

**Training Handbook:  
Basic Specialty Training,  
Obstetrics and Gynaecology  
July 2023**



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**INSTITUTE OF  
OBSTETRICIANS &  
GYNAECOLOGISTS**

ROYAL COLLEGE OF  
PHYSICIANS OF IRELAND

## 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 Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (IOG) Training Programme. The purpose of the document is to outline the Rules and Regulations pertaining to basic specialist training in Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

This document replaces previously published documents and reflects the continuously evolving nature of training in the specialty. 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](http://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 and Gynaecologists
- Institute of Medicine

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

In Obstetrics and Gynaecology, the Institute of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists oversees the Basic Specialty Training and the Higher Specialty Training Programmes.

Basic Specialist Training (BST) is three years in duration and Higher Specialist Training (HST) is five years in duration.

The National Speciality Directors (NSDs) for the Institute of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists oversees the delivery and development of the BST and HST training programmes. The Hub Coordinators support the National Speciality Directors for BST.

At Basic and Higher Specialist Training the day to day running of the programmes is conducted by the National Specialty Director(s) (NSDs). The NSD(s) run the Specialty Training Committee (STC) for the Obstetrics and Gynaecology 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 Executive of the Institute of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists which meets at a minimum quarterly.

## RCPI Trainers

Trainers play a crucial role in the delivery of the 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 Training Body 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:

- Meet the Trainee and understand requirements of training
- Meeting with the Trainee in their first week in a post and agreeing the Trainee's Personal Goal Plan
- 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
- Completing the End of Post assessment and signing relevant activities in ePortfolio
- Appraising the Trainee's progress at regular intervals during the post



Where possible, one clinical year maximum can be spent with the same Trainer.

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 [Role and Responsibilities of the Trainer 2016](#).

## 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 location/hospital 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 locations 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 Institute of Medicine, 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
- 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](mailto: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 trainingrelated 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. Data will be aggregated and only used after three years. 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 enter year one of the programme.

BST in Obstetrics and Gynaecology consists of two years of training in approved Senior House Officer posts and one year in a junior registrar post that have been approved for BST

BST in Obstetrics and Gynaecology is regulated and certified by the Institute of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and the Speciality Training Committee of the Institute, a constituent training body of RCPI. Completion of training within the BST programme is a mandatory requirement for entry into Higher Specialist Training (HST) Programme (at Specialist Registrar level).

In Obstetrics and Gynaecology from July 2014 the programme is a three-year BST rotation programme in order to receive certification from RCPI. It is not possible to obtain credit for BST by working in standalone, SHO posts.

In addition to the acquisition of specific clinical skills and competencies, it is emphasised that personal development, including leadership and team working, communication and presentation skills, basic management and audit, are important core components of BST and all other phases of training.

### Retrospective Recognition



Obstetrics and Gynaecology 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

Trainees must complete three years on the Obstetrics and Gynaecology Basic Speciality Training programme. There is no reciprocity with any other recognised training programmes.

### Allocation Process

A Trainee entering the Basic Specialty Training scheme will, be informed of their assigned rotations for the first two years of the scheme. The Obstetrics and Gynaecology BST Programme is made up of four hubs and posts are usually six months in duration. Each hub has a hub coordinator who is responsible for allocations within the hub. At the time of recruitment and selection Trainees will be asked to preference their hub. Hub choices will be allocated in order of rank from interview. During year two of the programme, Trainees will be required to attend an evaluation/interview for them to progress to year three. At this stage Trainees will be asked to preference their hub again and allocations will be made on performance and rank at evaluation/interview. It is noted that not all Trainees will be suitable to progress to year three.

### 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 and performance at Year 2 evaluation/interview.

If a Trainee's circumstances have changed applications for a post reassignment will be considered. Applications received will be considered by the Hub Coordinator and National Speciality Directors.



Applications will generally be considered as part of the allocation process. Priority will be given to Trainees with significant change in circumstances. Applications from Trainees with changes in circumstances related to caring or parental responsibilities will then be considered. 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 standardised criteria 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 National Speciality Directors, assurance of the academic training environment and feedback from Trainers and Trainees.

## 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/Quarterly 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 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



## BST Taught Programme

The BST Taught Programme is an essential element of the BST curriculum. It consists of a series of modular elements spread across the years of BST covering generic training components such as communication, ethics, etc. The programme is delivered via a combination of self-paced online content, live virtual tutorials, and in-person workshops.

Trainees will be assigned self-paced online content per quarter. This self-paced online content will be delivered via RCPI's virtual learning environment, Brightspace. Each quarter will also include one scheduled virtual tutorial lasting 90-minutes. Allocated dates will be provided before the start of the training year. Trainees must plan the time to complete requirements per quarter.

For full information on the Taught Programme, please go to:

[BST Taught Programme : RCPI Help Centre](#)

The Institute of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists requires BST Trainees to attend four study days per year of the BST programme.

## 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 in the RCPI.

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 three-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):

Special leave includes, Sick leave, maternity leave, compassionate leave, Force Majeure Leave. As the BST programme consists of three 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 three years: If a Trainee takes special leave totalling 6 weeks or less over three 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 three 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 three 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 three 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 three years



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 training 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 NSDs, 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. This includes parental leave taken in blocks or as part of a shortened week.

## Transfer Training Posts

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 Obstetrics and Gynaecology must be approved by your Hub Coordinator and the NSDs.

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 posts:

1. The Trainee should approach the hub coordinator in the hospital to which he/she would like to transfer, to discuss whether a transfer is possible
2. If the hub coordinator agrees in principle to a transfer, the Trainee should meet with his/her current hub coordinator (if different) to discuss the possibility of transferring to another post
3. If the Trainee's current hub coordinator agrees to the transfer, both hub coordinators 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
4. Medical Manpower in the relevant hospitals must agree to the transfer
5. The Trainee must notify the NSDs of his/her intention to transfer in writing
6. The NSDs 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 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, for them, not be practical for wellfounded 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

### HSE National Flexible Training Scheme

The HSE National Doctors Training and Planning (NDTP) operates a National Flexible Training Scheme, 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. We recommend applying as soon as possible, as applications are considered in the order in which they are received, and places are limited. The Trainee must inform the NSD of his/her intention to apply for flexible training.



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 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 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.



## Registrar posts

Trainees who successfully complete two years at SHO level and have a successful Year 2 evaluation/interview will be allocated to a junior registrar position. At no other point will Trainees be accredited for registrar training.

## 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 Training Posts”.

### 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 four weeks before they wish to leave their current post. Emailed notifications will be accepted.

### Informing the Hub Coordinator and National Speciality Directors:

The Trainee must inform his/her Hub Coordinator and NSDs 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 NSDs 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 - MRCPI and MRCOG

In order to present for the MRCPI in Obstetrics and Gynaecology candidates will be expected to have completed MRCOG Part 1 and have two years' experience in Obstetrics and Gynaecology. The MRCOG Part 1 can be attempted at Intern level. On completion of 18 months BST, Trainees will be eligible to present for the MRCPI in Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

Further information regarding the format, locations and dates of the MRCPI and other examinations can be found at [www.rcpi.ie/examinations](http://www.rcpi.ie/examinations).

## Exit Criteria

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

- Register on the BST programme. Entry to the programme is in July unless otherwise agreed with the relevant NSDs and Associate Dean of BST. Credit only accrues from the date of registration
- Complete 36 months of training, comprising of 24 months in SHO posts and 12 months in a Junior Registrar post that have been approved for BST
- Obtain a wide range of experience in posts with direct involvement in patient care
- Partake in an on-call commitment in Obstetrics, Gynaecology or combined Obstetrics and Gynaecology for the full duration of the programme
- Complete the mandatory courses as per minimum requirements



- Complete the OSATS as per minimum requirements
- Attend annual assessments, plus any interim assessments as required by RCPI
- Maintain an up-to-date and correctly completed BST ePortfolio as evidence of satisfactory completion of training
- Obstetrics Outpatient Clinics: minimum one clinic per week on average over two years
- Gynaecology Outpatient Clinics: one hour per week on average over two years
- Theatre commitment: four hours per week on average over two years
- Labour Ward: four hours per week on average over two years
- Attendance at In-Hospital Speciality conferences: one hour per week multidisciplinary team or radiology meeting; one hour per week specialty meeting on average over two years
- Hospital educational activities (e.g. Grand rounds, Journal club, DS meetings, other): one hour per week on average over two years
- Undergraduate Teaching: one hour per week on average over two years
- Research/ Audit/ Presentations: one hour per week on average over two years
- Successfully complete the MRCPI examination in Obstetrics and Gynaecology

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 five 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 the NSDs will be informed in writing by the BST coordinator in the Training Team, RCPI



### The Five-Year Rule

In normal circumstances Trainees must complete BST within a five-year period. If a Trainee's expected completion date is changed to a date greater than five years after their start date, they will be required to undertake the full three-year programme again from the beginning. In some exceptional circumstances on a case by case basis this rule may be changed. This rule is not affected by other special leave, e.g. maternity leave or sick leave.

## Supports for Postgraduate Medical Trainees

### ePortfolio

ePortfolio is an electronic logbook for recording essential information about training, educational and evaluation activities that are required during the training programme. Trainees are required to maintain an up-to-date ePortfolio throughout BST, 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. RCPI and the IOG provide the ePortfolio system via Kaizen in order for the Trainees to record their training programme requirements. This is not a log of all the activity of a Trainee and is provided so a Trainee can record the mandatory components of the training programme. This is the Trainees record and RCPI has no authority to share with third parties unless authorised to do so. Following completion of the training programme a Trainee will have access to the ePortfolio for three years, at which point Trainees can download all their records. Access to ePortfolio after three years will not be possible.



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/Quarterly 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](mailto:Helpdesk@rcpi.ie). To redeem your voucher and activate your four-month subscription, simply login to [www.rcpi.ie](http://www.rcpi.ie) and click on the link for BMJ OnExamination.

### RCPI Trainee Representative

RCPI Trainee Representatives have been appointed to training sites across Ireland.

The Trainee Rep is there to help Trainees stay connected to RCPI while in training. They act as a conduit between Trainees on site and RCPI, sharing important information about training and giving feedback to RCPI (and vice versa).

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 apply to be a Trainee Representative. For information on the Trainee Committee please email [Trainees@rcpi.ie](mailto:Trainees@rcpi.ie). For a list of current Trainee Reps 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](#). Commencing 8<sup>th</sup> July 2019, the full cost of an approved examination/course taken on after this date is eligible to be refunded for the **first sitting of the exam**. Applicants must hold HSE NCHD contract 2010. Subsequent sittings of the same exam are ineligible for any payment under this scheme. However subsequent sittings may be claimed from the HSE Training Support Scheme (TSS) from July 2019 onwards.

### 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](http://www.rcpi.ie) or contact [Helpdesk@rcpi.ie](mailto: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](http://www.rcpi.ie) or contact [Helpdesk@rcpi.ie](mailto: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](http://www.rcpi.ie) or contact [Helpdesk@rcpi.ie](mailto: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](http://www.rcpi.ie) or contact [Helpdesk@rcpi.ie](mailto:Helpdesk@rcpi.ie).

## Fellowships/Scholarships

A number of Fellowships/Scholarships are available for Trainees to apply each year. This list below is not exhaustive, and Trainees are encouraged to discuss potential opportunities with their Trainers. These are mainly available in HST.

### [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/>.

*Please refer to the HST Handbook for the list of Fellowships and Scholarships available at HST level.*



## 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](http://www.rcpi.ie).

### RCPI Policies

- Roles and Responsibility of a Trainer
- Post Reassignment Policy
- Job Sharing Policy
- Progression through Training: Higher Specialist Training
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Appeals Policy: Postgraduate Training
- Disciplinary Process for Postgraduate Specialist Training
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Grievance Policy: Postgraduate Training
- 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 from the date of approval of this document by the Institute of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (IOG).

Approved By:	Date
Institute of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists	July 2023
Review	
Review by Institute of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists	July 2024