

# Being a College tutor for psychiatry trainees

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## SUMMARY

College tutors for psychiatry trainees are National Health Service (NHS) consultants who have responsibility for organisation and delivery of postgraduate education and learning opportunities for the core trainees in NHS trusts. College tutors are responsible for monitoring the progress of trainees through the core training schemes. Tutors have various roles and responsibilities in teaching and training. Being a tutor can be a rewarding experience and any consultant interested in postgraduate teaching should consider becoming one.

## DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None

A College tutor (formerly known as clinical tutor) is a consultant National Health Service (NHS) doctor responsible for the organisation and delivery of education, high-quality training and learning opportunities for core trainees in psychiatry working in an NHS trust. This responsibility is usually undertaken with the support of colleagues in post-graduate medical education and clinical colleagues who act as clinical supervisors. Appointment to the post is at trust level or regional training scheme level, rather than by the Royal College of Psychiatrists itself.

## The education and training team

Below is a guide to the roles and responsibilities of staff that work hand in hand with College tutors.

- Clinical supervisors are trainers responsible for overseeing specified trainees' clinical work and providing constructive feedback during a training placement. Each trainee should have a named clinical supervisor for each placement.
- Educational supervisors are trainers responsible for the overall supervision and management of specified trainees' educational progress during a training placement or series of placements. It is a mandatory General Medical Council (GMC) requirement that trainees have a designated educational supervisor. The GMC also stipulates

that specialty trainees must meet with their educational supervisor (or representative) at least every 3 months during their placements to discuss their progress and outstanding learning needs.

- Specialty tutors may sometimes be appointed in a training scheme to oversee the programme of core training for a particular clinical specialty, for example psychotherapy.
- The programme director or programme tutor is responsible for the overall strategic management and quality control of a particular training programme in region. This person usually supervises the College tutors associated with the programme.
- An associate medical director with responsibility for training and education (or a director of medical education) is accountable for all medical education within a trust and usually holds the trust's budget for medical education.

The role of College tutor (Boxes 1 and 2) considerably mirrors that of the educational supervisor and can also overlap with that of the programme director. At a given time a tutor might be overseeing 10–15 trainees.

## Review meetings with trainees

A College tutor is expected to review each trainee at least three times during each 6-month placement:

### BOX 1 Specific responsibilities of College tutors

- To take an overview of a trainee's progress
- To act as a resource for a trainee's career guidance and pastoral support
- To monitor a trainee's attendance at teaching courses
- To participate in appointing trainees and planning trainees' rotation through the core training scheme
- To participate in deanery quality-management visits
- To be a member of the trust's medical education committee and regional core training committee
- To support clinical supervisors when they are experiencing problems in the delivery of training

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### BOX 2 Additional roles of College tutors

- Arranging the in-house teaching programme: tutors can structure these meetings to ensure good educational opportunities for trainees, for example by selecting relevant publications for critical appraisal and presentation at a journal club
- Arranging an induction programme for new trainees
- Dealing with trainees in difficulty
- Overseeing trainees' audit projects

In a trust with a large number of trainees there may be more than one tutor and each may choose to lead on particular roles

at an initial review to set learning objectives and sign a learning agreement; at a midpoint review to monitor progress; and at a final review to ensure that the educational supervisor's report and annual review of competence progression (ARCP) documentation are completed.

Areas covered during the review of trainees working towards the Membership examinations of the Royal College of Psychiatrists (the MRCPsych exams) would include:

- information and experiences from previous placements
- a report by the current clinical supervisor
- attendance at an MRCPsych course and progress in the MRCPsych exams
- attendance at in-house teaching programme
- sickness and other absence
- complaints or serious untoward incidents
- review of the e-portfolio, including progress with workplace-based assessments

- requests for future placements and career planning/mentoring
- research/management/teaching experience
- clinical supervision sessions: quantity and quality
- study leave
- the trust's statutory and mandatory training requirements
- any concerns raised by the trainee.

It can be challenging to deal with a trainee in difficulty or a trainee's complaint about a consultant. If at any point patient safety is involved or formal disciplinary action is needed, the tutor needs to work with a colleague with managerial responsibilities (such as the associate medical director) in accordance with local procedures.

A College tutor must keep up with recent developments in postgraduate education and training in their field. It is also essential to have an empathic, caring, supportive attitude and a personal commitment to continuing professional development. Good communication and time-management skills are very important. It can be a challenge to find the time with a busy clinical job and tutors should ensure that the role is recognised in their job plans. Being a tutor can be a stimulating and rewarding experience. It can also be a step towards further career opportunities within postgraduate medical education.

### Further reading

General Medical Council (2011) *The Trainee Doctor: Foundation and Specialty, Including GP Training*. GMC ([http://www.gmc-uk.org/The\\_trainee\\_Doctor\\_1114.pdf\\_56439508.pdf](http://www.gmc-uk.org/The_trainee_Doctor_1114.pdf_56439508.pdf)).

National Health Service (2013) *A Reference Guide for Postgraduate Specialty Training in the UK* (The Gold Guide) (5th edn). NHS (<http://specialtytraining.hee.nhs.uk/files/2013/10/A-Reference-Guide-for-Postgraduate-Specialty-Training-in-the-UK.pdf>).