

NHSE working across
London, Kent, Surrey and Sussex
Acting up into a Consultant
Policy and Procedure

Document Status

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Related Documents

- Gold Guide Version 7 <https://www.copmed.org.uk/publications/the-gold-guide>

Background

Trainees who are within one year of their anticipated completion of training date are eligible to 'Act Up' as consultants, for a fixed-term period of a maximum of three months (This is based upon a whole time equivalent- LTFT trainees may also apply for a period of acting up as a consultant, up to a maximum of three months *or on a pro rata basis*).

). "Acting up" provides trainees with the experience of navigating the transition from junior doctor to consultant, whilst maintaining the supervision associated with being a trainee. Additional guidance is provided by JRCPTB for Core Medical trainees acting up to ST3+ posts.

Reference is made to acting up within 'A Reference Guide to Postgraduate Specialty Training', which states, *"Trainees acting up as consultants will need to have appropriate supervision in place, and approval will only be considered if the acting up placement is relevant to gaining the competences, knowledge, skills and behaviours required by the curriculum. In these circumstances, OOPT will normally be for a fixed-term period of three months for both full-time and less than full-time (LTFT) trainees. LTFT trainees may apply for a period of acting up as a consultant, up to a maximum of three months. This is on a fixed-term basis and not pro rata."*

1. Eligibility, General Medical Council (GMC) and College/Faculty Guidance

Acting up as a consultant must not be confused with undertaking a locum consultant post. By undertaking a period of acting up training, the trainee will be moving into an established, substantive, college approved consultant post (i.e. a pre-existing post where the consultant has left or is away or alternatively is moving into a new approved post which is pending a substantive appointment).

Opportunities to act up are not available to all trainees and are only possible if the opportunity arises and an employing or host local education provider/Trust extends an invitation.

Trainees wishing to act up should normally be within one year of their anticipated completion of training. It is not possible to undertake a hybrid 'acting up' post with a standard training post, the opportunity should be a full 'acting up' opportunity within the programme/specialty that the trainee expects to receive a CCT in.

Trainees acting up as consultants will need to have appropriate named supervision arrangements in place at all times including on call work, and approval will only be considered if the acting up placement is relevant to gaining competences, knowledge, skills and behaviours required by the curriculum. Trainees with unmet objectives, unsatisfactory ARCP outcomes or outstanding competences are not normally eligible to apply to act up. Trainees will maintain their National Training Number throughout the acting up opportunity.

The General Medical Council (GMC) and some Colleges/Faculties have guidance and/or additional requirements when applying for Acting Up to Consultant posts. It is the responsibility of the individual trainee to check their respective curriculum, Royal College/Faculty and GMC guidance and fully comply with any requirements.

2. Post Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT) / Locum Arrangements

Trainees who are post CCT but continuing to hold their NTN in a Period of Grace are not normally eligible to act up but will be expected forgo their Period of Grace to take up the post as a Locum Consultant. Although acting up often fulfils a genuine service need, it is not the same as being a Locum Consultant. Any trainee taking up a Locum Consultant post will be required to resign their National Training Number.

When in an 'acting up' position, the term 'acting up' and not 'locum' must be applied.

3. Approval Process

Before commencing an acting up position, trainees must formally apply and request approval using the application form available at Appendix 1.

Trainees are responsible for arranging for the completion of Sections A, B, C and D, and for sending the completed form, along with evidence of support for the arrangement from the relevant local education provider(s) (including the funding element) to HEE.

Recognition of the period of acting up is subject to conditions set by the Colleges/Faculties and the competences contained within their curricula. These conditions vary between colleges. It is therefore important that the trainee is aware of their own college guidance on acting up prior to submitting an application.

Applications should normally reach the relevant HEE local office a minimum of sixteen weeks prior to the **proposed** start date of the 'Acting Up' arrangement (in line with contractual notice periods) in order to meet Code of Practice requirements, however this notice period may be waived in exceptional circumstances and in agreement with the relevant Trust(s) and Postgraduate Dean. Trainees and Trusts are encouraged to have discussions as early as possible to facilitate the approval process, upon identification of acting up opportunities.

A trainee can only act up into a post within the UK and which relates to their specialty Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT). In these situations, the trainee will need to consult the out of programme policy and submit an application, noting the GMC and College/Faculty requirements.

Recognition of acting up when stated in the specialty curriculum

If the specialty curriculum specifically references a period of acting up as a consultant, then no further College/Faculty or GMC approval will be required unless stated otherwise within the curriculum. In these situations, the period of acting up will automatically count towards training and will be undertaken in GMC approved training sites. The Training Programme Director must ensure that the post meets the requirements of the trainee's developmental plan and that appropriate supervision is provided.

Recognition of acting up when not stated in the specialty curriculum

If the specialty curriculum does not make reference to a period of acting up as a consultant, then the subsequent acting up period will not be recognised as training by the relevant College/Faculty and GMC and therefore cannot be counted towards training time. In these situations, the trainee will need to consult the out of programme policy and submit an application for out of programme experience (OOPE). In these circumstances the subsequent OOPE application should be clearly marked as acting up.

Recognition of acting up when not training in London or Kent, Surrey and Sussex

A trainee normally acts up within the same HEE local office area. In exceptional circumstances, a trainee may wish to act up in another region. Where the acting up post is in the same training programme that the trainee is enrolled onto, additional prospective approval is not required from the General Medical Council. If the acting up post is in a different training programme, the usual out of programme approval process must be followed. GMC approval is not required in instances where trainees are acting up in approved training locations.

4. During the Acting Up

A trainee must continue to have a named clinical and educational supervisor during their acting up period. This may be with the pre-existing supervisor or, for the duration of the acting up period, the responsibility may be transferred to another supervisor on the scheme (a decision in this respect would probably be based on locality). All supervisory arrangements must be specified in advance of post commencement and be agreed with both supervisor(s) and TPD.

Whether in working hours or on-call, a trainee must have access to consultant colleagues for advice and support on clinical & legal matters at all times.

Collection of evidence whilst acting up

There is an expectation that trainees will continue to complete reflections, collect work place based assessments as well as feedback from colleagues while they are acting up as these will provide useful markers on performance and will highlight areas where further development is necessary.

The educational supervisor will continue to provide on-going educational support to the trainee and at the end of the post will review and document the trainee's overall performance and upload a record of this to the trainee's portfolio. Depending on the timing of the acting up period, the above may form part of an educational supervisor's report for ARCP.

Retention of National Training Number (NTN) whilst acting up

As the acting up experience occurs while a trainee is still in training, they must not resign from the training scheme prior to taking up the post and will continue to hold their National Training Number (NTN). Whilst in a period of acting up, trainees are expected to remain connected to their Postgraduate Dean in terms of revalidation rather than the Responsible Officer within the place of work.

Salary arrangements while acting up

When acting up a trainee receives their salary for in-hours' work (i.e. the acting up post) from the Employing Trust (ET). This will usually be at the bottom point of the consultant salary scale. On-call payments will come via the ET in the usual way and according to which ST rota the trainee works. On-call arrangements (whether Trainee, Consultant or no on-call) must be mutually agreed prior to the commencement of the acting up post.

Offer of a substantive consultant job

If a trainee undertakes the acting up opportunity and is offered a substantive consultant role during this time, there is an expectation that a three-month notice period will be served to the employer where the trainee wishes to complete their training. Trainees will have a duty to ensure that they meet the requirements of the curriculum in terms of competency and time and will be in a position of a final ARCP sign off and therefore it is advisable to discuss any offers with your Training Programme Director (TPD) before accepting any substantive post whilst in training.

5. Acting Up and Period of Grace

To retain access to the Period of Grace, a trainee must complete their period of 'Acting Up' before their CCT date. There is not normally access to acting up once the CCT date is reached. Trainees who are offered the opportunity to 'act up' after point of CCT, will do so as a Locum Consultant and follow the process outlined above

Appendix 1: Application Form

ACTING UP TO CONSULTANT: APPLICATION FORM

- *Trainees must read the Acting Up guidance prior to completing and submitting this form*
- *Trainees must complete all sections of this form prior to submission to HEE, including signatures of support, collecting written evidence, etc.*

Section A: Trainee Information

Surname		Forename	
Specialty	GMC number	Mobile No	
Current training post			
Address of current training post			
Current employer (if different to above)			
Current email address (for contact regarding the application)			
Email address for contact whilst acting up (if approved). It is essential that you provide us with an email that will allow us to contact you whilst acting up.			
Please confirm that you will be in your last year of training at commencement of the acting up post (a)	Yes / No (please delete as appropriate)	Please confirm your CCT date	
Current ARCP outcome			

(a) Applications without confirmation that trainees are in their final training year will be rejected.

Section B: About the planned acting up post

Is acting up recognised in your specialty curriculum and will it take place within the region?	Yes / No (please delete as appropriate)	If you are unable to answer yes to all parts of this question, you should submit an OOPE application	
Title of acting up post			
Proposed dates		to	
Location of acting up (full address)			
Supervising consultant whilst acting up		Email	
Structure of planned acting up post (where possible a timetable should be provided)			

Section C: Trainee declaration

(Please tick boxes to show compliance)

I have discussed this application with my Educational Supervisor and Training Programme Director and they both support my application.	
I have completed all relevant parts of the form and, to my knowledge, all information is correct	
I have adhered to all guidance and provide evidence attached that the local education provider/Trusts affected are aware and supportive of this acting up and proposed timescales (losing Trust, gaining Trust and employer where this is not the same).	
I provide evidence attached that the acting up local education provider/Trust will fully fund the acting up opportunity (email or letter from relevant authority i.e. DME or deputy)	
I understand that I must not begin acting up until I have approval from HEE.	
I am aware that I cannot act up without supervision being in place and I have inputted details of my supervisory arrangements in section B	

I provide evidence of College approval (where applicable)	
I provide evidence of GMC approval (Where applicable)	
Where you have been unable to tick any of the above boxes, please explain why in the field below. Failure to do this will result in your application form being returned.	
Trainee name	Date
Trainee Signature	

Section D: Training Programme Director Declaration
(Please tick boxes to show compliance)

I can confirm that the trainee is meeting all educational requirement, and this application is appropriate. I support the approval of this acting up period.		
I can confirm that the relevant trust(s) are aware of and have endorsed the acting up post. Please attach written evidence from the trust which will have been obtained by the trainee. Approval cannot be given without this		
The trainee will remain in their current post until the application receives HEE approval.		
Where you have been unable to tick any of the above boxes, please explain why in the field below.		
Training Programme Director name		Date
Training Programme Director Signature		

Section E: Postgraduate Dean (or nominated representative) Approval

Is the acting up approved or declined?	Approved Please see conditions on support section below and complete if relevant		Declined Please explain reasons fully below	
Are there any conditions on the approval? This may be proposed dates to be changed to fit with rotational changeover. If none please write n/a.				
If you have declined the application you must complete the section below giving full reasons for your decision.				
Name of Postgraduate Dean		Date		
Signature				

For Office Use Only

To be completed by HEE Administration Team	Yes / No	Date
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Complete application received		
Evidence of LEP/trust(s) agreement(s) provided		
PG Dean approval granted		
Trainee informed of outcome		
Details added to HEE trainee data information systems		
Copy of approved form sent to:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainee • Losing Local Education Provider • Gaining Local Education Provider (if different from the above) • Employer (if different from the above) • Training Programme Director • Copy for Trainee File 		