



Training Handbook:

Basic Specialist Training, Institute of Medicine

July 2022



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Foreword

This document has been prepared by the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland (RCPI) and provides important information in relation to the Institute of Medicine (IOM) Training Programmes. The purpose of the document is to also outline the rules and regulations pertaining to specialist training for the following programmes:

Training Body	Training Programme	Training Body	Training Programme
IOM	General Internal Medicine	IOM	Infectious Diseases
IOM	Cardiology	IOM	Medical Oncology
IOM	Clinical Genetics	IOM	Nephrology
IOM	Clinical Pharmacology	IOM	Neurology
IOM	Dermatology	IOM	Palliative Medicine
IOM	Endocrinology & DM	IOM	Pharmaceutical Medicine
IOM	Gastroenterology	IOM	Rehabilitation Medicine
IOM	Genito-Urinary Medicine	IOM	Respiratory Medicine
IOM	Geriatric Medicine	IOM	Rheumatology

This document replaces previously published documents and reflects the continuously evolving nature of training in the above specialties. The document also refers to the published RCPI policies which should be read in conjunction with the Training Handbook.

Important

Information in this document is accurate at the date of publication. However, regulations are continually evolving and up-to-date information should be obtained from RCPI if in doubt. The most up-to-date version on this document will always be available on www.rcpi.ie.

While other institutions are referenced (e.g. Medical Council, Health Service Executive, National Doctors Training Planning) we have given our interpretation of their regulations but the institutes themselves should be contacted for definitive information.

There is inevitably some repetition in this document as it is intended to be used as a reference. If regulations are unclear or seem contradictory, RCPI or the Specialty Training Body will determine the correct interpretation.

Governance of the RCPI Training Programmes

Governance Structure

There are six accredited postgraduate training bodies under the umbrella of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland:

- Faculty of Occupational Medicine
- Faculty of Pathology
- Faculty of Paediatrics
- Faculty of Public Health Medicine
- Institute of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists
- Institute of Medicine

The accredited Training Body oversees the development and delivery of the postgraduate training programmes.

In Medicine the IOM oversees the Basic Specialty Training for General Internal Medicine and the Higher Specialty Training Programmes in the medical specialties.

Basic Specialist Training (BST) is two years in duration and Higher Specialist Training (HST) is four– six years in duration (specialty dependent).

The Director of Training and Education for IOM oversees the delivery and development of the IOM BST and HST training programmes. Supporting the Director of Training are the Associate Director for BST, Associate Director for HST General Internal Medicine (GIM) and the National Specialty Directors for HST.

In BST the Associate Director has been appointed to oversee the development and delivery of the BST Programme. Supporting the Associate Director are the Regional Programme Directors (RPD). Each BST Hub and Spoke programme has an appointed RPD overseeing the delivery of the regional programme. There are also appointed Training Leads in “spoke” hospitals within the scheme. The Associate Director chairs the Regional Programme Director (RPD) Forum which reports to the Board of the training body, the IOM, and meets quarterly.

At Higher Specialist Training each specialty training programme has an appointed National Specialty Director(s) (NSDs). The NSD(s) chairs the Specialty Training Committee (STC) for their HST specialty training programme. A key responsibility of the National Specialty Director(s) is to provide advice, career guidance and support to Trainees on issues relating to training, examination and general



queries relating to the specialty. The NSD and STC report to the Board of the training body, the IOM and meet, at a minimum, quarterly

The function of the RPD Forum at BST level and STC at HST level is to actively participate in the development and delivery of postgraduate specialist training in the defined specialty, under the governance of the training Body. The STC/RPD Forum is responsible for delivery of the training programme in the defined specialty in accordance with decisions made by the training body. All decisions and proposals for changes relating to development and delivery of the training programme in the defined specialty must be approved by the training body prior to implementation by the STC/RPD Forum.

RCPI Trainers

Trainers play a crucial role in the delivery of our Basic and Higher Specialist Training programmes. They guide Trainees along the path to becoming a specialist and help the next generation of medical leaders reach their full potential.

RCPI recognises that the quality of training depends to a large extent on Trainers' clinical experience and expertise, along with competence, aptitude, attitudes and abilities as good role models. The aim of the College is to continue to strive for education and training excellence for all of our Trainees, at all levels and in all locations across Ireland.

The primary focus of the RCPI Trainer is to oversee RCPI Trainees' development and education at all training levels, through their involvement in teaching, training, evaluation and supervision. At HST level no Trainer can have more than one HST Clinical Trainee. This rule can be reviewed by the IOM under exceptional circumstances. At BST level it is recommended that no Trainer should have more than two RCPI Trainees.

The core responsibilities of the Trainer are to:

- Meet the Trainee and understand requirements of training
- Agree a training plan at commencement of post
- Facilitate attendance at educational activities
- Act as a supervisor to the Trainee
- Provide feedback and motivation to Trainee
- Attend Trainee annual evaluations
- Monitor progress and performance

- Sign off records of training in the ePortfolio

The following criteria are required to be a registered Trainer:

- Registered on the relevant Specialist Division of the Medical Council Register
- Registered on a Professional Competence Scheme
- Practising at consultant level in Ireland
- Fellow of the relevant training body (RCPI or one of our Faculties/Institutes). Please note this is desirable but not mandatory

Further detail on the role of an RCPI Trainer can be found in the document [Role and Responsibilities of a Trainer](#).

Training Site Environment

All training posts are monitored by the RCPI through the Training Site inspection process. The purpose of a training site inspection is to determine the ability of an institution to deliver Higher Specialist and Basic Specialist Training in a specialty, according to the requirements as defined by the relevant curriculum of training.

The inspection panel advises on the suitability after a detailed interview with consultant Trainers, Trainees and management representatives, with an inspection of the facilities. All posts will be expected to conform to statutory guidelines on hours and condition of work for doctors in training.

Facilities

Your training site must provide an appropriate training environment and facilities that will allow you to develop the knowledge, skills and clinical judgement essential for your specialty. Physical facilities should include enough space for research and study. You should also have access to professional literature and information technology.

We regularly inspect all training sites approved for training to ensure that they meet these requirements.

Trainees' Committee

The RCPI Trainees' Committee is the 'voice' of Trainees in RCPI. They represent Trainees on College Council, the Advisory Committee, the IOM, each STC and the Examinations Committee.

The RCPI Trainees' Committee has always had an active interest in postgraduate specialist training and acts as an important interface between Trainees and RCPI. The goal of the Committee is to represent Trainees' interests and work towards improving training.

They are also responsible for the organisation of a number of Trainee Awards including:

- The Corrigan Medal
- The David Mitchell Award
- The William Stokes Award
- The Kate McGarry Prize

Trainees are encouraged to get involved with the Trainees' Committee. For information on the Committee please email Trainees@rcpi.ie. For a list of current Trainee Committee members and details on the role please [see here](#).

Training Post Evaluation

Each year you will be asked to complete a short online Training Post Evaluation. In it you are asked to evaluate the training post that you just completed. This includes the working conditions and the training-related supports available to you in that post.

The evaluation is completely anonymous. You are not asked for any identifying information such as your name, date of birth or RCPI ID number.

Your honest feedback is enormously important to us, as it helps RCPI identify any issues affecting the quality of training in specific posts or sites, so that we can take action and continue to drive improvements in training.

Regulations Relating to Basic Specialty Training

Point of Entry to the Programme (Recognition of Prior Learning)

Point of entry: Entry to the BST Programme is once a year, in July. Trainees in the majority of circumstances enter year one of the programme.

Equivalence of Basic Specialist Training – programme undertaken outside Ireland

Consideration will be taken, on a case by case basis, for equivalence of Basic Specialist Training for programmes undertaken outside of Ireland.

Applicants seeking to gain equivalence of training/experience for entry to BST will only be recognised if the training which is being considered has been successfully completed and provided through a structured programme formally recognised by a national training body in one of the following jurisdictions:

- UK – Programmes Approved by The Royal College of Physicians
- Australia and New Zealand – Programmes Approved by The Royal Australasian College of Physicians
- US – ACGME Approved Residency Programmes
- Canada – Programmes Approved by The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada
- OMAN – Fellowship programme of the Oman Medical Specialist Board OMSB

In determining the amount of credit to be awarded regard will be given to the clinical attachments, courses, etc. completed.

A minimum of 12 months and a maximum of 24 months overseas equivalence may only be considered.

Retrospective Recognition

General Internal Medicine does not recognise any retrospective recognition for standalone posts held in Ireland, i.e. posts undertaken at SHO and/or Registrar level while not registered on an accredited Basic Specialist Training programme.

Reciprocity of Basic Specialist Training programmes in Ireland

Consideration will be taken on a case by case basis for those Trainees who wish to transfer from other postgraduate training programmes recognised by Irish postgraduate training bodies in the Irish Health Care System – general practice, surgery, anaesthesia and emergency medicine.

In these cases applicants who have successfully completed two years BST in general practice, surgery, anaesthesia or emergency medicine may enter BST General Internal Medicine at year two (i.e. be given the equivalent of 12 months credit) under the provision that the training completed is relevant and corresponds with the BST General Internal Medicine Curriculum. This 12 months credit will only be applied once the Trainee has been offered a place on the BST General Internal Medicine programme.

Allocation Process

A Trainee entering the Basic Specialty Training scheme will, normally, be informed of their assigned rotations for the first two years of the scheme.

The process of allocating is scheme dependent and is as follows:

Hub and Spoke

BST GIM Hub	Hospitals
Galway Hub	Galway University Hospital
	Sligo Regional Hospital
	Letterkenny General
	Mayo General Hospital
	Portiuncula Hospital Ballinasloe
	Roscommon Hospital
	Mayo Clinic USA
Mater Hub	Mater
	Connolly Hospital
	Our Lady's Hospital Navan
	Our Lady's Hospital Drogheda
	Mullingar General Hospital
	Letterkenny General Hospital
	Mayo Clinic USA
South Hub	Cork University Hospital
	Mercy University Hospital
	Marymount Hospice
	Mallow General Hospital
	Bantry General Hospital
	University Hospital Kerry



	South Tipperary Hospital Clonmel
	University Hospital Waterford
Mid-West Hub	University Hospital Limerick
	Ennis Hospital
	Nenagh General Hospital
	St John's Hospital
	South Tipperary Hospital Clonmel
Mayo/Sligo Hub	Galway University Hospital
	Mayo University Hospital
	Sligo University Hospital
	Roscommon
St James's/Tallaght Hub	St James's
	Tallaght University Hospital
	Mullingar
	Portlaoise
	Tullamore
	Naas
	University Hospital Waterford
	Wexford General Hospital
	St. Luke's Hospital, Kilkenny
	St Columcilles
	St Luke's Rathgar
	Portiuncula Hospital Ballinasloe
Peamount	
Beaumont/Connolly Hub	Beaumont
	Connolly
	Our Lady's Hospital Navan
	Our Lady's Hospital Drogheda
	Cavan
	St Luke's Rathgar
	National Rehab
	St Joseph's Raheny
Bon Secours Glasnevin	
St Vincents Hub	St Vincents
	University Hospital Waterford
	St. Luke's Hospital, Kilkenny
	Wexford General Hospital
	St Columcilles
	National Rehab
	St Michaels Dún Laoghaire
South East Hub	University Hospital Waterford
	Wexford General Hospital
	St. Luke's Hospital, Kilkenny



	South Tipperary Hospital Clonmel
	Cork University Hospital

Post Reassignment

RCPI endeavours to provide Trainees their allocation assignment for their first two years in the scheme. Following that, allocations are assigned based on training requirements and Trainee's preference.

If a Trainee's circumstances have changed, applications for a post reassignment within the assigned Hub will be considered. Applications received will be considered by the Regional Programme Director.

Applications will generally be considered as part of the allocation process. Priority will be given to applications from Trainees with change in circumstances related to caring or parental responsibilities. Applications from Trainees with a change involving a committed relationship will be considered afterwards.

Please see policy [on Post Reassignment](#) for information and application process.

Training Site Environment

All rotations must meet the criteria outlined below and all rotations require the approval of RCPI. Regular evaluation of all rotations by RCPI is the basis for monitoring training. All posts will be expected to conform to statutory guidelines on hours and conditions of work for doctors in training. BST Site Visits include review of rotations with the Regional Programme Directors, assurance of the academic training environment and feedback from Trainers and Trainees.

Criteria for approval of a BST rotation:

1. Each Trainee must rotate through three out of the five core specialties listed:
 - a. Cardiology
 - b. Respiratory
 - c. Geriatric Medicine
 - d. Endocrinology
 - e. Gastroenterology
2. Each post is three months in duration and the BST programme is 24 months in total

3. A full rotation must include:

- a. A minimum of 6 months spent outside of the metropolitan area
- b. A minimum of 6 months in a level 4 hospital and a level 3 or 2 hospital

4. A minimum of 18 months on call, as per local hospital on call rota arrangements, to include a minimum of 12 months unselected G(I)M/cardiology.

Additionally: “A three month post in the emergency department may be counted towards your 18 month call requirement”

5. Each Trainee must have an assigned Trainer

6. Each Trainee should spend no more than 6 months in any one specialty

7. Structured Educational Activities must be in place at each training site. This may include journal clubs, case based small group teaching, grand rounds and MDT meetings

8. Trainees should attend specialty outpatient clinics and, when on acute medicine service, should participate in post call ward rounds

Trainers

Every BST post has at least one assigned Supervising Trainer, whose duties include:

- Meeting with the Trainee in their first week in a post and agreeing the Trainee’s Personal Goal Plan
- Appraising the Trainee’s progress at regular intervals during the post
- Completing the End of Post assessment in ePortfolio
- Supporting the Trainee, both personally and in respect of obtaining career advice

Research and Audit

Research and audit are not mandatory requirements for BST, however it is recommended that Trainees attempt one or the other to prepare for Higher Specialist Training.

Trainees are encouraged to:

- Ask their Trainer for audit ideas at the start of a rotation
- Choose a project that is achievable considering other commitments
- Consider sharing the audit with a colleague to reduce the burden
- Try to pick something that has presentation/publication potential
- Learn the necessary steps for completing clinical audit from someone who knows the subject, rather than learning a skill badly from an uninformed teacher



- Learn the difference between audit and research
- Start with trying to do case reports. They are less challenging and can be completed in a shorter period of time than large-scale studies
- See if any senior colleagues are working on an ongoing project that the Trainee could become involved in
- Consider a literature review as an intermediary step after case reports, which can be shared among several authors

Mandatory Courses

All BST Trainees are required to attend courses and study days throughout their training programme. These days are mandatory. Some courses/study days Trainees are required to attend once a year, and some are required once during the programme.

Trainees are automatically given access to their mandatory courses once they are registered on the programme via the online digital hub. Some courses/study days require attendance in RCPI, some are completed online, and some can be organised in the local hospital. Please see the curriculum for further details.

Attendance at study days, courses, exams and conferences including study leave entitlement is as per the NCHD Contract for educational leave (up to 18 working days per 6 months). This leave must be agreed in advance with the employer.

Should a Trainee complete their mandatory courses outside of their BST scheme, they will be required to pay the course registration fee. Please note that all courses must be undertaken inside of the *Four Year Rule* timeframe.

Should mandatory courses not be completed within four years of a Trainee's start date they will be required to undertake the full two-year programme again from the beginning in order to qualify for their Certificate of Completion.

Annual Evaluation Process

The Annual Evaluation of Progress is the formal method by which a Trainee's progression through her/his training programme is monitored and recorded each year. The evidence to be reviewed by the panel is recorded by the Trainee and Trainer in the Trainee's e-Portfolio.

Trainees are required to undergo an annual evaluation process. This evaluation will take place within the Trainee's hub.

Trainees must attend the evaluation. Trainees who do not complete an annual evaluation during each year of training will not be eligible for certification as they do not meet the minimum requirements of training.

Leave of Absence

Study leave and annual leave do not affect BST completion dates and are as per the NCHD contract.

Taking time out of the BST programme

Once you commence BST you must complete your training in a consecutive two year block except in exceptional circumstances. Details on special leave and how it may affect your completion date are outlined below.

Special Leave (Other than study and annual leave):

Examples of special leave: sick leave, maternity leave, compassionate leave, Force Majeure leave. As the BST programme consists of two years of intensive, supervised clinical training, any significant period of leave (i.e. greater than 6 weeks) taken over the course of the programme has the potential to affect the Trainee's opportunities to acquire the core skills and knowledge required for satisfactory completion of the programme.

In cases where additional leave (including maternity leave) is agreed by the Trainee's employer, the following conditions apply to all Trainees:

- ≤ 6 weeks over two years: If a Trainee takes special leave totalling 6 weeks or less over two years, his/her BST completion date is not affected
- >6 weeks: Any leave of greater than 6 weeks must be made up in a block of 3 months' extra training. This applies to all Trainees who take special leave totalling more than 6 weeks and less than or equal to 3 months over two years
- >3 months: 6 months of training in (an) approved post(s) must be completed in order to meet the requirements for BST certification. This applies to all Trainees who take special leave totalling more than 3 months and less than or equal to 6 months over two years
- >6 months: 9 months of training in (an) approved post(s) must be completed in order to meet the requirements for BST certification. This applies to all Trainees who take special leave totalling more than 6 months and less than or equal to 9 months over two years
- 9 months: 12 months of training in approved posts must be completed in order to meet the requirements for BST certification. This applies to all Trainees who take special leave totalling more than 9 months and less than or equal to 12 months over two years.

All requirements for the scheme, including completion of 3/5 core rotations, six months in a peripheral rotation and a minimum of 12 months on-call (acute unselected take), must be met. If an extra 6, 12 or 18 months is required: In cases where, due to leave in excess of 6 weeks, a Trainee is required to complete a further period of training, the College will help to place the Trainee in (a) suitable, approved training post(s). The post(s) will be approved for BST in the Trainee's speciality and will be counted towards the clinical training required for certification.

However, please note the following:

- RCPI cannot guarantee a post(s) in the Trainee's current hospital or region
- The Trainee may need to wait until a suitable post becomes available.
- It may be necessary to complete a minimum of one year in a structured rotation if no suitable, stand-alone six-month post can be found

If a Trainee wishes to take leave of absence, retain credit and return to the BST programme, this must be agreed with the RPD, Associate Director of BST, and the BST office. The Trainee should seek prospective approval of their leave of absence at least four weeks in advance. Approval will be agreed on a case by case basis and credit may not be retained in all cases.

Parental Leave

If a Trainee takes parental leave, he/she will have to make up this time on the programme, similarly to that of a flexible Trainee. Any time that is taken as parental leave must be made up before a Trainee will be awarded their Certificate of Completion of BST.

Transfer Between Hubs

Where possible, rotation transfers will be approved to accommodate Trainees who have had an unforeseen and significant change in their personal circumstances since the start of their training programme, for example:

- Disability or ill health
- Responsibility for caring for ill/disabled partner, relative or other dependent
- Responsibility for caring for school age children

Transfers between rotation programmes in General Internal Medicine must be approved by your RPD and the RPD of the rotation programme to which you want to transfer and the Associate Director of BST.

The overall combination of the Trainee's first and subsequent rotation must meet the requirements for BST certification. The following are the steps for transferring between hubs in the same specialty:

1. The Trainee should approach the regional director of the hub to which he/she would like to transfer, to discuss whether a transfer is possible
2. If the RPD agrees in principle to a transfer, the Trainee should meet with his/her current regional director to discuss the possibility of transferring to the other hub
3. If the Trainee's current programme director agrees to the transfer, both regional directors must agree formally to the transfer in writing, sending a copy to the BST office. This notification should include the agreed transfer date and a list of all posts affected by the Trainee's move. The director of the Hub being vacated should include a proposal for replacing the Trainee who is leaving.
4. Medical Manpower in the relevant hospitals must agree to the transfer
5. The Trainee must notify the Associate Director of BST of his/her intention to transfer in writing
6. The Associate Director of BST will inform the Trainee if his/her combined rotation schemes will meet the requirements for BST certification
7. The BST office in RCPI will update the Trainee's record accordingly.

Application Process

1. You must complete a [Post Reassignment form](#) and submit it to RCPI. You should contact your BST coordinator for more information on this. Please review the [post reassignment policy](#) before submitting
2. Applications made under the reassignment policy must be received prospectively, no later than three months before the rotation is due to commence
3. You may be required to provide documentation and evidence to support your application

Flexible Training

It is the policy of RCPI training bodies to facilitate flexible training. Whilst the training programme is full-time it is recognised that some Trainees may have individual circumstances that mean that training on a full-time, continuous basis would, for them, not be practical for well-founded reasons.

The training body recognises and supports part-time, interrupted, and other forms of flexible training and all Trainees are eligible to apply for flexible training for a set period.

Trainees can apply for flexible training through three routes:

- HSE National Flexible Training Scheme
- Job Sharing
- Less than full time working

HSE National Flexible Training Scheme

The HSE National Doctors Training and Planning (NDTP) operates a National Flexible Training Scheme,⁰ which allows a small number of Trainees to train part-time for a set period of time.

Applications may be made for flexible training by all Trainees excluding first year BST. This scheme is not recommended for final year Trainees. You must have a well-founded reason to apply, e.g. responsibility for young children or elderly relatives, or personal family circumstances. You cannot apply for flexible training in order to pursue other paid work or research.

Applications for flexible training can be made to the HSE NDTP up to 12 months in advance of the proposed date of commencement of flexible training. The Trainee must inform the RPD of his/her intention to apply for flexible training. NDTP recommend applying as soon as possible, as applications are considered in the order in which they are received, and places are limited.

Participation on the flexible training scheme will be restricted to a maximum of two years and will only be extended by NDTP in exceptional circumstances. This is to provide as many Trainees as possible with the option to train flexibly.

Applications for flexible training should be made to NDTP, however Trainees are required to let their relevant training body know that they are going to apply in plenty of time, so rotations can be planned and structured.

Further information on the application process can be found [here](#) on the HSE website.

Job Sharing

Postgraduate Trainees on the Basic Specialist Training Programmes can avail of job-sharing opportunities for a set period of time.

Job sharing works on the basis that two Trainees will share one full-time post with each Trainee working 50 per cent of the hours.

A training post can be shared by two Trainees who:

- Are training in the same specialty *and*
- Are within two years on the training pathway

Applications may be made up to 12 months in advance of the proposed date of commencement of the job share post and received no later than the month of October of the previous year of commencement.

Please refer to the [Job-Sharing](#) policy document for more information on how to apply and further information on the regulations of job sharing.

Acting Up to Registrar posts

Trainees cannot 'Act-up' into Registrar posts during the two year BST programme. All BST training must take place in SHO placements.

Training credit for BST will not be awarded for time spent in Registrar posts.

Withdrawal from the BST Programme

Trainees who withdraw from a programme will not receive credit for time spent in the programme unless they are transferring to another programme in line with the requirements as set out in "Transfer between Hubs"

Informing RCPI:

If a Trainee wishes to leave the programme before their expected BST completion date, they must notify the RCPI BST office in writing at least six weeks before they wish to leave their current post. Emailed notifications will be accepted.

Informing the Regional Programme Director:

The Trainee must inform his/her regional director of their intention to leave the programme as a matter of priority. This may be done in person, in writing or by telephone.

Leaving the programme without giving reasonable notice or explanation to the regional director is not acceptable behaviour and is considered unprofessional behaviour. Unprofessional behaviour may result in notification to the Medical Council by the RCPI.

Informing the employer:

Notice of resignation by the Trainee as an employee of his/her hospital must be given in accordance with the provisions of his/her contract of employment.

Withdrawal to take up another position:

The Irish training colleges regularly share information regarding Trainees transferring between schemes. If a BST Trainee is mid-scheme and is offered a position on another training scheme, early withdrawal from BST prior to the commencement of entry to the new training scheme without the express permission of the Regional Programme Director and the Associate Director of BST will be reported to the new training scheme. This may result in a withdrawal of the training offer for the new scheme, as such a withdrawal is considered unprofessional behaviour.

Out of Clinical Programme Experience

Out of Clinical Programme Experience is not permitted in Basic Specialist Training.

Examinations

All Trainees on a BST programme must complete the Membership of the Royal College of Physicians (MRCPI).

If a Trainee has not completed the MRCPI after the completion of the two-year clinical rotations the certification of completion will not be issued.

Further information regarding the format, locations and dates of the MRCPI and other examinations can be found at www.rcpi.ie/examinations.

Exit Criteria

For a Trainee to be awarded a Certificate of Completion of Basic Specialist Training Trainees are required to:

- Apply and be successful in the application process for the relevant BST programme
- Successfully complete 24 months in training posts as allocated by IOM that are approved for BST
- Achieve all outcomes as set out in the curriculum
- Attend all relevant study days
- Attend all mandatory courses
- Maintain an up-to-date and correctly completed ePortfolio as evidence of satisfactory completion of training
- Attend and have their annual evaluations signed off
- Complete the Membership of the Royal College of Physicians (GIM)

Failure to complete any of the above may result in a Trainee have their training time extended.

Trainees must complete their BST Training Programme within four years of their start date.

Completion dates may change under the following circumstances:

- If a Trainee takes special leave in excess of 6 weeks over two years and is required to complete a further period of training
- If a Trainee has not reached the required standard and is required to undertake additional training
- If a Trainee has not fulfilled the curriculum requirements for BST certification and is required to undertake additional training or attend outstanding mandatory courses
- If a Trainee's completion date is changed for any reason, the Trainee and regional programme director will be informed in writing by the BST coordinator in the Training Team, RCPI

The Four-Year Rule

Trainees must complete BST within a four-year period. If a Trainee's expected completion date is changed to a date greater than four years after their start date, they will be required to undertake the full two-year programme again from the beginning.



Supports for Postgraduate Medical Trainees

ePortfolio

ePortfolio is an electronic logbook for recording essential information about training, educational and evaluation activities. Trainees are required to maintain an up-to-date ePortfolio throughout HST, as it is an official record of satisfactory completion of training.

Trainees must complete an ePortfolio during their training programme. All Trainees will be given access to the RCPI ePortfolio which is set up depending on the specialty of the Trainee. Trainees must complete minimum requirements for their specialty. Details on the minimum requirements can be found in each specialty curriculum. The ePortfolio is also used to conduct Trainee Evaluations and end of post feedback.

The ePortfolio is the Trainee's record of their training and the information in the ePortfolio is owned by the Trainee. Following completion of the training programme a Trainee will have access to the ePortfolio for three years. RCPI provide a number of training videos on how to use your ePortfolio.

As you rotate through posts, your Trainers are required to verify recorded information and sign off evaluations. To do this, they will need to log into the RCPI website and open ePortfolio.

When to update ePortfolio

Trainees must update their ePortfolio at key points, listed below.

At the start of the year

- Check that personal details are correct
- Check that the details of post and Trainer are correct
- Review the training curriculum and requirements for the specialty. The curriculum and specialty requirements are reviewed every year, so Trainees need to be aware of any changes

At the start of each post

- Trainees must meet with their Trainer within the first six weeks to agree on the personal goals plan. The personal goals plan must be recorded on ePortfolio and the Trainer must sign it off

During each post

- Trainees must enter training and educational activities on ePortfolio
- Complete workplace-based assessments as they happen

At the end of each quarter and at the end of the post

- Trainees must ensure ePortfolio is up to date and signed off by the Trainer
- Meet the Trainer to complete the End of Post Form

At the end of each training year

- Trainees must make sure that the ePortfolio is up to date and signed off by the Trainer in preparation for the End of Year Evaluation
- Complete the annual evaluation form with the Trainer in advance of the Evaluation

At the end of your training programme

- Make sure that the ePortfolio is up to date and signed off by the Trainer in preparation for the Final Year Evaluation

RCPI Benefits

We are pleased to offer you a range of benefits to support all trainees on our training programme.

- Free attendance at Masterclasses, St Luke's Symposium as well as events and webinars organised by our Faculties and Institutes.
- Assistance with applying for a Student Leapcard for discounted fares on transport services



- Free four-month subscription to a BMJ OnExamination Package – request an access code by emailing helpdesk@rcpi.ie
To redeem your voucher and activate your four-month subscription, simply login to www.rcpi.ie and click on the link for BMJ OnExamination

RCPI Training Site Offices

RCPI training site offices are local, knowledgeable sources of information and support for Trainees, Trainers, Members and Fellows based in those hospital groups.

South/South West Hospital Group office

The RCPI South/South West Hospital Group office is located in Office 2.60, School of Medicine, Brookfield Health Sciences Complex, College Rd, UCC, Cork. The office is open Mondays 8:00am to 5:00pm and Thursdays 8:00am to 4:30pm. This office is currently closed.

Saolta Hospital Group office

The RCPI Saolta Hospital Group office is located in the Academic Office, Nurses Home in University Hospital Galway. The office is open on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday mornings.

Sheila Kelly

Tel: 091 893151

Email: RCPIsaolta@rcpi.ie

University of Limerick Hospitals Group Office

The RCPI UL Hospitals Group office is located in the Postgraduate Training Department, Room 2938, Ground Floor, Nurses Home, University Hospital Limerick. The office is open in the morning Monday to Thursday.

Muire Graham

Tel: 061 588264

Email: MuireGraham@rcpi.ie

RCPI Trainee Representative

Trainee Representatives are an important point of contact for Trainees seeking clarification or direction relating to training and education matters and are expected to encourage and support

improvements to educational facilities that will improve training delivery, for example MRCPI tutorials, journal access, journal clubs, internet access and Trainer engagement.

They are also expected to encourage open and honest feedback from Trainees on their training experiences.

Where possible, Trainee Reps also attend the College's hospital inspections at their hospital sites(s).

Trainee Reps are appointed each year for a period of one year, with applications for new appointments normally opening in June. It's an ideal opportunity to take up a formal role in RCPI and put your management skills into action.

Trainees can apply to become a Trainee Rep for their hospital if they meet the following criteria:

- A SpR in a full-time clinical post in Higher Specialist Training or in the second or later year of Basic Specialist Training
- Clear assessment/training record of at least 12 months prior to your application
- Interest in education and training

Trainees are encouraged to get apply to be a Trainee Representative. For information on the Trainee Committee please email Trainees@rcpi.ie. For a list of current Trainee Reps and details on the role please see [here](#).

HSE Financial Support Schemes

Clinical Course & Examination Refund Scheme for NCHDs

This HSE scheme is open to all NCHDs. The HSE Clinical Course and Examination Refund Scheme covers the cost of examination fees and clinical courses such as Advanced Cardiac Life Support.

There is an approved list of clinical courses and examinations qualifying for this refund scheme contained in the HSE [guidance document](#). A maximum contribution of €450 is payable to NCHDs for each course or exam on this list.

Training Support Scheme (TSS)

Additional Training Support Funding has been made available to NCHDs from July 2019 onwards. This scheme is in addition to existing financial supports such as the Clinical Course and Exam Refund Scheme and the Higher Specialist Training Fund. Funding is allocated based on grade. Funding is available pro-rata for doctors employed on shorter contract durations.

A list of approved clinical courses, conferences and examinations that can be claimed for under the TSS are listed [on the HSE NDTP website](#). Please see the NCHD Training Supports Scheme (TSS) Guidance Document for Employers and NCHDs [on the HSE NDTP website](#).

Professional Support (Health and Wellbeing)

The health and wellbeing office provides professional services to Trainees who require additional support during their training programme. This can include any of the following areas:

- Mental/physical health issues which impact on training progression
- Interpersonal conflict or difficulties
- Professionalism competencies development such as communication, assertiveness, building relationships
- Complaints made by Trainees or about Trainees
- Difficult working environments/conditions including bullying which was not resolved locally
- Burnout
- Career guidance
- Mentoring
- Advice and referral to other services such as Occupation Medicine, Health Committee, psychology and psychiatry



- Advice and referral to additional resources such as course, books, online resources, mentors

The health and wellbeing service is available to RCPI Trainees only and forms part of their training programme where required. As such, it is not a confidential service. Trainees are referred by their Trainers, NSDs or they may self-refer into the service.

Trainee Awards and Fellowships

Corrigan Award for BST Case Study

The **Corrigan Award** is awarded by the Trainees' Committee in RCPI. It recognises excellence in communication, the ability to identify complicating and challenging aspects of patient histories and communicate what we can learn from them.

The winner receives the Corrigan Medal, named after past RCPI President Sir Dominic Corrigan (1859 – 1863) and an educational grant worth €1,000.

This competition is open to all Trainees currently undertaking BST with RCPI.

Further information can be found at www.rcpi.ie or contact helpdesk@rcpi.ie

David Mitchell Award for Audit

The David Mitchell Award is awarded by the Trainees' Committee in RCPI. It recognises audits that improve patient care and/or specialist education and training.

The winning Trainee or team of Trainees receives an educational grant worth €1,000 for a single Trainee or €1,500 for a team of Trainees.

The competition is open to all Trainees, or a team of Trainees currently registered with RCPI.

Further information can be found at www.rcpi.ie or contact helpdesk@rcpi.ie

William Stokes Award for Research

The William Stokes Award is awarded by the Trainees' Committee in RCPI. It recognises research of the highest standards carried out by Trainees in Higher Specialist Training. The winning Trainee receives the William Stokes Award and an educational grant worth €4,000.

The award is open to all Trainees currently undertaking Higher Specialist Training with RCPI.

Further information can be found at www.rcpi.ie or contact helpdesk@rcpi.ie

Dorothy Stopford Price Medal

The Dorothy Stopford Price Medal recognises excellence in research or audit on vaccination, immunisation or control of infectious diseases and its potential impact on public health.

The medal is awarded by the Faculty of Public Health Medicine to honour this pioneer in infectious disease control in Ireland.

This competition is open to all Trainees.

Further information can be found at www.rcpi.ie or contact helpdesk@rcpi.ie

Fellowships/Scholarships

Wellcome – HRB Irish Clinical Academic Training (ICAT)

The Wellcome – Health Research Board Irish Clinical Academic Training (ICAT) Programme is a unique all Ireland cross-institutional, comprehensive national programme for Clinician Scientists based at six major Irish universities and their affiliated hospital groups. The partner universities include Trinity College Dublin, University College Dublin, National University of Ireland, Galway, Queen’s University Belfast, the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland and University College Cork. At its core is an integrated programme spanning 6–7 years of seamless, supported and mentored academic and clinical training targeting future academic leaders.

ICAT’s mentorship scheme spans the entire duration of specialist medical and postgraduate academic training. At the time of completion, ICAT fellows will have graduated with a PhD at their chosen university/ institution and achieved CCST (RoI) / CCT (NI) in their chosen specialty. The ICAT Programme adopts a dynamic training focus whereby the emphasis shifts and leads the ICAT Fellow from (i) learning how to start a research career as a PhD candidate, (ii) to successful completion of a PhD, (iii) to establishing independence through novel thought and independent research funding.

For further details on ICAT please see <https://icatprogramme.org/>.



Policies and Procedures

There are a number of other Policies and Procedures that Trainees may refer to throughout the duration of their training programmes. Below is a summary of these policies and procedures. For further detail please see the individual policy or procedure which is available on www.rcpi.ie.

RCPI Policies

1. Roles and Responsibility of a Trainer
2. Post Reassignment Policy
3. Job Sharing Policy
4. Progression through Training: Higher Specialist Training
5. Anti-Bullying Policy
6. Appeals Policy: Postgraduate Training
7. Disciplinary Process for Postgraduate Specialist Training
8. Equal Opportunities Policy
9. Grievance Policy: Postgraduate Training
10. HST Allocation Policy

Other Relevant HSE Policies

- Specialist Training Fund Policy
- Clinical Course and Exam Refund Scheme
- Training Support Scheme

Please click [here](#) for further information on the above HSE policies.



Review

This Handbook shall be subject to annual review by the Institute of Medicine.

Approved By:	Date
IOM	September 2019
Review	
Review by IOM	July 2020