

COVID-19 and Trainee Progression in 2020 (update IV) – 1 June 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 Bodies¹ (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:

- ARCP management and Outcome 10
- FRCS and MRCS examinations
- Training in the COVID-19 recovery phase
- National Selection
- Wellbeing support
- Working during pregnancy
- Out of Programme (OOP)
- Clinical academic training

You will also find an updated list of useful links on page 5 of this document.

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

ARCP management and Outcome 10

The four SEBs have published guidance on the management of ARCPs during the COVID-19 outbreak and the new Outcome 10 – you can find it on the Conference of Postgraduate Medical Deans of the United Kingdom (COPMeD) website [here](#).

Following discussions between the medical Royal Colleges, the SEBs and the GMC, and recently published SEB/GMC documents, we have now produced additional guidance on how Outcome 10 should be applied in surgery.

¹ Health Education England (HEE), Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW), NHS Education for Scotland (NES), and Northern Ireland Medical & Dental Training Agency (NIMDTA).

Our guidance is required to follow SEB and GMC requirements.

Please follow the links below to access the following:

- [Surgery specific management of ARCPs during COVID-19](#) to be used in conjunction with the following SEB and GMC guidance:
 - o [ARCP 2020 – COVID recording](#)
 - o [Enabling Progression at ARCP](#)
 - o [Implementing ARCP Outcomes 10.1 and 10.2 during COVID-19](#)
 - o [Managing extensions to training](#)
 - o [COVID-19 ARCP Appeal Process](#)
- [Surgery Curriculum Derogations](#)

You can find a separate version of the ARCP Flowcharts [here](#).

The SEBs have also released guidance on how to use the new outcomes for those in Locum Appointment for Training (LAT) posts [here](#).

As part of our certification processes and the important role externality plays at ARCPs, we encourage all SAC Liaison Members (LMs) to attend all the ARCPs they are invited to, if available. This is especially important for trainees due to be awarded an Outcome 6 for satisfactorily completing specialty training and also for trainees on non-standard ARCP Outcomes. The current COVID-19 situation places an additional emphasis on the advice and support that an SAC LM can provide at ARCP panel meetings.

In addition to the above, the new ARCP Outcomes will be available on the interactive ARCP form on the ISCP website from Tuesday 2 June.

We encourage trainees and trainers to refer to JCST's [Guidance for recording COVID-19 experience in ISCP](#).

FRCS and MRCS examinations

The [Joint Committee on Intercollegiate Examinations](#) (JCIE) is responsible for running the FRCS exam and the [Intercollegiate Committee for Basic Surgical Examinations](#) (ICBSE) is responsible for running the MRCS exam.

Following the cancellation of the FRCS and MRCS exams in March/April and the subsequent cancellation of exams that were due to take place over the summer period, both the JCIE and ICBSE issued guidance on future sittings of these exams. You can find the JCIE statement [here](#) and the ICBSE statement [here](#).

For further guidance on the FRCS exam please visit the [JCIE website](#) and for further guidance on the MRCS exam please visit the [ICBSE website](#).

Training in the COVID-19 recovery phase

As we start to enter the recovery phase after the disruption caused by COVID-19, it is important to remember that training in surgery has also been severely disrupted over the last months. When drawing up recovery plans we encourage trainers to remember to include training in those plans, whether in theatre, outpatient clinic (virtual or otherwise), ward rounds or elsewhere. Wherever patients are being seen, opportunities for training should be taken to help trainees make up training time lost to COVID-19.

Many centres are using local private hospitals as COVID-19 free sites. Training can, and should, be delivered in these centres too. We encourage supervisors and Training Programme Directors (TPDs) to involve their Heads of School (or equivalent) to help this take place and to **read JCST advice on training in private hospitals [here](#)**. Private provider sites will need to be recognised for training (see GMC website [here](#) for further information on site approval) – this can be done by local offices/deaneries via GMC Connect (see [here](#) for further details). Trainers and TPDs are encouraged to ask for application for recognition of sites where clinical activity is happening.

Getting the most out of training opportunities is essential, and so please remember to give detailed feedback to trainees at the end of each case, ward round or clinic to maximise learning. It really helps trainees to progress.

There will be many challenges to training because of new ways of working, social distancing and PPE. We are very interested to hear of ways you have overcome these challenges and other innovations in the way you work to accommodate training during COVID-19. If you have something you want to share with others, please do so on Twitter, using the hashtag **#NoTrainingTodayNoSurgeonsTomorrow** and tag [@JCST_Surgery](#) (if you do not have a Twitter account or are not sure how to use hashtags, etc., your trainee may be able to help!).

Do not let your trainees miss out on any training opportunity.

#NoTrainingTodayNoSurgeonsTomorrow

National Selection

We are aware that this year's National Selection processes, which are administered by the Medical and Dental Recruitment and Selection (MDRS) group, raised some concerns among trainees and trainers. Below are two statements from the General Surgery and Vascular Surgery, and Trauma & Orthopaedic Surgery SACs, which we hope offer some clarity:

- [General Surgery/Vascular Surgery](#) statement
- [Trauma & Orthopaedic Surgery](#) statement

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 (ES), TPD, Associate Postgraduate Dean or Programme Support Unit, if they need additional support.

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.
- The Royal College of Surgeons of England – [Confidential Support and Advice Service – Helpline](#)

Working during pregnancy

The JCST, with the support of CoPSS, has produced surgery specific guidance for trainees and trainers. You can find the published document [here](#).

Out of Programme (OOP)

We encourage trainees in Out of Programme (OOP) posts or who wish to apply for OOP, to access local office/deanery guidance.

The SEBs have also produced guidance that can be accessed on the relevant websites here:

- [Health Education England](#) (HEE) or via accessing the main trainee information page [here](#) (in the ‘Training’ tab under *Guidance on facilitating the return of trainees on flexible training pathways - 9 April 2020*).
- [Health Education and Improvement Wales](#) (HEIW)
- [NHS Education for Scotland](#) (NES)
- [Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency](#) (NIMDTA) in their FAQs page

For Irish trainees, guidance is also available [here](#).

Clinical academic training

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) recently published guidance on progressing UK clinical academic training in 2020 and addressing the challenges of COVID-19. You can find it [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 \(ASiT\)](#)
- 3) [British Orthopaedic Trainees' Association \(BOTA\)](#)
- 4) [GMC advice for Doctors](#)
 - includes advice on doctors working outside their normal field of practice; doctors' own health; prioritising access to treatment; and more
- 5) [Health Education England \(HEE\)](#)
- 6) [NHS Education for Scotland \(NES\)](#) and [Scotland Deanery](#)
 - includes guidance for Educational Supervisors (ES) in preparing for ESs reports for ARCPs in 2020 [here](#)
- 7) [Health Education and Improvement Wales \(HEIW\)](#)
- 8) [Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency \(NIMDTA\)](#)
- 9) [Academy of Medical Royal Colleges](#)
- 10) Additional guidance and advice on COVID-19 is also available at:
 - [Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh](#)
 - [Royal College of Surgeons of England](#)
 - includes [link](#) to resources on the recovery of surgical services during and after COVID-19
 - [Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow](#)
 - [Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland](#)
- 11) Additional guidance and advice on COVID-19 is also available at:
 - [Society of Cardiothoracic Surgery \(SCTS\)](#)
 - [Association of Surgeons of Great Britain and Ireland \(ASGBI\)](#)
 - [Society of British Neurological Surgeons \(SBNS\)](#)
 - [British Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons \(BAOMS\)](#)
 - [British Association of Ear, Nose and Throat Surgeons \(ENT UK\)](#)
 - [British Association of Paediatric Surgeons \(BAPS\)](#)
 - [British Association of Plastic, Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgeons \(BAPRAS\)](#)
 - [British Orthopaedic Association \(BOA\)](#)
 - [British Association of Urological Surgeons \(BAUS\)](#)
 - [Vascular Society](#)

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

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

- [27 April 2020](#)
 - Wellbeing support
 - ARCP management and outcome 10
 - Training Interface Group (TIG) Fellowships
 - Out of Programme (OOP)
 - Useful links

➤ **17 April 2020:**

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

➤ **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, AEs 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](#).

For ongoing updates on surgical training in the UK and Ireland, please follow us on Twitter [@JCST_Surgery](#).