

Out of Programme  
(OOP) Guidance

HEEWM



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# Overview

\*Anywhere in this document that states CCT is deemed to also cover all alternatives such as CESR(CP) or CEGPR(CP)\*

\*The OOP form is completed by the Trainee and signatories, only once it is completed will HEE process the form\*

The purpose of OOP options is to allow a Trainee to gain additional clinical experience, clinical training or undertake a period of research outside the training programme to which they were appointed. Trainees may also request to take a career break.

No trainee may start an OOP of any kind before they receive the emailed approval letter from the deanery.

There are a number of circumstances when a trainee may seek to spend some time out of their training programme to which they have been appointed. All such requests need to be agreed by the Postgraduate Dean or nominated deputy in advance, so trainees are advised to discuss their proposals as early as possible. Normally, trainees would be approved for one OOP per training programme (including dual CCT programmes). However, The Postgraduate Dean has discretion to consider exceptional circumstances and approve more than one OOP for trainees where there are sound educational reasons e.g. academic trainees may be required to undertake an OOPE in preparation for an OOPR to undertake a PhD.

OOP options exist to support the Trainee in obtaining their individual educational/personal needs, subject to the approval of the HEE-WM. Such approval is cognisant of the proposed OOP being in alignment with local training arrangements and the impact of new OOP requests on the programme.

The purpose of taking OOP is to support the trainee in:

- i. undertaking clinical training that is not a part of the trainee's training programme (OOPT)
- ii. gaining professional skills that would enhance their future practice (OOPE) – This could include enhancing skills in medical leadership, academia, medical education or patient safety, or enhancing clinical skills related to but not part of the curriculum. Such experience may benefit the trainee (e.g. working in a different health environment/country) or may help support the health needs of other countries (e.g. with Médecins Sans Frontières, Voluntary Service Overseas, global health partnerships). OOPE is not applicable in foundation training.
- iii. undertaking a period of research (e.g. leading to an MD or PhD) (OOPR)
- iv. taking a planned career break (OOPC)

## **General Principles**

A trainee should have been in post for a year before an OOP can be started unless there are exceptional circumstances, and will not normally be approved in the final year of training (with the exception of Acting Up)

**Counting towards training time:** Time in an OOP can only be counted towards training if it is approved to count towards training before the OOP starts.

OOP Placements are normally dependant upon satisfactory progression at ARCP

Trainees will retain their NTN whilst on an OOP, and as such HEEWM will remain the revalidation officer.

Trainees must ensure that HEE has up-to-date contact details throughout the period of OOP.

Academic trainees taking an OOP will end their academic award (they will no longer be an academic trainee). If a trainee wishes to continue ACF/CL then they will need to apply to NIHR.

**If you are on a Tier 2 visa, you must check with the national Tier 2 team about how your visa will be affected if you go on an OOP.**

You are advised to check how your OOP will affect your pension.

This process covers 5 types of OOP placements (each type of OOP has its own specific application form)

**OOPR:** Out of Programme Research: this OOP may have some of the time counted towards the trainees training time (up to one year). OOPR's relate to trainees applying to undertake research as part of their training experience. Research projects may last up to 3 years. Research should usually be towards a higher degree.

**OOPT:** Out of Programme Training: at least some of the time must be counted towards training, otherwise it will not be granted. An OOPE should then be used. OOPT's relate 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.

**OOPE:** Out of Programme Experience: none of the time can be counted towards training. OOPE's relate to trainees applying for an out of programme clinical experience which does not fall under OOPT. OOPE will normally be for a period of 1 year in total. This will be less common than OOPT and may be for experience outside of the curriculum.

**OOPC:** Out of Programme Career Break: relate 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 1-2 years however may be longer in exceptional circumstances. Trainees must relinquish their National Training Number (NTN) if they take more than a 2 year break. It is the trainees' responsibility to maintain licensing / revalidation as appropriate at the time

**OOPAUC:** Out of Programme Acting Up as a consultant can occur for 3 months maximum (pro rata) in the final year, retaining their training number with agreement from the TPD and / or Head of School if clinical service / programme planning allows. Trainees must obtain Royal College approval for time acting up as a consultant prospectively; please note that trainees need to complete an OOP application form for time acting up as a consultant.

## **Employment/Contractual Issues**

Trainees whose OOP applications are approved will normally be granted unpaid leave for the period of the OOP.

Trainees should ensure that the organisation/authority offering the OOP post issues a statement of terms and conditions of service.

It is the responsibility of the trainee to contact their current employer to establish how the OOP will affect their:

- i. Continuous employment
- ii. Incremental progression
- iii. Parental leave entitlement
- iv. Employer's contributions to superannuation
- v. Any other employment issues

Trainees taking career breaks should get advice from their employers on all statutory rights in relation to career breaks.

Trainees on OOP are not normally eligible to apply for funded study leave from the specialty study leave budget, except for those on OOPE. Applications for trainees on OOPE will only be approved and funded where there is clear evidence linking the application to the specific curriculum requirement for the trainee's individual specialty. The trainee's base local office will be responsible for approving the study leave and funding/reimbursing the associated study budget. Where a trainee chooses to take study leave while OOPE, that individual would then not be eligible to apply for, and have funded, that same element again upon re-joining their training programme.

Trainees on OOP are not normally eligible to receive expenses from HEE

Return to programme should be planned, both before and during the period of OOP. At least six months' notice should be given if return to programme is earlier than initially planned, with no guarantee that a specialty place will be available, although every effort will be made to identify a programme placement at the earliest opportunity.

## **ARCP Processes for OOP**

Trainees on OOP will still be required to engage with the annual ARCP process.

The ARCP panel should receive documentation from the trainee on a HEEWM Form (sent out prior to ARCP) indicating what they are doing during their OOP time, if the OOP is not recognised for training.

- i. OOPE – If the OOP period is to gain clinical experience that will not contribute towards the competences required by the training programme (OOPE), then an annual OOP report form should be submitted, including an indicative intended date of return.

- ii. OOPR – If the purpose of the OOP is research, the trainee must produce a research supervisor's report together with the annual OOP report form indicating that appropriate progress in research is being made, along with achievement of the relevant degree (if appropriate). If there is prospective approval by the GMC for the OOPR to contribute to the CCT or CESR(CP)/ CEGPR(CP), then formal assessment documentation must be submitted annually to the review panel.
- iii. OOPC – If a trainee is undertaking a career break, a yearly OOPC request should be sent to the panel, indicating that the trainee is still on a career break and including an indicative intended date of return.
- iv. OOPT – If the trainee is out of programme on a training placement or OOPR that has been prospectively approved by the GMC and that will contribute to the competences of the trainee's programme, then an Outcome 8 should not be used. Instead, a routine assessment of progression should be made and an Outcome 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 should be awarded.

All queries regarding ARCP should be directed to [assessments.wm@hee.nhs.uk](mailto:assessments.wm@hee.nhs.uk)

# Completing the OOP Form.

With the exception of OOPAUC (and potentially for OOPC) all OOP forms should be submitted 6 months before the proposed start of the OOP placement.

It is best practice for OOPs to align with the programme rotations, especially the end date of OOP so as to facilitate the induction of trainees back into the programme placements, but this is not always possible/practical

It is the Trainees responsibility to gather all signatures, and college/faculty approval before submitting your OOP application form. HEEWM will process your form once it has had the final approval from the Head of School (HoS)

OOP forms that have not been completed will be returned to trainees for completion before HEE can process them.

Once HEEWM have processed your completed OOP Application Form, you will be emailed an OOP approval form, stating the type, start date and end date of the OOP, and how much time, if any, is counted towards training.

Please see the following pages for information regarding applying for the different OOP types.

# OUT OF PROGRAMME – Research

**OOPR | Research |** This may or may not count towards CCT

## Introduction to OOPR

OOPR's 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 trainees CCT. Research should usually be toward a higher degree.

## Considering an OOPR

Before applying for OOP, trainees must discuss their plans with their Educational Supervisor (ES) and Training Programme Director (TPD). 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.

**If you are on a Tier 2 visa, you must check with the national Tier 2 team about how your visa will be affected if you go on an OOP.**

## Applying for an OOPR

1. Discuss with ES and TPD to see if there is support for application in principal
2. Complete the trainee section of the OOP application form, selecting if any of the time will be requested to count towards training.
3. Send your OOP form to your ES, they will complete the ES section and return to you.
4. Send your OOP form to your TPD (they may want to meet to discuss) they will complete the TPD section and return to you. This will include a new CCT date.
5. If your specialty comes under the JRCPTB, JCST or RCPCH you will need your OOPR approved by the Academic TPD. Please contact your specialties academic lead, an example of what may be required is in Appendix i. They may contact you requesting further information, and once satisfied, will sign the Academic TPD section, and return the form to you.
6. Submit your form to your Head of School (HoS), they will provisionally sign and return to you, pending the college approval of time.
7. Submit your provisionally approved form to your Faculty/College (RCPCH have agreed that Regional Advisors are able to verify the suitability of the OOP on behalf of the Royal College, so send it to them instead).
  - a. If your training time is counting towards your training, your college/faculty will supply you with a letter stating how much time is to be counted.
  - b. If your training is not being counted, the college/faculty will send you an acknowledgement of you going OOP
8. Submit your form to your Head of School (HoS), including your time to be counted towards training, they will then sign, granting permission for an approval letter to be generated.
9. Complete the final declaration (confirmation that college/faculty has been informed) and submit your application with the college letter if training is to be counted.
10. If your time counts towards training, please submit confirmation of GMC approved code for the site you will be training at.

- a. If the site is not approved for training in that specialty, HEEWM will submit the GMC approval request. (Any approval from the GMC must be before the start of the OOP, or none of the time will count)
- 11. HEEWM will check your application, if any of the signatures or the college letter are missing, it will be returned to you.
- 12. Once HEEWM have a completed application (and college/faculty letter if needed) HEEWM will process your form, send you your approval letter and update TIS. You must not go on OOP without this approval letter.

# OUT OF PROGRAMME – Training

## Introduction to OOPT

OOPT's relate 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. At least some of the time of the OOP must count towards training for it to be an OOPT. **If the college/faculty do not recognise any of the time as counting towards training, then it cannot be approved as an OOPT. In this instance the HoS can either decline it, request that a new OOPE form is submitted, or approve it as an OOPE.**

## Considering an OOPT

Before applying for OOP, trainees must discuss their plans with their Educational Supervisor and / or 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.

**If you are on a Tier 2 visa, you must check with the national Tier 2 team about how your visa will be affected if you go on an OOP. (especially important if the OOPT becomes an OOPE)**

## Applying for an OOPT

1. Discuss with ES and TPD to see if there is support for application in principle
2. Complete the trainee section of the OOP application form, selecting how much of the time will be requested to count towards training.
3. Send your OOP form to your ES, they will complete the ES section and return to you.
4. Send your OOP form to your TPD (they may want to meet to discuss) they will complete the TPD section and return to you. This will include a new CCT date.
5. Submit your form to your Head of School (HoS), they will provisionally sign and return to you, pending the college approval of time.
6. Submit your provisionally approved form to your Faculty/College (RCPCH have agreed that Regional Advisors are able to verify the suitability of the OOP on behalf of the Royal College, so send it to them instead). your college will supply you with a letter stating how much time is to be counted.
  - a. If your college will not recognise any of the training time, you will need to apply for an OOPE.
7. Complete the final declaration (confirmation that college/faculty has been informed) and submit your application with the college letter as training is to be counted.
8. If your time counts towards training, please submit confirmation of GMC approved code for the site you will be training at.
  - a. If the site is not approved for training in that specialty, HEEWM will submit the GMC approval request. (Any approval from the GMC must be before the start of the OOP, or none of the time will count, and your OOP cannot be an OOPT)
9. HEEWM will check your application, if any of the signatures or the college letter are missing, it will be returned to you.
10. Once HEEWM have a completed application and letter, HEEWM will process your form, send you your approval letter and update TIS. You must not go on OOP without this letter.

# OUT OF PROGRAMME – Experience

## Introduction to OOPE

OOPE's relate 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 may be for experience outside of the curriculum.

## Considering an OOPE

Before applying for OOPE, trainees must discuss their plans with their Educational Supervisor and / or 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.

**If you are on a Tier 2 visa, you must check with the national Tier 2 team about how your visa will be affected if you go on an OOP.**

## Applying for an OOPE

1. Discuss with ES and TPD to see if there is support for application in principal
2. Complete the trainee section of the OOP application form, selecting if any of the time will be requested to count towards training.
3. Send your OOP form to your ES, they will complete the ES section and return to you
4. Send your OOP form to your TPD (they may want to meet to discuss) they will complete the TPD section and return to you. This will include a new CCT date.
5. Submit your form to your Head of School (HoS), they will sign and return to you.
6. Submit your completed form to your Faculty/College (RCPCH have agreed that Regional Advisors are able to verify the suitability of the OOP on behalf of the Royal College, so send it to them instead). The college/faculty will send you an acknowledgement of you going OOP
7. Complete the final declaration (confirmation that college/faculty has been informed) and submit your application with the college acknowledgement.
8. HEEWM will check your application, if any of the signatures or the college acknowledgement are missing, it will be returned to you.
9. Once HEEWM have a completed application and acknowledgement, HEEWM will process your form, send you your approval letter and update TIS. You must not go on OOP without this letter.

# OUT OF PROGRAMME – Career Break

## 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 1-2 years however may be longer in exceptional circumstances. Trainees must relinquish their National Training Number (NTN) if they take more than a 2 year break. It is the trainees' responsibility to maintain licensing / revalidation as appropriate at the time.

**If you are on a Tier 2 visa, you must check with the national Tier 2 team about how your visa will be affected if you go on an OOP.**

Note: Trainees are not required to complete an OOP application Form for maternity leave.

## Applying for an OOPC

1. Discuss with ES and TPD to see if there is support for application in principal
2. Complete the trainee section of the OOP application form, selecting if any of the time will be requested to count towards training.
3. Send your OOP form to your ES, they will complete the ES section and return to you
4. Send your OOP form to your TPD (they may want to meet to discuss) they will complete the TPD section and return to you. This will include a new CCT date.
5. Submit your form to your Head of School (HoS), they will sign and return to you.
6. Submit your completed form to your Faculty/College (RCPCH have agreed that Regional Advisors are able to verify the suitability of the OOP on behalf of the Royal College, so send it to them instead). The college/faculty will send you an acknowledgement of you going OOP
7. Complete the final declaration (confirmation that college/faculty has been informed) and submit your application with the college acknowledgement.
8. HEEWM will check your application, if any of the signatures are missing, it will be returned to you.
9. Once HEEWM have a completed application, HEEWM will process your form, send you your approval letter and update TIS. You must not go on OOP without this letter.

# OUT OF PROGRAMME – Acting Up as a Consultant

## Introduction to OOPAUC

Acting up as a consultant can occur for 3 months maximum (pro rata) in the final year, retaining their training number with agreement from the TPD and / or Head of School if clinical service / programme planning allows. Trainees must obtain Royal College approval for time acting up as a consultant prospectively.

Except in exceptional circumstances, OOPAUC should take place in the site/trust the trainee would have been training at during that time period.

**If you are on a Tier 2 visa, you must check with the national Tier 2 team about how your visa will be affected if you go on an OOP.**

## Applying for an OOPAUC

1. Discuss with ES and TPD to see if there is support for application in principal
2. Complete the trainee section of the OOP application form, selecting if any of the time will be requested to count towards training.
3. Send your OOP form to your ES, they will complete the ES section and return to you
4. Send your OOP form to your TPD (they may want to meet to discuss) they will complete the TPD section and return to you. This will include a new CCT date.
5. Submit your form to your Head of School (HoS), they will sign and return to you.
6. Submit your completed form to your Faculty/College (RCPCH have agreed that Regional Advisors are able to verify the suitability of the OOP on behalf of the Royal College, so send it to them instead). your college will supply you with a letter stating how much time is to be counted.
  - a. If your college will not recognise any of the training time, you will need to apply for an OOPE.
7. Complete the final declaration (confirmation that college/faculty has been informed) and submit your application with the college letter as training is to be counted.
8. HEEWM will check your application, if any of the signatures or the college letter are missing, it will be returned to you.
9. As your time counts towards training, if the site is not approved for training in that specialty, HEEWM will submit the GMC approval request. (Any approval from the GMC must be before the start of the OOP, or none of the time will count.) This should only be needed in exceptional circumstances
10. Once HEEWM have a completed application and letter, HEEWM will process your form, send you your approval letter and update TIS. You must not go on OOP without this letter.

# OUT OF PROGRAMME – Extension

## 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.

## Considering an OOP Extension

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

**If you are on a Tier 2 visa, you must check with the national Tier 2 team about how your visa will be affected if you go on an OOP.**

## Applying for an OOP extension

1. Discuss with ES and TPD to see if there is support for application in principal
2. Complete the trainee section of the OOP extension application form, selecting if any of the time will be requested to count towards training.
3. Send your OOP extension form to your ES, they will complete the ES section and return to you
4. Send your OOP extension form to your TPD (they may want to meet to discuss) they will complete the TPD section and return to you. This will include a new CCT date.
5. Submit your OOP extension form to your Head of School (HoS), they will sign and return to you.
6. Submit your completed OOP extension form to your Faculty/College (RCPCH have agreed that Regional Advisors are able to verify the suitability of the OOP on behalf of the Royal College, so send it to them instead). The college/faculty will send you an acknowledgement of your OOP extension.
7. Complete the final declaration (confirmation that college/faculty has been informed) and submit your application with the college acknowledgement.
8. HEEWM will check your application, if any of the signatures or the college acknowledgement are missing, it will be returned to you.
9. Once HEEWM have a completed application and acknowledgement, HEEWM will process your form, send you your OOP extension approval letter and update TIS. You must not extend your time on OOP without this letter.

# Appendix i

Sample OOPR Check list



RCS doc -  
Questions for OOP :

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# Appendix ii

How to find GMC site approval

<https://www.gmc-uk.org/education/standards-guidance-and-curricula/guidance/programme-and-site-approvals>