This guidance addresses the issue of whether time out of programme for research requires PMETB approval. This guidance is effective from 1 January 2007.

**What is it?**

The research within an approved curriculum can either be a higher degree or appropriate research experience. Many individuals undertaking such research retain a clinical element, which will allow them to maintain their existing competences whilst out of programme.

**Does it require PMETB approval?**

The time spent out of a specialty training programme for research purposes will be recognised towards the award of a CCT when the approved curriculum includes such research as an optional element.

If research is part of the PMETB approved CCT curriculum requirements, the run through training programme should reflect this. Therefore, if research is in a programme – which should be based on an approved curriculum – then trainees may undertake this research and no further approval need be sought from PMETB.

If research is part of the PMETB approved CCT curriculum requirements, but the run through training programme does not offer the possibility of a period of research, prospective approval for individual out of programme research posts (OOPR) should be sought from PMETB by the postgraduate deanery. This process is as follows:

1. A formal covering letter from the deanery to PMETB seeking prospective approval of the OOPR post and confirming that this post has deanery support. PMETB cannot accept applications from individual trainees or Colleges/SACs/Faculties.

2. Confirmation that the OOPR post has the explicit written support of the relevant royal medical college representative(s). Local college representatives must act in accordance with the national policy of their college and should seek advice where necessary from their college to ensure consistent standards across the UK.
3. A statement from the competent authority\(^1\) in the country where the OOPR will take place which details the purpose and structure of the post to the satisfaction of the Deanery and the College.

4. If the documentation outlined in point 3 above is not provided, then a brief description of the OOPR post which covers the following points: a) where the OOPR is based, b) the structure of the OOPR, c) the educational goals and characteristics of the OOPR, and d) confirmation that the post is subject to quality management in line with PMETB requirements.

Applications must come from the deanery. This is to maintain consistency with PMETB policy of holding the deaneries responsible for local level quality management of education and training. Trainees are therefore advised to liaise with their deaneries to co-ordinate the applications for approval.

**What if research is not a requirement of the curriculum?**

If a period of research is **not a requirement of the approved CCT curriculum**, but trainees still wish to undertake it, it is still possible to do so as out of programme experience. This is permissible provided that it has the approval of the postgraduate dean. Time in these posts will not be counted towards the award of a CCT, however, and therefore such posts do not need PMETB approval.

---

\(^1\) A ‘competent authority’ would normally be defined as an organisation which has the statutory responsibility for regulation and/or training and/or education in the medical education field in a particular country.