

HEE-EM Out of Programme Pause: FAQs

Note OOPP is In a Pilot Stage National update will be available in due course.

General

What is Out of Programme Pause and how does it differ from other forms of out of training?

Trainees told Health Education England (HEE) that existing out of programme mechanisms (out of programme experience [OOPE], out of programme research [OOPR], out of programme career break [OOPC] and out of programme training [OOPT]) provided a degree of flexibility, however none of these mechanisms recognised that trainees sometimes wish to “pause” their training to undertake an NHS non-training post, gain further experience, take stock of their training, work in another related specialty etc.

Equally, trainees told HEE that they felt frustrated about the inability to count competencies or time in non-training posts, when they had left and at a later stage returned to training. Out of programme pause (OOPP) differs from out of programme for experience (OOPE) because in OOPE, none of the experiences or competencies/capabilities gained whilst with OOPP can be directly counted toward CCT subject to quality verification by their relevant craft school.

Out of programme pause therefore allows trainees to step out of formal training for up to two years and have any competencies gained whilst out of training assessed upon their return. This may allow trainees to minimise the impact on the time out of programme has on their CCT date.

Who can apply for Out of Programme Pause?

Time out of programme (OOP) will not normally be agreed until a trainee has been in a HEE approved training programme for at least one year of training (unless at the time of appointment, deferral of the start of the programme has been agreed for leave on statutory grounds). Trainees should have had at least one ARCP at which point they should be attaining the curriculum goals at a rate not requiring alteration of their initial CCT date. LTFT (less than full time) trainees are eligible to apply for OOPP however they are subject to the same progress requirements as full time trainees. That is their CCT date must not have been extended for any other reason than those required to accommodate LTFT changes.

For clarification trainees must be normally progressing at a rate not requiring alteration of their CCT date to be eligible to apply to undertake OOPP.

For those trainees on a tier 2 visa, please contact HEE’s overseas sponsorship team (tier2@hee.nhs.uk) before applying so you can be advised based on your individual circumstances.

Starting OOPP

What stage of training do I need to be at to be eligible to apply for OOPP?

Time out of programme (OOP) will not normally be agreed until you have been in a training programme for at least one year of training (unless at the time of appointment, deferral of the start of the programme has been agreed for leave on statutory grounds) and you are progressing at a rate not requiring alteration of your CCT date.

What is the process for applying for OOPP?

If you elect to take a period OOPP you must discuss and agree this with your educational supervisor and training programme director. This agreement is to ensure that going OOPP does not destabilise the educational or service sufficiency of the programme you are in. After this, the application can proceed once details of when and where you will be spending the time out of programme have been confirmed. The OOPP section of the OOP form should be completed, together with the OOPP initiation document that sets out your plan for OOPP, your intended scope of practice, indications of possible capabilities you may acquire, plans to return to training and any pertinent indemnity considerations.

How much notice am I required to give?

In line with all applications to take time out of training, trainees will be expected to give six months' notice. As with other OOP requests this should align with programme rotation dates. If you are considering applying for OOPP you should keep HEE informed of plans as early as possible and continue to update on progress and any changes to plans to return to training on a regular basis.

Who can I speak to about how this will affect my pay, pension and employment rights?

Please talk to your employer and/or trade union. Trainees should be aware that any time spent out of programme in a non-NHS setting will have an effect on both their cumulative NHS service and their continuous employment. This has practical implications for employment rights such as pay, pension entitlement, maternity leave and pay, parental leave, and other entitlements. Trainees considering going out of programme can speak to their employer and, if they are a member of the BMA they can ask them for further advice also.

Financial

Will my pension be affected by taking time out of training?

Your NHS pension may be affected due to a break in service if you are working for a non-NHS organisation. For further advice speak to your employer, trade union and/or the NHS Business Services Authority

Who will be my employer whilst out of programme?

The employer will normally be the organisation paying your salary during your period working OOPP.

Can I apply for study leave funding whilst on OOP-P?

Historically, it has been the case that trainees on OOP are not normally eligible to apply for study leave.

Having considered the wider changes to study budgets, the current agreed HEE position is that Study Leave time and funding for trainees on OOP, except for OOPT (Out of Programme Training), remains the same and is **not** provided.

Revalidation

Who will my Responsible Officer be whilst out of programme?

Whilst on OOPP, your RO will remain your postgraduate dean. The specific considerations around revalidation are outlined below. You will be asked to identify who the RO of the employing organisation you will be working with during your OOPP in your OOPP initiation form, where this is applicable.

What process will I need to go through to ensure my revalidation is up to date?

The process for ensuring revalidation requirements are met whilst out of training are on the COPMeD website at:

https://www.copmed.org.uk/images/docs/revalidation/Guidance_to_ensure_doctors_in_postgraduate_training_meet_revalidation_requirements_across_full_scope_of_practice.pdf

Whilst Out of Programme, if you are undertaking a substantive role you need to engage with the revalidation governance arrangements of your employer and submit details of work undertaken, involvement in significant events and any complaints and compliments about your work in your ARCP form R.

Issues surrounding OOP Post

What roles can I undertake?

To proceed with OOPP you must take a **patient facing role with a UK registered organisation**.

Does my OOPP post need prior 'training' or 'educational' approval from HEE or GMC?

No prior approval is required of the post or posts that you will undertake during the OOPP period. However, any post (and any changes) must be recorded against your scope of practice

What if the OOPP post comes to an end earlier than expected?

Should an Out of Programme Post come to an end sooner than expected, then the trainee should contact their HEE office as soon as is practically possible to facilitate a return to their training programme. This will be subject to programme capacity. Once returning, the standard process for assessing competence gained whilst in the OOPP post will commence.

What if I want to change role/post within my period of OOPP?

If you wish change your role or post whilst on OOP-P, or your circumstances change, you must contact your ES, TPD and PG Dean as soon as is practically possible. In the case of any of these changes, you will be required to resubmit your “OOP-P Initiation and Scope of Practice Form” to reflect the changes.

Do I need to have a confirmed offer of a post before applying for OOPP?

Unlike other forms of OOP, trainees will need to have a confirmed post to be in whilst out of programme during their period of OOPP.

Returning to training

Do I have to return to training?

Whilst you are not obliged to return to your training programme from a period OOPP, a decision to not return should be communicated formally to HEE in line with an appropriate notice period relevant to the level of training, to indicate your resignation from the training programme and your wish to relinquish your national training number.

What happens should I not return to my training programme?

As above.

What is the process for returning to training?

The Specialty Trainee would return from OOPP alongside/after completing any relevant return to training (RTT) programme elements and have an initial educational appraisal meeting with their Educational Supervisor to consider the experience and any competencies gained during their OOPP. The trainee may want all, some or none of their competencies gained whilst OOPP to count toward their training. A ‘gap analysis’ would be conducted with a judgement on what may have been achieved with respect to both Generic Professional Capabilities and specific curriculum outcomes. This would form the basis of a training plan.

Once the initial educational appraisal meeting has taken place, the trainee will have an opportunity to demonstrate their skills and capabilities as part of their prospectively approved training programme. This would ideally be undertaken in the first three months following return to training, to allow the Trainee and Educational Supervisor to ensure the training plan is appropriate and properly focus learning objectives in advance of the next Annual Review of Competence Progression (ARCP);

Following OOPP, if the Trainee and/or their School/TPD/Educational Supervisor do not want to count competences [for example the trainee cannot evidence competences gained] and did not feel an adjustment to the CCT date would be appropriate then there would be no requirement to do so.

At the ARCP, a formal determination of outcome would be made with an adjustment to the CCT in light of demonstration of competencies evidenced following return to training and the Educational Supervisor’s report; this would be in accordance with Gold Guide and GMC guidance.

How much notice do I need to give of my intention to return to training?

The trainee should plan their return to work with their training programme faculty educators, who work on behalf of the Postgraduate Dean. Although usually the returning trainee will be accommodated as indicated on their initiation form which will generally be in the next available suitable vacancy in their specialty, there is no guarantee of return date and it may take time for a suitable vacancy to arise. If there are likely to be problems accommodating the trainee back into the programme, wherever possible, the trainee should be advised as soon as practicable during the period of them being out of programme.

Will going OOP-P affect my ability to go on other forms of OOP within my training programme?

Other forms of OOP will remain available but applying to go on other OOP opportunities will be subject to the normal procedures whereby the relevant specialty school and the Postgraduate Dean/APD would make an informed decision in each case, in line with all other such applications

