

ARCP Guidance to Trainees, Trainers and Assessment Panels



Royal College
of Surgeons
ADVANCING SURGICAL CARE

June 2018

Introduction

The extended period of ‘winter pressures’ has impacted on trainees’ ability to undertake elective surgical procedures in the last year. Individual trainees and surgical trainee organisations (ASiT and BOTAs) report concerns regarding the ability of trainees to progress against their respective curricula either through indicative numbers, or trainer observation with confirmation of satisfactory performance.

Giving such trainees extensions to training through an ‘ARCP outcome 3’ (inadequate progress – additional training time required) may be viewed as disproportionate, or as unfair when progress has been restricted through no fault of their own. The guidance below provides direction for trainees, trainers and assessment panels during the forthcoming ARCP process for individuals whose training may have been compromised in this way.

Trainees

If there are concerns about whether all competencies have been gained, provide supervisors and the panel with details about the scheduled training lists cancelled during the training year and, if possible, an indication of the number and types of procedures that would normally have been expected in that time. Provide any evidence you have of your competency in these procedures. This may include evidence of alternative training opportunities undertaken when scheduled lists were cancelled and learning opportunities gained elsewhere (i.e. in the private sector).

Trainers

Consider if the acquisition of technical competence has been compromised by loss of elective lists (information from educational supervisors regarding levels of experience

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attained by trainees in previous years may be used to guide this assessment), and if so to what degree.

ARCP panels

In keeping with current practice, assess each trainee individually.

Review the evidence for the past year to determine if the trainee is on the trajectory based on last year's ARCP. If there appear to be deficits, determine if these reflect overall poor progress, or are purely the result of a loss of training opportunities due to reduction in elective surgery in the context of 'winter pressures'.

For those where 'winter pressure' have had an adverse effect, identify any gaps in competences and/or experience. Decide if these are such that it cannot be said that the trainee has reached the knowledge and skills expected at the relevant stage of training.

In the presence of significant shortfalls, determine the potential to correct these within the remaining time in the current training post or in the initial phase of next year's post, before considering an outcome 2 or 3.

Indicate how correction of any deficits could be incorporated flexibly into the next years training within a new post, or detail for an outcome 2 the required competencies to be focused on in the next post as detailed in the current version of the [Gold Guide](#) (Version 7, 2018 – GG7). If there have been deficits identified, an interim review of progress should be undertaken by the Educational Supervisor or Training Programme Directors three months into the next post with the option of planning further training opportunities if these are still required.

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Confirmation of achievement of any identified deficient competences should be determined at next year's (2019) ARCP, ensuring this is consistent with the overall progress of the trainee.

If there remain concerns, consideration should be given to revision of the CCT date. This should be viewed as a last resort.

It is possible that up to 3 months of the last years placements could have been adversely affected by winter pressures. Addressing any deficits in the next year should be included in the work scheduling for the first 3-4 months. This is likely to be easier to achieve in early years and may require more focused approaches for those training in later years.

If there are gaps identified in the acquisition of competencies by specialty trainees, their School should propose contingency plans to put in place for the coming winter, as similar pressures are likely.

In addition, Educational Supervisors and Training Programme Directors are encouraged to review the requirements of individual trainees, plan work schedules appropriately and encourage trainees to carefully record their progress and acquisition of competencies to minimise any potential adverse effects of loss of elective work.

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