



Annual Review of Competence Progression (ARCP) guidance for the Infection specialties during the COVID-19 outbreak 2021

Introduction

This guidance should be read alongside the following (also available on the [RCPATH website](#)):

- [Temporary approval of curricula derogation to support Annual Review of Competence Progression \(ARCP\) where training has been disrupted by coronavirus \(Covid-19\)](#) (March 2021);
- [Contingency planning for ARCPs – COVID 19 outbreak](#), the publication of Management of Annual Review of Competency Progression (ARCP) by the Statutory Education Bodies;
- [Supporting the Covid-19 Response: Enabling Progression at ARCP](#) and [Coding for ARCPs](#) and;
- the [Derogation to GG8: 4.91 in response to COVID pandemic and impact on trainee progression assessments \(ARCP\)](#).

This guidance was approved by the General Medical Council and Health Education England for ARCPs held in 2021.

The three infection training committees¹ are aware that disruptions in training due to COVID-19 related issues such as examination deferral, temporary redeployment out of specialty and/or temporary suspension of training are beyond the control of the trainees concerned. Assessment of training progression and expectations at ARCP should adjust accordingly.

General guidance for trainees and trainers in the infection specialties

- Trainees must follow any adopted national practice and safety guidance with respect to the handling of samples and their own personal conduct inside and outside of work premises.
- If trainees are redeployed from their current specialty during the COVID-19 emergency measures and they have opportunity to undertake WBAs that cover the generic aspects of the training curriculum, then they should do so.
- Sick leave/special leave should be discussed with Educational Supervisors/TPDs as normal and taken into consideration by the ARCP panel.

Critical progression points for the infection specialties

- The critical progression points are as follows:
 - Medical Microbiology or Medical Virology only: Trainees in ST5 who are not in possession of the FRCPATH Part 1 or trainees in ST6 who are not in possession of the FRCPATH Part 2 should be awarded an outcome 10.2 where the delay has been caused by COVID-19 disruption, or an outcome 3 where it has not (e.g. related to repeated examination failure).
 - Dual trainees in Medical Microbiology or Medical Virology and Infectious Diseases: Trainees in ST6 who are not in possession of the FRCPATH Part 1 or trainees completing ST7 who are not in possession of the FRCPATH Part 2 should be awarded an outcome 10.2

¹ Joint Combined Infection Training Specialty Advisory Committee, Microbiology/Virology College Specialty Training committee and the Infectious Diseases/Tropical Medicine Specialist Advisory Committee



where the delay has been caused by COVID-19 disruption, or an outcome 3 where it has not (e.g. related to repeated examination failure).

- Infectious Diseases or Tropical Medicine only: Infectious Diseases trainees in ST6 and Tropical Medicine trainees in ST7 who are not in possession of the CICE should be awarded an outcome 10.2 where the delay has been caused by COVID-19 disruption, or an outcome 3 where it has not (e.g. related to repeated examination failure).
- Dual trainees in Infectious Diseases or Tropical Medicine and General Internal Medicine: Infectious Diseases and General Internal Medicine trainees in ST7 and Tropical Medicine and General Internal Medicine trainees in ST8 who are not in possession of the CICE should be awarded an outcome 10.2 where the delay has been caused by COVID-19 disruption, or an outcome 3 where it has not (e.g. related to repeated examination failure).
- Trainees are not able to gain an outcome 6 (completion of training) without having completed all required examinations and curriculum competencies.
- Any infection trainee who has sufficient evidence to present to the ARCP panel of the curriculum defined competences and who are in possession of the FRCPATH Part 1 or CICE or the FRCPATH Part 2 may be awarded an outcome 1 and progress to the next year or stage of training.
- Any infection trainee who has sufficient evidence to present to the ARCP panel of the curriculum defined competencies may be awarded an outcome 6 and apply for CCT if they are within 6 months of their projected CCT date.
- Infectious Diseases and Tropical Medicine trainees should note that Penultimate Year Assessments are suspended until further notice.

Minimum data set for each year of training

For the 2021 ARCPs, it is expected that the Educational Supervisors Structured Report (ESSR) will be a key part of the evidence. It may include indicative assessment of the trainee, mindful of the impact of COVID-19.

The portfolio of evidence provided by the trainee for the period under review can include:

- any workplace-based assessments completed. The number of workplace-based assessments required for each year or stage of training is indicative². These can include any undertaken during redeployment which demonstrate evidence of generic or other relevant skills.;
- any indicative cases undertaken;
- an MSF (although trainees who have not completed a required MSF but are otherwise satisfactory must undertake their MSF in the following year);
- suitable and appropriate alternative evidence (see 'Learning Experiences' listed in the curriculum for guidance);
- any College exams completed prior to COVID-19.

Where there is overall evidence that a trainee is generally achieving progress and competences at the expected rate but has not been able to provide the indicative number of workplace-based assessments, suitable and appropriate alternative evidence can be taken into consideration.

Where there is overall evidence that satisfactory progress is not being made and an indicative number of workplace-based assessments has not been provided, trainees will generally be required to complete additional workplace-based assessments in the following year, as determined by the ARCP Panel.

The ARCP Panel are encouraged to be very clear with all trainees about any additional training, competencies, assessments or other requirements that must be achieved in the following year and document these accordingly.

² Please see the relevant curriculum for information about indicative numbers ([Infectious Diseases](#), [Medical Microbiology](#), [Medical Virology](#), [Tropical Medicine](#)).

There is clear guidance in each curricula and/or in additional guidance about the requirements for each stage or year of training. ARCP Panels are encouraged to refer to these, and existing ARCP guidance, and make an overall judgement about progression for each trainee, taking into account impact of COVID-19.

Conducting the ARCP

ARCPs can take place virtually, via secure videoconferencing, on appropriate platforms as determined by each deanery or LETB. The privacy of the individuals involved must be maintained, regardless of the physical location of all participants.

The ARCP outcome should be recorded in the trainee's e-portfolio which has had the additional ARCP outcomes added.

Criteria for non-progression

The criteria for non-progression is as follows:

- Trainees who are on course to receive an outcome 3, 4 or 5 outwith COVID-19 derogations.
- Trainees who have not passed FRCPATH Part 1/CICE or FRCPATH Part 2 by the required time (see above). This includes where examinations have been deferred. Trainees will not be penalised by the ARCP process if their examination has been deferred by the RCPATH. Trainees should be given an outcome 10.2 extension to training in order to allow them the necessary time to revise and sit the requisite examination.

Circumstances where a complete ARCP panel would be required

The circumstances where a complete ARCP panel would be required are where trainees are making unsatisfactory progress and where an outcome 2, 3, 4, 5 outwith COVID-19 derogations or 10.2 is likely.

Amendments to the person specification needed to facilitate career progression of trainees who have been unable to acquire capabilities in their core programme due to the impact of COVID-19

Please refer to the [JRCPTB website](#).

Advice regarding capabilities which may be gained in an acting up position within a defined education/development plan

Trainees who have spent additional time waiting to complete their FRCPATH Part 2 examination may, if they are on track to complete their training satisfactorily, spend reduced time in training after passing the FRCPATH Part 2, and/or may accumulate evidence of competences during an acting up position within a defined education/development plan. Trainees are encouraged to follow the course of action that is right for their individual circumstances and with the support of their Educational Supervisor/Training Programme Director.

References

[Contingency planning for ARCPs – COVID 19 outbreak](#)

[Derogation to GG8: 4.91 in response to COVID pandemic and impact on trainee progression assessments \(ARCP\)](#)

[Gold Guide 8th edition](#)

[Curricula and ARCP guidance](#)

Curricular component	Comment	Recommended ARCP outcome
COVID-19 has caused disruption to training including redeployment	Limitation of exposure to samples, clinics and experience, MDT, courses, QIPs and research opportunities.	ARCP 10.1 ARCP 10.2 (for trainees in their final year of training only)
FRCPPath Part 1/CICE examination not passed	Completion necessary for progress. Balance between satisfactory progress and pressurising by extra requirements in next year of training.	ARCP10.2 (if due to COVID-19) or ARCP 3 (if not due to COVID-19)
FRCPPath Part 2 examination not passed	Completion necessary for progress. Balance between satisfactory progress and pressurising by extra requirements in next year of training.	ARCP10.2 (if due to COVID-19) or ARCP 3 (if not due to COVID-19)
No disruption to training	Trainee on course to complete requirements for year of training, including acquisition of relevant examination.	ARCP 1 or 2
No disruption to training	Concerns raised about trainee (including probity and patient safety as well as general progress)	ARCP 2, 3 ARCP 4 (with a preceding outcome 3)
Completion of training	Trainee on course to complete training, including acquisition of relevant examination.	ARCP 6