

# Out of Programme / Acting-Up Application Guidance

All applications for Out of Programme (with the exception of Acting Up applications and OOPC) must be approved and confirmed at least 3 months before the scheduled start of any activity, this means that the request should be submitted at least **6 months before the start of OOP**. You will be required to give your Programme Director (FPD/TPD), current and next employer a minimum of 3 months' notice of undertaking a period of out of programme.

## 1. Introduction

It is recognised that there are a number of circumstances in which a specialty trainee may seek time out of training. The circumstances and overall process is already outlined within the Gold Guide 10<sup>th</sup> Edition Section 3.143- 3.176. (Pages 46 -52)

This protocol does not supersede those arrangements set out in the Gold Guide, but rather adds further clarity and support for those wishing to undertake time Out of Programme (OOP), detailing the strict requirements for application and approval.

These requirements must be adhered to and failure to follow the processes and timescales set within this document are likely to result in a request for OOP being rejected. Therefore, those wishing to undertake a period OOP are advised to thoroughly read this document and contact their Deanery administrator with any questions.

## 2. Process and principles - OOP

### 2.1 Application and approvals

- Doctors in training may only go Out of Programme (OOP) with the prior written agreement of the Programme director (FPD/TPD) and the Postgraduate Dean/Deputy Dean or nominated deputy (APGD/AD) responsible for their training.
- Applications to go OOP must be made online via the OOP application within Turas.
- There are set timescales that must be adhered to when making a request to undertake a period OOP. These timescales are in place to ensure there is a sufficient period for requests to be considered, provide more information if required, consider the impact on the wider training programme, ensure contractual notice periods are met and that appropriate backfill arrangements are in place, and to safeguard against any potential detrimental impact on service commitments. Timescales are as follows:
  - The online application form (via Turas) and supporting evidence is submitted to the Programme director (FPD/TPD) and Postgraduate Dean/Deputy Dean or nominated deputy (APGD/AD) a minimum of six months in advance of the intended commencement date of the OOP (see below for OOP for Acting Up)
  - If approved by the Programme director (FPD/TPD) and Postgraduate Dean/Deputy Dean or nominated deputy (APGD/AD), a minimum of three months' notice is provided to the TPD/FPD, current and future employer (see below for Acting Up)
  - Arrangements for OOP for Acting Up
    - If the Acting Up post is within the same Health Board, the Acting Up request must be received by the Programme director (FPD/TPD) and Postgraduate Dean/Deputy Dean or nominated deputy (APGD/AD) at least 2 weeks before the start date.
    - If the Acting Up post is within a different Health Board, the Acting Up request must be received by the Programme director (FPD/TPD) and Postgraduate Dean/Deputy Dean or nominated deputy (APGD/AD) at least 4 weeks before the start date.
- Those wishing to make an OOP application must be aware of these timescales and factor 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 Deanery administrator to discuss at the earliest opportunity.

- When requesting OOP, doctors in 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 Programme director (FPD/TPD) and Postgraduate Dean/Deputy Dean or nominated deputy (APGD/AD) may approve eligible applications with the caveat of an amended start date to ensure compliance with programme commitments.
- In some exceptional circumstances, the Programme director (FPD/TPD) and Postgraduate Dean/Deputy Dean or nominated deputy (APGD/AD) 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.
- In most instances, periods of OOP can only be taken with the agreement of the Programme Director (FPD/TPD) and Postgraduate Dean/Deputy Dean or nominated deputy (APGD/AD).
- In some instances, the number of doctors in training wishing to go OOP during the same timeframe may potentially weaken either the adequacy of the education of the training programme or compromises patient-facing services. The threshold for this will be dependent on each specialty, programme and deanery arrangements.
- Normally, OOP will not be approved in the final 3 months of training. In some exceptional circumstances, Postgraduate Dean/Deputy Dean or nominated deputy (APGD/AD) may exercise discretion regarding the timing of the OOP.

## 2.2 Application and supporting documentation

All 'Out of Programme' must be **prospectively** approved by the Programme director (FPD/TPD) and Postgraduate Dean/Deputy Dean or nominated deputy (APGD/AD) responsible for the programme. A completed online application form should be submitted via Turas **with the following supporting documentation** is required:

**OOPT:** attach details of the proposed training for which GMC prospective approval will be required if the training does not already have GMC approval (e.g. if it is part of a recognised training programme in a different Deanery it will already be recognised training). If the post does not have GMC prospective approval this can be sought. OOPT will normally be for a period of up to one year. Please refer to the ARCP pages on The Scotland Deanery website for exact requirements for OOPT.

**OOPE:** attach details of how the OOPE aims to deliver 'recognisable achievements' that are beyond the requirements of the specialty curricula, and that would enhance future practice. This could include enhancing skills in medical leadership, medical education, simulation training or patient safety. OOPE will normally be for a period of up to one year.

**OOPR:** attach an outline research proposal to this document and include the name/location of the research supervisor and funding source. For on-going OOP, a report from the research supervisor needs to be provided for the ARCP (details on The Scotland Deanery Website). OOPR will not normally exceed three years. OOPR exceeding three years will only be granted in highly exceptional circumstances and requires specific prospective approval from the Postgraduate Dean/Deputy Dean or nominated deputy (APGD/AD). A new online application via Turas would be required.

**OOPC:** attach a brief outline for the reasons for requesting a career break whilst retaining the training number. The duration of OOPC will normally be a period of up to one year. A second year of OOPC can be considered but is at the discretion of the Postgraduate Dean/Deputy Dean or nominated deputy (APGD/AD), who may take into account prior OOP periods for other reasons.

**Acting Up:** attach title and location of post as well as evidence of approval from clinical lead of the current placement which confirms their support and agreement and off the acting up placement that funding is available for salary payment.

- The Programme Director's (FPD/TPD) signature denotes that release of the trainee will not adversely affect delivery of the programme to other doctors in training for the period of the OOP request.

## **2.3 ARCP requirements**

Those wishing to apply for and undertake a period OOP are required to be in possession of a current satisfactory ARCP outcome. In exceptional circumstances, the Postgraduate Dean/Deputy Dean or nominated deputy (APGD/AD) may exercise discretion for doctors in training with other ARCP outcomes.

In some unusual instances, a doctor in training who is currently undertaking a period OOP may wish to apply for an extension, or in exceptional circumstance, may wish to apply to undertake a different OOP opportunity before returning to his or her training programme. Where the current period of OOP relates to an OOPT, the requisite satisfactory outcome remains a current ARCP outcome 1. A new online application via Turas would be required.

Due to the nature of OOPC relating primarily to personal circumstance, in some instances, possession of a current satisfactory ARCP outcome may not be feasible. For example, a doctor in training may have mitigating health factors that have prevented satisfactory progression through their current training period. In such circumstances where a doctor is requesting an OOPC in relation to their personal circumstance, the requirement to hold a current ARCP outcome 1 may be waived at the discretion of the Postgraduate Dean/Deputy Dean or nominated deputy (APGD/AD). Instead, suitable evidence to substantiate current personal circumstance will normally be required, such as an Occupational Health report.

## **2.4 Programme requirements and prioritisation of Out of Programme time**

If the number of doctors in training 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 exists the programme director (FPD/TPD) and Postgraduate Dean/Deputy Dean or nominated deputy (APGD/AD) will need to determine an appropriate mechanism for determining priority. This may include discussion with individuals regarding flexibility over dates or giving priority to exceptional personal issues (OOPC) on compassionate grounds.

In general, prioritisation will occur when multiple applications for OOP are received from doctors in training in the same programme/placements. Decisions will be taken balancing the needs of the individual requesting OOP in relation to the nature of the request and the needs of both the remaining doctors in training and ensuring patient safety.

Normally, only one period of OOP will be granted during training.

## **2.5 ARCP during OOP**

While you are OOPE/R/T you will be expected to submit evidence to the Deanery Annual ARCP panel, it is therefore recommended that your e-portfolio is maintained and updated throughout the OOP period. You are also required to complete SOAR (Scottish Online Appraisal Resource) and a deanery absence declaration. Please refer to the Scotland Deanery ARCP pages for exact requirements.

## **2.6 Extension to time OOP**

Application for an extension to the previously agreed time OOP should be made by submitting a new online application via Turas. This will require Programme director (FPD/TPD) approval and Postgraduate Dean/Deputy Dean or nominated deputy (APGD/AD) approval. The most common reasons for requests for extension to time OOP are for maternity leave, sick leave, conversion of MD to PhD, issues related to the research project, family circumstances. This list is not exhaustive, your programme director (FPD/TPD) should be contacted for advice regarding extensions. The application for extension should include confirmation that funding can also be extended, if relevant.

## **3. Process and principles – Acting Up**

‘Acting-up’ into a consultant post can only be undertaken by doctors in the final year of their training programmes and completed before the award of their CCT. The maximum period of ‘Acting Up’ is three months and normally only one period of ‘acting-up’ will be given approval. The term “acting up” should be applied and not locum. Doctors in training undertaking ‘Acting Up’ roles must have a named educational supervisor for the duration of the ‘Acting Up’ period. The ‘Acting Up’ post must be within the United Kingdom.

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Doctors in training must have the support of their Programme Director (FPD/TPD), the unit where their training post is based at the time of the acting up, and the unit in which they would be acting up, including identifying a named supervisor. Doctors in training will retain their NTN whilst undertaking the 'Acting Up' post.

- If the "Acting Up" post is not part of the approved specialty programme but is to be counted towards CCT, An OOP application will need to be completed via Turas and the deanery should apply for approval of the post in the same way as for OOPE.
- For specialties that allow acting up experience within training the following process should be followed
  - Doctors in training may only Act Up with the prior written agreement of the Programme director and Postgraduate/Deputy Dean/Associate Postgraduate Dean/Assistant GP Director Associate responsible for their training.
  - Applications to Act Up must be made using the online application form via Turas.
  - Doctors in training continuing in Acting Up post which extends post CCT date must advise Deanery and will be relinquishing the period of grace.
- Doctors in training who wish to take up a Locum consultant post whilst in their period of grace will normally be required to resign from their NTN, with sufficient advanced warning aligned to their T&C contract

#### **4. Early return from OOP**

If for any reason a doctor in training wishes to request to return to the training programme before the agreed end date, in the first instance they should contact their programme director and postgraduate dean. If supportive a new application would be required to be submitted online via Turas. The Postgraduate Dean will confirm whether or not it would be possible to accommodate the trainee in the programme and advise the trainee on the options available.

#### **5. Employment status and continuous service**

Doctors in training are advised to seek clarification from their employer regarding their pension contributions and any statutory rights and benefits whilst undertaking a period OOP.

#### **6. For those with Visas**

If you are on a Skilled Worker Visa, please note that your Sponsorship will cease with NHS Education for Scotland, and it will be your responsibility to ensure you are able to secure alternative Sponsorship for the duration of your time OOP.

If you are unable to secure Sponsorship, please let the OOP Administrator know as soon as possible.

All applications should be submitted via the OOP application within Turas.

Please refer to the Scotland Deanery website for further guidance.