The OOP application form should not be utilised by Dental Specialty trainees for applications related to Acting Up or Locum Consultant appointments. Trainees are advised to refer to the HEE YH Acting Up to Consultant Guidance which is available on the [website](#).

8. The Application Process

8.1. General Principles

Trainees must complete the application form available on the [website](#) and submit it to the relevant Programme Support Team (details available on the application form).

Trainees must complete the application form in full and provide all supporting documentation required as part of the process. Forms which have missing information, or have been completed incorrectly, will be returned to the Trainee for correction and will not be processed until rectified.

Trainees should discuss the OOP with their Educational Supervisor and their Training Programme Director prior to submission of their application.

The Training Programme Director will review the application based on appropriateness for the Trainee and their Programme. The PGD/PGDD (or nominated deputy) will make the final decision

to approve, reject or request further information. GMC approval processes will be followed where appropriate.

Some Colleges have additional requirements as part of the OOP application process. Trainees should contact their relevant College to ascertain requirements.

Trainees will be notified in writing of the outcome of their application.

In instances where applications are refused, trainees may appeal the decision in writing to the PGD/PGDD and HEE YH will respond within 10 working days. The PGD/PGDD's decision is final.

8.2. Changes to Approved Applications

Trainees wishing to extend or curtail periods of OOP must have the approval of PGD/PGDD. They should also discuss changes with supervisors and the Training Programme Director in the first instance, and at the earliest opportunity.

A formal application must be submitted to extend OOP, normally at least 6 months in advance of the initially approved end date. The Trainee should submit details outlining the reason(s) for the extension and have the support of their clinical/research supervisor (where applicable) and Training Programme Director.

In addition, trainees wishing to extend OOP (T or R) should consult College/Faculty guidance, to clarify what time can count towards CCT. Dental Specialty trainees should contact the PGDD for clarification.

Trainees should use the application form available on the HEE YH website to apply for an extension.

Where a Trainee intends to curtail their OOP, normally 6 months' notice will be required, and the Trainee should contact their supervisor(s), Training Programme Director and the HEE YH Programme Support Team regarding their proposed change. Curtailments will normally be agreed by the PGD/PGDD.

The Trainee will be notified in writing of the outcome of their application to extend or request to curtail their OOP.

9. OOP and the Annual Review of Competence Progression

Trainees on OOP are required to engage with the Annual Review of Competence Progression (ARCP) process.

The ARCP Panel should receive documentation from the Trainee on the OOP Request and Annual Review Form (Appendix 4 of the Gold Guide or Appendix 3 Dental Gold Guide). This should include what the Trainee has been undertaking during their OOP time, in instances when the OOP is not recognised for training.

9.1. ARCP and OOPE

If the OOP period is to gain clinical experience which will not contribute towards the competences required by the training programme (OOPE), an annual OOP Request and Annual Review Form should be submitted, including an indicative intended date of return.

9.2. ARCP and OOPR

If the purpose of the OOP is research, the Trainee must produce a research supervisor's report together with the annual OOP report form. This should reference that appropriate progress in research is being made, along with achievement of the relevant degree (if appropriate).

If there is prospective approval by the GMC for the OOPR to contribute to the CCT or CESR(CP)/CEGPR(CP), formal assessment documentation must be submitted annually to the ARCP Panel.

9.3. ARCP and OOPC

If a Trainee is undertaking a career break, an OOP Request and Annual Review Form should be submitted by the Trainee to the ARCP Panel for consideration. This should indicate that the Trainee is still on a career break and include an indicative intended date of return.

9.4. ARCP and OOPT

If the Trainee is on OOPT which has been prospectively approved by the GMC (where applicable) and that will contribute to the competences of the Trainee's programme, an Outcome 8 should not be used. Instead, a routine assessment of progression should be made and an Outcome 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 should be awarded by the ARCP Panel.

9.5. ARCP and OOPP

If a Trainee is undertaking an OOPP, an OOP Request and Annual Review Form should be submitted by the Trainee to the ARCP Panel for consideration. This should indicate that the Trainee is still on an OOP Pause and include an indicative intended date of return.

Any relevant competencies gained during the OOPP will be reviewed at the next ARCP upon recommencement to the training programme.

9.6. ARCP and OOP for SST

Trainees who are undertaking or have undertaken a period of OOP for SST will have their CCT date re-calculated at their next ARCP. An OOP Request and Annual Review Form should be submitted by the Trainee to the ARCP Panel for consideration.

10. Employment/Contractual Arrangements

10.1. Contractual Implications and Employer Liaison

Trainees whose OOP applications are successful will normally be granted unpaid leave for the period of the OOP.

Trainees should ensure that the organisation/authority offering the OOP issues a statement of terms and conditions of service to the individual.

It is the responsibility of the Trainee their current employer to establish how OOP will affect their:

- immigration/visa status;
- continuous employment;
- incremental progression;
- parental leave entitlement;
- employer contributions to superannuation;
- any other employment matters.

Trainees taking career breaks are strongly advised to obtain advice from their employers on all statutory rights and contractual arrangements. Trainees may also wish to refer to guidance produced by their trade union (where applicable).

10.2. Statutory Leave and Extension to OOP

Where trainees are undertaking a period of OOP and take statutory leave (e.g. sickness, maternity, parental, adoption, etc.), the organisation providing the OOP placement will determine whether the placement can be extended.

Where a placement is extended (for any reason), the Trainee will need to apply for an extension to their OOP.

10.3. Sickness Absence and OOP

It is expected that OOP will not normally be used in conjunction with managing ill health or sickness absence. Trainees who require leave on health grounds should discuss the matter with their employer.

10.4. Study Leave Arrangements and Entitlements

Trainees on OOP are not normally eligible to apply for funded study leave from the Specialty study leave budget.

11. Return from OOP and Supported Return to Training

Trainees are advised to refer to the Supported Return to Training (SuppoRTT) Guidance [5] in conjunction with this guidance.

Return to programme should be planned, both before and during the period of OOP and at least 6 months' notice should be given. If return to programme is earlier than initially planned, and the curtailment or change to return date has been formally agreed, there is no guarantee that a placement will be available. However, every effort will be made to identify a programme placement at the earliest opportunity.

Other points to consider include:

- Contractual implications, including immigration status and visa requirements. Trainees are advised to discuss returning to training with their employer.
- In the interest of patient safety, an assessment should be made by the School to agree an appropriate plan for return to clinical training. The School will need to consider the type of OOP, length of time out of training, maintenance of clinical skills throughout the OOP, etc. Liaison with the HEE YH Supported Return to Training (SuppoRTT) Team should be considered; further information can be found on the [HEE YH website SuppoRTT pages](#).
- All trainees returning from an OOP should have a return to practice programme organised for them, which may include a phased return to clinical practice. This will be accelerated as practically as possible but may result in the delay of recommencement to training.
- Upon return from OOP, an Educational Supervisor review should occur early on for the above reasons, to ensure that any support required to return to the training programme is put into place at the earliest opportunity.

12. Bibliography

1. Health Education England. Out of Programme (OOP) Guidance. Standard Operating Procedure. 2019 Sept.
2. Health Education England, Department of Health. A Reference Guide for Postgraduate Foundation and Specialty Training in the UK. The Gold Guide. 8th ed. 2020 March.
3. UK Committee of Postgraduate Dental Deans and Directors (COPDEND), Department of Health. A Reference Guide for Postgraduate Dental Specialty Training in the UK. The Dental Gold Guide. 5th ed. 2018 Jun.
4. GP National Recruitment Office. Step on Step Off Training (SST) for GP Specialty Training (GPST) and Widening Out of Programme (OOP). 2020 Jul.
5. Health Education England working across Yorkshire and the Humber. Supported Return to Training Guidance. v4. 2019 Apr.
6. Health Education England OOP Sponsorship Guidance. 2020 Feb.

13. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Under the Equality Act, the need for public bodies in England to undertake or publish an equality impact assessment of their policies, practices and decisions was removed in April 2011 when the 'single equality duty' was introduced. Public bodies must still give "due regard" to the need to avoid discrimination and promote equality of opportunity for all protected groups when making policy decisions and are required to publish information showing how they are complying with this duty.

14. Monitoring Compliance and Effectiveness

This Operational Guidance will be reviewed in accordance with updated or new guidance published by UK Foundation Programme, COPMeD, COPDEND, Health Education England, the General Medical Council, the General Dental Council, Royal Colleges or any other organisation as applicable. New iterations of this guidance will be ratified by the Postgraduate Dean's Senior Team within HEE YH.

15. Appendices

Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms

Please refer to the Medical Gold Guide [Appendix 7], Dental Gold Guide, Dental Blue Guide and Foundation Reference Guide Glossary of Terms.

ARCP	Annual Review of Competence Progression
CCT	Certificate of Completion of Training
CCST	Certificate of Completion of Specialist Training
CESR(CP)	Certificate of Eligibility for Specialist Registration Combined Programme
CEGPR(CP)	Certificate of Eligibility for the General Practice Register
GDC	General Dental Council
GMC	General Medical Council
HEE YH	Health Education England, working across Yorkshire and the Humber
NIHR	National Institute for Health Research
OOP	Out of Programme
OOPC	Out of Programme Career Break
OOPE	Out of Programme Experience
OOPP	Out of Programme Pause
OOPR	Out of Programme Research
OOPT	Out of Programme Training
PGD	Postgraduate Dean
PGDD	Postgraduate Dental Dean
SAC	Specialty Advisory Committee
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SST	GP Step-on Step Off Training
SuppoRTT	Supported Return to Training