

Guidance for Trainees Wishing to take Time Out or Unpaid Leave from Their Programme

Wessex Deanery Guidance

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Introduction to Out of Programme

Out of Programme (OOP) relates to trainees that wish to participate in an experience that is out of their planned programme of training. There are a number of circumstances that trainees may wish to spend time out of programme; to gain training or clinical experience, to undertake research or to take a career break.

All requests for such leave must be agreed prospectively in writing by the Postgraduate Dean so proposals should be discussed as early as possible.

Time out of programme will not normally be agreed until a trainee has been in a training programme for at least one year and will not normally be allowed in the final year of training other than in exceptional circumstances.

The Postgraduate Dean is ultimately responsible for OOP; working with Heads of School, Training Programme Directors and Programme Managers.

Before applying for OOP, trainees must discuss their plans with their Educational Supervisor and Training Programme Director. This discussion will determine the suitability of the out of programme experience and ensures the proposed post will meet the educational needs of the trainee.

Wessex Deanery needs to balance the needs of the OOP applicants against the risk of compromising the training of other trainees within the specialty, quality of care and potentially the safety of patients as well as service gaps in rotas impacting on service delivery.

Wessex Deanery requires OOP Application Forms and supporting documentation to be submitted **at least 6 months in advance** of the proposed OOP start date; exceptions will only be agreed by the Postgraduate Dean. Trainees must inform their current employer **at least 3 months in advance** to ensure that the needs of patients are appropriately addressed.

Each programme has agreed an indicative percentage of trainees who can be OOP at any one time in order to maintain programme viability and patient facing services. This percentage will include trainees on maternity leave.

If the maximum agreed OOP percentage per specialty or school has reached capacity, an OOP panel will convene and trainees will be subject to a competitive process. The Postgraduate Dean will only authorise applications over capacity if a management plan is in place.

Trainees must understand that undertaking time out of programme whilst retaining their training number:

a) Normally the maximum time allowed out of programme will be:

- 12 months for OOPT

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- 12 months for OOPE
- 3 years for OOPR
- 2 years for OOPC

Extensions to this will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances that will need further written approval from the Postgraduate Dean.

b) Trainees will need to liaise closely with their Training Programme Director (TPD) so that their re-entry into the clinical programme can be facilitated. At least **six months** notice must be given of the date the trainee intends to return to the clinical programme, the exact placement on return will depend on a number of considerations including training needs of all trainees on the rotation. If less than six months is provided then the placement will be based on availability at that time. Trainees must understand that they may have to wait for a placement if they provide less than six months notice. Most specialties prefer trainees to start their OOP from the rotation date, only at other times by exception.

c) Trainees must continue to have an Annual Review of Competence Progression (ARCP) or Record of In-Training Assessment (RITA) for which an out of programme report will need to be submitted for each year that they are out of programme for consideration by the annual review panel. This will need to be accompanied by an assessment report of the trainee's progress in their research or clinical placement. Failure to do this could result in the loss of the training number.

d) Trainees must give at least six months notice to the Postgraduate Dean and three months notice to their employer before time out of programme can commence.

e) Trainees who are less than full time (LTFT) should complete the same OOP Application Form noting their agreed hours of work.

f) Acting up as a consultant can occur for a maximum of three months in the final year whilst retaining their training number; a separate guidance document and application is available at http://www.wessexdeanery.nhs.uk/policies_procedures/acting_up.aspx

g) It is the trainee's responsibility to maintain licensing/revalidation during their OOP.

Please refer to the Department of Health document "A Reference Guide for Postgraduate Specialty Training in the UK" known as The Gold Guide, for full details of taking time out of your specialty programme.

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Out of Programme Training (OOPT)

Introduction to OOPT

OOPT relates to trainees applying for an out of programme training experience. This could include a secondment to another training scheme abroad. OOPT will normally be for a period of 1 year in total. Please note that if the training for which you are applying for exists within Wessex Deanery, usually trainees will not be able to take OOPT.

Royal College Approval

For all out of programme training experiences, the appropriate Royal College Approval must support the application. It is the trainees' responsibility to gain Royal College Approval (Appendix 1). Note: The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health have agreed that Regional Advisors are able to verify the suitability of the OOP on behalf of the Royal College.

GMC Approval

Wessex Deanery will seek GMC approval on behalf of the trainee only when all documentation has been received. The GMC cannot accept applications from individual trainees, Colleges, Specialty Advisory Committees or faculties.

GMC approval must be sought before any OOPT can be undertaken and failure to do so will result in trainee's OOPT not being credited towards their CCT, therefore delaying the CCT date. If GMC approval has not been sought prior to the proposed start date of the OOPT, the trainee must not start their post.

With regards to GMC approval, it is important to remember it is a legal requirement for any OOPT, if the post is not part of the specialty curriculum, for approval to be given **prospectively** by the GMC. If prospective approval is not given, then the trainee will no longer be able to be awarded a CCT legally. The GMC can no longer accept retrospective requests. Therefore if prospective approval has not been given the trainee will need to be moved to a CESR (CP) programme.

If the post within a programme has already been approved by the GMC, a letter from the Deanery where the placement is being undertaken must be obtained to certify the post within a programme is GMC approved. The letter must contain the appropriate GMC approval code. It is the trainees' responsibility to obtain this letter from the Deanery where the OOPT will be taking place.

If OOPT is not counting towards CCT, GMC approval is not required. GMC approval is not required when experience is not part of the curriculum; this experience is classed as an OOPE.

Clinical training which has not been GMC approved cannot contribute towards trainees CCT and will not be classed an OOPT but as an OOPE.

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Applying for OOPT

For OOPT requests (Diagram 1), it is the trainees' responsibility to forward the following documentation to the relevant Programme Manager:

1. Fully completed OOP Application Form
http://www.wessexdeanery.nhs.uk/about_nesc/policies_and_procedures/out_of_programme_experience.aspx signed by your Educational Supervisor and Training Programme Director
2. Letter from the Deanery where the placement is being undertaken to confirm the GMC approval code
3. Royal College Approval Letter verifying the suitability of the OOP
4. A statement detailing the purpose and structure of the OOP

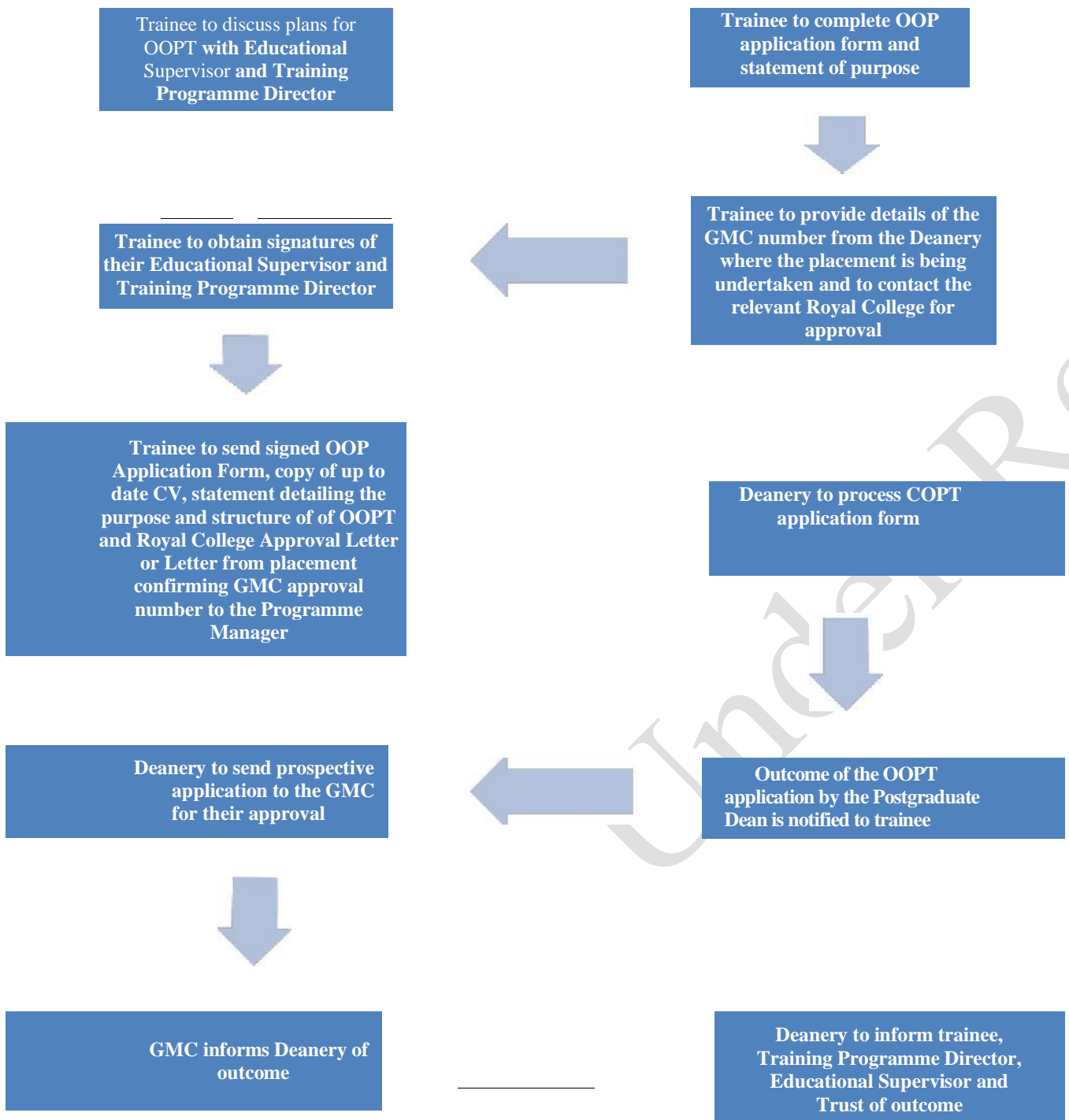
If the OOP Application is unsuccessful, trainees are advised to discuss the outcome with their Training Programme Director in the first instance.

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Flowchart for OOPT (Diagram 1)



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Out of Programme Experience (OOPE)

Introduction to OOPE

OOPE relates to trainees applying for an out of programme clinical experience which does not fall under OOPT and does not contribute towards their CCT. OOPE will normally be for a period of 1 year in total. This will be less common than OOPT and should be for experience outside of the curriculum.

Royal College Approval

For all out of programme clinical experiences, the appropriate Royal College Approval must be informed of the application. It is the trainees' responsibility to inform the relevant Royal College.

GMC Approval

GMC Approval is not required for OOPE.

Certificate of Completion of Training

OOPE does not contribute towards trainees Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT); therefore GMC Approval is not required.

Applying for OOPE

For OOPE requests (Diagram 2), it is the trainees' responsibility to forward the following documentation to the relevant Programme Manager:

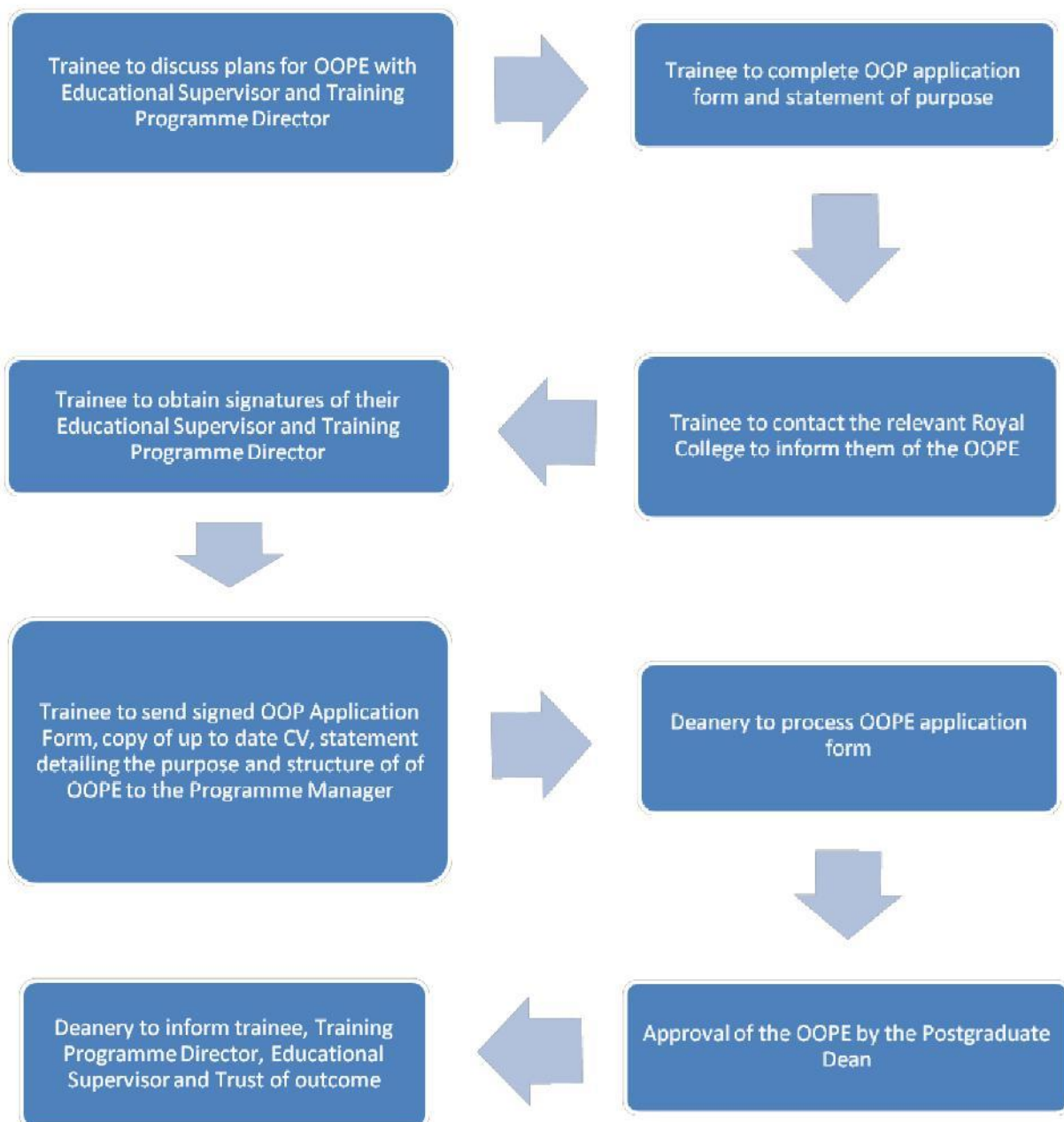
1. Fully completed OOP Application Form
http://www.wessexdeanery.nhs.uk/about_nesc/policies_and_procedures/out_of_programme_experience.aspx signed by your Educational Supervisor and Training Programme Director
2. A statement detailing the purpose and structure of the OOP

If the OOP Application is unsuccessful, trainees are advised to discuss the outcome with their Training Programme Director in the first instance.

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Flowchart for OOPE (Diagram 2)



Out of Programme Research (OOPR)

Introduction to OOPR

OOPR relates to trainees applying to undertake research as part of their training experience. Research projects may last up to 3 years and can contribute up to 1 year towards the trainee's CCT. Research should usually be towards a higher degree.

Royal College Approval

For all out of programme research experiences, the appropriate Royal College Approval must support the application. It is the trainee's responsibility to gain Royal College Approval (Appendix 1). Note: The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health have agreed that Regional Advisors are able to verify the suitability of the OOP on behalf of the Royal College.

GMC Approval

Wessex Deanery will seek GMC approval on behalf of the trainee only when all documentation has been received. The GMC cannot accept applications from individual trainees, Colleges, Specialty Advisory Committees or faculties.

Prospective GMC approval must be sought before any OOPR can be undertaken and failure to do so will result in trainees OOPR not being credited towards their CCT, therefore delaying their CCT date. If GMC approval has not been sought prior to the proposed start date of the OOPR, the trainee must not start their post.

With regards to GMC approval, it is important to remember it is a legal requirement for any OOPT, if the post is not part of the specialty curriculum, for approval to be given **prospectively** by the GMC. If prospective approval is not given, then the trainee will no longer be able to be awarded a CCT legally. The GMC can no longer accept retrospective requests. Therefore if prospective approval has not been given the trainee will need to be moved to a CESR (CP) programme.

If OOPR is not counting towards CCT, GMC approval is not required.

Certificate of Completion of Training

OOPR generally contributes up to 1 year towards the trainees CCT.

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Applying for OOPR

For OOPR requests (Diagram 3), it is the trainee's responsibility to forward the following documentation to the relevant Programme Manager:

1. OOP Application Form
http://www.wessexdeanery.nhs.uk/about_nesc/policies_and_procedures/out_of_programme_experience.aspx signed by your Educational Supervisor, Training Programme Director
2. Royal College Approval Letter verifying the suitability of the OOP, it is the responsibility of the trainee to gain this formal statement.
3. A statement detailing the purpose and structure of the OOP

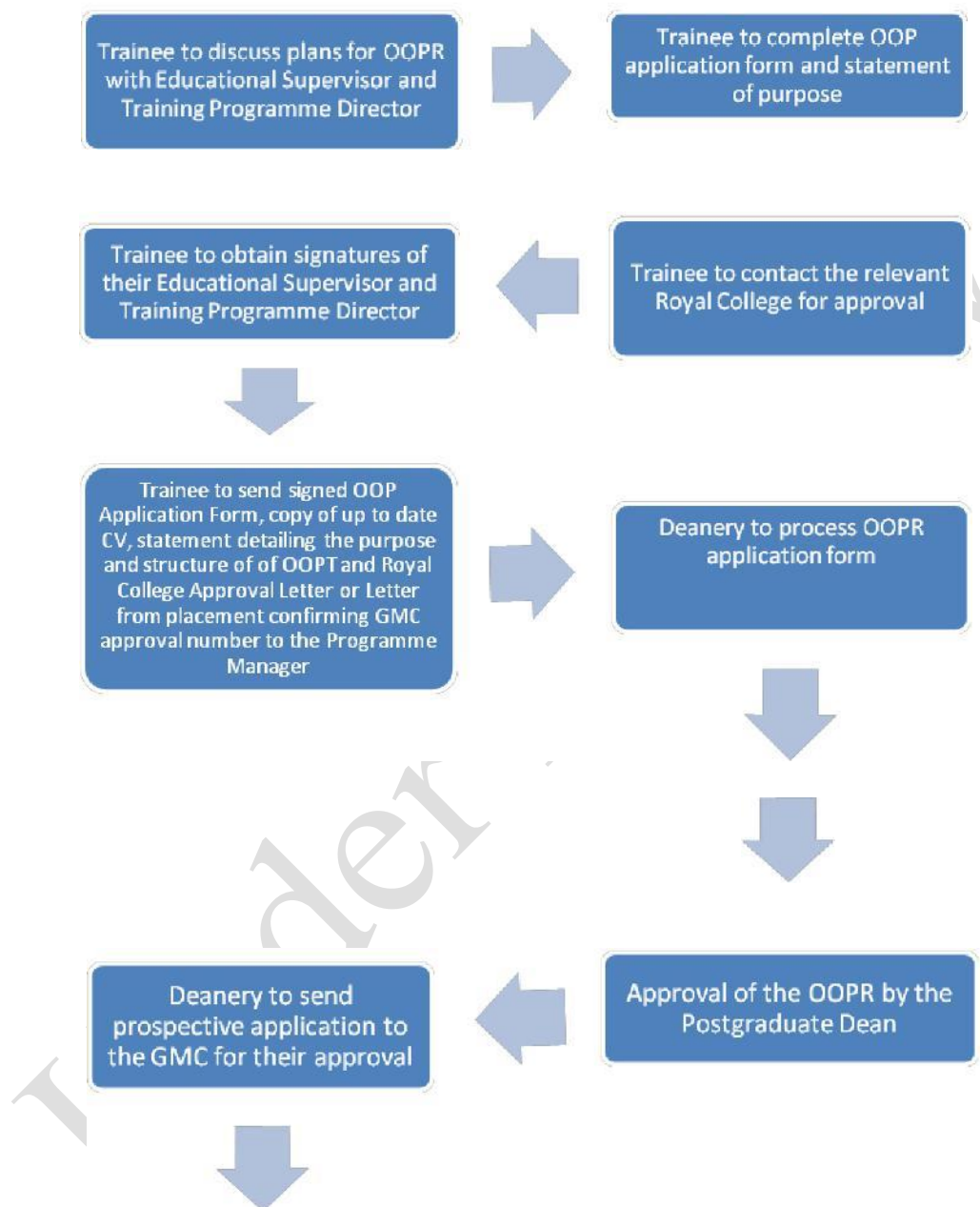
If the OOP Application is unsuccessful, trainees are advised to discuss the outcome with their Training Programme Director in the first instance.

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Flowchart for OOPR (Diagram 3)





Out of Programme Career Break (OOPC)

Introduction to OOPC

An OOPC relates to trainees who for personal reasons, request time out from their training programme. This may relate to illness, family caring responsibilities or other personal reasons. Normal approval lasts up to 2 years.

Royal College Approval

For all out of programme, the appropriate Royal College Approval must be informed of the application. It is the trainees' responsibility to inform the relevant Royal College. Royal College Approval is not required for OOPC

GMC Approval

GMC Approval is not required for OOPC.

Certificate of Completion of Training

OOPC does not contribute towards trainees CCT; therefore GMC Approval is not required.

Applying for OOPC

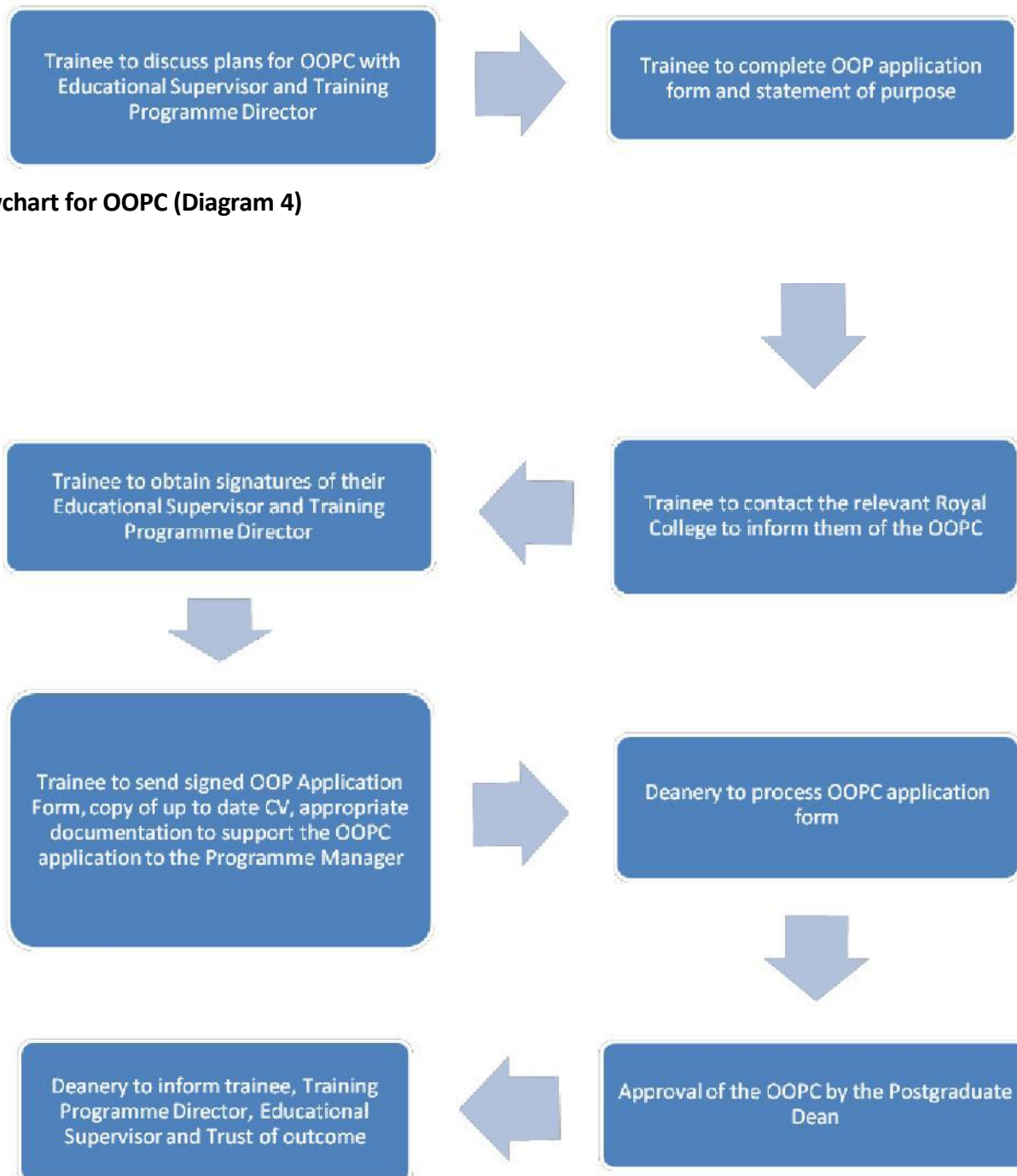
For OOPC requests (Diagram 4), it is the trainee's responsibility to forward the following documentation to the relevant Programme Manager:

1. OOP Application Form
http://www.wessexdeanery.nhs.uk/about_nesc/policies_and_procedures/out_of_programme_experience.aspx signed by your Educational Supervisor and Training Programme Director
2. Appropriate documentation to support application

If the OOP Application is unsuccessful, trainees are advised to discuss the outcome with their Training Programme Director in the first instance.

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Flowchart for OOPC (Diagram 4)

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Extension to Time Out of Programme

Introduction to Applying for an OOP Extension

Extending time out of programme relates to trainees who are currently on previously agreed OOP. Trainees may wish to apply for an extension to their previously agreed OOP and must submit the appropriate documentation at least 6 months prior to their original planned end date. Trainees should be aware that normally the maximum time allowed out of programme will be:

- 12 months for OOPT
- 12 months for OOPE
- 3 years for OOPR
- 2 years for OOPC

Extension to OOP Documentation

For trainees wishing to extend their previously agreed OOP (Diagram 6), the following documentation must be forwarded to the relevant Programme Manager:

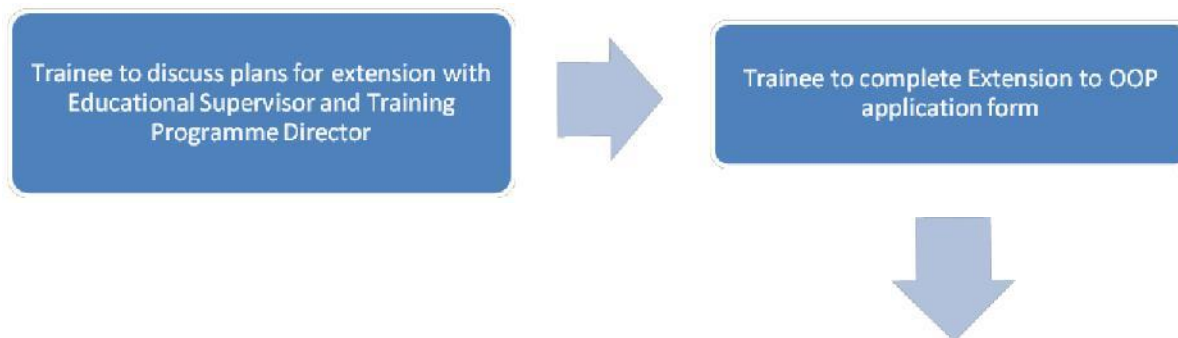
1. Extension to OOP Application Form
http://www.wessexdeanery.nhs.uk/about_nesc/policies_and_procedures/out_of_programme_experience.aspx signed by Educational Supervisor and Training Programme Director
2. Educational Supervisors Report to support application.
3. A statement detailing reasons for applying for an extension.

If the Extension to OOP Application is unsuccessful, trainees are advised to discuss the outcome with their Training Programme in the first instance.

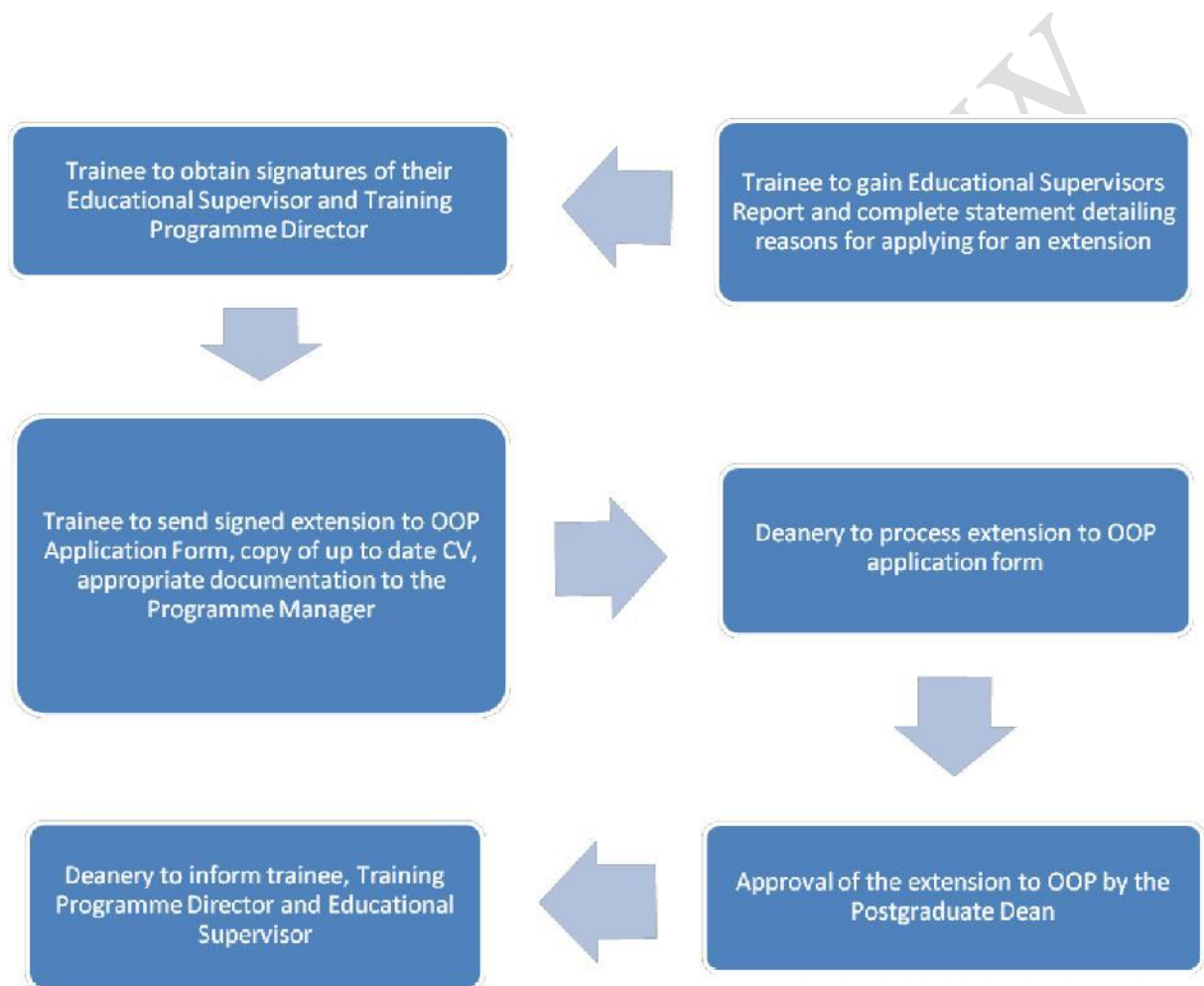
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Flowchart for extension to OOP (Diagram 5)



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Responsibilities

Prior to Out of Programme start date

Trainees

- Trainees must maintain GMC registration during the period out of program. This will allow them to maintain their national training number.
- Trainees must keep in regular contact via an updated form R and by returning an annual out of programme report for each year that they are out of programme to their respective training board. Trainees must provide a regular and reliable physical postal address and reliable email address for correspondence that they must be up to respond to within 10 working days.
- Trainees who are out of program are subject to an annual review of competency progression.
- Discussion to take place between trainee and their Educational Supervisor (ES) and TPD to ensure the proposed period out of programme meets the educational needs of the trainee. This process should be started as early as possible with a suggested 9 months minimum before the intended time OOP. Please note that if the training for which you are applying exists within Wessex Deanery, usually trainees will not be able to take OOP.
- Secure funding prior to submitting an application. Time spent out of programme is not usually funded by the Wessex Deanery and therefore funding must be secured by the trainee, this includes study leave funding. It is anticipated that the hosting programme / organisation will provide this for the period being undertaken.
- Ensure you have checked your own Royal College/Faculty regulations and application process
- Fully complete an Out of Programme Application from http://www.wessexdeanery.nhs.uk/about_nesc/policies_and_procedures/out_of_programme_experience.aspx which is available on the Deanery Website and submit this at the earliest opportunity with 7 months minimum to the TPD. The out of programme application form outlines all relevant information that the TPD, Deanery and GMC require to consider the application. It is a mandatory requirement that all fields are completed. **Incomplete applications will not be considered which could result in a delayed start date.** All incomplete applications will be returned to the trainee.
- The out of programme application needs the support of the TPD before it is submitted to the Deanery. The support of the Deanery and where appropriate the Royal College/ Faculty and GMC is required before final approval is given.

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- The trainee must be supervised appropriately whilst OOP. The G MC's definition of a supervisor includes a person who is selected and appropriately trained to be responsible for overseeing a specified trainee's work and providing constructive feedback.
- The trainee must adhere to any Royal College / Faculty guidance for assessment whilst OOP.
- Trainees under right to work restrictions must seek approval from the Deanery before applying for OOP.
- Trainees should keep in mind that they are contractually required to give the Employing Trust three months notice about taking time out of programme.

TPD

- Discussion to take place between trainee and TPD to ensure the proposed period out of programme meets the educational needs of the trainee. This process should be started as early as possible with at least 7 months minimum before the suggested OOP.
 - TPDs should note that if the training for which trainees are applying for exists within Wessex Deanery, usually they will not be able to take OOP.
 - TPDs should discuss with trainees any applications for out of programme which they do not approve and the reasons for not approving the application.
 - TPDs must consider the risk of compromising the training of the remaining trainees, e.g. balancing gaps on the training rotation against the risk of gaps in rotas impacting on service delivery, quality of care and potentially the safety of patients. Please ensure that the dates which are provided by the trainee can be accommodated by the rotation.
 - TPDs must be aware that any replacement will be by a LAS and not an NTN holder
 - TPDs must ensure all the requirements within this process and the out of programme policy are adhered to.
 - TPDs should process applications for OOP within three weeks.
 - A fully completed application needs to be submitted to the Programme Manager who will coordinate authorisation from the Postgraduate Dean.
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Deanery

- On receipt of a fully completed application approved by the TPD, the Programme Manager will coordinate final authorisation from the Postgraduate Dean.
- If approved, the Deanery will seek prospective approval of the time spent out of programme for training/research from G MC and will confirm to the G MC that the post has Deanery support.
- Once approval has been received from G MC the trainee will be informed in writing.
- The Deanery should process applications for OOP within four weeks.
- Amend CCT date (if applicable)

Whilst Out of Programme

Trainee

- Extensions or changes to time spent out of programme can be considered but permission will need to be sought as if it were a new period of time out of programme.
- Trainees must complete the appropriate documentation for their ARCP or RITA whilst out of programme. This ensures trainees renew their commitment and registration to the training programme. It also requests permission for the trainee to retain their NTN and provides information about the trainee's likely date of return to the programme.

TPD

- Review educational supervisors report at the ARCP / RITA panel and issue the appropriate outcome.

Deanery

- Ensure any extensions or changes to the OOP are processed.
- Ensure appropriate forms submitted by the trainee are processed.
- Amend CCT date (if applicable)

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Further Points for consideration

- **ARCP and RITA outcomes**

Those wishing to apply for and undertake a period OOP are required to be in possession of a current satisfactory ARCP or RITA outcome. A satisfactory outcome constitutes an ARCP outcome 1 or a RITA form C. Due to the nature of OOPC relating primarily to personal circumstance, in some instances possession of a current satisfactory ARCP or RITA outcome may not be feasible. 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 or RITA C may be waived at the discretion of the Postgraduate Dean.

- **Research**

If a period of research of more than one year is requested, it should enable the trainee to submit for an appropriate higher qualification (e.g. MD / PhD) and should not exceed a maximum of three years out of programme. Trainees in their final year will not be allowed to undertake a period of research which will delay their CCT date.

- **Salary**

This may not be the same as you get now. The Deanery is not able to make up any shortfall.

- **Accommodation**

This is your responsibility.

- **Travel costs**

These are your own responsibility. Please ensure if you are going to take up a training slot within a UK Deanery, that issues of travel/relocation/study leave are agreed with the host Deanery Personnel and/or Medical Staffing Department before you leave.

- **Study Leave**

This will not be covered by Wessex Deanery, please ensure that you ask for this from your new placement

- **Pension Contributions /Statutory Rights/ Continuous Service**

These might be affected by a period abroad, or work away from the NHS. Please check with the NHS Pensions Agency / Medical Personnel or Payroll department, as Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs) may need to be paid. Further information can be found via the Pensions Agency <http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/Pensions.aspx> or the BMA http://www.bma.org.uk/employmentandcontracts/pensions/pension_scheme/nhsuniapps.jsp

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Timeline

Actions Required	Approximate Timescale	Approximate Total Time
Discussion with Educational Supervisor and Training Programme Director	2 - 3 weeks	2 - 3 weeks
Trainee to fully complete OOP application form and statement of purpose	2 weeks	4 - 6 weeks
Trainee to obtain GMC approval number or contact the Royal College for approval (if OOPT or OOPR)	4 – 6 weeks	8 – 11 weeks
Trainee to obtain signatures of Educational Supervisor and Training Programme Director	4 – 6 weeks	12 – 17 weeks
Trainee to send OOP form to Programme Manager	1 – 2 weeks (Please note that the OOP application must be received at the Deanery at least 6 months prior to the OOP)	13 – 18 weeks
Programme Manager to co-ordinate Postgraduate Dean's approval	2 – 3 weeks	15 - 21 weeks
Deanery to send the prospective application to the GMC for approval (if OOPT or OOPR)	2 – 3 weeks	17 – 24 weeks
GMC inform Deanery of outcome	3 – 4 weeks	20 – 28 weeks
Deanery to inform trainee, Training Programme Director, Educational Supervisor and Trust Medical Personnel	1 – 2 weeks	21 – 30 weeks

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Appendix One: Royal College/Faculty Contacts

Royal College/Faculty Contacts for Out of Programme Approval

Royal College/Faculty	Email Address & Contact Number
College of Emergency Medicine (CEM)	oonah.newbury@collemergencymed.ac.uk 020 7404 1999
Faculty of Dental Surgery	fds@rcseng.ac.uk 0207 869 6810
Faculty of Intensive Care Medicine	ficm@rcoa.ac.uk 020 7092 1653
Faculty of Public Health Medicine	russellampofo@fph.org.uk 0207 224 0642
Joint Royal College Of Physicians Training Board (JRCPTB)	https://www.jrcptb.org.uk/contact-us 020 3075 1476
Royal College of Anaesthetists (RCOA)	training@rcoa.ac.uk 0207 092 1554
Royal College of General Practitioners	postgraduate@rcgp.org.uk 020 3188 7400
Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists	tchambers@rcog.org.uk 0207 772 6294
Royal College of Ophthalmologists	training@rcophth.ac.uk 0207 935 0702
Royal College of Pathologists	Jennifer.maddocks@rcpath.ac.uk 0207 451 6741
Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health	Local Regional Advisor (see Deanery website for current contact details)
Royal College of Psychiatrists	cdrummond@rcpsych.ac.uk 0207 235 2351
Royal College of Radiologists	chris.murley@rcr.ac.uk 020 7299 1164
Royal College of Surgeons of England	education@rcseng.ac.uk 020 7869 6300

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