

ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF LONDON

FUNCTIONS OF REGIONAL SPECIALTY ADVISERS

INTRODUCTION

Regional Specialty Advisers have a major role in overseeing specialty training. They are also able to advise the local Regional Adviser on service matters relevant to the specialty such as consultant job descriptions and Advisory Appointment Committees. In some cases the Adviser will cover both training and service issues, but in others these roles will be split between two advisers, according to local or specialty circumstances.

These roles are under review in light of changes to College procedures such as Advisory Appointments Committees, and the reorganisation of training processes. As changes are made these guidelines will be reviewed and updated.

TRAINING

Where involved in training issues, for specialty training programmes, Specialty Advisers are responsible for the following:-

- a) The development of the new training programmes.
- b) The supervision of specialty trainees (SpRs and ST3 onwards) during their rotation through the programme.
- c) Representation on Appointments Committees for specialist registrars.
- d) Making arrangements for trainee assessment meetings, providing appropriate feedback to trainees and for ensuring relevant documentation is made available to the College.
- e) Ensuring that systems of appraisal are in place and in particular that trainees are aware of a confidential channel through which they can draw attention to anxieties they may have about the programme or its supervision.
- f) Liaising closely with the Joint Royal Colleges of Physicians Training Board (JRCPTB) through the SACs and attending SAC meetings when invited.
- g) Ensuring that applications to PMETB for educational approval of all new posts are copied to JRCPTB with any additional documentation. (Currently Forms B).
- g) To provide SACs, or in the advent of a Head of Specialty Training being appointed, to work with the HoST to full details of the Deanery Specialty Training Programme so that appropriate PTB Quality Management can take place

- h) Attending regional Specialty Training Committees, as chairman where possible and, since they are joint appointees with the Postgraduate Deans, acting as a channel of communication between the Postgraduate Deans and the College.
- i) Contributing to the first stage of appeals procedures relating to annual assessment decisions.
- j) They are expected to play an important role for both overseas doctors and for those in academic and research posts. For the former they should facilitate their placement in suitable, relevant training programmes as well as their supervision, appraisal and assessment. They should support and encourage trainees wishing to enter a period of research and should facilitate entry into such a period and exit back into clinical training programmes. For SpRs they can be involved in assessing the training credit to be recommended in respect of clinical work undertaken during periods of research.

SERVICE

Where the adviser is dealing with non-training activities, Specialty Advisers are able to provide advice for the Regional Advisers on such matters as consultant job descriptions (JD) and Fellowship proposals.

In the context of Advisory Appointments Committees (AAC) the RSA will be asked to comment on job descriptions for vacant consultant or NCCG posts, especially where the College's 'main' Regional Adviser does not work in the particular specialty. They will be asked to advise the Regional Adviser on the suitability of the JD, for example in terms of the proportion of particular sessional commitments. This has to be done within a particular timescale, and final approval of the JD is given by the Regional Adviser (rather than the RSA) on behalf of the College.

The RSA is also called upon to advise the Regional Adviser on the suitability of candidates for election to the Fellowship, as part of the annual process. However, the RSA may also be called upon for local specialty advice at other times, either by the Regional Adviser or directly by the College.

APPOINTMENT

In view of the vital role to be played by Specialty Advisers for specialty training it is clear that close working relationships with the Postgraduate Dean are essential. The College has agreed with the Postgraduate Deans that Specialty Advisers should be joint appointments and Advisers will then work on behalf of both the Deans and the College on training matters in their specialty.

The Specialist Societies also have a strong interest in regional specialty matters and it is hoped that in most instances, the Specialty Adviser will be the same person who acts as the Specialist Society's representative. Where this is not possible, or where the workload is heavy, the responsibility for advice on job descriptions and other clinical practice matters could be

undertaken by the Specialist Society's representatives where they exist. In this case it will be essential for the appointee for specialty training matters to liaise closely with the representative responsible for other specialty matters.

TERM OF OFFICE

The term of office of Specialty Advisers and appointment should be agreed, where training responsibilities are involved, between the Postgraduate Dean and College. For service advisers, this will be based on agreement between the College and Specialist Society.

LINES OF COMMUNICATION AND RESPONSIBILITY

As well as a line of responsibility to the Postgraduate Dean, Specialty Advisers communicate directly with the relevant SAC and Joint Royal Colleges of Physicians Training Board for all training matters from ST3 onwards. Specialty Advisers communicate with Regional Advisers on matters relating to AACs, Fellowship proposals etc. and through them to the College Registrar.

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