

# NHS England – North West

## Annual Review of Competence Progression (ARCP) Protocol for Specialty (including GP) Postgraduate doctors in training

Postgraduate Medical and Dental Education  
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### Annual Review of Competence Progression (ARCP) Protocol

<b>Document Title</b>	Annual Review of Competence Progression (ARCP) Protocol
<b>Purpose</b>	This protocol aims to ensure a reliable, valid and equitable process for the ARCP for postgraduate doctors in training, being compatible with recommendations within The Reference Guide for Postgraduate Specialty Training in the UK (the Gold Guide, 2022), ensuring consistency of practice across NHS England –North West.
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# Annual Review of Competence Progression (ARCP) Protocol

## 1. Background

This protocol aims to ensure a reliable, valid and equitable process for the ARCP, aligned with recommendations within The Reference Guide for Postgraduate Specialty Training in the UK (the Gold Guide, 9<sup>th</sup> Edition 2022).

The Annual Review of Competence Progression Protocol is applicable to:

- all specialty postgraduate doctors in training (including those in general practice, those in core training, those in less than full-time (LTFT) training and those in academic programmes) whose performance through a specialty training programme must be assessed to evaluate progression
- postgraduate doctors in training in combined academic/clinical programmes (e.g. those in academic clinical fellowships, clinical lectureships or clinician scientist appointments)
- postgraduate doctors in training who are out of programme with the agreement of the Postgraduate Dean
- postgraduate doctors in training who resign from a programme. Such postgraduate doctors should normally have their progress between their last ARCP and the point of resignation reviewed. The ARCP panel should document any relevant competences achieved by the postgraduate doctor; however, no outcome will be awarded and the N21 and N22 codes should be utilised (Gold Guide 4.41 iv).
- LAT trainees

The ARCP process for postgraduate doctors in training in LTFT training should take place at the same frequency as those in full-time training, i.e. at least once per calendar year. The ARCP panel should take particular care to consider that progress has been appropriate and that the estimated time for completing the training programme is reviewed.

For postgraduate doctors undertaking dual training, or main specialty and sub-specialty training, separate outcomes will be recorded.

This process does **not** include Foundation postgraduate doctors in training, who should refer to the national guidance (<http://www.foundationprogramme.nhs.uk/pages/home/foundation-ARCP>) and regional process (<https://www.nwpgmd.nhs.uk/foundation-policies-and-processes>) However, the process within the Foundation Programme is aligned with this process.

This process does **not** include trainees on dental education programmes. Dental trainees on specialist programmes are subject to an ARCP process that complies with the Dental Gold Guide. Pilot work is underway for trainees on the dental foundation programme, aiming to roll the process out to central core training in the future. Both processes within the dental section of NHS England-NW are aligned with this process.

## 2. Educational Review

It is recommended that educational supervisors undertake an educational review with their postgraduate doctors in training 8 weeks prior to the ARCP date. A structured report should be prepared by the postgraduate doctor's educational supervisor which should reflect the evidence

which the postgraduate doctor and supervisor agreed should be collected to reflect the learning agreement for the period of training under review. The purpose of the report is to provide a summary of progress including collation of the results of the required workplace-based assessments, examinations and other experiential activities required by the specialty curriculum (e.g. logbooks, evidence of research activity, publications, quality improvement activities audits). Postgraduate doctors must make themselves familiar with the expectations for ARCP through review of the curriculum.

Academic postgraduate doctors in training should also meet with their academic supervisor to complete the 'Report on Academic Trainees' Progress' form or the relevant academic supervisor's report on eportfolio. As the assessment process jointly assesses academic and clinical progress, the postgraduate doctor must also submit evidence of clinical achievement.

The process of educational review should produce a provisional personal development plan for the following 12 months. The eportfolio should be mapped against all the areas of Good Medical Practice. Although the Gold Guide suggests this process should take place after the ARCP panel, it would be educationally more valid for a plan to be produced at the educational review, particularly for postgraduate doctors in training who are progressing satisfactorily. The ARCP panel may modify the plan after consideration of the evidence presented. Where significant concerns are expressed the educational supervisor may choose to only make a statement of the competencies required and leave the further planning process to the panel.

Educational supervisors should also review the Form R with the postgraduate doctors in training. Postgraduate doctors must be able to raise any concerns without fear of being penalised, with any patient safety issues identified by clinical incident reporting and reflective notes maintained via the eportfolio, in addition to being reported through the relevant organisational procedures. Postgraduate doctors also need to be aware that any such discussions should be reported as part of the required self-declaration for revalidation. Postgraduate doctors need to update Form R annually and submit to NHS England- North West prior to every ARCP panel. Failure to submit a completed Form R that reflects the full scope of practice will result in an Outcome 5 being issued. Postgraduate doctors must be reminded that persistent failure to submit an updated Form R may result in referral to the GMC for non-engagement with the revalidation process.

Postgraduate doctors in training will be given at least 6 weeks' notice of the date of their ARCP panel so they can ensure all assessments and appraisals have been done and they can obtain structured reports from their educational supervisors, ensuring their educational eportfolio is complete. The educational eportfolio with the required evidence must be available to NHS England- North West by the date of the ARCP panel meeting. Postgraduate doctors will not be "chased" to provide the documentation by the required date but should be aware that failure to do so will result in the panel failing to consider their progress.

The educational appraisal process is the principal mechanism whereby there is the opportunity to identify concerns about progress as early as possible. These concerns should be brought to the attention of the postgraduate doctor in training during educational review meetings and it should not come as a surprise to them that action through the ARCP process is under consideration. Account should be taken of all relevant factors which might affect progress (for example, health or domestic circumstances) and should be recorded on the educational eportfolio. An action plan to address the concerns should be agreed and documented between the educational supervisor and postgraduate doctor.

### **3. The ARCP process**

The ARCP process is not an assessment of the postgraduate doctors in training in and of itself but it is an assessment of the documented and submitted evidence that is presented by the postgraduate doctor. All ARCP panel decisions will be held in with the postgraduate doctor in absentia and will take place virtually i.e. through Microsoft Teams.

For practical and administrative reasons, some specialties may wish to discuss other issues e.g. the postgraduate doctor's views on their training and planning of future placements. However, the assessment of evidence and the judgment arising from the panel must be kept separate from these other issues. In summary, the ARCP panel that decides on a postgraduate doctor's ARCP outcome must be a separate decision-making panel where the postgraduate doctor is not present (Gold Guide 4.83)

The following frameworks may be used during the ARCP process.

1. Panel reviews evidence submitted and issues ARCP outcome (assessment panel). Postgraduate doctors in training only seen if an Outcome 2, 3 or 4 is issued (feedback panel).
2. Panel reviews evidence submitted and issues ARCP outcome (assessment panel). All postgraduate doctors in training then invited to attend, notified of the outcome, and discussion follows (feedback panel).
3. Panel meets with postgraduate doctor in training for appraisal meeting to review evidence submitted and records any additional information to assist the ARCP panel in its decision (Educational Review). A separate ARCP panel should then issue the final ARCP outcome based on its individual judgment of all the evidence submitted (assessment panel). The postgraduate doctor may be invited back to the panel to discuss the outcome once this has been agreed (feedback panel).

Framework 3 may be most useful to those specialties that run multiple panels over the course of one day. If it is necessary to convene a feedback panel on a separate day to the assessment panel and it proves logistically difficult to convene a full panel, a senior educator involved in the training programme with delegated responsibility (ideally the TPD) can meet with the postgraduate doctor in training instead (Gold Guide 4.85).

In summary, the assessment panel and feedback panel make up one assessment period and postgraduate doctors in training should only be issued with one outcome in this period unless an Outcome 5 is issued followed by a further outcome. In this case, both the Outcome 5 and subsequent outcome should be recorded. Postgraduate doctors must not be present at any panel where outcome decisions are made.

The panel must record the outcome for each postgraduate doctor in training within the educational eportfolio. The postgraduate doctor must sign the form to indicate their understanding of the recommendations of the panel. For hospital speciality postgraduate doctors, the Programme Support team will confirm the final ARCP Outcome Form to the postgraduate doctor, the Training Programme Director (TPD) and the relevant College or Faculty (as required) within 2 weeks of the ARCP taking place. For academic postgraduate doctors in training, the academic report should be attached to the outcome confirmation. For general practice postgraduate doctors, the outcome paperwork is immediately accessible by the relevant people and College via the eportfolio.

All Schools should ensure that training needs in relation to eportfolio's for educational supervisors and postgraduate doctors are assessed well in advance of the ARCP period. Eportfolio training should be considered compulsory for any individual taking on the role of educational supervisor.

The purpose of the postgraduate doctor in training meeting with the panel after it has reached its decision (feedback panel) is to discuss the recommendations for focused or additional remedial training if these are required. If the panel recommends focused training on the development of specific competences (Outcome 2) then the timescale for this should be agreed with the postgraduate doctor. Objectives should be written in SMART format.

Feedback panels will take virtually i.e. via Microsoft Teams. Any postgraduate doctor wishing to request a face-to-face feedback panel meeting must submit a formal written request to their

Associate Dean, with clear justification as to why a virtual ARCP feedback panel is felt to be unsuitable. Postgraduate doctors are not entitled to bring a representative to their ARCP feedback panel.

If additional remedial training time is required (Outcome 3), the panel should indicate the intended outcome and proposed timescale. The framework of how a remedial programme will be delivered will be determined by the Postgraduate Dean, however the details will be planned by the TPD/Head of School (HOS), in discussion with the Associate Dean. The remedial programme will be planned taking into account the needs of other postgraduate doctors in the specialty and must be within the limits of patient safety.

This additional training must be agreed with the postgraduate doctor in training, the trainers and employer. Full information about the circumstances leading to the additional training requirement must be transmitted by NHS England- North West to the training site and employer, including the reasons for remediation. This will be undertaken by the PSM once the process is complete by sending copies of the SMART objectives to the TPD, the postgraduate doctor's current and next (where known) Trust specialty lead, the postgraduate doctor's current and next (where known) Director of Medical Education (DME) or educational supervisor. The information transmission will be shared with the postgraduate doctor but agreement to it being shared with the new employer and trainers is a requisite of joining and continuing in the training programme.

Progress with Outcome 2s and 3s can be reviewed at a further ARCP panel at an agreed later date. If all objectives have been met, an Outcome 1 can be issued. Details should be fully documented in the ARCP notes pro-forma for future reference.

The postgraduate doctor in training may request a review or appeal within 10 working days of receiving written notification of their ARCP outcome.

#### 4. ARCP Panels

The ARCP panel will be convened by the PSM (or their deputy) and should consist of at least three panel members appointed by the training committee or an equivalent group. At least one clinical member of the ARCP panel must have a detailed knowledge of the relevant curriculum (and ARCP decision aide where appropriate) and the required level of competence for doctors in training. The ARCP panel Chair must be one of the following: Associate Dean, Head of School, TPD or their appointed deputy (where necessary for multiple panels). Where panels are chaired by an appointed deputy, the Head of School or TPD should be available to oversee all panels on that day. Feedback panels should be attended by the Associate Dean but can be chaired by the Head of School or TPD if felt appropriate.

It is advisable, where possible, that Schools make arrangements for 'stand-by' panel members to be available on the day of the ARCP in the event of cancellation by a scheduled member of the panel. It is recognised that in smaller specialties it may only be possible to arrange panels with two members plus a NHS England- North West representative. Where multiple panels take place over one day, the Chair can act in a roaming role across all panels.

Where an Associate Dean is not available to attend a feedback panel, the NHS England- North West representative role can be undertaken by the Head of School. However, in such circumstances, a further specialty representative such as the TPD or another educational supervisor will also be required to attend as the Head of School cannot represent NHS England- North West and the specialty on the same panel. Where such representation occurs, the Head of School must ensure discussion with the Associate Dean prior to the feedback panel to ensure they are fully briefed on their NHS England- North West representative role.

For those specialties where the assessment panel and feedback panel take place on the same day, it must be ensured that an Associate Dean is available to Chair any unexpected feedback panel complex outcomes (i.e. non-exam failure outcomes), or that the Head of School has obtained a full briefing from the Associate Dean (as above) on their role as Chair.

It should be noted that for assessment panels, the maximum recommended number of panel members is four. For feedback panels, the maximum recommended number of panel members is six; for example, the Chair, a lay representative and four other clinicians. Any panel larger than this may be asked to justify its membership.

A member of NHS England- North West training programme management team will arrange and be in attendance for every ARCP panel. The PSM or Programme Support Coordinator (PSC) should be in attendance at every feedback panel whenever possible. However, it is acknowledged that during the summer ARCP programme it may be necessary for a NHS England- North West representative other than the PSM/PSC to be in attendance. Where an Associate Dean is not present (as above) a PSM/PSC must be available to sit on the panel or the panel will need to be reconvened.

For academic assessment, the lead Associate Dean will advise on academic input to the annual ARCP process. All academic postgraduate doctors in training must ensure they have met with their academic supervisor prior to their review and completed the 'Report on Academic Trainees' Progress' form or the relevant section on eportfolio.

Lay representation should be arranged for all feedback panels and 10% of all assessment panels across Schools (or across specialty for those that stand alone). Schools are responsible for ensuring consistency and standardised outcomes across their specialties. Lay representation will be co-ordinated centrally by NHS England- North West. Where multiple panels occur on one day, the lay representative should be free to rotate around all panels but should focus on the more complex outcomes. For smaller specialties and panels, internal NHS England- North West staff should be utilised to provide lay representation wherever possible.

The role of the lay representative at assessment panels is to ensure consistency of process within the 10% samples and across NHS England- North West. At feedback panels, the lay representative should be actively involved as a panel member, making contributions to dialogue and ensuring fairness to postgraduate doctors in training. The lay representative should not be asked to judge whether the postgraduate doctor has made satisfactory progress or whether the outcome awarded is appropriate. NHS England- North West will provide training on the role of the lay to all lay representatives.

Specialties should use an external trainer from within the specialty, but from outside the training programme or school, to also review at least 10% of their ARCP outcomes. In General Practice, the ARCP process is reviewed and evaluated by nationally appointed Educational Advisors as part of the Royal College's quality management of GP training.

All members of the panel (including the lay members and those acting as external members) must be trained for their role. This includes training on fitness to practise and equality, diversity and inclusion issues and should be refreshed every three years. Where possible, an individual should observe an ARCP panel prior to participating as a full member.

The review period for the ARCP must be explicit. This would normally be the date from the last ARCP to the date of the current ARCP, or where appropriate the CCT date. When accessing the eportfolio, only evidence within the appropriate review period should be considered.

If a postgraduate doctor in training wishes to accelerate their CCT date, the NHS England Bringing Forward a Completion of Training (CCT date) guidance document should be followed. If a CCT date of stage of training is accelerated, this must be stated and the reasons(s) detailed on the ARCP form.

The decision taken by the assessment panel relating to the outcome awarded should be recorded on the eportfolio, ARCP timetable and TIS, as well as the ARCP Outcome Form. For Academic Postgraduate doctors in training, the Report on Academic Trainees' Progress form should also be completed. Detailed notes are only required to be taken at a feedback panel. The only paperwork required to be stored in the postgraduate doctor file is the ARCP Outcome Forms (including the supplementary form for postgraduate doctors receiving a developmental outcome and the supplementary information for the GMC form), if not stored on their eportfolio, and any notes taken on the feedback panel pro-forma. Copies of WPBAs and educational supervisor's reports should be stored in the postgraduate doctor's eportfolio.

As the assessment panel and feedback panel together make up one assessment period, feedback panels should not take place any later than one month after the assessment panel. Any assessment outside of this one-month period should be counted as a new formal assessment. It is recommended that both panels take place on the same day to avoid unnecessary delays in the issuing of ARCP outcomes. Feedback panels should not be delayed due to awaiting examination results (see Appendix 3 for further explanation on issuing outcomes when awaiting examinations).

In exceptional cases, it may be necessary for the feedback panel to overrule the decision of the assessment panel and issue a new outcome. However, this should be in exceptional cases only, for example, where postgraduate doctors in training have extenuating personal or educational circumstances that were not previously known or discussed at the assessment panel. These could include health issues, personal bereavements or serious issues with their training environment (see Appendix 2 for examples of exceptional cases).

Where a final year assessment is being considered remotely, a panel of 3 consultants should be set up. This should be the TPD and two other consultants from the specialty. Each panel member must check that all targets have been met as well as the final year ARCP decision aide requirements. The final outcome can be issued within 3 months of the CCT date.



It should be noted that in order to successfully demonstrate progression, postgraduate doctors in training eportfolios must reflect completion of the required number of WPBA's at regular intervals over a 12-month period. WPBA's completed over a short space of time, relatively close to the ARCP panel, may be judged not to have met this requirement.

The ARCP panel chair is responsible for capturing any comments made concerning the quality of the educational supervisor report. PSMs should then work with their Heads of School to feedback any concerns to the quality team, TPD for the individual specialty or directly to the educational supervisor within General Practice. The ARCP panel chair should also ensure that any issues that require the attention of the Responsible Officer (Postgraduate Dean) are noted at the feedback panel.

Consultant/GP supervisors must declare an interest if their own postgraduate doctors are being considered by a panel of which they are a member and where there are concerns should withdraw temporarily from the process whilst their postgraduate doctor is being considered.

All those present at the ARCP panel must ensure they are in a confidential environment.

## **5. The ARCP Process & Revalidation**

Whilst the ARCP assessment will be the vehicle for the revalidation of postgraduate doctors in training, it should be noted that these processes are not interdependent. Revalidation is a process which all doctors must undergo and is solely concerned with an individual's Fitness to Practise. The ARCP process is concerned with educational performance and the achievement of competences in relation to a specialty training programme curriculum. The ARCP provides advice to the Postgraduate Dean, in their role as Responsible Officer, about revalidation of the postgraduate doctor to enable the Responsible Officer to make a recommendation to the GMC. (Gold Guide 4.134)

There are 6 types of supporting information that doctors will be expected to provide in their eportfolios and discuss in their annual appraisals in relation to revalidation, as listed below:

1. Continuing Professional Development
2. Quality Improvement Activity
3. Significant Events
4. Feedback from Colleagues
5. Feedback from Patients (where applicable)
6. Review of Complaints and Compliments

The ARCP panel will review the supporting evidence in line with the specialty curriculum, issuing postgraduate doctors in training with either a satisfactory or developmental outcome. In addition, the panel will also be asked to review the self-declaration from the postgraduate doctor in training (the Form R), any comments from the educational supervisor in relation to revalidation issues, and any relevant exit and exception reports from the postgraduate doctor's employing organisation. The previous year's outcome should also be reviewed to ensure any unresolved issues have been resolved and reflected upon. At the end of the ARCP, the panel will be asked to make a decision as to whether it believes there to be any revalidation concerns in relation to individual postgraduate doctors. At the end of a postgraduate doctor's final ARCP all past outcomes should be checked to ensure there are no outstanding unresolved issues prior to recommendation for revalidation.

At the point of revalidation, the Responsible Officer will have three options in making a recommendation. These are:

1. Recommendation to revalidate

2. Recommendation to defer
3. Recommendation of non-engagement

It should be noted that an ARCP outcome is not directly related to the recommendation for revalidation. For example:

A postgraduate doctor who has completed training through achievement of all necessary competencies will be issued with an Outcome 6 at ARCP. Providing there are no on-going clinical governance concerns the Responsible Officer will be able to make a positive revalidation recommendation at this point. However, if a postgraduate doctor has achieved all the necessary competencies but has an on-going fitness to practice issue, they can still be issued with an Outcome 6 but their revalidation recommendation will need to be deferred until the conclusion of the GMC investigation.

Alternatively, a postgraduate doctor can receive an Outcome 4 at ARCP and be released from training due to repeated exam failure. However, provided there are no concerns about the doctor's Fitness to Practice, this outcome should not, in itself, prevent the Responsible Officer from making a positive revalidation recommendation.

## **6. ARCP Resources**

The following appendices are available to aid the panel process:

- Appendix 1: Guidance on outcome forms to be issued
- Appendix 2: Guidance on exceptional extenuating circumstances when considering outcomes
- Appendix 3: FAQs: guidance for panels when issuing outcomes
- Appendix 4: The Academy of Medical Sciences: Guidelines for monitoring clinical academic training and progress

The panel chair and/or PSM will brief panel members on the purpose of the panel and the protocol for carrying out the ARCP at the beginning of each session. They will make available copies of the ARCP protocol and all appendices, including guidance on issuing outcomes. The ARCP process should be evaluated annually where possible.

## **7. Reviews and Appeals**

All postgraduate doctors in training who receive an outcome from a panel indicating further training is required or that they be released from a training programme will have had an opportunity to discuss the findings with the panel or a senior educator involved in the training programme. On receipt of the outcome they have the right to request a review or appeal.

### **Reviews**

Postgraduate doctors in training who receive Outcome 2 (further training or supervision is needed but additional time is not required) have the right to request a review. This request should be made to the relevant PSM within 10 working days of receiving written confirmation of the outcome. The postgraduate doctor must supply supporting evidence for the request and this may include additional evidence (e.g. evidence of mitigating circumstances or other evidence relevant to the original panel's decision). The PSM will administer the review process on behalf of the panel Chair, which will take place within 15 working days of receipt of the review request. The PSM will endeavour to include as

many original panel members as possible, although the review can be undertaken virtually. The panel can confirm or change the outcome and it will ensure that the postgraduate doctor receives its decision, with the reasons, in writing. If the panel considers it appropriate, it may invite the postgraduate doctor to meet with them or a senior representative to discuss the decision of the review. (Gold Guide 4.164)

The decision of the review of Outcome 2 is final and there is no further appeal. The review should not impose an increased sanction on the postgraduate doctor. In such circumstances where new information has come to light that may inform such a decision, these issues will be brought to the attention of the Postgraduate Dean.

## **Appeals**

Postgraduate doctors in training who have received Outcome 3 or 4 (additional training time is required or release from the training programme) have the right to request an appeal. This request should be made to the Postgraduate Dean within 10 working days of receiving written confirmation of the outcome. The Programme Support Business Manager will administer the appeals process, which has two steps:

**Review:** if the postgraduate doctor accepts the outcome of the Review, this completes the process.

**Appeal:** If the postgraduate doctor does not accept the findings of the Review, then they should inform the Postgraduate Dean in writing within 10 working days of the Review meeting taking place. NHS England- North West will then convene a formal separate appeal panel. This is the final internal appeal process.

(For more information see the Formal ARCP Appeals Process Guidance)

## **8. Infrastructure**

Each ARCP panel will require:

- Administrative support, co-ordinated via the PSM/PSC
- IT access for each panel member to be able to review eportfolios individually, i.e. workstations or laptop computers, with fast internet access
- All participants to ensure they are in a confidential environment for the duration of the ARCP, and any pre or post ARCP discussions.

## **9. References**

The Academy of Medical Sciences (2011) Guidelines monitoring clinical academic training and progress: A guide for trainees, supervisors and assessors

Department of Health (2010) A Reference Guide for Postgraduate Specialty Training in the UK: The Gold Guide: 9<sup>th</sup> Edition 3 August 2022.

## Appendix 1: Guidance on Issuing Outcomes

<p><b>Outcome 1</b> Satisfactory progress – Achieving progress and the development of competences at the expected rate</p>	<p>Satisfactory progress is defined as achieving the competences in the specialty curriculum approved by GMC at the rate required. The rate of progress should be defined in the specialty curriculum (e.g. with respect to assessments, experiential opportunities, examinations etc). (It is possible for postgraduate doctors in training to achieve competences at a more rapid rate than defined and this may affect their CCT date.)</p> <p>Outcome 1s should not be issued pending receipt of documentation. Where documentation is missing, Outcome 2 or 5 should be used.</p> <p>Where a postgraduate doctor has resigned from a training programme (and dependent on the timing of this resignation), they should be informed that an ARCP panel will review their progress between their last ARCP and the point of resignation (unless the effective exit from the training programme occurred within three months of the last ARCP). The ARCP panel should document any relevant competences that have been achieved by the postgraduate doctor; however, no outcome will be awarded, and the N21 and N22 codes should be utilised. It is expected that postgraduate doctors will engage in this process.</p>
<p><b>Outcome 2</b> Development of specific competences required – Additional training time not required</p>	<p>The postgraduate doctor in training's progress has been acceptable overall but there are some competences that have not been fully achieved and need to be further developed. It is not expected that the rate of overall progress will be delayed or that the prospective date for completion of training will need to be extended or that a period of additional remedial training will be required.</p> <p>Where such an outcome is anticipated, the postgraduate doctor should appear before the panel. The panel will need to specifically identify in writing the further development that is required. Objectives should be written in SMART format. NHS England – North West will return completed documentation to the postgraduate doctor, the TPD and educational supervisor, who will make clear to the postgraduate doctor and the employer(s) what must be done to achieve the required competences as well as the assessment strategy for these. At the next annual assessment or educational review of outcome, it will be essential to identify and document that these competences have been met.</p> <p>Where a postgraduate doctor in training has resigned from a training programme (and dependent on the timing of this resignation), they should be informed that an ARCP panel will review their progress between their last ARCP and the point of resignation (unless the effective exit from the training programme occurred within three months of the last ARCP). The ARCP panel should document any relevant competences that have been</p>

	<p>achieved by the postgraduate doctor; however, no outcome will be awarded, and the N21 and N22 codes should be utilised. It is expected that postgraduate doctors will engage in this process.</p>
<p><b>Outcome 3</b> Inadequate progress – Additional training time required</p>	<p>The panel has identified that a formal additional period of training is required that will extend the duration of the training programme (e.g. the core training programme end date or anticipated CCT/CESR(CP)/CEGPR(CP) date). Where such an outcome is anticipated, the postgraduate doctor must attend the panel meeting.</p> <p>The postgraduate doctor, educational supervisor and employer will need to receive clear recommendations from the panel about what additional training is required as well as the circumstances under which it should be delivered (e.g. concerning the level of supervision). It will, however, be a matter for NHS England–North West to determine the details of the additional training in the context of the panel's recommendations since this will depend on local circumstances and resources. Objectives should be written in SMART format. NHS England –North West will send a letter, detailing to the postgraduate doctor, educational supervisor and the employer(s) what must be done to achieve the required competences and the assessment strategy for these.</p> <p><b>Duration of extension to training:</b></p> <p>Where such additional training is required because of concerns over progress, in the hospital and non-general practice community specialties, this will be up to one year within the total duration of the training programme (up to six months for core training, and an overall total of one year across both core and higher specialty training where the programme is “uncoupled”). In general practice, this will be up to one year. Exceptionally, this additional training time may be extended at the discretion of the Postgraduate Dean but with an absolute maximum of two years in hospital and non-general practice community specialties within the total duration of the training programme (up to one year for core training, and two years across both core and higher specialty training when the programme is uncoupled) and eighteen months in general practice. This does not include additional time that might be required because of statutory leave such as ill health or maternity/paternity/adoption leave. Whilst not exclusive, examples of exceptional circumstances for extension to training beyond a normal period that may have a significant impact on the ability to train or on training opportunities may include significant unforeseen changes to personal circumstances, service reorganisation, a major epidemic or catastrophe, or the unforeseen absence of a trainer (see also Appendix 2).</p> <p>The extension does not have to be continuous (as a block of one year) but may be divided over the course of the training programme as necessary. An extension to training of less than six months may be particularly appropriate where the reason for extension is exam failure. For LTFT postgraduate doctors in training, should an extension to training be required following the</p>

	<p>award of Outcome 3, this will be on a pro rata basis if training requirements for progression have not been met. The outcome panel should consider the outcome of the remedial programme as soon as practicable after its completion.</p> <p>Where a postgraduate doctor has resigned from a training programme (and dependent on the timing of this resignation), they should be informed that an ARCP panel will review their progress between their last ARCP and the point of resignation (unless the effective exit from the training programme occurred within three months of the last ARCP). The ARCP panel should document any relevant competences that have been achieved by the postgraduate doctor; however, no outcome will be awarded, and the N21 and N22 codes should be utilised. It is expected that postgraduate doctors will engage in this process.</p>
<p><b>Outcome 4</b> Released from training programme – with or without specified competences</p>	<p>The panel will recommend that the postgraduate doctor in training is released from the training programme if there is still insufficient and sustained lack of progress despite having had additional training to address concerns over progress. The panel should ensure that any relevant competences that have not been achieved by the postgraduate doctor are documented. The postgraduate doctor will have their NTN withdrawn and may wish to seek further advice from the Postgraduate Dean or their current employer about future career options, including pursuing a non-training, service-focused career pathway.</p> <p>Outcome 4 may also be recommended in circumstances where there is no performance-linked need for additional training.</p> <p>Following such a recommendation, the Postgraduate Dean will advise the postgraduate doctor of their release from training. The Postgraduate Dean will also notify the employer that the individual is no longer in specialty training and that, following statutory guidance, their contract of employment be withdrawn.</p> <p><b>N.B.</b> Providing there are no fitness to practice concerns, postgraduate doctors who have received an Outcome 4 may reapply to specialty training at a later date via the normal competitive process. The support of the Postgraduate Dean is required (Gold Guide paragraphs 3.74).</p>
<p><b>Outcome 5</b> Incomplete evidence presented – Additional training time may be required</p>	<p>The panel can make no statement about progress or otherwise since the postgraduate doctor in training has supplied either no information or incomplete information to the panel. The postgraduate doctor will usually have to supply the panel with a written account within ten working days as to why the documentation has not been made available to the panel. The panel does not have to accept the explanation given by the postgraduate doctor and can require the postgraduate doctor to submit the required documentation by a designated date, noting that available “additional” time is being used (see Outcome 1) in the interim. If the panel accepts the explanation offered by the postgraduate doctor accounting for the delay in submitting their documentation to the panel, it can choose to recommend that</p>

additional time has not been used. Once the required documentation has been received, the panel should consider it (the panel does not have to meet with the postgraduate doctor if it chooses not to and the review may be done “virtually” if practicable) and issue an ARCP outcome. This may include referring a postgraduate doctor to a Feedback Panel. Both Outcomes will stand on the postgraduate doctor record.

Alternatively, the panel may agree what outstanding evidence is required from the postgraduate doctor for Outcome 1 (and the timescale in which it must be provided) and give authority to the Chair of the panel to issue Outcome 1 if satisfactory evidence is subsequently submitted. However, if the Chair does not receive the agreed evidence to support Outcome 1, then a panel will be reconvened. This reconvened panel can be undertaken “virtually”.

It is the responsibility of the TPD/Panel Chair to check outstanding documentation on behalf of the panel to sign off an Outcome. It is not the responsibility of NHS England –North West staff.

Outcome 5s should only be issued when a postgraduate doctor in training fails to produce documentation or evidence that already exists but for whatever reason has not been made this available to the panel. If the evidence does not exist then postgraduate doctors should be issued with an Outcome 2 or 3.

Outcome 5 should also be recommended as a consequence of failure to submit Form R (Gold Guide paragraph 4.97). If a postgraduate doctor still fails to submit a satisfactorily completed Form R after two weeks and this is the first time that this situation has arisen in the training programme, for core, specialty and general practice postgraduate doctors, an Outcome 2, 3 or 4 will be issued (according to training progression). A note is made on the postgraduate doctor’s record that they did not submit a completed Form R. An Outcome 1 or 6 is not awarded, even if there are no training progression concerns (Gold Guide paragraph 4.99). Postgraduate doctors must be reminded that persistent failure to submit a Form R may result in referral to the GMC for non-engagement with the revalidation process.

When postgraduate doctors are awaiting examination results, an Outcome 5 should only be issued where the result will be known prior to the Feedback Panel taking place, taking into account that the Assessment Panel & Feedback Panel SHOULD NOT be more than 4 weeks apart. Outside of this window, postgraduate doctors who are awaiting examination results should be issued with an outcome 2 (or 3 if additional training time is required). If successful in the examination an outcome 1 can be issued in absentia at a later date. If unsuccessful in the exam, the postgraduate doctor should be reassessed in the next assessment window.

Outcome 5 is an interim outcome, which the postgraduate doctor cannot remain on. It needs to be reviewed by the panel or chair within a defined timescale (within a maximum of 8 weeks) and must be before the end of the training period being considered.(GG9:4.94, footnote 24)

<p><b>Outcome 6</b> Gained all required competences – Will be recommended as having completed the training programme (core or specialty) and if in a run-through training programme or higher training programme, will be recommended for award of a CCT/CESR(CP)/CEGPR(CP).</p>	<p>The panel will need to consider the overall progress of the postgraduate doctor and ensure that all the competences of the curriculum have been achieved prior to recommending them for completion of the training programme to the relevant College/Faculty.</p>
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<p align="center"><b>Outcomes for postgraduate doctors in fixed-term training posts e.g. LATs</b></p>	
<p>Postgraduate doctors in fixed-term training posts will undertake regular in-work assessments and maintain documentary evidence of progress during their fixed-term appointment. This evidence will be considered by the ARCP panel and will result in one of the following outcomes:</p>	
<p><b>Outcome 7.1</b> Satisfactory progress in or completion of the post</p>	<p>The postgraduate doctor in training has established that they have acquired and has demonstrated the competences expected of a postgraduate doctor undertaking a placement of this type and duration at the level specified.</p>
<p><b>Outcome 7.2</b> Development of specific competences required – Additional training time not required</p>	<p>The postgraduate doctors in training’s progress has been acceptable overall; however, there are some competences not fully achieved, which the postgraduate doctor needs to develop either before the end of their current placement or in a further post to achieve the full competences for this period/year of training. The rate of overall progress is not expected to be delayed, nor will the prospective date for completion of training be extended, nor will a period of additional remedial training be required as this is a fixed-term post. Where such an outcome is anticipated, the postgraduate doctor should appear before the panel. The panel will need to specifically identify in writing the further development required. The documentation will be returned to the TPD and educational supervisor, who will make clear to the postgraduate doctor and the employer(s) what must be done to achieve the required competences as well as the assessment strategy for these. At the next review of progression, it will be essential to identify and document that these competences have been met. Failure to complete the competences in time will mean this period of training cannot be formally recognised.</p>
<p><b>Outcome 7.3</b> Inadequate progress by the postgraduate doctor</p>	<p>The postgraduate doctor in training has not made adequate progress for this period of training for it to be formally recognised towards the CCT/CESR(CP)/CEGPR(CP) or full CESR/CEGPR. If the postgraduate doctor wishes to attain the described competences, they will be required to repeat this period of training (not necessarily in the same post, with the same employer or in the same locality in NHS England). If postgraduate doctors move to a new post, employer or locality in NHS England, NES, HEIW or NIMDTA, they must declare their previous ARCP outcome.</p>
<p><b>Outcome 7.4</b> Incomplete evidence presented</p>	<p>The panel can make no statement about progress or otherwise since the postgraduate doctor in training has supplied either no information or incomplete information to the panel. The postgraduate doctor will have to supply the panel with a written account within five working days of the panel meeting as to why documentation was not provided for the panel.</p>



	<p>However, the panel does not have to accept the explanation given by the postgraduate doctor and can require the postgraduate doctor to submit the required documentation by a designated date. This evidence will then be considered by the panel. Failure to submit this documentation will mean that the period of training cannot be counted towards the CCT or CESR(CP)/CEGPR(CP).</p> <p><b>N.B.</b> It should be noted that an Outcome 7.4 is equivalent to an Outcome 5, <b>NOT</b> an Outcome 4.</p>
<p>The ARCP outcome should be sent to the postgraduate doctors in training and their educational supervisor for that year of training, who should arrange a follow-up meeting even if the end of the appointment period/year has been reached. NHS England will also keep a copy on record.</p>	

<p align="center"><b>Outcomes for Postgraduate Doctors who are Out of Programme</b></p>	
<p><b>Outcome 8</b> Out of programme for clinical experience, research or a career break (OOPE/OOPR/OOPC/OOP-P)</p>	<p>The panel should receive documentation from the postgraduate doctor in training on the required form indicating what they are doing during their OOP time, if the OOP is not recognised for training. Postgraduate doctors in training should also submit a Form R.</p> <p><b>OOPE</b> – If the OOP period is to gain clinical experience that will not contribute towards the competences required by the training programme, then an annual OOP report form should be submitted, including an indicative intended date of return.</p> <p><b>OOPR</b> – If the purpose of the OOP is research, the postgraduate doctor must produce a research supervisor’s report together with the annual OOP report form indicating that appropriate progress in research is being made, along with achievement of the relevant degree (if appropriate). If there is prospective approval by the GMC for the OOPR to contribute to the CCT or CESR(CP)/CEGPR(CP), then formal assessment documentation must be submitted annually to the review panel.</p> <p><b>OOPC</b> – If a doctor is undertaking a career break, a yearly OOPC request should be sent to the panel, indicating that the postgraduate doctor is still on a career break and including an indicative intended date of return.</p> <p><b>OOP-P</b> – If a doctor is undertaking time out of their specialty (a “pause”), and during this time undertaking work outside the training environment in NHS-related work, a yearly OOPP request should be sent to the panel. This should indicate that the postgraduate doctor is still on a pause from training and should include an indicative intended date of return. Any relevant competencies gained during the OOPP will be reviewed at the next ARCP upon recommencement to the training programme.</p> <p><b>OOPT &amp; OOPR</b> – If the postgraduate doctor in training is out of programme on a training placement or OOPR that has been prospectively approved by the GMC and that will contribute to the competences of the postgraduate doctor’s programme, then Outcome 8 should not be used. Instead, a routine assessment of progression should be made and Outcome 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 should be awarded.</p>
<p>End of programme/stage outcomes for core</p>	<p>Where success in an examination is a requirement for exit from early years training, then relevant ARCP outcomes codes apply.</p>

and early years postgraduate doctors	
When an outcome is not issued	The ARCP panel would not issue an outcome when the postgraduate doctor is absent due to statutory leave (e.g. parental or sick leave) or where training has been suspended (Gold Guide paragraph 4.77). In these circumstances, the panel will record the reasons for this (refer to N codes on the ARCP Outcome Form).

## **Appendix 2: What Constitutes Exceptional Circumstances?**

### **1. Educational:** (to support postgraduate doctors requiring extra support)

Where postgraduate doctors in training are struggling with performance issues due to several underlying factors that may or may not include conduct, health, significant unforeseen changes to personal circumstances and the learning environment. There may also be disciplinary issues.

### **2. Health & associated circumstances:**

Where postgraduate doctors in training are currently on long-term sick leave or have underlying health issues that have impacted upon their ability to complete training/competencies.

Where postgraduate doctors have experienced bereavements or other life-changing events that have impacted upon their health and well-being.

Where postgraduate doctors have had to undertake caring responsibilities, which have impacted upon their ability to successfully complete training/competencies.

### **3. Capacity/service based:**

Where the training programme has been unable to provide the right level of training for individual postgraduate doctors to enable them to complete all required competencies due to such issues as ineffective supervision, consultant inaccessibility or retirement, posts that are no longer able to deliver the curriculum as originally planned, service reconfiguration.

## **Appendix 3: FAQs to assist with the issuing of ARCP Outcomes**

### **1. Outcome 2/3 versus Outcome 5**

Outcome 5s should only be issued when a postgraduate doctor in training fails to produce documentation or evidence that already exists but for whatever reason has not made this available to the assessment panel. If by the date of the assessment panel, a WPBA or course has been completed but the postgraduate doctor has merely failed to include evidence of this in the portfolio then an outcome 5 can be issued and the postgraduate doctor be given a limited period of time to produce this.

However, if the evidence does not exist, i.e. the task has not yet been done, then postgraduate doctors in training should not be given the extra time allowed by an outcome 5 to complete this. If by the date of the assessment panel, a WPBA or a course or any other mandatory documentation has not yet been completed or an examination has not yet been sat then the postgraduate doctor has failed to produce the mandatory evidence required to achieve a satisfactory ARCP. They should therefore be issued with an outcome 2 or 3 with specific objectives to complete the missing WPBAs/ meet the missing competencies. The postgraduate doctor should remain on this outcome until their next assessment whether this is 3 months, 6 months or 1 year (this period of time should be determined by the ARCP panel).

The following principles should be observed:

- Where other evidence in the portfolio indicates likely satisfactory progress but a mandatory piece of evidence is missing then an outcome 5 should be issued
- Where other evidence in the portfolio indicates concerns with progress or there is evidence of inadequate engagement despite feedback then outcome 2 (or 3 where appropriate) should be issued

**N.B:** If an outcome 2 or 3 is issued at the assessment panel, this decision **MUST NOT** be overturned at the feedback panel if the postgraduate doctor produces new evidence in the time between the two panels (see point 2 below).

When postgraduate doctors in training are awaiting examination results, an Outcome 5 should only be issued where the result will be known prior to the feedback panel taking place, taking into account that the assessment panel & feedback panel SHOULD NOT be more than 4 weeks apart. Outside of this window, postgraduate doctors in training who are awaiting examination results should be issued with an outcome 2 (or 3 if additional training time is required). If successful in the examination an outcome 1 can be issued in absentia at a later date. If unsuccessful in the exam, the postgraduate doctor should be reassessed in the next assessment window.

Outcome 5 should also be recommended as a consequence of failure to submit Form R (Gold Guide paragraph 4.123). Postgraduate doctors in training must be reminded that persistent failure to submit a Form R may result in referral to the GMC for non-engagement with the revalidation process.

An Outcome 5 is an interim outcome, which the postgraduate doctor cannot remain on. It needs to be reviewed by the panel or chair within a defined timescale (within a maximum of 8 weeks) and must be before the end of the training period being considered.(GG9:4.94, footnote 24)

## 1.1 For General Practice postgraduate doctors in training only - Action when evidence is missing

- Where the evidence in the portfolio indicates likely satisfactory progress but a mandatory piece of evidence is missing then outcome 5 should be issued. This should be reviewed in a short timescale (2-3 weeks).
- If the complete evidence was not available for the review panel or the new evidence raised concerns about progress then outcomes 2 or 3 would be issued.
- Where there is not immediate opportunity to provide the evidence or a longer period is needed to evaluate evidence submission (e.g. insufficient PDP or learning log entries) then the timescale for review can be longer.
- Where the evidence in the portfolio indicates concerns with progress or there was evidence of inadequate engagement despite feedback then outcome 2 or 3 should be issued

## 2. Changing Assessment Panel unsatisfactory outcomes at Feedback Panel (NOT INCLUDING OUTCOME 5s)

It should be noted that the assessment panel and the feedback panel together make up one assessment (see Gold Guide extracts below\*) and postgraduate doctors in training issued with an outcome 2, 3 or 4 at the assessment panel should therefore only receive one outcome. Unless there are strong extenuating circumstances the outcome 2, 3 or 4 issued at the assessment panel MUST NOT be changed at the feedback panel. If a postgraduate doctor attends a feedback panel with evidence that did not exist at the time of the assessment panel this cannot be considered unless it is covered under exceptional circumstances. The outcome issued at the assessment panel stands until the next assessment, whether this is 3 months, 6 months or 1 year.

\*GG4.83 The process is a review of the documented and submitted evidence, supporting information and assessments that are presented by the postgraduate doctor. The postgraduate doctor must not be present at the panel considering the outcome (paragraph 4.86). However, following the ARCP, there will be a meeting with the trainee to inform them of and explain the outcome, and to agree the objectives and learning plan (paragraph 4.85).

\*GG4.84 Any concerns that emerge about a trainee's fitness to practise must be reported to the Postgraduate Dean/Medical Director, as RO, for further advice and guidance.

\*GG4.85 Where the TPD, educational supervisor or named academic supervisor has indicated that there may be an Outcome 2/10.1, 3/10.2 or 4, the trainee must be informed of the possible outcome prior to the ARCP panel meeting, which may be included in the pre-ARCP feedback from the educational supervisor (paragraphs 4.56 and 4.57). After the panel has considered the evidence and made its judgement, if Outcomes 2/10.1, 3/10.2 or 4 are recommended, the trainee must meet with either the ARCP panel or a senior educator involved in their training programme at the earliest opportunity. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the recommendations for focused or additional remedial training if this is required.

\*GG4.86 For practical and administrative reasons, HEE, NES, HEIW or NIMDTA may wish to discuss other issues (e.g. the trainee's views on their training or planning of future

placements) on the same occasion as the annual panel meeting. However, the review of evidence and the judgement arising from the ARCP panel must be kept separate from these other issues. Trainees must not be present at the panel considering the outcomes.

Where outcomes 2, 3 & 4 are issued, the feedback panel **SHOULD NOT** be re-reviewing evidence or changing the decisions of the assessment panel. It should be explaining to the postgraduate doctor in training why the outcome was given following the review of evidence and advising on future support measures and objectives.

### **3. Postgraduate doctor in training resignations**

Where a postgraduate doctor has resigned from a training programme (and dependent on the timing of this resignation), they should be informed that an ARCP panel will review their progress between their last ARCP and the point of resignation (unless the effective exit from the training programme occurred within three months of the last ARCP). The ARCP panel should document any relevant competences that have been achieved by the postgraduate doctor; however, no outcome will be awarded, and the N21 and N22 codes should be utilised. It is expected that postgraduate doctors will engage in this process (Gold Guide 4.41 iv).

### **4. Long-term sick leave**

If a postgraduate doctor in training is on long-term sick leave their training clock should be paused and they should not be assessed until they have returned to the training programme full-time. A review of training should be undertaken and the expected date for end of training adjusted if required. The GMC form for postgraduate doctors who are not assessed must be completed and the reasons for this documented.

### **5. LTFT**

The GMC requires that all LTFT postgraduate doctor in training attend an annual review and an outcome be issued. The ARCP form should clearly document the period under review, i.e. 6 months/8 months etc. Should an extension to training be required following the award of Outcome 3, this will be on a pro rata basis if training requirements for progression have not been met.