

The Royal College of Ophthalmologists
Education and Training Department

Accelerated training

Background

Prior to 2007 an ophthalmology trainee was deemed to be competent when they had completed 4.5 years in approved Higher Specialist Training (SpR) following a minimum of 2 years of Basic Specialist Training (SHO). It was widely recognised that this requirement was based on an educationally unsound assumption that all trainees would achieve competency at the same rate. The era of Modernising Medical Careers (MMC) was accompanied by competency based curricula where completion of training was based on assessment of having achieved specified competencies rather than time in training. In order to make training programmes manageable Heads of School and Programme Directors still required an indicative time at which the "average trainee" would be expected to have achieved competency. For Ophthalmology this is 7 years.

The GMC's view is that training programmes should be undertaken for the indicative time period (i.e. 7 years) but that in exceptional cases trainees may complete their training in a shorter period of time.

Any decision to recommend an accelerated CCT date must be based on sound educational principles and not for the sole purpose of applying for a forthcoming consultant vacancy or Fellowship post. This advice will apply to those in full time and less than full time training.

Process for applying for accelerated training

It is anticipated that a trainee and their educational supervisor should have discussed early completion in advance of it being discussed at an ARCP panel.

In advance of the ARCP panel, the RCOphth accelerated training application form should be completed and the trainee asked to attend the Panel meeting. Following a positive ARCP Panel decision the form needs to be submitted to the College for ratification. The Education and Training department will confirm whether or not the College can support the proposed change.

Applications for a 12 month acceleration must be made at least 12 months in advance of the proposed accelerated CCT date. No exceptions will be made.

Applications for a 6 month acceleration must be made at least 6 months in advance of the proposed accelerated CCT date. No exceptions will be made.

Applications for accelerated training cannot be made retrospectively.

In order for an early CCT to be recommended, the following conditions would need to be met:

- The trainee has had favourable ARCP outcomes through their ophthalmology training and there have been no irregularities in their training to date.
- The trainee's Clinical and Educational supervisors must agree that the trainee's progress had been exceptional and that early CCT is in the trainee's best interests. This recommendation must be supported by the Head of School or TPD (where there is no School of Ophthalmology).
- The CCT date can only be accelerated by a maximum of 12 months and there can be no further additional or subsequent acceleration.
- The ARCP panel must agree that the trainee is performing exceptionally, is ahead of the expected competency progression, and that there are no patient safety contraindications to early exit from the training programme.
- The final CCT date must be agreed and documented at the ARCP, and the College's accelerated training form completed and sent to the College for ratification
- It is essential that the trainee not only completes each of the required WpBAs (including the full 7 years total of CbDs) but also meets all other curricular requirements and demonstrates a degree of maturity and professionalism normally only achieved by serving the full 7 years in training. Educational and Clinical Supervisors must be made aware that the trainee is in their final year of training and should be assessed as such.
- At the final ARCP where the outcome 6 is awarded:
 - The CCT date on the ARCP form must be correct
 - The previous completion date must be recorded in the 'detailed reasons for recommended outcome' with text to confirm that on review of progression an earlier completion date is supported
- Once the final CCT date has been recommended, no further alterations would be acceptable. In the unlikely event that the panel at the final ARCP felt that additional training was required then it would need to issue an ARCP outcome 3 detailing the need for a further period of training and a further ARCP review.

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