

Training Handbook: Higher Specialist Training, Public Health Medicine July 2023



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Foreword

This document was prepared by the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland (RCPI) and the Faculty of Public Health Medicine. It provides important information in relation to the Public Health Medicine Training Programme and the Rules and Regulations relating to it.

Training Body	Training Programme
Faculty of Public Health Medicine	Higher Specialist Training in Public Health Medicine

This Training Handbook replaces previously published documents and reflects the continuously evolving nature of training in the above specialty. It refers to published RCPI policies which should be read in conjunction with this 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 of 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 and Planning) we have given our interpretation of their regulations but the institutions 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 (The Faculty of Public Health Medicine) will determine the correct interpretation.

Governance of 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 and Gynaecologists
- Institute of Medicine

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

The Faculty of Public Health Medicine oversees the delivery and development of the Higher Specialist Training (HST) programme in Public Health Medicine.

The day-to-day running of the programme is conducted by the National Specialty Director (NSD). The NSD runs the Specialty Training Committee (STC) for the Public Health Medicine training programme. A key responsibility of the NSD is to provide advice, career guidance and support to Trainees on issues relating to training, examinations and general queries relating to the specialty. The NSD and STC report to the Board of the Faculty of Public Health Medicine and meet quarterly at a minimum.

The duration of HST in Public Health Medicine will usually be 4 years in supervised and approved training posts. Trainees who have not completed their Master's in Public Health or an equivalent degree course prior to commencing Year 1 of HST are required to spend 4.5 years in training.

RCPI Trainers

The aim of the College is to continue to strive for education and training excellence for all our Trainees, at all levels and in all locations across Ireland. Trainers play a crucial role in the delivery of our HST 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 their competence, aptitude, attitudes and abilities as good role models.

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 the HST level, no Trainer can have more than one HST Clinical Trainee. Under exceptional circumstances this rule may be reviewed by the Faculty of Public Health Medicine.

The core responsibilities of the Trainer are to:

- Understand the requirements of training
- Meet with the Trainee in their first weeks in a post and agree the Trainee's Personal Goal Plan
- Facilitate attendance at educational activities
- Act as a supervisor to the Trainee
- Appraise the Trainee's progress at regular intervals during the post
- Provide feedback and motivation to the Trainee
- Monitor progress and performance
- Attend Trainee annual evaluations. Attendance is mandatory for Penultimate Annual Evaluations only and highly desirable for first year Annual Evaluations.
- Complete the End of Post assessment and sign relevant activities in the Trainee's ePortfolio

A maximum of one training year can be spent with the same Trainer. The following criteria must be met 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/equivalent post in Ireland
- Complete the Physicians as Trainers Essential Skills course
- Complete the Trainer's Refresher course when required
- 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 [RCPI Trainer Agreement](#) document.

The RCPI Trainees' Committee

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

Members of the RCPI Trainees' Committee, including a representative from the HST in Public Health Medicine, represent Trainees on the College Council, the Advisory Committee and the Examinations Committee.

The Trainees' Committee is also responsible for the organisation of several Trainee Awards including:

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

Trainees are encouraged to get involved with the Trainees' Committee. For information on the Trainee 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 required to complete a short online Training Post Evaluation. In it, you are asked to evaluate the training post that you have just completed. This includes the working conditions and the training-related supports available to you in that post.

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 Higher Specialist Training (HST)

Point of Entry (Recognition of Prior Learning)

Entry to the HST Programme is once a year, in July. Trainees, in most circumstances, enter Year One of the programme.

Trainees must complete all years and requirements of the programme to be awarded a Certificate of Satisfactory Completion of Specialist Training (CSCST).

In most cases, recognition of prior learning is not possible. Retrospective recognition may be considered in some programmes if the previous experience formed part of a structured training programme. Such requests will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. This is applied for in advance of the first year Annual Evaluation in writing to the NSD, and any credit is subject to approval by the Evaluation Panel.

Training Posts and Organisation of Training

The duration of the training programme is four or four and a half years. You cannot defer your first year of HST or start HST in a research year. Unless less than full-time training has been agreed in advance, you are required to take up a full-time SpR post in July of your first year. The first two years, or two and a half years, of HST must be spent in training posts in Ireland.

The earlier years in training will usually be directed towards acquiring broad general experience of Public Health Medicine under appropriate supervision. An increase in the content of hands-on experience follows naturally, and, as confidence grows and abilities are acquired, the Specialist Registrar will be encouraged to assume a greater degree of responsibility and independence.

The training programme is organised into two phases:

Phase One

The first 2 years (2.5 years if Trainee needs to complete an MPH Programme as part of HST) are spent in a clinical post in one regional Department of Public Health. This training duration remains the same regardless of whether the Trainee is working full-time or part-time. Any additional time will be added in their final placement in a regional Department of Public Health.

The Trainee should enter Part 1 MFPHMI before the end of Year 1 of training, and it must be completed by the end of Year 2 of training. This is a requirement of the Scheme.

Phase Two

Training will usually include at least two specialty training attachments of six months' duration. These occur during the final two years of training, with the balance of training time taking place in a regional Department of Public Health other than the Department of initial appointment.

The training programme will provide opportunities to fulfil all the requirements of the Curriculum of Training for Public Health Medicine. All Specialist Registrars are required to rotate through more than one location as approved by RCPI and the Faculty. Most training posts are based in regional Departments of Public Health as above. Specialty training sites may include the HSE Health Intelligence Unit (HIU), Department of Health (DoH), the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC), National Immunisation Office (NIO), National Health Protection Service of Ireland (NHP), National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP), National Screening Service (NSS), National Quality and Patient Safety Directorate (NQPSD), the Global Health Programme, World Health Organisation (WHO), the National Social Inclusion Office, Child Health, and the Institute of Public Health (IPH). Additional sites may become available in the future.

Out-of-programme clinical experience is limited to the final two years of training.

In certain circumstances where, for example, an SpR may wish to pursue further training in an area of special interest approved by the Faculty of Public Health Medicine, the possibility of a fifth year in training may be accredited, e.g. post-CSCST Fellowship, dependent on development and funding.

Part II MFPHMI completion is expected before entering the final year of training.

Annual Allocation of Training Posts

The purpose of your Phase One training placement is:

- To provide the opportunity to work as an integral part of a public health team
- To provide broad, generic experience across the domains of public health practice

The initial training placement is a decision for the NSD, informed by advice from a subgroup of the STC where required. SpRs are informed of their initial training placement at least 13 weeks in

advance of commencing training. Initial placements are for two years (whole time equivalent training time) and will be based in regional departments of public health capable of providing training in all curriculum competency areas. Entrants without a Master's in Public Health, or equivalent, and who need to undertake formal academic training to achieve this, will usually be required to spend 2.5 years in the initial training post (whole time equivalent training time). Site allocation for those undertaking part-time training will generally take place on a pro-rata basis. Decisions on training location are based on:

- Place (1st, 2nd etc) awarded by the panel at interview for HST
- Incoming SpR preferences
- Availability and geographic location of vacant training posts
- Fair distribution of posts across the training sites
- Availability of training posts with a sufficient number of Trainers meeting all RCPI criteria and working in sites that have been inspected and approved by RCPI

Participation of SpRs in academic Part 1 training does not influence decision-making regarding training placements.

Training Site Environment

All training posts are monitored by the RCPI and the Faculty through the Training Site inspection process. The purpose of a training site inspection is to determine the ability of an institution to deliver 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 are 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 inspect all training locations approved for training to ensure that they meet these requirements and plan to introduce an accreditation process for this purpose.

Trainers

Trainers must be accredited, CPD compliant, up to date with prescribed RCPI courses for Trainers, and they should be in good standing with the Faculty. The NSD, with the advice of the STC Committee if required, allocates the Trainee to a training site. Subsequently, the head of department, in consultation with the liaison Trainer, will decide on the appointment of the Trainee to a Trainer. A different Trainer should generally be appointed for each Trainee on an annual basis. In a situation where a Trainer is not meeting core responsibilities, the situation will be reviewed by the NSD and Dean. Non-performing Trainers will not be permitted to continue as Trainers for PHM HST.

Trainers with very senior roles (considered above ADPH level) will in general be assigned as co-Trainers, with the specific arrangements with another co-Trainer to be agreed with the NSD at the outset of each placement. The aim is to maintain valuable training opportunities while managing the risk of exceptional circumstances impacting on the contribution which very senior personnel may make to training, given their reduced capacity to fulfil all the responsibilities of the Trainer role during any period of heightened demand, crisis, outbreak or emergency situation.

Flexible Training

It is the policy of the 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 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 forms of training for a period.

Trainees can apply for flexible training through three routes:

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

Please note that the NDTP does not provide a supernumerary post for flexible training in PHM. 'Less

than full-time training' and parental leave (see below) are facilitated to meet the individual needs of Trainees in PHM.

Job Sharing

Postgraduate Trainees on the HST 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% of the hours.

A training post can be shared by two Trainees who:

- are training in the same specialty; and
- are roughly at an equivalent stage on the training programme

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 for job sharing.

Post Reassignment

In some instances, it may be necessary for Trainees to apply to have their allocation post changed to another training site. The policy on post reassignment can be found [here](#).

The aim of post re-assignment is to support Trainees who have had an unforeseen and significant change in their personal circumstances since the commencement of their current training programme which requires a change to the agreed post/rotation.

Leave of Absence

HST Trainees may take up to three months consecutive leave of absence from the programme within the duration of the training programme with no impact on their CSCST date. After three months, leave will be deducted and the date of CSCST will be changed accordingly.

Trainees must discuss the leave with their NSD in the first instance and then inform the Faculty

Coordinator at least 4 weeks in advance of the intended leave of absence. Leave must be applied for prospectively and acknowledged by RCPI. Any applications received retrospectively will not be approved.

In the absence of exceptional circumstances i.e., maternity leave or sick leave, Trainees must complete posts they are allocated to for the duration of the post.

Trainees returning from exceptional leave must notify their RCPI Specialty Coordinator in writing with as much advance notice as possible. Trainees are not guaranteed a post immediately but will be assigned to the first available post.

Extended sick leave, and its impact on date of CSCST, will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

All applications for leave of absence should be made prospectively in writing to the NSD, via the Training Coordinator using the RCPI Leave of Absence [form](#) found [here](#).

Parental Leave

If a Trainee takes parental leave, he/she will have to make up this time on the programme. Any time that is taken as parental leave must be made up before a Trainee will be awarded their CSCST. This includes parental leave taken in blocks or as part of a shortened week. Parental leave is not considered a leave of absence.

Out of Clinical Programme Experience (OCPE)

OCPE cannot be taken until Year 3 of the programme. A maximum of one-year credit for OCPE may be sought to pursue the following:

- A specialist training opportunity (for example a clinical fellowship) in Ireland or abroad approved by the training body; OR
- A dedicated research post approved by the training body; OR
- A suitable academic post approved by the training body

Trainees can receive up to 12 months credit towards their training programme on OCPE. If more than 12 months is spent in these posts, for example if a Trainee does 12 months in a clinical fellowship and 12 months research, only 12 months will be recognised towards completion of training.

Trainees must complete the [OCPE form](#) before taking up an OCPE research, clinical or lecturer post.

All applications must be made prospectively. Sufficient time must be allowed for enquiries to be made about a proposed OCPE post if credit is to be awarded towards completion of Higher Specialist Training (HST). This form must be submitted to the Training and Faculties Department, via the relevant Training Coordinator. Completed applications must be received at least six months before the proposed OCPE start date. OCPE is not guaranteed. The decision to allow a Trainee to go on OCPE is based on relevance of clinical experience, relevance of research, training rotation numbers and service requirements among other considerations.

Some Trainees may wish to spend two or three years in research leading to an MSc, MD, or PhD by stepping aside from the programme for a time. During this period the Trainee will not accrue training credit.

Courses and Study Days

All HST Trainees are required to attend courses and study days throughout their training programme. Trainees must attend four study days per year. 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 may be organised in a local department or other setting.

For 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.

If a Trainee completes a Master's in Public Health as part of their Programme, the Trainee is entitled to protected time while undertaking the course. The Trainee is entitled to 24 weeks of protected time (120 days).

The Master's in Public Health Programme can stretch over a period greater than 6 months. The equivalent protected time, over that period, should be a maximum of 24 weeks. The Trainee should be available for service work outside of the 120 days of documented protected time.

Audit

Trainees must take part in audit activities during HST and provide evidence of having completed the process. Audit activities must relate directly to a Trainee's practice. The Minimum Requirements for the Training section of the specialty curriculum outlines the requirements. Quality Improvement projects can be counted towards this requirement.

Teaching

Trainees are required to participate in teaching during HST. The knowledge and skills you are expected to acquire include:

- Postgraduate and multidisciplinary teaching
- Developing and delivering lectures
- Principles of adult learning, teaching and learning methods available and strategies
- Educational principles directing assessment methods including, formative vs. summative methods
- How to set effective educational objectives and map benefits to learners
- Design and delivery of an effective teaching event, both small and large groups
- Use of appropriate technology and teaching materials
- The value of regular appraisal and assessment in informing the education process

Acting up as a Consultant

It is possible to 'act up' as a consultant in your final year on the programme for a maximum of three months. To be eligible, a Trainee must:

- Be in their Final Year on a HST Programme
- Be working in the relevant specialty under direct supervision of another Consultant
- A maximum of three months is allowed in the final year of the training programme
- Be acting up in an approved Substantive Consultant post within the same training site
- Be required to cover periods of leave for a Consultant in a substantive post – not to cover a long-term locum or to start a substantive post earlier than training completed.

Trainees must have no significant outstanding training issues at their Penultimate Annual Evaluation that will have an impact on their ability to carry out the acting position.

- In line with HSE regulations for the appointment of locum / temporary consultant posts, no Higher Specialist Trainee –including flexible Trainees – is permitted to “act up” during their flexible training post
- Application form to be completed by Trainee including work plan for the post and agreed by both the NSD and supervising Consultant
- An application form which is available from your HST Coordinator, must be completed in typed format and submitted by email to training@rcpi.ie and an original signed copy must also be submitted to the Higher Specialist Training (HST) Department in the RCPI
- You must also receive written approval from senior clinical and public health management at the site and submit a copy of this to the HST Coordinator for the attention of the NSD
- Once the application form is submitted and verified you will be issued with a letter of approval. This must be kept in your logbook for future reference
- If any of the application details change you must contact the HST Department with an update

Annual Evaluations

The Annual Evaluation of Progress (AEP) is the formal method by which a Trainee’s progression through their 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 usually take place in the RCPI administration offices in Dublin. Trainees must attend the evaluation.

At the AEP, recommendations will be highlighted and approved by the Evaluation Panel. These recommendations will be shared with the Trainee’s next assigned Trainer. The recommendations will be recorded and saved in the Trainee ePortfolio. Evaluations take place from April to June.

The evaluation panel includes the National Specialty Director for your specialty and a Chair. During the evaluation, the panel will review the ePortfolio and an evaluation pack.

At the end of your evaluation, the panel will agree on a list of recommendations for the following year. Further information on the Annual Evaluation process can be found [here](#) in the HST Progression Through Training HST policy.

Duration of Training Programme

Usually, no more than two years, maximum, can be added to the duration of the training programme. If the required duration of HST training is four years, that plus two years, means a total of six years to achieve CSCST. This includes Trainees who participate in flexible training. The revised training requirements and CSCST date for Trainees on extended leave of absence who return to the programme will be assessed on an individual basis.

Requests to extend beyond two years will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Faculty of Public Health Medicine.

Withdrawal from the Training Programme

If a Trainee wishes to withdraw from the Training Programme before their expected CSCST date, they must first notify their NSD, then the HST Coordinator and Trainer, of their wish to withdraw from the Training Programme.

Trainees should give at least four weeks' written notice before they wish to leave their current training post. All Trainees who withdraw from the training programme are invited to attend an exit interview.

Exit Criteria - Certificate of Satisfactory Completion of Specialist Training (CSCST)

For a Trainee to be awarded a Certificate of Satisfactory Completion of Specialist Training (CSCST), Trainees are required to:

- Complete the full duration of the programme in HST posts that are approved for HST as allocated by the Training Body
- Achieve all outcomes as set out in the specialty curriculum
- Attend relevant study days
- Attend mandatory courses listed in the specialty curriculum
- Maintain an up-to-date and correctly completed ePortfolio as evidence of satisfactory completion of training

- Attend and satisfactorily pass annual evaluations and have been awarded training credit through this process

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

CSCST Ceremony

Once a Trainee has successfully completed all the requirements of the specialty programme, they will be awarded a CSCST. This allows Trainees to apply for specialist registration with the Medical Council of Ireland. Trainees will be invited to a conferring ceremony where they will be awarded a CSCST.

Supports for Postgraduate Medical Trainees

ePortfolio

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

All Trainees will be given access to the RCPI ePortfolio which is set up depending on the specialty of the Trainee. Trainees must record relevant training activities and progress towards attaining learning outcomes. 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. The RCPI provides several training videos on how to use ePortfolio.

As Trainees rotate through posts, 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 Trainees' 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 the post and the 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 the ePortfolio and the Trainer must sign it off

During each post

- Trainees must enter training and education 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 their 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

RCPI offers a wide range of benefits, services and support to all Trainees on our training programmes.

Benefits and services that we are pleased to offer Trainees include:

- Free online access to BMJ Journals and the Lancet Online
- A wide range of discounts on travel, computers, insurance, medical equipment, entertainment, sports and fitness, financial products, and lots more through our group affinity scheme
- A free Student Leap Card, which will get you discounts with Irish Rail, Dublin Bus, Bus Eireann, Dart and Luas services
- Free attendance at many of our courses and events, including Masterclasses and Clinical Updates
- Facilities for research and study at our premises at 6 Kildare Street, available Monday to Friday



Where do I find these journals?

You will see links to Online Journals when you log in to the RCPI website.

If I need help?

If you need help accessing journals call our Helpdesk on +353 1 8639721 or email helpdesk@rcpi.ie.

RCPI Training Site Offices

RCPI training site offices are local, knowledgeable sources of information and support for Trainees, Trainers, Members and Fellows based in the following 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 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Thursdays 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. 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 Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday mornings 08:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Sheila Kelly

Tel: 091 893151

Email: SheilaKelly@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 08:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Dovile Lee

Tel: 061 588264

Email: dovilelee@rcpi.ie

RCPI Trainee Representatives

RCPI Trainee Representatives have been appointed to training sites across Ireland. There is one Trainee Representative for Public Health Medicine. In addition, there is a Trainee Representative for each year of training.

The Trainee Representative is there to help Trainees stay connected to RCPI while in training. He or she acts as a conduit between Trainees and the Faculty, sharing important information about training and giving feedback and vice versa.

The Trainee Representative is an important point of contact for Trainees seeking clarification or direction relating to training and education matters and is expected to encourage and support improvements to educational facilities that will improve training delivery, for example examination tutorials, journal access, journal clubs and Trainer engagement.

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

Where possible, the Trainee Representative also attends the inspections of training sites(s).

The Trainee Representative is 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 the Faculty and put your management skills into action.

Trainees can apply to become a Trainee Representative if they meet the following criteria:

- An SpR in a clinical post in Higher Specialist Training
- Clear assessment/training record of at least 12 months prior to their application
- Interest in education and training

Trainees are encouraged to apply to be a Trainee Representative.

From 2020, on the basis of an election organised by the Trainees, there will be an SpR on the Board of the Faculty:

- The term of office will usually be for one year
- Any SpR may put themselves forward if they have completed at least 1 year in training and have at least 1 year of training remaining
- As for all Board members, if there is a potential conflict of interest/sensitive subject for discussion relevant to that person, the SpR would absent himself/herself for that discussion at the meeting
- The SpR will have full voting rights

Arising from a recommendation by the RCPI Trainee Committee, the Trainee Representative will report to the Trainee on the Board who in turn will be a member of and report to the RCPI Trainee Committee. For information on that please email Trainees@rcpi.ie. For a list of current RCPI Trainee Representatives and details on the role please see [here](#).

HSE Financial Support Schemes

Clinical Course and 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.

Specialist Training Fund for Higher Specialist Trainees

The Specialist Training Fund was introduced by the HSE to support Trainees in HST to participate in education and training activities in addition to the mandatory elements of HST provided by their training body.

This scheme is open to Trainees (SpRs) registered on the Higher Specialist Training Programme. The funding available to each HST Trainee is €500 per year of training and the fund rolls over if not

claimed in a particular year. Trainees can claim for participation in relevant non- mandatory educational activities, such as attendance at conferences.

The Specialist Training Fund for Higher Specialist Trainees HSE [guidance document](#) contains a detailed explanation of the Scheme.

Trainees who are eligible to avail of this fund must submit the signed reimbursement form and return it with original receipts and a certificate of attendance (if applicable) to training@rcpi.ie to [claim their refund](#). All applications must be signed and approved by the current Trainer or training director as set out by the Training Body. For further details please see the [RCPI website](#) or the HSE NDTP [website](#).

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 plus a detailed explanation of the Scheme is provided [on the HSE NDTP website](#).

Professional Support (Health and Wellbeing)

The RCPI Health and Wellbeing department 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 Occupational Medicine, 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 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

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 by contacting Trainees@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 by contacting Trainees@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.



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This competition is open to all Trainees.

Further information can be found at www.rcpi.ie or by contacting Trainees@rcpi.ie.

Fellowships/Scholarships

Each year, Trainees may apply for a number of Fellowships and Scholarships. This list below is not exhaustive, and Trainees are encouraged to discuss potential opportunities with the NSD.

HSE Dr Richard Steevens' Scholarship

The Richard Steevens' Scholarship was established by the Health Service Executive (HSE) in 2007, arising from a recommendation of the Report of the Postgraduate Medical Education and Training Group.

This important initiative provides a valuable opportunity for specialist medical Trainees to spend time training in centres of excellence abroad and to bring the skills gained back to the Irish health service. For further details please click [here](#).

Post CSCST Fellowships

In association with the HSE, RCPI has established a register of approved Post-Certificate of Satisfactory Completion of Specialist Training (CSCST) Fellowship posts in the Irish health service. These Fellowships allow Trainees to gain training or experience which is not currently available on the RCPI Higher Specialist Training programmes, or which a Trainee may need for a particular consultant post with a special interest.

These Fellowships offer training opportunities for doctors who obtained a CSCST within the previous two years. The additional training is designed to expose Trainees to subspecialties and advanced clinical skills.

The posts will offer:

- A structured educational experience designed to deliver the requirements of a particular subspecialty which are not readily available within HST
- A supervisor with authority and accountability for the fellowship post
- Opportunities for audit and research
- An enhanced salary

Where appropriate, the Fellowship post will fulfil training body requirements and HSE employment requirements for consultant level posts. All posts are evaluated and approved by the appropriate training body. Further information can be found [here](#).

Aspire Post CSCST Fellowship Programme

The NDTP Aspire (Post CSCST) Fellowship awards have resulted from the collaborative efforts of the HSE's Acute Hospitals Division, Mental Health Division, National Doctors Training and Planning (NDTP) and the Post-Graduate Medical Training Bodies in Ireland. The NDTP Aspire Post CSCST Fellowships are funded by the NDTP and recognised through the training body.

Successful Aspire Fellows receive:

- An SpR salary and headcount for the duration of the fellowship
- Eligibility to access the Higher Specialist Training Fund during the fellowship
- Formal recognition of achievement following completion of the fellowship from the relevant Irish Post Graduate Medical Education Body/Bodies
- A high-quality Fellowship experience in Ireland that will improve competitiveness for positions within Ireland

Further information can be found [here](#).

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 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, it 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 CSCST (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

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 review every three years from the date of approval of this document by the Faculty of Public Health Medicine.

Approved By:	Date
Senior Management Group	July 2020
Faculty of Public Health Medicine	July 2020
Review	
RCPI Faculties and Institutes	July 2023