

COVID-19 and Trainee Progression in 2020 (update II) – 17 April 2020

Please note this is primarily a UK-based document.

You can find the JCST's previous statements [here](#) and a separate statement from the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) [here](#).

The JCST is an advisory body to the four Surgical Royal Colleges of the UK and Ireland. It works closely with the Statutory Education Bodies (SEBs), the General Medical Council (GMC), the Confederation of Postgraduate Schools of Surgery (CoPSS), and Trainee and Specialty Associations.

Trainees' wellbeing and provision remains a high priority for all and we are continuing to work to find the safest and most pragmatic solutions to the current situation. We hope the information below addresses some of the current queries and offers further support and clarity.

This document includes updates and advice on the following:

- Wellbeing support
- National Selection
- Guidance for recording COVID-19 experience in ISCP
- ARCPs management
- Out of Programme (OOP)
- Acting Up as a Consultant (AUC)
- Useful links

Given the rapidly changing nature of the current situation, the advice below may be subject to further changes.

Wellbeing support

As mentioned in previous statements, local offices and deaneries encourage trainees to go to their Trust's or Health Board's Director or Associate Director of Medical Education, or to their Educational Supervisor, Training Programme Director, Associate Postgraduate Dean or Programme Support Unit, if they need additional support.

However, a number of additional resources are also available at:

- NHS England/Improvement – includes a package of [wellbeing support](#), designed to help all NHS staff take steps to maintain their physical and mental health, and overall wellbeing. It includes:
 - a free wellbeing support helpline, providing confidential listening from trained professionals and specialist advice, including coaching, bereavement care, mental

health and financial help on **0300 131 7000**, available from 7.00 am – 11.00 pm seven days a week

- a 24/7 text alternative to the above helpline - simply text **FRONTLINE** to 85258
- [online](#) peer to peer, team and personal resilience support, including through [Silver Cloud](#), and free mindfulness apps including [Unmind](#), [Headspace](#), [Sleepio](#) and [Daylight](#).
- NHS Scotland – NHS Inform website [here](#)
 - Further resources also available on the Scotland Deanery website [here](#)
- NHS Wales – [Staff Wellbeing COVID-19 Portal](#)
- NHS Northern Ireland – NIDirect website [here](#)
- The Intensive Care Society's website [here](#)
- The [Academy of Medical Royal Colleges](#)' (AoMRC) website – includes a number of resources and advice.

National Selection

Please refer to the JCST's update published on 1 April 2020 [here](#) for previous guidance.

Following recent discussions, the Medical and Dental Recruitment and Selection (MDRS) group decided that National Selection for General Surgery and Vascular Surgery will take place as described below. Please read the full statement from the four Statutory Education Bodies (SEBs) [here](#).

For General Surgery and Vascular Surgery: candidates will be asked to complete a self-assessment form and upload primary evidence against the self-assessment domains. A cohort of candidates will have their evidence assessed and validated by clinicians. Candidates have already been contacted by the Medical and Dental Recruitment and Selection team to advise them of this process.

For all the other surgical specialties (with the exception of Core Surgery, Cardiothoracic Surgery, Neurosurgery and Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery for which selection was completed before the COVID-19 outbreak): self-assessment forms already formed part of the standard selection process and candidates would have submitted those ahead of the outbreak on the understanding that the self-assessments would have been reviewed at interview. For that reason, candidates in these specialties will not be asked to submit primary evidence and their application will be reviewed solely through the self-assessment form submitted.

Guidance for recording COVID-19 experience in ISCP

We have developed guidance on how you can, if you wish to do so, record your COVID-19 experience in ISCP. The guidance which you can read in full [here](#) includes the following:

- Recording a separate placement (COVID-19 re-deployment)
- Completion of the current Learning Agreement (LA)
- Use of workplace-based assessments (WBA)
- Recording COVID-19 workplace experience – includes suggestions for using the ISCP and an ASiT designed logbook of experience

ARCPs management

The four Statutory Education Bodies (SEBs) are working with all Royal Colleges through the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges to finalise details for managing ARCPs this year. It is proposed that a new ARCP outcome is produced to recognise the adverse impact of COVID without penalising or holding back trainees' progress.

We hope to be able to release further details on ARCP management in due course.

Out of Programme (OOP)

Health Education England (HEE) and Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) have both published additional guidance on Out of Programme posts. You can find it [here](#) and [here](#) respectively.

Acting up as a Consultant (AUC)

Further guidance has been released by the four Statutory Education Bodies [here](#).

Please also refer to the JCST's guidance on Acting Up [here](#) and our previous COVID-19 statements [here](#).

Useful links (updated)

- 1) [Gold Guide](#) (8th edition) released on 31 March 2020
 - includes derogation to GG8: 4.91 in response to COVID pandemic and impact on trainee progression assessments (ARCP) [here](#)
- 2) [Association of Surgeons in Training \(ASiT\)](#) webpage
 - includes COVID-19 resources
- 3) [British Orthopaedic Trainees' Association \(BOTA\)](#) website
 - includes latest COVID-19 updates
- 4) [GMC advice for Doctors](#) webpage
 - includes advice on doctors working outside their normal field of practice; doctors' own health; prioritising access to treatment; and more
- 5) [Health Education England \(HEE\)](#) webpage
 - includes section dedicated to trainees [here](#)
- 6) [NHS Education for Scotland \(NES\)](#) and [Scotland Deanery](#) webpages
 - includes useful documents section [here](#)
 - includes guidance on the need to balance increased calls for service delivery with training requirements and describes how training safety will be assured in more detail within Scotland
- 7) [Health Education and Improvement Wales \(HEIW\)](#) webpage
 - includes sections dedicated to trainees [here](#) and trainers [here](#)
 - [guidance for Health Boards](#) – describes the need to balance increased calls for service delivery with training requirements and describes how training safety will be assured in more detail within Wales.
- 8) [Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency \(NIMDTA\)](#) webpage
 - includes FAQs and other information for trainees

- 9) Advice from the [Academy of Medical Royal Colleges](#)
- overarching COVID-19 resource page [here](#)
 - guidance on exams for those in training [here](#)
- 10) Additional guidance and advice on COVID-19 is also available at:
- [Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh](#)
 - [Royal College of Surgeons of England](#)
 - [Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow](#)
 - [Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland](#)

Please refer to JCST's previous statements [here](#) for additional links.

The following topics were addressed in previous JCST's statements released on:

➤ **[1 April 2020:](#)**

- National Selection
- Training Interface Group (TIG) Fellowships
- FRCS examination
- Acting Up as a Consultant (AUC)

➤ **[19 March 2020:](#)**

- MRCS and Progression to ST3
- Annual Review of Competence Progression (ARCP)
- Workforce and training vacancies
- Out of Programme (OOP)
- Trainee time off due to illness/self-isolation
- Training post rotations

Trainees and trainers (TPDs, AESs and CSs) should communicate regularly to enable trainees' concerns to be discussed openly and ways forward to be found. We encourage regular communication to ensure trainees are given the support they need.

The JCST will continue to endeavour to support trainees and trainers during these trying times, and will update all those involved in training on a regular basis as we monitor the situation.

This update will be posted as a news item on the [JCST](#) and [ISCP](#) websites and will be shared on Twitter [@JCST_Surgery](#).