

Guidance to Trainees – Updated March 2021

Impact on Medical and Dental Training Programmes of COVID-19 Response

Recruitment Processes for August 2021

As previously advised, all specialties developed recruitment plans for 2021. These plans included alternative delivery methods if clinical staff were not available to support interviews or attend assessment centres due to service pressures. It has now been necessary for some specialties to implement these alternative plans. Specialties affected to date include recruitment to Internal Medicine Training and Intensive Care Medicine Training Programmes. Further information and details of specialties affected are published on the [Specialty Training website](#).

ARCP and Training Progression (Updated 12/03/2021)

During Spring/Summer 2020, it was identified that trainees may experience difficulties in preparing for and providing evidence for ARCP. These difficulties included cancellation of courses, professional examinations, planned rotations, a reduction in clinical experience, interaction with Trainers, numbers of WPBAs and redeployment of trainees and trainers to different clinical areas.

In response to this, the four Statutory Education Bodies (SEBs), Medical Royal Colleges & Faculties worked together with the GMC to review how the ARCP process should be managed and a number of derogations were put in place. As the pandemic has progressed over the last twelve months, these derogations remain in place until at least September 2021. The intention remains that all trainees will have an ARCP carried out for their training year. More information is available on the following links:

<https://www.gmc-uk.org/-/media/documents/temporary-approval-of-derogation-for-the-annual-review-of-competence-progression--arcp--may-82838951.pdf>

https://www.copmed.org.uk/images/docs/ARCP_Ddecision_Aid/ARCP_Ddecision_Aid.pdf

<https://www.copmed.org.uk/publications/covid-20>

NIMDTA Processes have been revised as follows:

- Trainees will be given a date for the panel to review their evidence. Trainees should ensure that all evidence is up to date before then and clinical and educational supervisors' reports are completed.
- The Outcome 10 option due to disruption from progression by COVID will still be available to panels.
- There may be updated derogations in relation to evidence required for this year written by your College / Faculty and approved by the GMC.
- Panels will not be meeting face to face with trainees. Some trainees / programmes may have follow up meetings via Zoom or phone call.
- Feedback will be provided to trainees on the outcome of the ARCP.

Redeployment of Trainees (Updated 12/03/2021)

Throughout the pandemic, NIMDTA has been working with Trusts to consider how redeployment should be managed. While the loss of training opportunities during the initial phase of the COVID-19 pandemic did not prevent most trainees progressing, any further impact on training from subsequent surges will have a cumulative effect, potentially resulting in delayed progression for many trainees.

The key principles for Educational Organisations to follow for redeployment are:

1. planned for by the service & only occur where there is both service delivery & educational support
2. discussed and agreed with the Postgraduate Dean in advance of any change,
3. staged,

4. considered in consultation with the trainees involved,
5. proportionate to the clinical need,
6. of the minimum duration necessary to support essential service response,
7. supported by appropriate induction and supervision,
8. for a set period of time and not extended without further agreement of the Postgraduate Dean to minimise cumulative disruption to training for individual trainees.

Trainees should contact the Director of Medical Education at their Trust to discuss any concerns regarding redeployment or email NIMDTA ValuedTrainees@hscni.net for advice.

Covid 19 Vaccination (Updated 12/03/2021)

Following regional discussion, trainees are advised to attend for second vaccination in the same location that they received their first vaccination even if they have moved at changeover.

Principles for Educational Organisations During Pandemic Surges

The UK's Four Statutory Education Bodies have produced a document outlining the [Principles for Educational Organisations during Pandemic Surges](#). Following on from this, NIMDTA hosted a workshop with Trusts to identify ways to maximise and improve training opportunities during future surges.

Rotations from 3rd February / 7th April 2021 (Updated 12/03/2021)

Following discussion with DoH and HSC Trusts, February 2021 rotation of trainees took place as planned. All rotations planned for Wednesday 7th April 2021 are expected to proceed.

Trainee Health and Wellbeing

NIMDTA will continue to provide access to Professional Support services during this crisis. Information on resources available is available [here](#). If you wish to make an appointment please email professionalsupport.nimdt@hscni.net.

Self-Isolating

If you are required to remain at home to self-isolate, you must inform your clinical supervisor and rota coordinator at work, and advise your training department at NIMDTA. Provided you remain well during isolation, trainees are encouraged to engage in remote learning activities, including hospital teaching, regional teaching and online learning. Please continue to record all activity in eportfolios.

Clinically Extremely Vulnerable Trainees (Updated 12/03/2021)

From 26 December 2020, Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) people are advised not to attend the workplace. The Chief Medical Officer has written to individuals within this category to advise of this change. As indicated in this correspondence *'It is important to note that this is advice only. People are free to make their own judgements about whether or not they should attend work, depending on the COVID security of their working environment.'*

This advice will be in place until 1 April, and will be reviewed by 18 March in line with the review of restrictions more generally. More information is available on the [NI Direct website](#).

Trainees who fall into the CEV category or have other reasons for adjustments to their duties should make contact with the Clinical Manager in the workplace where they are due to be working to ensure an appropriate risk assessment (if required) has been carried out in advance of a return to work.

These trainees must inform NIMDTA of these changes via email to valuedtrainees@hscni.net. This information will be shared confidentially with the next receiving Trust to facilitate trainee and service adjustments.

Trainees who are Pregnant

All pregnant women must have a risk assessment carried out with their line manager. Risk assessments should be reviewed on a regular basis. The Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists (RCOG) have published two useful documents:

- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Infection in Pregnancy, Information for Healthcare Professionals](#)
- [Occupational health advice for employers and pregnant women during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

The HSC has updated their advice and guidance for staff who are pregnant. The Q&A can be accessed on the PHA website [here](#).

Annual Leave (Updated 12/03/2021)

HSCNI have made provision for untaken contractual leave to be paid (or a combination of carrying forward and pay) to ensure no one loses annual leave as a result of Covid19. This applies to all HSC staff, including doctors and dentists in training.

If your leave year runs over a different period, you are still entitled to carry forward your unused annual leave over the next two years but this must be used by 31 March 2023. This supersedes [guidance](#) previously issued to trainees in May 2020.

If you wish to receive payment for your unused additional contractual annual leave you can make an application to do so for that accrued as at 31 March 2021. To apply under these arrangements, trainees should contact the relevant manager currently responsible for the approval of your leave (as advised at local induction) by 31 March 2021. Accrued leave paid under this arrangement will be deducted from your entitlement for the remainder of your annual leave year.

The Voluntary Scheme for the Extra-Ordinary Payment of Unused Contractual Leave Entitlement ends on 31 March 2021 and this option will not be applicable following this date. Following on from this scheme, normal arrangements for the use/payment/carrying forward of annual leave during rotation will apply and be communicated outside of this process.

Revalidation (Updated 12/03/2021)

In March 2020, the GMC deferred all revalidation recommendations due between March 2020 and March 2021 by 1 year. Later, this was extended to include those due to revalidate between March 2021 and July 2021 (all dates moved back by four months). Revalidation Recommendations will continue for trainees who are obtaining CCT. Trainees should capture their full scope of practice in Section 2 of their ARCP Form R including any work in a new clinical area because of redeployment.

FAQs for meeting revalidation requirements across full scope of practice for doctors in postgraduate training taking into account the special arrangements put in place during the Covid-19 pandemic can be accessed at:

https://www.copmed.org.uk/images/docs/revalidation/FAQs_Full_Scope_of_Work_COVID_Update_-_24th_April_2020.pdf

Further information is available on the COPMeD website <https://www.copmed.org.uk/publications/covid-20>

Study Leave, Teaching & Training Events and Membership Exams

[NIMDTA Study Leave Guidelines](#) were updated for August 2020 and include reference to Covid-19 and online events. Teaching and training events resumed in August 2020 with some events taking place socially distanced and others online only. Trainees may request study leave to participate in online training and learning events. PHA guidance on study leave is available on the [PHA website](#). Information on changes to membership examination arrangements are available at relevant College website. As service pressures increase, it is inevitable that many educational events (including membership exams) may be postponed. Up to date information on NIMDTA events will be issued via direct email and on the NIMDTA website. For other events, the relevant organisation will issue updates.

Guidance on Death Certification and Cremation Processes (Updated 12/03/2021)

The Coronavirus Act 2020 contains clauses which impact on the Death Certification process, the issuing of both MCCDs and Stillbirth Certificates and referrals to the Coroner. Trainees should familiarise themselves with the guidance which is available [here](#). In December 2020, the CMO issued correspondence to remind medical practitioners of their [statutory responsibilities](#) in these processes during the pandemic.

In February 2021, the NI DoH updated its published [Educational Material](#) Surrounding Death - Hospital Training & Induction Programmes.

Other Sources of Guidance and Information

All [NIMDTA Trainee Guidance](#) is available on the NIMDTA website.

Trainees can email ValuedTrainees@hscni.net for advice on any additional queries or concerns.

The HSC has also developed advice and guidance regarding employment related issues including: annual/statutory leave, childcare arrangements and support available, advice for staff who are pregnant or with underlying health issues, support for Black Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) staff. The Q&A can be accessed on the PHA website [here](#).