



Frequently Asked Questions for Trainees Undertaking Specialty Training in Psychiatry

This compilation is designed to assist trainees but is not meant to be exhaustive. If you are unable to find the answer to your query in the relevant sections, please email the Training & Workforce Unit at specialtytraining@rcpsych.ac.uk

Trainees are also advised to read the following documents:

- [Specialty Specific Curricula, including core curriculum](#)
- [A Reference Guide for Postgraduate Specialty Training in the UK \(the "Gold Guide"\)](#)

This guide contains the following:

- [Section A: CCTs and CESR CPs](#)
- [Section B: Applying to the College & GMC for a CCT or CESR CP](#)

Training & Workforce Unit, Royal College of Psychiatrists

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Section A: CCTs and CESR CPs

1. What is a CCT?

A [Certificate of Completion of Training \(CCT\)](#) is awarded by the GMC to doctors who have successfully completed an approved training programme. The award of a CCT allows entry to the GMC's Specialist Register which is required to be appointed to a substantive, honorary or fixed-term consultant post in the UK health service. CCTs are listed in Annex V (point 5.1.2) of [EU Directive 2005/36/EC](#) as a specialist medical qualification which means they will be recognised as such in other member states.

2. What are the eligibility criteria for a CCT in psychiatry?

- i. Completion of a minimum of 36 months at post-foundation/internship level in posts prospectively approved by the relevant competent medical authority.
- ii. Successful completion of all sections of the MRCPsych Examination.
- iii. Completion of a minimum of 36 months in advanced training posts prospectively approved by the relevant competent medical authority.

3. What posts can count towards a CCT?

- i. Approved UK training posts. Since 1 April 2010, UK training posts have been approved by the GMC. Before this, they were approved by the PMETB or the STA. Further information about post approval is available on the GMC's website.
- ii. Up to two years in Locum Approved for Training (LAT) posts provided the period of training is assessed via an Annual Review of Competency Progression (ARCP).
- iii. Out of programme research/training that is prospectively approved by the relevant competent authority in the UK.
- iv. Approved training posts in the EU can potentially count towards a CCT. See FAQ 14 below for further information.

4. What is a CESR CP?

A [Certificate of Eligibility for Specialist Registration – Combined Programme \(CESR CP\)](#) is awarded to doctors who have been appointed to a GMC-approved training programme above the usual entry point, and have successfully completed the rest of the approved training programme.

5. What are the eligibility criteria for a CESR CP?

- i. Completion of a minimum of 36 months of training/experience at post foundation/internship level.
- ii. Successful completion of all sections of the MRCPsych Examination in psychiatry or a specialist qualification in psychiatry listed in Annex V of [EU Directive 2005/36/EC](#) which can lead to direct entry onto the GMC Specialist Register. The qualification must be compatible with the EEA qualifications listed on the [GMC website](#).
- iii. Completion of a minimum of 24 months (2 years) in advanced training posts prospectively approved by the relevant competent medical authority. Trainees must obtain an ARCP outcome 6.

6. What posts can count towards a CESR CP?

- Staff grade/Specialty Doctor posts
- Locum consultant posts
- Trust grade SHO posts
- Locum Approved for Service (LAS) posts.
- Any other experience not prospectively approved by the relevant competent authority listed above.

7. Can I count time training in another medical specialty towards training in psychiatry?

Following the [Accreditation of Transferable Competences Framework](#), the Core Curriculum allows for up to year of approved training in Core Medical Training, Paediatrics and Child Health, or General Practice to be counted towards Core Psychiatry Training. This applies to trainees entering core training in psychiatry from August 2015.

8. Do I need to be a member of the Royal College of Psychiatrists to get a CCT or CESR CP?

Yes. All doctors in training must [register](#) with the College as a Pre-Membership Psychiatric Trainee (PMPT), Member, Affiliate or Specialist Associate so all training can be counted towards a CCT or CESR CP. This is a Gold Guide requirement. Registration must be retained throughout the whole period of training.

9. What's the difference between a CCT and CESR CP?

Both CCTs and CESR CPs lead to specialist registration with the GMC and allow the holder to work as a substantive consultant in the UK. However, only CCTs are listed as a specialist medical qualification in [EU Directive 2005/36/EC](#) which means that they may be automatically recognised in other European countries. Please see the [GMC website](#) for further information.

10. Can I complete all training in Locum Approved for Training (LAT) posts and get a CCT?

No. Only two years spent in LAT posts in either core or higher training can count towards a CCT provided you subsequently are appointed to an approved training programme in psychiatry through the National Recruitment process and achieve an ARCP outcome 6. For all LAT posts to count towards a CCT or CESR CP you will be required to have an ARCP to cover this period of training and register with the Royal College of Psychiatrists.

11. I work less than full-time. What is the minimum number of sessions I can work so it can count towards training?

The GMC's position statement on [less than full-time training](#) states that the minimum a trainee can work is 50%. However, there may be exceptional circumstances whereby a trainee may be returning to work on a phased basis. In cases such as these the GMC guidance states that the absolute minimum would be 20% of full-time training, with an expectation that trainees should not undertake a placement at this level for more than 12 months.

12. I didn't satisfactorily complete all core competencies and/or pass the MRCPsych examination in core training. Can I still get a CCT?

Yes. You can pass the Examination and achieve outstanding competencies in a non-training post provided you submit evidence when applying for advanced training.

13. I have a specialist qualification in psychiatry from a country belonging to the European Union (EU). Can I still get a CCT?

No. You are not eligible for a CCT unless you have MRCPsych.

Doctors entering UK training at ST4 who have completed approved European training and who hold a specialist medical qualification from an EU country but who do not have MRCPsych may be eligible for CESR CP.

Please see the GMC's position paper on [Approved curricula and the role of UK and overseas exams](#) for further information.

14. I completed some training in psychiatry in a country belonging to the EU. Can I still apply for a CCT?

Yes. EEA nationals who have undertaken some specialist training in another European Union member state and who have been appointed to a UK training programme can request to have their previous training counted for the award of a CCT. However, you will need to provide your Deanery/LETB with confirmation of approval from the competent authority of the relevant European country that this training meets the minimum requirements of [EU Directive 2005/36/EC](#). It is the responsibility of your Deanery/LETB to verify that the EU training has been appropriately approved and to decide how much of the time spent in the EU training can count towards a CCT. This discussion should take place before your first ARCP and you will need to provide the College with written confirmation from your Deanery/LETB of which posts have been verified and how much time is being counted when you apply for your CCT.

15. Can I undertake an Acting Up Consultant post and will this count towards my CCT or CESR CP?

Yes. Doctors can spend up to 3 months in an Acting Up Consultant post in the final year of training. The College will support time spent in these posts provided all sessions are devoted to

the acting up post and it meets the criteria as stipulated in the College's [Acting Up Consultant guidance](#) (PDF). All acting up posts must be in locations approved for training by the GMC.

16. How do I calculate my completion of training date?

The College has developed a [Completion of training date](#) spreadsheet which can be used to help trainees calculate their completion of training date.

17. If I take time out of training for maternity/paternity or sick leave, will my completion of training date need to be extended?

In accordance with the GMC's position statement on [Time out of training](#), trainees who have been absent for a total of more than 14 days within a 12 month period will require their completion of training date to be reviewed by their Deanery. Training should normally be extended to make up for the time taken out, however each trainee should be considered on an individual basis, and any changes will reflect the trainee's competence.

18. Can annual leave accrued during maternity leave count towards my training?

Yes, annual leave accrued during maternity leave can count towards your training.

19. Can Keep in Touch (KIT) days during maternity leave count towards my training?

Yes, Keep in Touch (KIT) days during maternity leave can count towards your training.

20. How do I get an endorsement on the Specialist Register?

Trainees working towards a CCT/CESR CP in General psychiatry can obtain sub-specialty recognition ("an endorsement") on the GMC's Specialist Register. You must spend at least 12 months' whole time equivalent in an approved placement in one of the three recognised subspecialties of General psychiatry which are:

- Liaison psychiatry
- Rehabilitation psychiatry
- Substance Misuse psychiatry

Trainees working towards a CCT/CESR CP in Old age psychiatry can obtain sub-specialty recognition ("an endorsement") in Liaison psychiatry on the GMC's Specialist Register. You must spend at least 12 months' whole time equivalent in an approved placement in Liaison psychiatry and achieve all the competencies of the 2016 version of the Liaison psychiatry subspecialty curriculum.

Trainees must indicate on their CCT/CESR CP application if they wish to obtain an endorsement/s. It is possible for General psychiatry trainees to gain endorsements in two subspecialties.

21. Can I count time spent as a core trainee in a sub-specialty of general psychiatry towards an endorsement?

No. All training must be undertaken in advanced training programmes.

22. Can my special interest sessions count towards an endorsement?

No. Only supervised clinical sessions in a substantive placement in advanced training will count.

23. Can time spent in an Acting Up Consultant post count towards an endorsement?

Yes, time spent in Acting Up Consultant posts can count towards an endorsement providing they are in the relevant sub-specialty and all other requirements are fulfilled.

24. Which curriculum will I be assessed against?

All trainees must be working to the most up to date curriculum published on the [Royal College of Psychiatrists' website](#) and the GMC website.

25. How many months should I remain at each training level during core training?

You should spend 12 months' whole time equivalent at each level of training, however, you will normally complete 2 placements of 6 months' duration during each training level, although this may be 3 placements of 4 months' duration in some Postgraduate Deaneries. All posts must be assessed via the ARCP process.

26. How many months should I remain at each training level during advanced training?

Clinical placements should last 12 months' whole time equivalent. Placements of up to 15 months may be acceptable if there are problems with rotational dates. However, you still need to ensure you have completed the necessary competencies and assessments for that level of training. All posts must be assessed via the ARCP process.

27. How many nights do I need to spend on-call during my core training?

The [Core Curriculum](#) states that:

“During Core Psychiatry training, trainees must have experience equivalent to participation in a first on call rota with a minimum of 55 nights on call during the period of core specialty training (i.e. at least 50 cases with a range of diagnosed conditions and with first line management plans conceived and implemented.) (Trainees working part time or on partial shift systems must have equivalent experience.)” (p. 105)

Please refer to the [Core Curriculum](#) for further details of the knowledge, skills and behaviours that should be demonstrated.

28. *How many nights do I need to spend on-call during my advanced training?*

There is no specific number of nights. Higher trainees are also expected to undertake out of hours working for the duration of their training as part of a second on-call rota. This is in order to further develop skills in emergency psychiatry, particularly with respect to Mental Health Act work, but also to gain experience of supervising doctors on first on-call rotas. The frequency of out-of-hours work for both higher and core trainees is a matter for local employers but it should be frequent enough for appropriate skills to be acquired and maintained.

Please refer to the [relevant curriculum](#) for further details of the knowledge, skills and behaviours that should be demonstrated.

29. *Can I apply for Higher Training if I already have specialist registration in psychiatry?*

Yes, you can apply for Higher Training in another specialty. If you have a dual CCT you can't apply for a single CCT in either of these two specialties.

It may be possible to count some of the time spent training for one CCT towards training for a second one.

30. *Do I need to work in both Adult and Old Age settings to meet the requirements of the 2016 Liaison curriculum?*

The 2016 Liaison curriculum applies to both General and Old Age psychiatry trainees but the emphasis can be different, the key sentence being:

It is expected that all trainees working towards an endorsement in Liaison Psychiatry will need to be familiar with the broad range of presenting problems in all age groups.

For example, a General Adult trainee working towards a single CCT may mostly see patients under the age of 65 but would be expected to have some knowledge of the conditions of old age, e.g. dementia and delirium. A trainee holding a single NTN in Old Age would be expected to mostly see patients over 65 but would need to have some knowledge and exposure to working age patients to gain some of the competencies.

Training programme directors in both General Adult and Old Age Psychiatry and Heads of specialty schools need to work collaboratively with local education providers and the RCPsych Liaison Faculty to develop approved training posts that reflect the likely future workforce requirements of the speciality.

Section B: Applying to the College & GMC for a CCT or CESR CP

1. How do I apply for my CCT or CESR CP?

In order to be awarded either a CCT or CESR CP and gain entry on to the GMC's Specialist Register, you need to apply to both the GMC and the College. These applications can be made at the same time but both need to be completed before your certificate will be awarded. You need to pay a fee to the GMC but not to the College. Full details are available on the [College website](#).

2. If I do not remain in an approved training post can I still apply for a CCT?

If you leave the training programme without obtaining your final ARCP assessment outcome, then you will not be able to apply for a CCT or CESR CP. Therefore, if you leave the programme or training post without having successfully completed all assessment elements of the programme you will need to apply for a Certificate of Eligibility for Specialist Registration (CESR). Therefore, the College and GMC strongly recommend that you remain in an approved training post/programme until you have received a decision from the GMC.

3. When will I receive my CCT?

Once the College receives the application form with the relevant documentation, and is satisfied that you meet the requirements for a CCT, we will send a recommendation to the GMC. The College will notify you once a recommendation has been sent to the GMC. As far as possible, a recommendation for the award of CCT is sent to the GMC within 7–14 days, although there are obviously times when this cannot be achieved.

The GMC normally releases a CCT within five weeks of the College recommendation. However, if the completion date is in the future, then the GMC will only release the CCT a week or two beforehand. You should, therefore, allow up to two months to receive your CCT.

4. How soon can I be interviewed for a substantive consultant post?

You cannot be interviewed until you are within six months of your expected CCT date. If you are applying for a post prior to completion, ensure that you highlight your expected date of completion in your application.

5. How soon can I take up a substantive consultant post?

You cannot take up a substantive consultant post until you have an entry on the GMC's Specialist Register as this is a legal requirement.

6. *What happens when I take up a substantive consultant appointment?*

If you have obtained a substantive consultant post, you should e-mail details of the appointment to the Training & Workforce Unit of the Professional Standards Department of the Royal College of Psychiatrists at specialtytraining@rcpsych.ac.uk. You should also inform the [Membership Department](#) of changes to your employment.