

# Health Education England's review of competence progression

## A trainee's guide



Developing people  
for health and  
healthcare

[www.hee.nhs.uk](http://www.hee.nhs.uk)

Over the last year Health Education England (HEE) has worked with many trainees, educators and wider stakeholders to think about how competence progression for healthcare professionals can help deliver excellent healthcare.

The focus of this work has been on [reviewing the effectiveness of the Annual Review of Competency Progression \(ARCP\)](#) for doctors in training, to ensure the process is consistent, safeguards patient safety and best supports the development of all trainees.

#### As doctors in training, you told us:

- There is significant variation in the ARCP process across specialties and geographies – ‘the goalposts keep moving during the training year’
- You had a lack of confidence in the current process
- You found the ARCP to be a ‘tick box’ exercise, and felt that you were simply being made to ‘jump through hoops’
- The boundaries between ARCP (as per [the Gold Guide recommendations](#)), appraisal and feedback on training were blurred, resulting in confusion and disillusionment due to much variation in these processes.
- There is a need for clarification of the role of ARCP and different trainee/trainer responsibilities
- The current process does not reward excellence and there is reluctance to identify and ‘fail’ the poorly performing trainee
- Your trainers also feel under-valued and unsupported in their roles as Educational Supervisors
- There is a lack of standardisation of feedback mechanisms for ARCP outcomes.



#### In response, HEE did the following:

- Launched a programme in January 2017, to review and improve the mechanisms by which doctors in training are assessed, appraised and receive feedback on their progress, including the ARCP
- Made a commitment to make these processes more effective, equitable and efficient, but above all, ensure that they value doctors and enable more flexibility in training
- Responded to the overwhelming feedback requesting improved consistency in the assessment process by making recommendations aimed to ensure consistent standards to restore your confidence in the ARCP.

#### So what does HEE's review of competence progression mean for trainees?

HEE's review aims to ensure that the ARCP process is consistent, reliable, and best supports the development of all trainees.

#### Delivery of educational and clinical supervision

You should have regular formative feedback including:

- preparation for the ARCP
- timely feedback after the ARCP
- career discussion
- The ARCP outcome should not come as a surprise to you. If you are not progressing, you should be supported in a timely way
- Educational Supervisors should be appropriately supported, trained and given adequate time in their jobs plans to fulfil the role
- HEE will be working with the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges (AoMRC) to enhance the consistency of Educational Supervisor reports so that they provide a high quality summative assessment of progress.

#### Consistency of ARCP panels

- Although ARCP outcomes must be decided with trainees in absentia, formative feedback post-ARCP is crucial. All trainees should receive post-ARCP feedback in a timely and supportive way. If you are performing well, your achievements should be recognised during this feedback
- Members of the ARCP panel will be trained and provided with national guidance including decision-aids. These decision-aids will be of consistent quality across specialties and applicable nationally.



### Professional and personal support for trainees

- You and your Educational Supervisor should be provided with information about the professional and personal support available to all trainees.

### Standardisation of quality assurance and quality management processes

- Your ARCP panel will receive clear guidance and decision-aids to reduce unwarranted variation across geographies and specialties
- HEE will be working with the AoMRC and medical Royal Colleges to ensure a standardised approach to improving the quality of ARCP processes.

### Defining and communicating the ARCP process

- All involved should understand the purpose of the ARCP (as described in [the Gold Guide](#)) and their specific roles/responsibilities. Trainees should be aware of the steps required to revalidate with the General Medical Council (GMC)
- At the start of your training year, you should look through your GMC approved curriculum and the ARCP requirements set by your Royal College. These will not change during the year
- National training bodies should empower trainees by setting out expectations and communicating these with all involved with the ARCP.

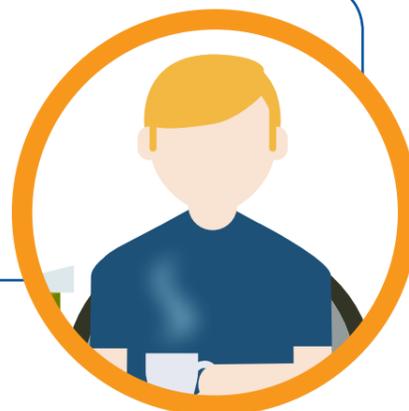
### Promoting flexibility in postgraduate training

- More flexible training is endorsed by adapting Out of Programme (OOP) arrangements to allow a 'Step-on Step-off' approach
- All trainees should have equitable principles applied to requests to train less than full time (LTFT)
- Deferred entry which is under evaluation in General Practice, should be explored for trainees in other specialties in the future.

#### Where can I go for more information?

[Watch the short animation](#) about HEE's review on competence progression.

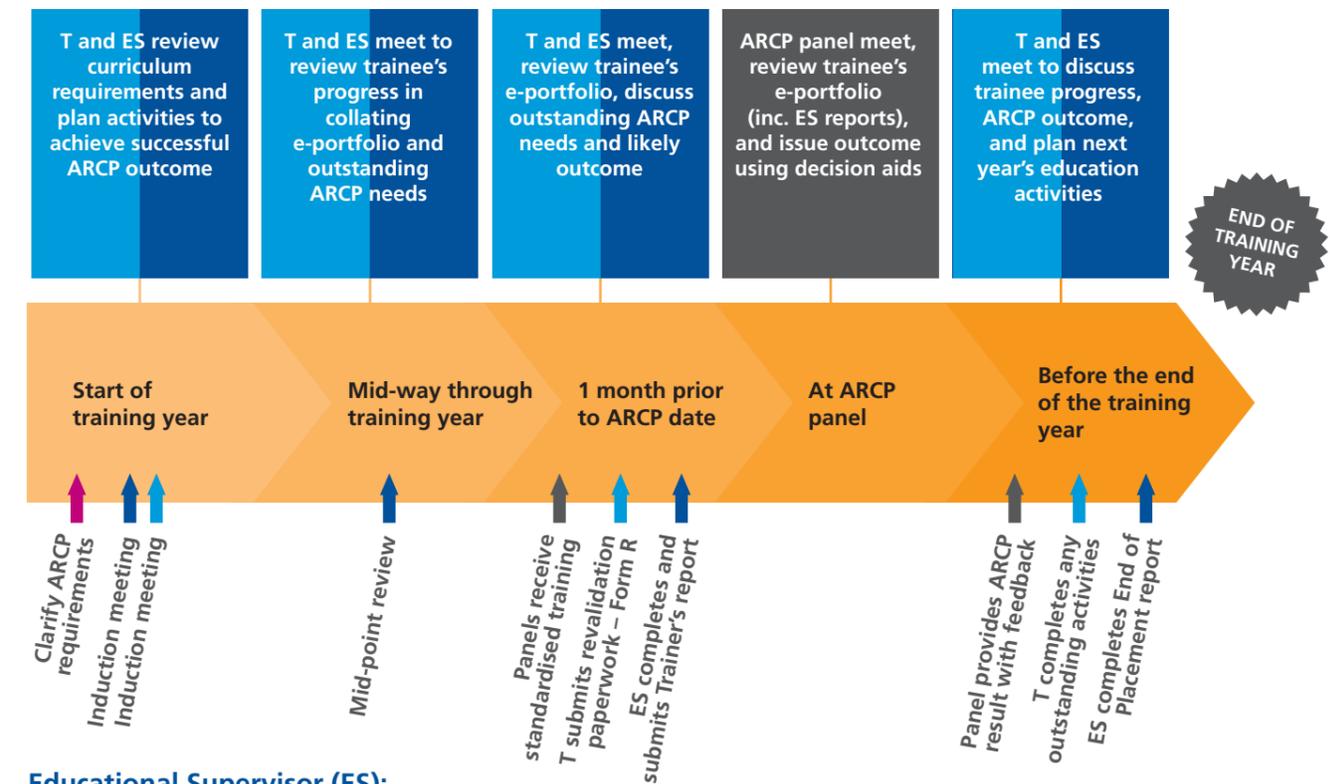
[Read the full review document.](#)



### The ARCP Process through the training year (including roles and responsibilities)

Continual process of compiling their e-portfolio of evidence including: Professional examinations, courses and educational activities linked to attainment of the curriculum, work-place based assessments, self-reflective learning logs, skills logs, QI projects/audits, publications and research

#### Trainees (T):



#### Educational Supervisor (ES):

Supervision activity includes collation of evidence on trainee performance from the clinical supervisor and others informally involved with supervising the trainee; the ES should also provide regular formative appraisal and career guidance through the course of the training year, sign-posting educational needs for the future

- Where a trainee's placement is < 1 year, an induction, mid-point and end of placement review should be conducted for each placement

Blue = Trainee  
 Dark Blue = Educational Supervisor  
 Purple = Royal College  
 Grey = ARCP panel



Health Education England  
[www.hee.nhs.uk](http://www.hee.nhs.uk)

 [LinkedIn](#)

 [@NHS\\_HealthEdEng](#)

 [www.facebook.com/nhshee](http://www.facebook.com/nhshee)



This work was led and informed by doctors in training, through an engagement programme led by our National Medical Director's Clinical Fellow, Dr Tahreema N Matin. On behalf of Dr Matin, we thank all the doctors in training who have been involved in the development of this guide.