

GUIDANCE FOR TRAINEES WISHING TO ACT UP AS A CONSULTANT

1. General Points

1. The Specialty Curricula indicate that trainees in their final year of Higher Training (or possibly penultimate year in dual training) can undertake a three month 'acting up' consultant post in their CCT/CESR (CP) specialty or the relevant sub-specialty.
2. If the 'acting up' period will take place within the local training programme it is not necessary to apply to the College or GMC for approval. Further information is given below.
3. If the 'acting up' period will take place outside of a trainee's home Deanery/LETB, or in a location that has not been approved for training, they should submit an Out of Programme for Training (OOPT) application to the College's Quality Assurance Committee.
4. All requests need to be agreed by the Postgraduate Dean and trainees must follow local procedures. Trainees are advised to discuss their proposals as early as possible with their Training Programme Director.
5. At least three months' notice is usually expected so that employers can ensure that the needs of patients are appropriately addressed. Trainees must not assume that approval will be given. Any commitments made before approval is received in writing are made at the trainees' own risk. Trainees who depart from their programme without approval may be putting their employment at risk.
6. Trainees should note that each Deanery/LETB will have its own process; some deaneries require college support before they will send the application to the GMC, others do so pending college support. The College QA Committee will review applications after the TPD and Head of School have given their approval. The success of any application is dependent upon Deanery/LETB approval and College support.
7. Retrospective approval will not be given.

Please refer to the GMC's [website](#) for further information.

2. Acting Up Consultant (AUC) posts

The Royal College of Psychiatrists, in line with the Gold Guide for Training and GMC guidance on going out of programme, recognises that acting up experience in a properly supervised training environment can provide advanced trainees an

opportunity to consolidate their skills in the final year of training.

Acting up is not to be considered an essential or mandatory part of training but a potentially useful tool. Trainees acting up as consultants must have appropriate support and clinical supervision within the employing trust to a level approved by the TPD as well as ongoing access to weekly educational supervision.

An acting up post can only be offered to individuals who have had successful ARCP outcomes.

It is not possible to undertake a period of acting up in the post-CCT period of grace.

A maximum of three months (for LTFT trainees three months whole time equivalent as per Gold Guide 2018) spent in an AUC post may count towards a trainee's CCT/CESR(CP) as part of the GMC approved specialty programme, provided it meets the following criteria:

- i. The trainee is in their final year of training (or possibly penultimate year if in dual training)
- ii. The post is undertaken in the appropriate CCT specialty
- iii. The approval of the Training Programme Director (TPD), Head of School and Postgraduate Dean is given
- iv. There is agreement from the employing trust to provide support and clinical supervision to a level approved by the trainee's TPD.
- v. The trainee still receives one hour per week educational supervision either face to face or over the phone by a trainer who is recognised by the GMC.
- vi. The trainee will retain their National Training Number during the period of acting up
- vii. Full-time trainees should 'Act up' in full time Consultant posts wherever possible. All clinical sessions should be devoted to the 'acting up' consultant post (i.e., there must be no split between training and AUC work).
- viii. In exceptional circumstances, where no full time Consultant posts are available, full-time trainees may 'act up' in part-time consultant posts, but must continue to make up the remaining time within the training programme.
- ix. The post has been approved by the Regional Advisor in its current form. A new post must have this approval.
- x. If the trainee is on call there must be consultant supervision.
- xi. A trainee who is acting up should be referred to a 'Dr XXX, ST6, Acting Consultant'
- xii. If the period is at the end of the final year of the training programme, a recommendation for the award of a CCT will not be made until the report from the educational supervisor has been received and there is a satisfactory ARCP outcome.

The College has concerns that AUCs undertaken outside of the local training programme, especially in the last three months, essentially cut the trainee off from the educational process. Therefore, if a trainee wishes to undertake an AUC post outside of their home Deanery/LETB, they should submit an OOPT application to the QA Committee.

The College will only consider supporting AUC posts outside of programme where an important educational need has been identified by the TPD, and the TPD has confirmed in writing to the College that the AUC post provides an important part of a trainee's progress. The hosting TPD should also confirm in writing that they will act as a guarantor of quality.

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Quality Assurance Committee