

Paediatrics

Out Of Programme (OOP) Process

Introduction

This guidance document is designed to explain the current OOP application process for the London School of Paediatrics & Child Health. Please note that the process has changed, and that applications to go out of programme will only be accepted if they are **submitted 6 months before the start**; deadlines outlined below. This includes applications for fellowships advertised after the OOP deadline, for example, Darzi Fellowships. Please see the section below on 'Conditional OOP Approvals' for further details.

Please note that this guidance is specific to the School of Paediatrics and Child Health and relates solely to the decision making process leading to the approval or rejection of applications for time OOP. It is designed to be read in conjunction with guidance issued by Health Education England and the *Gold Guide* and does not replace either, but is supplementary to them.

Full details of out of programme guidance can be found in sections 6.66 to 6.88 of the '*Gold Guide*' June 2010. This can be downloaded from the MMC website – www.mmc.nhs.uk.

The Key Point: Communicate with your training programme director as early as possible (at least 6 months before) if you are considering applying for an OOP, **even if only provisional at that stage**. This allows the school to plan ahead and give you conditional approval pending confirmation of your OOP plans.

The 4 OOP Types:

- Out Of Programme Experience - OOPE ○ Time out of programme for clinical experience in a post. OOP type will **not** count towards the award of a CCT
- Out Of Programme Research – OOPR ○ Time out of programme for research. Up to 12 months can count towards CCT where prospective GMC approval is obtained
- Out Of Programme Training – OOPT
 - Time out of programme for approved clinical training in a post which already has prospective approval from the GMC. May count towards CCT where prospective GMC approval is obtained
- Out Of Programme Career – OOPC ○ Time out of programme for career breaks. This OOP type will **not** count towards the award of a CCT

The School OOP Panel

Currently, OOP applications submitted by the published deadline are reviewed by an OOP panel which meets 4 times a year; 2 main panels per year with one 'tidy up' panel after each. This has been in effect since November 2009.

The idea of the OOP panel is to have a structured and transparent decision making process with set criteria for judging each application.

The panel will be comprised of the following:

- Head or Deputy Head of School

- STC Chair or representative from each region of the training programme
- Training Programme Director/s, both clinical and academic
- College Tutor/s
- Trainee Representative (observer capacity)

The Trainee Representative on the OOP panel (a senior trainee i.e. ST4+) is invited to sit in on the main panel meeting as an observer. The Trainee Rep should not be involved in the actual decision making process, or be present during the discussion of any potentially confidential information about the applicant (such as progress in training or confidential reasons for requesting OOPC). The role of the Trainee Rep at these meetings is to act as an impartial observer, ensuring that the OOP process is being conducted properly and fairly by the panel, and that all trainees are treated equally during the decision making process.

Criteria for assessing applications

To ensure consistency and transparency of application reviews, the following criteria will be used by the panel to assess the quality of each application. However, due to the variety of reasons for applying for time OOP, each application should be judged on a case-by-case basis:

Essential:

- Application submitted by the deadline
- Clear objectives and learning goals
- Evidence of commitment to OOP project
- Evidence of appropriate project planning
- Appropriate plans for supervision during time out
- Commitment to return to training
- Unless clear exceptional circumstances:
 - Applicant should have completed ST1 before the start of the proposed OOP
 - Applicant should have passed MRCPCH (if at the end of ST3)
 - Applicant should be not less than 12 months from the end of training
 - There should be no concerns about the applicant's progress through training i.e. the applicant should have achieved a satisfactory outcome at their last ARCP/RITA

Desirable:

- Applicant should have passed MRCPCH (ST1-2)
- Contribution to specialty competencies as set out by RCPCH, especially those difficult to achieve in trainee's particular rotation
- Contribution to personal development plan/career goals
- Contribution to society/global public good
- Benefit to paediatrics as a specialty

A maximum of 3 years out of clinical training will be allowed. Extensions to this will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances and will require further written approval from the Head of Specialty/Postgraduate Dean and STC Chair / Training Programme Director.

Trainees should plan to start their OOP at the usual changeover times of the clinical training programme - currently the first Monday in September and March. Any reasons for planning to start at other times must be clearly stated in the OOP application, and may not be agreed to by the panel. Trainees must give at least 6 months' notice of their

intended return to the clinical training programme to the Operations Officer and TPD responsible for the allocation of placements at the appropriate level of training.

If a trainee is not granted permission to take time OOP, he/she will receive formal notification of the reasons why their application was unsuccessful.

What to Submit to Apply for Time Out of Programme

- A. For OOPE / OOPC and OOPRs (where time is not counting towards to CCT) the following documentation must be returned to the Paediatrics Team, Operations Department (London)
1. **OOP Application Form** confirming support of Educational Supervisor and TPD/STC Chair.
 2. **Job Description** (and Statement of the post or research timetable where applicable) or other relevant supporting documentation
 3. **OOP Application Checklist**
- B. For OOPT and OOPRs (where application is being made for time to count towards CCT) the following documentation must be returned to the Paediatrics Team, Operations Department (London)
1. **OOP Application Form confirming** support of Educational Supervisor and TPD/STC Chair.
 2. **Job Description** and Statement of the post/timetable
 3. **Letter of confirmation from your Regional Advisor** that the post has College/Faculty Training Committee approval that the post has GMC approval. This will also need to detail the amount of time your Regional Advisor supports to count towards training. See full details below.
 4. A statement detailing the purpose and structure of the OOPT or OOPR placement, including **confirmation that the placement is subject to quality management in line with GMC requirements**
 5. **OOP Application Checklist** completed and signed by the trainee

The letter from your Regional Advisor / Academic Regional Advisor (bullet point 3 above)

In order to make an application to the GMC for time to count towards training, the GMC ask that we submit a letter of support from your Regional Advisor, along with your OOP application form.

For OOPR trainees wishing to count some of their research time, the GMC also ask for a letter of support from the Academic Regional Advisor.

Both Regional Advisor and Academic Regional Advisor letters must be on headed paper and contain the following information:

- Your full name
- You GMC number
- Whether this is an OOPT or an OOPR
- The location of your OOP
- The exact to and from dates of your OOP
- The amount of time your Regional Advisor is happy to support to count towards your training, in words.

The details in these support letters must be exactly the same as on your application form. Any discrepancies in information will cause a delay in processing your application.

Contact details for Regional and Academic Advisors can be found on the RCPCH website:

<http://www.rcpch.ac.uk/training-examinations-professional-development/training-contacts/london/london-draft>

Conditional OOP Approval

OOP applications should be made 6 months prior to the intended start date. ***Please note even if you haven't finalised your plans, you will still need to submit an application by the 6 months deadline.*** The OOP panel will then consider giving you conditional approval pending confirmation of the OOP plans. The Operations team require confirmation of your plans as soon as possible and certainly no less than 15 weeks prior to the rotation date. Trainees who get conditional OOP approval will not be removed from their next clinical placement until they have had their OOP confirmed – hence why plans have to be confirmed before the 15 weeks prior to rotation date. It is really important to liaise with the relevant Training Programme Director regarding your OOP and future placements plans.

Conditional approval is especially relevant for OOP applications for Darzi Fellowships. The School is aware that fellowships such as these are often advertised after the OOP deadline, but if you are intending to apply for a fellowship advertised post-OOP deadline, you must put in an application before the OOP deadline to secure conditional approval. Applications made after the deadline will not be considered, and you will need to apply in the following OOP window.

When funding for OOPR is unlikely to be confirmed before the 3 months' notice period for leaving or not taking up a scheduled training placement, you, the trainee, must provide evidence of agreement to the proposed start date of OOPR from the Trust where they are working or would have been placed at the start of the proposed OOP. This must be countersigned / authorised by the relevant Human Resources Department.

Process for Applying for Time to Count towards Training

Once the above documentation has been received, reviewed and approved, an application for prospective GMC approval will be made by The Paediatrics Team (London). Approval for time to count towards training can only be granted once GMC approval has been received.

Additional notes for trainees who wish for time to count:

It is worth noting that the GMC have issued very clear guidance that as of 28th April 2014, all training must be prospectively approved if it is to count towards the award of a CCT or CESR (CP) and this is a requirement of the EU Directive.

You must therefore submit your signed OOP application form, proof of appointment to post and/or funding and your letter(s) of support from your Regional Advisor(s) at least 3 months in advance of your start date. Any delay in providing these documents could result in the GMC not approving your application and your CCT date being extended by the duration of your OOP.

Service Provision/Fairness to other trainees:

While the London School of Paediatrics believes that appropriate time out of programme should be encouraged and approved where possible, consideration of the effect that granting time out will have on service provision is necessary. Consideration should be made of:

- The ability of the Trust in question to cover the trainee's service commitments during their time out of programme
- The creation of an 'uneven playing field' with regards to applications for higher or subspecialty positions
- In accordance with RCPCH guidance, applications for OOP in order to enhance an individual trainee's prospects of successful application to National Grid training will not be approved, as this would be contrary to one of the fundamental aims of the National Grid, namely to provide equity of access to sub-specialty training.

Trainees should ensure that they discuss their proposed OOP with their local Educational Supervisor and TPD at the earliest possible opportunity. This will help to ensure that they are able to make an appropriate decision about whether to apply for time OOP and can do so in a timely manner.

OOP and Exams

The OOP panel does not recommend trainees in ST1-3 taking OOP before MRCPCH is completed as this can create a disadvantage when studying toward the membership exams. Failure to obtain MRCPCH by the end of ST3 may prevent you from progressing through training and may ultimately lead to the withdrawal of your National Training Number.

Although an OOP application will not be refused by the panel solely on the grounds of non-completion of membership (except at the end of ST3 when this is a required competency), applicants should demonstrate that they have considered the consequences of their OOP proposal on their exams and have planned accordingly. For trainees who do choose to go OOP during their Level 1 training, no exceptions will be made in regard to the exam requirements.

Special circumstances - OOPC

Trainees with special circumstances likely to require application for OOP for compassionate reasons, potentially at short notice should contact their local educational supervisor, TPD and Head of School at the earliest possible opportunity.

OOPCs are only approved 6 months at a time. Trainees applying for an extension of this time will be asked to meet with the Head of School to discuss their application. This meeting will be to assess if the extension of OOPC time is the most appropriate course of action, and will also provide an opportunity to review if any additional support is needed.

Academic Trainees

In general, you cannot go out of programme as an ACF or ACL, but this is at the discretion of the School and NIHR with whom the request should be discussed. OOPs based on statutory grounds might be approved by the NIHR, but from our experience OOPTs and OOPEs will not be approved by the NIHR. Without NIHR approval the academic award will cease to exist from the time the OOP starts.

Additional information

Please note that once your OOP has been formally approved by Health Education England, any placement that you may already have been allocated will not be guaranteed and will be subject to change. Thus, if for any reason you do not take up your OOP, you will be allocated to a training post at a location which still has vacancies and not the location that you may have gone to had you not applied to go OOP.

Trainees on a Tier II Visa should be aware that once you leave a training post, and commence your time out of programme, you will no longer be sponsored by us (Health Education England). Your Tier II Visa sponsor will become your new employers, and you should contact them regarding this before you commence your OOP.

Please ensure that The Paediatrics Team (London) are given an up-to-date contact address and e-mail address throughout the duration of the OOP placement.

Please note that all definitions are as per the Gold Guide to Postgraduate Specialty Training in the UK, as interpreted by Shared Services in the above policy guidance.