Return to Training Scheme

Wessex Deanery Policy

Author: Alethea Peters, Revalidation Project Officer; Mr Mark Goodwin, Associate Dean for Revalidation

Date: July 2012

Review Date: July 2015

Equality Impact Assessment Completed: August 2012
Introduction

Trainees may be absent from training and active clinical practice for a number of reasons including maternity/paternity leave, research, ill health etc.

In some cases trainees have been expected to return to full duties, including on-calls, after a prolonged period of absence and potentially in a new hospital, which has implications for patient safety.

Although some specialties in Wessex, such as Anaesthetics, have formal reintroduction to training schemes it is not something that occurs across all specialties and Trusts there was no Deanery wide Return to Work or Training Scheme.

Therefore a short life working group was established to look at the issues surrounding returning to training after a prolonged period of absence and to develop a Return to Training Scheme. This group comprised of trainees, consultants, educationalists and Associate Deans with varied experience of absence from work, ranging from maternity to sickness and fellowships.

The purpose of this scheme is to promote patient safety and quality of care, whilst giving the trainees an opportunity to regain their confidence and previously acquired skills more quickly and safely.

Both the length and nature of the absence along with the stage of training of the doctor and their individual needs will all have an effect on how safely and confidently they can return to training. Therefore the scheme has been developed to be flexible enough to take into account the needs of individual trainees.

The Academy of Royal Medical Colleges have recently produce guidance on Return to Practice and they suggest that an absence of 3 months or more is more likely to significantly affect skills and knowledge and therefore recommend an assessment on return to practise. Therefore the scheme will apply to any trainee who has had a prolonged absence of 3 months or more.

In cases of absence due to ill health or a conduct and capability investigation then the trainee would be more than welcome to participate in the scheme but any phased return or training plan devised by occupation health or HR should take precedence.

Careful consideration was given to the structure of the process and it was felt that 5 domains were appropriate:

- Pre- Absence
- During Absence
- Prior to Return
Overview of Scheme
A flowchart overview of the scheme is included in Appendix A.

Participation in the scheme is compulsory for absences of 3 months or more for whatever reason. Any trainees that have been absent due to ill health or a conduct or capability investigation may participate in the scheme, but any phased return/training plan devised by occupational health or HR should take preference.

Pre-Absence Meeting
Where possible the trainee should meet their Educational Supervisor at a Pre-Absence meeting before their period of absence to discuss how the trainee might keep up to date and any particular concerns they may have about returning.

The trainee and Educational Supervisor should complete the Pre-Absence Form (Appendix B) detailing the discussion and then send a copy of this to the Programme Director and College Tutor who can then pass it onto the appropriate people within the Trust and Deanery. The trainee should also keep a copy of this in their portfolio.

Of course if the absence is unplanned, say the trainee is involved in a road traffic accident, then this meeting could be held at an appropriate time or not at all depending on the circumstances.

During Absence
What clinical practise the trainee does during the absence will be dependent on the nature of the absence and what the trainee chooses to do.

If the employer and the trainee agree then the trainee can use their Keeping in Touch (KiT) days to attend study days, courses or team meeting.

Prior to Return
Once a timeframe for return is known then the trainee should meet with their Educational Supervisor for an Initial Review. The aim of the meeting is to agree an individualised plan for returning accommodating any specific concerns, learning needs and required assessments.

It is encouraged that this takes place 6 – 10 weeks prior to the estimated date of return, allowing enough time for the trainee to be incorporated into the rota. However this should be flexible depending on the needs and circumstances of the trainee.

Add about completing Return to Training Form
For the majority of cases it is expected that a supervised period will be required. However for shorter absences when the trainee has maintained active clinical practice the supervised return period may not be necessary. Good evidence of this must be documented on the Return to Training form and the lack of supervised period agreed with the Programme Director.

**Supervised Period**

On return to work there should be a period under direct supervision, including any on-calls, during which time workplace-based assessments should be performed. After this supervised period the trainee and Educational Supervisor should meet at a **Return Review** to discuss the trainee’s progress, review the assessments, address any concerns, arrange any further targeted training and if necessary extend the supervised period. Once the trainee and Educational Supervisor are satisfied with the trainee’s progress and feel confident then the trainee can be signed off and return to ‘normal duties’.

*Add about completing Return to Training Form*

**Acknowledgements:**

Thank you to all the members of the working group for their brilliant contributions:

- Alice Aarvold – Anaesthetics Registrar
- Emma Torbe – O&G Registrar
- Toni Ardolino – T&O Registrar
- Isabel Smith – Consultant Anaesthetist
- Richard Weaver – Head of GP School
- Rosie Lusznat – Associate Dean for Professional Support
- Mark Goodwin (Chair) – Associate Dean

**References:**


Any trainees that have been absent due to ill health or a conduct or capability investigation may participate in the scheme, but any phased return/training plan devised by occupational health or HR should take preference.

**PRIOR TO ABSENCE**

If the absence is unexpected then this discussion can be held at a different time for the trainee to be incorporated into the rota.

Ideally the Initial Review should take place and assessments.

**DURING ABSENCE**

- If trainee and Trust agree the trainee can use KiT days (optional).
- If possible the PD sends material from training session to trainee at their request.

**PRIOR TO RETURN**

Ideally the Initial Review should take place 6 – 10 weeks prior to estimated return date to allow time for the trainee to be incorporated into the rota. It is expected that this will be a face-to-face meeting.

**SUPERVISED RETURN PERIOD**

- The length of the supervised period can be varied depending on the specific needs of the trainee. It would be expected that a longer absence would require a longer supervised period on return.
- During this period the trainee should engage in workplace based assessments (WPBAs) with feedback from Educational Supervisor.
- This period must be fully supervised including any on-calls or out-of-hours. When appropriate this supervision must be direct and not via phone.
- The trainee should be attached to a range of consultants responsible for supervising trainees returning to training.

Please Note: Normally the supervised period would not affect the CCT date, however in exceptional circumstances the ARCP panel may recommend an extension to training if the required competencies have not been achieved by the time of the next ARCP.

**APPENDIX A**

WESSEX DEANERY

RETURN TO TRAINING SCHEME

The Academy of Medical Royal Colleges suggest that an absence of 3 months or more is more likely to significantly affect skills and knowledge and therefore recommend an assessment on return to practice. Therefore the Wessex Deanery Return to Training Scheme is compulsory for absences of 3 months or more, but can be opted into for absences of less than 3 months.

Glossary:

- KIT days = Keeping in Touch days
- ES = Educational Supervisor
- PD = Programme Director
- DME = Director Medical Education
- WPBAs = Workplace based assessments

*Please Note: It is expected that in the majority of cases a supervised period is required. However for shorter absences when the trainee has maintained active clinical practice the supervised return period may not be necessary. Good evidence of this practice must be documented on the Return to Training form and the lack of supervised period agreed with the Programme Director.

**REVIEW OF RETURN PERIOD**
Pre-Absence Form

If possible this Form should be completed by the trainee doctor and their Educational Supervisor/College Tutor, before the trainee doctor is due to go on absence.

The return to work scheme is compulsory for absences of 3 months or more, but can be opted into for absences less than 3 months if trainee or Educational Supervisor feel it is necessary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trainee Name:</th>
<th>GMC Number:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Position:</td>
<td>Educational Supervisor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current place of training:</th>
<th>Anticipated date of absence:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If known, place of return to training:</td>
<td>Estimated date of return:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reason for Absence:

Summary of discussion between trainee and Educational Supervisor:

Discussion parameters:
- Keeping up to date
- Use of Keeping In Touch days
- Particular concerns

Are you happy for the Deanery to contact you while you are absent?  
Yes  No

If Yes then what are your preferred contact details:

Address:

Email Address:  Phone Number:

ONCE COMPLETED PLEASE SEND A COPY OF THIS FORM TO THE PROGRAMME DIRECTOR AND COLLEGE TUTOR  
A copy also needs to be retained in your portfolio
# Return to Training Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trainee Name:</th>
<th>GMC Number:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Position:</td>
<td>Educational Supervisor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 1. Initial Review - compulsory
The Initial Review between trainee and Educational Supervisor/College Tutor should take place between 6 to 8 weeks prior to the estimated return to training date to allow time for the trainee to be incorporated into the rota.

### Place of training at absence:

### Date of absence:

### Place of training on return:

### Anticipated date of return:

### Reason for Absence:

### Intention to return to training Full Time or LTFT? |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full Time</th>
<th>LTFT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Comments:

### Forthcoming roles/responsibilities:

### Summary of discussion between trainee and Educational Supervisor:

**Discussion parameters:**
- Anything done to keep up to date
- Any work done during absence: on calls, KiT days etc.
- Any particular concerns over returning

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Return to Training Form

Overview of plan for supervised return to work period*

Required assessments in this period:
These must include assessments of observed practice, and may include workplace based assessments (WPBAs) and logbook evidence

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Provisional Date of Return Review Meeting: 

*If in exceptional circumstances the decision has been made by both the trainee and the Educational Supervisor that the supervised return to training period is unnecessary, then please provide documentary evidence below that the trainee has maintained active clinical practice during the absence. Then complete Section 3: Return to Training Sign-Off.

Evidence of how active clinical practice has been maintained during absence:
Return to Training Form

2. Return Review – compulsory after supervised return to training period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Return Review:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Summary of discussion between trainee and Educational Supervisor:**

Discussion parameters:
- Summary of observed assessments and logbook
- Overall progress
- Outstanding concerns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What additional learning needs have been identified:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is an extension to the supervised return to training period necessary:</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Please comment:

If Yes, an extension to the supervised period is required, please complete Section 4: Plan of Extended Supervised Period.

If No, an extension to the supervised period is not required, please complete Section 3: Return to Training Sign Off.

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### 3. Return to Training Sign Off

**Trainee Statement:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I feel confident in all respects to recommence usual duties on:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signed:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printed Name:</td>
<td>Date:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Educational Supervisor Statement:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I concur that this trainee has demonstrated to me that they are able to return to their usual duties.</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signed:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printed Name:</td>
<td>Date:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Plan of Extended Supervised Period – if required

Date of Review: 

Overview of plan for extended supervised return to training period:

Required assessments in this period:
These must include assessments of observed practice, and may include workplace based assessments (WPBAs) and logbook evidence

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Provisional Date of next Review Meeting: 

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A copy also needs to be retained in your portfolio
Return to Training Form

5. Review of Extended Supervised Period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of next Review Meeting:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Summary of discussion between trainee and Educational Supervisor:**

Discussion parameters:
- Summary of observed assessments and logbook
- Overall progress
- Outstanding concerns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What additional learning needs have been identified:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is a further extension to this supervised return to training period necessary:</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Please comment:

If Yes, an extension to the supervised period is required, please complete another Section 4: Plan of Extended Supervised Period on a separate Return to Training Form.

If No, an extension to the supervised period is not required, then please go back and complete Section 3: Return to Training Sign Off

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