

Anaesthetic Training Update

28 May 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused widespread disruption to many areas of training. This update from the College is a guide to some of the areas of particular importance. It is intended as a follow up to the [previously circulated advice](#) to provide up to date information that will be of use for both anaesthetists in training and trainers.

ARCPs

The UK Statutory Education Bodies have advised that ARCPs will go ahead this summer. The majority of these will be held in absentia with face-to-face events occurring only when there is a specific requirement to meet. Please ensure that an Educational Supervisors Structured Report is included in all cases along with a completed Form R that outlines the full scope of practice.

There are two new outcomes, 10.1 and 10.2, which may be used this summer where progress has been interrupted. Outcome 10.1 may be awarded where progress has been at the expected rate but particular Units of Training have not been completed or examinations were not able to be sat. Those receiving a 10.1 may progress to their next year of training in all cases (including those commencing ST3 posts). Additional time in training posts may also be obtained following discussion with the Training Programme Director if it is deemed necessary, for instance at the end of CT2 if an individual is not moving into an ST3 post. Outcome 10.2 will be awarded when extra time is definitely required, for instance for someone at the end of ST7 who has not completed all of their mandatory Units of Training.

It is highly recommended that anaesthetists in training and educational supervisors read the advice on ARCPs which is on the College website (guidance and checklists can be found below this article).

Units of Training

We would ask that everyone takes a pro-active approach to getting Units of Training (UoTs) signed off but those who are unable to do so will be able to move forward in their programme providing appropriate progress has been achieved over the rest of the year. Please note that all mandatory UoTs will need to be completed by the end of the training programme but they may be deferred for those in years CT-ST6 without requiring additional time. In most cases, outstanding UoTs should be completed at the earliest opportunity but it will be possible to combine intermediate and higher units into a single attachment in areas such as neuro, cardiac and paediatric anaesthesia if it is desired to do so.

It is recognised that many anaesthetists in training will have spent additional time in ICM to support critical care during the crisis and may wish that this time counted towards their ICM UoTs. We are recommending that such decisions are made by



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schools on a regional basis to ensure that there is ongoing support for ICM services and encourage flexibility in this area. With regards to training in COVID-specific areas, there are competencies in other areas such as perioperative care and trauma that must be completed for UoT signoff.

Recruitment

Offers for the August 2020 ST3 posts have now gone out. The College is committed to ensuring the future recruitment processes allow an interactive element and have submitted a proposal for the February 2021 recruitment round for both CT1 and ST3 posts, which commences in September. Unfortunately, this is too soon to be certain that face-to-face interviews will be appropriate and therefore we have made plans to institute a suitable alternative. We have requested that candidates are given a single interview via video link, which will include both a review of the portfolio evidence and also clinical questions. This format is subject to approval but we hope that we can provide a fair and rigorous way of managing recruitment. We have also requested that the ST3 person specification is changed to allow applicants who have passed the Primary FRCA MCQ to apply for posts with a requirement to achieve the full Primary FRCA by the end of ST3.

Examinations & Revision Courses

All examinations scheduled to take place between the end of March and July have been cancelled. Conducting exams is essential to supporting progress of anaesthetists in training and it is clear that we need to find a way to restart this activity. Exams will be restarting from August onwards and we are working hard to look at how we can devise an appropriate way to conduct exams and also meet the increased demand.

After careful consideration, it is felt that all written exams can be conducted as online remotely invigilated exams. We are also trialling a virtual delivery for the structured oral exams (SOE or vivas) for both the Primary and Final FRCA and will make a final decision on this post-trials. However, we believe that there are many elements within the OSCE requiring a face-to-face approach, which cannot adequately be replicated in other ways. We are therefore looking to develop a mechanism to run a live OSCE exam at the College (and /or other locations) with appropriate safety measures in place including social distancing. Due to these measures, it is likely that the live OSCE will be separated from the SOE in the Primary FRCA.

We are very pleased to announce that the College has set up online revision courses for both the Primary and Final FRCA. These may be [accessed via the College events page](#).

Curriculum

We are continuing to work with the GMC and the four Nations Statutory Education Bodies to finalise the arrangements for the new curriculum, in particular the move to a 3 year Core Programme. We will be discussing plans with Heads of School over



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the coming weeks with a view to a phased introduction to the new curriculum in August 2021 with the CT3 year from August 2022. [Details of the High-level Learning Outcomes are now on the College website.](#)

Morale and Welfare

The welfare of all anaesthetists is of paramount importance to the College. The joint COVID website contains links to a number of resources that can be accessed. We would also encourage anaesthetists in training to speak to their educational supervisor about any concerns that they may have and actively seek support. We know that anaesthetists who are shielding are experiencing particular problems and worries and would encourage you to get in touch with your College Tutor or the Return to Training lead in your area.

The College is committed to supporting anaesthetists in training and facilitating progression in the training programme whenever it is possible. We will provide further updates about recruitment and examinations on a regular basis. If anyone has questions, concerns or feedback you are welcome to contact the training mailbox: training@rcoa.ac.uk

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Chair of the RCoA Education, Training & Examinations Board