**Wessex**

**Core Psychiatry**

**Course**

**COURSE HANDBOOK**

**Health Education England Wessex**

**School of Psychiatry**

**Wessex School of Psychiatry Course for Core Specialty Trainees**

**Course Handbook**

Introduction

This course was devised especially for Wessex Core Specialty Trainees and has been running in this format since September 2009.

The Course Handbook has been written by members of the course development group for trainees, module leads, course facilitators, administrative staff and trainees’ educational supervisors. In it we describe the course and its special features, its overall purpose and basic structure, how it will run, and the educational principles (or philosophy) on which it is based.

We strongly recommend that you read it in conjunction with the curriculum for Core Specialty Training published by the Royal College of Psychiatrists and the College syllabus on which the MRCPsych examination is based

http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/traininpsychiatry/corespecialtytraining/curricula.aspx

Aims of the course

The course has several aims, which we see as closely linked. We intend that by attending and engaging with this course, you will be able to:

* practise psychiatry at the highest possible standard, safely and at a level that is appropriate to your year of training, to prepare you for further specialist training in the future

&

* pass the Royal College of Psychiatry membership examination.

In order to do this we encourage you to

* link together the various elements of your work, such as your clinical practice, your meetings with your educational supervisor, your personal study, and your revision for the membership examination with the course.

We will endeavour to

* cover as much as possible of the College curriculum and examination syllabus

We want to play our role in making your postgraduate education a rewarding, fulfilling and, we hope, enjoyable experience. We very much believe that ‘the whole is greater than the sum of the parts’.

This is the basic premise of the course.

The principles behind the course

As you can already see, we believe that you will become a better clinician as you ‘integrate’ (that is, make connections between) the various otherwise separate strands of your working life. The course has been designed on sound educational principles. Fundamentally, we recognise that we cannot learn what there is to know about psychiatry for you – but we can provide (and, in the way we have planned the course, have attempted to find effective ways of providing) educational opportunities to help you do this effectively.

Of course, all of this means that you have to do something too! You will see as you read through this handbook, and you will know from presentations the organisers will give about the course, that success rests on what you put into it. You are a vital, and active, part of the process.

This is not just educational good sense, it is also necessary. Psychiatry, like all clinical specialties, is changing rapidly. New treatment options are becoming available. Alternative medications, are being developed. Service configurations are being altered, some as a consequence of financial constraints, others for social and humanistic reasons, some because the research evidence points in a particular direction, and of course the new ways of working discovered and then embedded as a consequence of Covid-19. Very significantly for this course, we recognise that the world of psychiatry you will inherit will not only be new; it will be different from that of your current senior colleagues. Increasingly, in many instances, you will not be able to ask someone else what to do because they simply won’t know. You will have to find it out – to work it out – for yourself. What is more, psychiatric practice will be changing round you as you continue through your career. The things you learn now might soon be outdated. **This course is designed not just for you to learn a lot about Psychiatry (and to pass the exam) but also to develop your capacity to go on learning and developing your practice for the rest of your career**.

For all these reasons, the overriding educational model on which this course is based requires that YOU research (enquire into) your own emerging clinical practice. This means you looking at what you do and how you do it, exploring the options, finding out what others suggest are good ways forward, and (this is the crucial point) you developing your professional judgement. When you are a senior clinician, you will be faced with situations of complexity and uncertainty where your juniors ask you for help. You’ll know then (as your seniors know now) that sometimes there won’t be a ‘right’ answer, only one that is ‘best’ in the circumstances you find yourself in. There might not even be an answer at all. All you might be able to do is ‘to cope and contain anxiety’. That is why ‘judgement’ lies at the heart of professional practice. And there won’t always be someone around with more experience to tell you what to do. You will need to be a ‘self-directed learner’. But you can’t delay acquiring those skills until you have a senior position, you need to develop them from now. From the very first time that you are on call or working autonomously in other circumstances, you will have to use your judgement, even if the decision is to decide whether or not to call on someone else for support. This course is designed to help you do that, and to become a self-directed learner.

The overall course structure

The course involves training on alternate Thursdays throughout the year and runs on 16 days each year overall.

There are three years to the course. The first year of the course Part A covers the Integrated Module which runs every year. The second and third year of the course, Part B, for CT2s and CT3s, delivers training on Specialty Modules and is a rolling programme that repeats every two years.

The course is divided into ‘modules’. Each module addresses a key area of your clinical practice, and is made up of various ‘topics’. All this relates to the College curriculum and the syllabus for the MRCPsych examinations. Appendix 1 shows the programme for this year and Appendix 1, the day/weekly structure for the Part A and Part B.

The structure of a module

Each module has been allocated a certain amount of time depending on how this is reflected in your clinical placements and the length of each placement. The time allocation also reflects the emphasis given to a particular clinical discipline or knowledge area in the College syllabus, which in turn is reflected in the details of the examination (such as how many questions are devoted to the different topics).

Perhaps the best way to describe how the course works is to look at ‘a day in the life of a module’ and what this involves. The concept for most modules is this:

Each module is divided up into a series of topics, and each topic generally lasts ‘a day’ – two half-days that is. Each ‘day’ begins, in effect, after lunch on a Thursday afternoon and ends before lunch on the Thursday morning a fortnight later. So, in effect, the topic lasts two weeks overall, where two half-days are spent actually attending the course. However, some Modules, particularly in the Part A and General Adult courses will complete a topic over one full day.

**There is an expectation that you link together your clinical work and your weekly educational supervision with what you are studying on the course**. The hope is that this not only makes the topics you will be studying on the course more relevant (and interesting) but also that it will help you develop your clinical practice.

We will describe below what actually happens during this time but before that here’s something about exam preparation.

Preparation for the Membership exam

An important aim of the course is to enable you to pass the Royal College Membership exam, which is a crucial stepping stone in your progression through your specialty training. This is how the course is arranged to deal with that.

First, the topics that are presented in the modules have been ‘mapped’ against the College curriculum and exam syllabus: (http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/traininpsychiatry/corespecialtytraining/curricula.aspx) by the members of the course planning team. Having said this, not all of the syllabus is (or ever can be) ‘covered’ in the course - there just isn’t the time. This means that you will have to deal with some things through your own private study (as always).

The course will though, provide time for you to work on preparation for the exam during the ‘role play’ and ‘clinical skills’ sections of the course.

Information about the Psychotherapy section of the curriculum can be found at;

http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/traininpsychiatry/corespecialtytraining/curricula.aspx

Making the most of your time on the course

***Your ‘learning set’***

As we’ve already said, for most of the course each new topic starts after lunch on a Thursday. Following a general introduction to the topic (often with the whole group meeting together and probably by the module lead) you will then meet in your study group (which we have called a ‘learning set’ for reasons that will become clear shortly).

***Your facilitators***

In your ‘learning set’ you will begin by discussing the brief you will have been given by the ‘facilitators’ for that day. ‘Facilitators’ are people (senior trainees, staff grade doctors, Associate Specialists and Consultants) who have volunteered to do this work and are there to help guide you through the module’s ‘topic of the day’ and what is expected of you, see

It is worth saying at this point that facilitators are not there to ‘teach’ you, in the conventional sense of the word. They are there to help more with the ‘process’ rather than the ‘content’ of the course.

***How ‘content’ is dealt with***

We should also re-emphasise that the ‘content’ of the course won’t be ‘presented’ through the more common approach of ‘lectures’. Rather, the content will be made available through recommended reading; from books and journals you either hold your own copies of or can access through library services, or through being given printed/electronic copies of material that otherwise might be difficult to get hold of.

**So partly your ‘job’ will be to find out a lot of ‘the content’ for yourself**! (One of the educational principles here is that much of what you are told you will forget but that most of what you study for yourself you will remember.)

*Discussing your ‘tasks’*

In your ‘learning set’, with the ‘tasks’ you will have been given, you will then discuss amongst yourselves how you could go about finding out how to deal with the tasks. Some of these tasks will involve you finding a suitable case in your own clinical work (when you are back there) that is relevant to the topic. On occasions the module planners might provide you with a ‘paper-and-pencil’ case if they believe it might be difficult for you to find one or if the topic requires a particular clinical focus

The learning sets provide a space for discussion and learning from each other within the learning set groups as you bring back your individual examples/experiences/findings of the tasks that have been set

***The masterclass***

Following your initial discussion, the topic will be ‘expanded’, often by a special presentation – a masterclass – given by a Consultant or SpR, who is well versed in, or has particular interest concerning, the topic. For some modules, this session might involve a visit or some other special activity - details will be made available for each module by the module lead.

***During the intervening fortnight***

As we’ve already said, the ‘topic’ doesn’t stop at the end of the day. Your ‘researching’ of it carries on through what you will be doing for the rest of the fortnight.

Here are some examples of what you will be doing:

* Linking what you are studying for this topic to aspects of your everyday clinical work. Of course, the module might be on ‘Adult’ psychiatry when you are currently on an ‘Old Age’ placement. **You might need to use your ingenuity here**. The course organisers hope that you will find some aspect of your current clinical practice that will ‘fit’ with the topic you are researching. Details will be made available for each module by the module lead.
* **Discussing what you are currently studying on the course with your educational /clinical supervisor.** One of the course planners’ aims is to link what happens on the course with your weekly hour-long meeting with your supervisor. It is, after all, a College requirement that you meet regularly with your supervisor in this way. A routine topic for conversation, then, can be ‘this is what we are studying at the moment on the course’. Your supervisor will have been briefed about the course and given details about the topics you are studying. Issues arising from the course might be discussed further (not least, as you might prefer to raise them with your supervisor or have reflected on what was discussed and come up with questions or dilemmas). Also, the supervision session is an ideal opportunity for both you and your supervisor to think of issues that could usefully be discussed at the next meeting of your learning set. Your portfolio will be a good resource for recording all of these discussions, a useful basis for discussions between you and your supervisor, and (as described below) an element in the assessment of your progress.
* Communicating as a learning set during the two weeks between the course sessions. We hope that creating sets will give you a natural group of people who are able to learn together. Meetings of learning sets outside of the formal arrangements for the course can be very useful - these could be in person or a virtual meeting on Skype or Teams, something we have all become very familiar at doing. We hope that the tasks set will be relevant to your clinical practice and will ‘stretch’ you – i.e. take you further with your studies than you might otherwise go – meeting other members of your learning set in between sessions would be a chance for you, as a group, to stretch yourselves.

***At the next session***

The topic will be ‘concluded’ on the morning of the next session. You will begin this by meeting in your learning set and reporting back to your colleagues what you have learnt from the tasks. When you have all done this, you as a group will prepare to feedback to the rest the main points you have come up with, together with any useful suggestions you might make for them about understanding the topic. Then the whole course group will meet together to receive your learning set’s feedback and those of the others.

Before the morning ends, you will have about 15 minutes to write up your own conclusions – your learning points – from your work on the topic. Your notes can form the basis for some reflective writing for your portfolio. This will also be a time for you to complete an ‘end-of-topic’ evaluation sheet, which will help the organisers with their further development of the course.

**We have listened to your feedback about tasks and how separate from the other work and difficult to complete they can be. For some modules this year, tasks will be for individuals rather than groups to complete and the expectation will be of doing them in one day rather than over the two weeks. We look forward to your feedback about this change. For other modules, the two week process seems to work really well so we haven’t made this change.**

***Your learning e-portfolio***

We have already said that your learning e-portfolio is a good place to record your discussions with your educational supervisor, both generally as well as concerning the course. It is also an important place for you to write about your work on the course.

We would suggest that you keep records of your work in this way – about your discussions in your learning set, the work you do on your own and your reflections on all of this, together with your learning points from masterclasses.

Your portfolio will form part of your assessment leading to satisfactory completion of each year’s attendance at the course. As part of this, we will ask your educational supervisor to follow your progress on the course by reviewing from time to time your portfolio, and to comment on this when they submit their supervisor’s report as part of the Annual Competence Review Process (ARCP).

The course organisers and module leads may also review a sample of all trainees’ portfolios for quality assurance purposes and to moderate educational supervisors’ assessments of their trainees’ work.

The topic ends at lunchtime, and in the afternoon another topic begins or, if the current module has now ended, another module.

Some of the details

***Introduction***

At the start of the course, the first morning will be an introduction to this way of working.

***Allocation to learning sets***

You are allocated to a learning set and will be informed about this at the course introduction. Allocation is broadly on a ‘geographical’ basis, with others who work or live near you. As we said above, we hope that this will help you to meet together in between the course sessions.

***Attendance at the course sessions***

You will be expected to attend each of the sessions, and for the whole day 09:00 to 16:00. **You will be asked to sign in and out, and attendance records will be kept**.

We see course attendance as being the same as ‘being at work’, since it is ‘your work’ at that time. We wouldn’t want this to become an issue, and trust you to be professional about it. This is not an ‘employment’ or ‘disciplinary’ matter. **You are required to inform the postgraduate centre in advance of any planned absence such as sickness, annual leave or night shifts**.

***Punctuality***

**You are asked to turn up on time**. This is absolutely essential. Again, as with attendance, this is for two reasons – first, being at the course is part of your professional work; second, you need to be there on time to help your colleagues learn.

***Sanctions***

Absence from the course, recurrent lateness or early departure will be advised to your Educational/Clinical Supervisor. Arrival after 09:30 will be recorded as absence from the session. **Course attendance of at least 70% is a requirement of the ARCP**.

***Sickness absence***

If you are sick on a course day, please let the Postgraduate staff know as soon as possible so that they can advise your Learning Set. You must also advise your work base of your absence using your normal sickness reporting procedure.

Some definitions

Many elements are linked in the training process:

***Trainees’ role***

Take the lead as a professional and take an active part in their own development, setting objectives and developing a personal learning plan. They should be able to identify their learning needs and also to be able to recognise their own level of competence. These should form the basis of discussions within educational and clinical supervision. **These meetings should also include discussions linking the Core Psychiatry course to clinical practice.**

***Library and IT facilities***

You will have access to Library facilities in your own local area and you will be able to use the library at Tom Rudd Unit on course days. You should ensure that you have a NHS Athens account: this is **a username and password which allows you to use information resources paid for by the NHS. All NHS staff are entitled to an NHS Athens account.**

**You will each be required to take your own work laptop & headset to training on course days.**

**Some useful websites are:**

* <http://www.library.nhs.uk/> and http://www.evidence.nhs.uk/ - locate libraries, search for articles / books / other publications, register for an Athens account, “My Library” facility
* http://www.swims.nhs.uk - catalogue of what is available (books, journals, audiovisual, etc) in all libraries in the south west
* <https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/training/exams/preparing-for-exams> - will help you learn more about what you need to do to prepare for each exam
* **Basingstoke, Southampton, Winchester and South West Hampshire:**

[http://www.hantshealthcarelibrary.nhs.uk/](http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/traininpsychiatry/corespecialtytraining/curricula.aspx) - links to a range of resources and databases. You can also register for an Athens account here.

* **Dorset:**

East Dorset NHS Library Service, Haven Road, Canford Cliffs, Poole

PGMC.library@poole.nhs.uk

* **Isle of Wight**:

[http://www.iow.nhs.uk/Working-With-Us/oliveira-library/oliveira-library.htm](http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/traininpsychiatry/corespecialtytraining/curricula.aspx)

library@iow.nhs.uk

* **Salisbury**:

Beechlydene, Fountain Way, Salisbury SP2 7EP

Education Centre, Salisbury District Hospital, Salisbury SP2 8BJ library.office@salisbury.nhs.uk

**Evaluation and further development of the course**

The organisers of the course are committed to ongoing evaluation. We would like to get to know as clearly as possible how it is working for you, and what you think about it, e.g. what's good about it, and what needs to be changed for another time. A feedback sheet will be issued at the end of each topic, which for most modules will be before the lunch break. We would be very grateful if you could give this as much thought as possible and give us your honest, i.e. considered and constructive, comments and hand it in at the close of that session. **Your feedback will be absolutely crucial for the on-going development of the course**.

The course has been well received nationally and has formed the basis of the development of other courses. We acknowledge that it can be hard work and challenging, however this has been rewarded in improved clinical performance and in exam success – our pass rates have been consistently equal to or above national rates.

If you would like to give us feedback at any other time, please do. You are most welcome to contact any of us.

**HELP**

If you are having any difficulties with the course or want more information at any time, please contact [postgraduate.centre@southernhealth.nhs.uk](http://www.evidence.nhs.uk/)

* **Head of School of Psychiatry**:

Dr Cynthia Gil-Rios

* **Directors of Medical Education/Clinical Tutors:**

Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust

(Clinical Tutor) Dr Anthony Gahan [anthony.gahan@awp.nhs.uk](http://www.swims.nhs.uk/)

Dorset Healthcare University NHS Foundation Trust

(DME) Dr Ian Roden [ian.roden@nhs.net](http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/traininpsychiatry/corespecialtytraining/curricula.aspx)

(Clinical Tutor) Dr Prem Jeyapaul [PREM.JEYAPAUL@nhs.net](http://www.hantshealthcarelibrary.nhs.uk/)

Isle of Wight Healthcare NHS Trust

(DME) Dr Maria Lynch Maria.lynch@iow.nhs.uk

(Clinical Tutor) Dr Richard Braithwaite richard.braithwaite@iow.nhs.uk

Solent Healthcare NHS Trust

(DME) Dr Suyog Dhakras Suyog.Dhakras@solent.nhs.uk

(Clinical Tutor) Dr Jenny Mayes Jennifer.Mayes@solent.nhs.uk

Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust

(DME) Dr Stefan Gleeson [Stefan.Gleeson@Southernhealth.nhs.uk](http://www.iow.nhs.uk/Working-With-Us/oliveira-library/oliveira-library.htm)

(Divisional DME):

Dr Maja Meerten (Mid North) Maja.Meerten@southernhealth.nhs.uk

Dr Katie Williams (Mid North) Katherine.Williams@southernhealth.nhs.uk

Dr Martin Brown (Portsmouth SE) martin.brown1@nhs.net

Dr Jothi Naidoo (Southampton) JOTHI.NAIDOO@southernhealth.nhs.uk

Dr Jasenka Matekovic (South West) Jasenka.Matekovic@southernhealth.nhs.uk

* **Core Training Programme Director:**

Dr Nicus Kotze Contact via Specialty Programme Co-ordinator: psychiatry@wessex.hee.nhs.uk

* **Postgraduate Medical Education staff in Southampton:**

Postgraduate.Centre@southernhealth.nhs.uk

**Appendix 1**

**Basic structure of Core Psychiatry Course Teaching Programme Part A Integrated Module**

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| --- | --- |
| Time | Week 1 |
| 0900-1015 | Introduction & Welcome to Core Psychiatry |
| 1015-1030 | Break |
| 1030-1150 | Thinking about Psychiatry |
| 1150-1215 | Psychotherapy Training Programme |
| 1215-1315 | Lunch |
| 13.15-1400 | Masterclass – MSE and Phenomenology |
| 1400-1415 | Tea Break |
| 1415-1600 | Introduction to topic, masterclass and group work: Phenomenology & how to engage in self directed learning |
| Time | Week 2 | Week 3 | Week 4 |
| 0900-1030 | Communication Skills | Communication Skills | Communication Skills |
| 1045-1230 | Learning sets meet for seminar discussions & feedback& Role Play/Clinical Skills | Learning sets meet for seminar discussions & feedback& Role Play/Clinical Skills | Learning sets meet for seminar discussions & feedback& Role Play/Clinical Skills |
| 1230-1330 | Lunch | Lunch | Lunch |
| 1330-1600 | New Topic/Masterclass/Set Task Work for following week | New Topic/Masterclass/Set Task Work for following week | New Topic/Masterclass/Set Task Work for following week |

**Basic structure of Core Psychiatry Course Teaching Programme Part B Integrated Module**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Time | Week 1 |
| 0930-1000 | Welcome to the Core Psychiatry Course Part B – Introduction and Q&A session |
| 1000-1300 | Clinical Skills |
| 1300-1400 | Lunch |
| 1400-1600 | Adult Mental Health ModuleMasterclass:Management of Schizophrenia including Resistant Patients |
| Time | Week 2 | Week 3 | Week 4 |
| 0900-1230 | Masterclass | Masterclass | Masterclass |
| 1230-1330 | Lunch | Lunch | Lunch |
| 1330-1600 | Role Play & Clinical Skills | Role Play & Clinical Skills | Role Play & Clinical Skills |