Irish College of Ophthalmologists
Eye Doctors of Ireland
Protecting your Vision

Higher Surgical Training in Ophthalmology

Trainee Guidebook 2024

Revision Level	Revision Date	Description of Revision	Document Owner/Author	Approved By
Final	21/05/2020	Final Approved Version	Rebecca Martin	YD/ KMcC/ SK
Revision	05/06/2020	Inclusion Paternity Leave	Rebecca Martin	
Revision	23/07/2020	Courses	Rebecca Martin	SK
Updated	16/10/2020	Leave	Rebecca Martin	Yvonne Delaney
Revision	09/04/2021	Amendments for July 2021	Rebecca Martin	Yvonne Delaney
Update	01/10/2021	OOPT Update	Rebecca Martin	YD/SK/KMcC
Updates	10/05/2022	Updates for July 2022	Rebecca Martin	Yvonne Delaney
Revision	29/08/2022	Change to Human Factors modules: Bias & Diversity removed	Rebecca Martin	Yvonne Delaney
Update	16/05/2023	July 2023 Updates	Andrea Farrell	Yvonne Delaney
Update	15/07/2024	July 2024 Updates	Andrea Farrell	Yvonne Delaney

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1.   Welcome

Dear HST Trainee,

Very many congratulations on your appointment to specialty training in Ophthalmic surgery (HST4-HST7).

Specialist training in Ophthalmic surgery is delivered through a collaborative relationship between the Irish College of Ophthalmologists (ICO) and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI). The training programme is continually reviewed so that, as a specialty, we can identify areas that can be improved upon. We aim to continually adapt the programme to positively contribute to the quality of your training experience.

Please take time to read this document carefully as it will aid you in your development over each year of specialist training. Also note the well-defined processes which must be adhered to, to ensure the smooth running of this training programme.

If you require assistance, please speak with your Consultant trainer in the first instance and with the Irish College of Ophthalmologists or myself thereafter, as necessary.

I hope that your experience of specialty training in Ophthalmic surgery will be an extremely positive one and wish you the very best in your surgical training.

Yours sincerely,

Miss Yvonne Delaney
Dean of Postgraduate Education,
Irish College Ophthalmologists.

2.   Overview

The surgical ophthalmology curriculum is a seven-year competence-based curriculum, which consists of three basic years followed by four years of subspecialty training.

The purpose of the Higher Ophthalmic Surgical Training is to provide in-depth surgical training so as to equip trainees with skills both in cataract surgery as well as in the surgical subspecialties of anterior segment surgery, glaucoma, paediatric ophthalmology and strabismus, vitreo-retinal surgery, nasolacrimal, oculoplastic and orbital surgery and neuro-ophthalmology. Higher surgical trainees, irrespective of preference and future career choice, need to complete training in all subspecialties to successfully complete their training.

3.   Training Programme Framework

Trainees commence the four-year Higher Ophthalmic Surgical Training Programme in HST4.

Trainees who entered the Higher Surgical Training Programme from July 2021 onwards must complete **four years** of Higher Surgical Training in accredited posts in Ireland.

At the end of training, a Trainee is awarded a Certificate of Completion of Specialist Training (CCST) if they have achieved the surgical, clinical, personal and professional competencies defined in the surgical curriculum, fulfilled the mandatory assessment requirements and passed the FRCSI Exit Examination. A complete list of the l requirements is outlined in the CCST section of this document.

Retrospective recognition is not considered for trainees on this training pathway.

4.   Accredited Training Post Hospitals

Hospital	Important Contacts
Cork University Hospital	Educational Supervisor: Mr Zubair Idrees
University College Hospital Galway	Educational Supervisor: Ms Paul-Eduard Stanciu
Mater Misericordiae University Hospital Beaumont Hospital	Educational Supervisor: TBC
Temple St Children's University Hospital	Educational Supervisor: Mr Stephen Farrell

Royal Victoria Eye and Ear Hospital	Educational Supervisor: Mr Edward Loane
St. Vincent's University Hospital	
Our Lady's Children Hospital, Crumlin	Educational Supervisor: Ms. Kathryn McCreery
Sligo University Hospital	Educational Supervisor: Ms Ann Marie Mongan
University Hospital Limerick	Educational Supervisor: Mr Kevin Kennelly
University Hospital Waterford	Educational Supervisor: Mr John Stokes

5. Curriculum

There are seven sub-specialties in ophthalmic surgery and the training programme covers all seven.
1. Cataract and Refractive Surgery
2. Paediatric Ophthalmology & Strabismus
3. Corneal and External Eye Disease
4. Glaucoma
5. Vitreoretinal surgery, Medical Retina and Ocular Oncology
6. Neuro-ophthalmology
7. Oculoplastics, Orbit and Lacrimal disorders

For further information, please view the curriculum document on the ICO website.
http://www.eyedoctors.ie/trainees/Specialist-Training-in-Surgical-Ophthalmology.asp

6. Mandatory Components

6.1 Human Factors

A programme of training in Human Factors in Patient Safety is a mandatory component of ophthalmology training for Trainees at junior and senior levels of training.

Training sessions use a combination of didactic and action-based learning teaching methods. Classes are kept to a maximum of 25 attendees to allow for simulation and practice. Emergency Medicine, Ophthalmology and Surgical Trainees attend sessions together which stimulates multidisciplinary communication. Sessions are facilitated by a Clinical Psychologist/Senior Lecturer and either a Consultant in Surgery, Ophthalmology or Emergency Medicine. Each Trainee attends two full day sessions per year of training.

Attendance is an important component of the annual assessment and is necessary to permit progression through the training programme.

The Human Factors Training Calendar is set by the Human Factors department in RCSI Surgical Training and is circulated by email at the start of each training year. Each module is repeated annually. Dates can be found in the ICO Training & Events Calendar

Trainees on the HST in Ophthalmic Surgery Programme must attend **each** of the following four* modules once, during their programme.

ST 4.   **21st Century Professionalism**
Safety Management Systems

ST 5.   **Advanced Communication: Advocacy & Negotiation**
Leadership

From July 2023, the Human Factors department in RCSI will streamline the modules of Human Factors. Trainees will be required to complete the module assigned to their current training year. These allocations are listed below. During the transition period, if a trainee has outstanding modules to complete before CCST, they are required to contact Human Factors in RCSI (humanfactors@rcsi.ie) to request a place on the waiting list. Walk-ins will not be facilitated.

The following modules are optional to attend in 2024-2025:

1. Train the Trainer.

2. Preparation for Practice: Healthcare Management (runs every 2 years).

At the beginning of each training year, details of the modules that are available for registration will be available on the RCSI Trainee Portal https://connectsatrainees.rcsi.com/.
To login and register on the portal, trainees must use their **RCSI account** (RCSI email and password).

It is the responsibility of each **_trainee_** *to ensure that they have attended all **four** HST modules, to be eligible for CCST.*

Should you encounter any technical difficulties please contact the ICO immediately.

6.2   Research Methodology Course for Surgical Trainees

The Irish Surgical Postgraduate Training Committee (ISPTC) is committed to ensuring that Academic Surgery is an integral part of surgical training.

A taught course in research methodology was introduced in 2015. This is a modular programme, which runs over four days in HST4 and HST5 i.e. 2 days in each training year. The programme gives a comprehensive introduction to research methodology relevant to surgeons and is delivered in RCSI by Professor Tom Fahy and his team.

The ISPTC has deemed this programme mandatory for all HST4 trainees in all specialties and you will be required to complete the four modules in order to complete your CAPA at the end of HST5. Trainees who have already completed a taught MCh, or MD or PHD are exempted. Please note, an MSC degree is not eligible for an exemption. Trainees commencing HST4 will be contacted by RCSI with details of the course including details on applying for an exemption.

Research Methodology Course Modules

Module 1
- Introduction to evidence based medicine
- Developing a research question and mapping to the most appropriate study design
- Study design – strengths and weaknesses
- Fundamentals of bias, confounding and causality
- Protocol development
- Introduction to standardised reporting guidelines

Module 2
- Accessing clinical evidence
- Fundamentals of randomised controlled trials
- Fundamentals of systematic reviews and meta-analysis
- Other synopses of evidence, including clinical practice guidelines

Module 3
- Fundamentals of biostatistics
- Nature of data; descriptive statistics
- Hypothesis testing; sample size calculation
- Univariable analysis
- Multivariable analysis

Module 4
- Student presentations - protocol and/or completed research
- Funding of research and grant applications
- Peer review publishing
    - Author
    - Reviewer
    - Editor

6.3 School for Surgeons & Interactive Classroom

School for Surgeons (SFS) in Ophthalmology and the Interactive Classroom – SFS is the online component of the training programme. School for Surgeons (SFS) is a **mandatory** component of HST training.

Through the eJournal portal on the SFS site each HST will be able to access all the peer reviewed journals relevant to ophthalmology as well as other disciplines. Trainees are expected to attend a minimum of **60%** of interactive classrooms in order to pass each six month rotation of their four year training cycle.

The College will email you directly with your SFS login details. Your login details remain the same as those used during Basic Surgical Training. If your login details are not working you must contact the ICO directly.

6.4 ICO National eTutorial Series in Ophthalmology

The ICO National eTutorial Series was launched in January 2021 as part of the online learning programme. The College hosts subspecialty teaching sessions that are aligned to the learning outcomes of the curriculum. Trainees are strongly encouraged to attend and engage in these sessions.

The sessions run for 10 months, September to June, of the training year. The sessions include 30 minute presentation followed by a short 10 minute question and answer session. The presentations are recorded and are available for trainees to access via the ICO trainee portal.

*These sessions are for training purposes only and any sharing of this material or links to this material by participants to any persons not registered on an ICO National Training Programme in Ophthalmology is **prohibited.***

6.5 American Academy of Ophthalmology ONE Network

As a Trainee of the ICO, you have free access to the American Academy's Ophthalmic News & Education (ONE®) Network. The ONE Network is a comprehensive, online educational resource that brings together the most clinically relevant content, news and tools from a variety of trusted sources. The recent updates mean that when you log on to use the ONE Network, you will be able to access a greater extent of new content, such as a library of 3,500 free clinical images, basic skills courses, master class videos and self-assessments.

The ICO has provided the setup details required to the ONE Network and you will be emailed directly with your login details. If your login details are not working or you need instructions on logging in to the ONE Network you can contact the ICO directly or email oneintl@aao.org.

7.   HST Assessment

7.1 Examinations

-   **FRCSI Examination**

The Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (FRCSI) is the exit appraisal for the Higher Ophthalmic Surgical Training Programme. The FRCSI examination is a test of competence to practice as an independent specialist consultant in ophthalmic surgery and is aimed at trainees who are coming to the end of their Higher Specialist Training in Ophthalmology.

The MRCSI is an entry requirement for the FRCSI and candidates for the FRCSI must be in their final year of Specialist Training in Surgical Ophthalmology in Ireland. Trainees must have satisfactorily completed all assessments deemed appropriate by the Training Committee to be eligible to sit the final FRCSI exam.

You can apply via the RCSI Postgraduate Exams portal and search for the FRCSI exam listing https://postgradexams.rcsi.ie/public/openexams.

If you have any queries before your exam, you will see listed on the portal a contact person from the RCSI Exams office for the FRCSI exam. Alternatively you can contact the general exams email address pgexams@rcsi.ie.

For the Regulations and Eligibility Guidelines of the FRCSI Exam, please visit http://www.rcsi.ie/ophmembersexams.

It is essential that you pay close attention to the **closing dates** for the exam, as these can be as early as 2-3 months before the examination date.

-   **EBOD Examination**

The European Board of Ophthalmology Diploma (EBOD) Examination is a test of excellence in ophthalmology. It is designed to assess the knowledge and clinical skills requisite to the delivery of a high standard of ophthalmology care both in hospitals and in independent clinical practices.

The examination takes place twice each year, usually in May and October and welcomes eligible candidates from all over Europe.

The MRCSI is an entry requirement for the EBOD Exam and candidates must be in HST4 or HST5 to apply.

Please visit http://www.ebo-online.org/ebo-exam/exam-information/ to apply for the exam. Here, you can also read the Exam Regulations and Eligibility Criteria, along with information about the exam structure and fees.

Candidates are required to upload an approval letter from the College. Applications are not complete without this letter. Please complete this form to request a letter.

If you have any queries regarding the examination, you can contact lisa.flanagan@ebo-online.org or the general exams email address ebo@ebo-online.org.

It is essential that you pay close attention to the **closing dates** for the exam, as these can be as early as 2-3 months before the examination date.

7.2   Ophthalmic Knowledge Assessment programme (OKAP)

The Ophthalmic Knowledge Assessment programme or OKAP is an examination administered by the American Board of Ophthalmology. It is a 260 item MCQ that is administered annually to all residents in ophthalmology training programmes in the USA and is utilized and available to international training programmes. The OKAP assesses 13 sub-sets and the score is reported as a percentile rank or scaled score.

The OKAP will be administered annually, in Spring, in HST 4-6. The assessment is formative in nature.

The dates of the OKAP will be circulated to trainees closer to the time of the assessment. Further detail regarding the content of the OKAP can be found here.

7.3   Objective Structured Examinations (OSEs)

The Objective Structured Examinations are structured oral examinations with the purpose of providing feedback to trainees in preparation for the FRCSI exit exam. They will be administered in HST 6 and will address the seven subspecialty areas of the HST curriculum. The dates of the OSEs will be circulated to trainees closer to the time of the assessment.

7.4   Competence and Assessment of Performance Appraisal (CAPA)

Trainees are assessed via Competence and Assessment of Performance Appraisal (CAPA). A formal review session with the Dean and HST Programme Director wherein your progress in relation to fulfilling the mandatory components of training is discussed takes place annually. Trainees must submit CAPA assessment documentation for each six months rotation however. CAPA assessment documentation for your first six-month rotation is required in November for review by the Programme Director. CAPA assessment documentation for your second six-month rotation is required in May ahead of the formal CAPA assessment session with the Dean and Programme Director in June.

Please note that it is the responsibility of the **Trainee** to check their forms before submitting them to the College. Ensure your name is on the form, and that both you and your Trainer have provided signatures where required. Ensure all relevant fields are completed by your Trainer.

ICO Training ePortfolio

The [ICO Training ePortfolio](#) launched in July 2024 to enable trainees to submit CAPA documentation on a virtual platform. Trainees are **required** to inform the College, the name of their Consultant Trainer who will then be assigned to the trainee on the Training ePortfolio.

Details and instructions on accessing the ICO Training ePortfolio are available on the Trainee Portal.

HST CAPA Assessment Documentation

The following documents should be submitted to the ICO at the completion of each **6-month** rotation for review by the Dean and Programme Director.

1. HST Training Assessment Form for Subspecialties 1-7
- This form is a record of Trainees' timetable, clinical skills, professional development, subspecialty assessment including a six monthly subspecialty logbook, subspecialty learning outcomes and the Trainer's report for the six-month rotation.
- Trainees must submit details of their Clinical Case Based Discussion, Presentation of Major Clinical Topic, progress in Audit, Peer Reviewed Paper and International Presentation on the Assessment Form completed in the six months of training.
2. HST Summary Logbook

The Programme Director will also chart your progress in Exams, SFS and Mandatory Courses on a CAPA summary sheet, which is stored in your training file in the ICO.

Mandatory Components of HST

1. CAPA Assessment Session	Trainees must submit assessment documentation for first six-month rotation in *November* and second six-month rotation in *May*. Trainees must attend a formal CAPA assessment session once per year with the Dean and Programme Director.
2. HST Trainer Assessment Form	This form will record the training that takes place during each six-month rotation. Clinical Case Based Discussions and Presentation of a Major Clinical Topic are both contained in the assessment form. Trainees are required to submit this form in full, signed by their Trainer. 1. Clinical Case Based Discussion **Two** clinical case base discussions based on content referenced to the learning outcomes of the subspecialty curricula should be presented locally *every six months.*

	2. Presentation of a Major Clinical Topic **One** major clinical topic, referenced to the learning outcomes of the subspecialty curricula should be presented locally or nationally *every six months.*
3. Audit	Trainees must perform **one** audit *per training year. Evidence of each audit must be provided.* The Trainer(s) will give guidance on an appropriate subject and methodology but it is the responsibility of the Trainee to initiate this within three weeks of starting each new training placement. The audit should include along with attached copies of relevant published literature: - Choice of audit subject - National/international standard against which current practice will be audited. - Outcome of initial audit of current practice and variance of results from chosen standard. - Measures taken to improve practice. - Final audit and closure of audit loop. Trainees commencing HST in July 2024 must complete audits with the ICO Trainee Audit Report which are available on the [Trainee Portal]().
4. Peer Reviewed Paper	Trainees must have **one** published peer reviewed paper *by the **end of training**. This must be completed during HST. Evidence must be provided.*
5. International Presentation	Trainees must give **one** international presentation *by the **end of training**. This must be completed during HST. Evidence must be provided.*
6. Teaching and School for Surgeons	Trainees are expected to engage with any in-unit training as well as the School for Surgeons (SFS) online training programme. Participation on SFS assignments, the Interactive Classroom (IC) feedback sessions and the end of term MCQ are mandatory components of the HST programme. A minimum of **60%** of assignments are required to be completed and a minimum of **60%** of ICs to be attended.
7. Logbook	(1) A logbook showing all procedures should be prepared for *each six-month rotation. This is included in the subspecialty HST Trainers Assessment Form.*
	(2) A HST Summary Logbook of all procedures to date i.e. a cumulative HST record should be prepared for *each six-month rotation.*

9. Exams	(1) The EBOD exam should be sat in *HST4 or HST5.*

	(2) The FRCSI exam should be sat in *HST7*.
10. Mandatory Courses	(1) Human Factors - One to two modules must be attended *per training year*. All **four** HST modules must be attended over the course of the four years. (2) RCSI Research Skills Course must be completed in *HST4 or HST5.* Trainees may be considered for exemption from this course if they have a research degree. (3) ICO Anterior Vitrectomy Simulation Course
11. Recommended Courses and Meetings	Certificates of completion of recommended courses and attendance at recommended meetings should be submitted at *the formal CAPA assessment session.*

HST TRAINING SUMMARY

As part of the CAPA documentation, the ICO completes a cumulative HST Training Summary for each trainee which details whether or not the training requirements as outlined above have been successfully attained for each year of training. This document is continually reviewed by the Dean and Programme Director ahead of each CAPA session. At the final CAPA, this document will also be reviewed alongside the CAPA documentation submitted by the trainee to determine a trainee's eligibility for CCST.

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HST TRAINING SUMMARY									
Trainee Name:				**Start Date:**					
Out of Programme Experience *(if any & pre July 2021)*									
Leave *(if any)*									
CCST Date									

CAPA REQUIREMENTS	HST4A	HST4B	HST5A	HST5B	HST6A	HST6B	HST7A	HST7B
CAPA= Satisfactory CAPA=Unsatisfactory	**Post**	**Post**	**Post**	**Post**	**Post**	**Post**	**Post**	**Post**
Subspecialty								
HST Assessment Form *(1 per rotation)*								
SFS *(Assignment 60%, IC 60%)*								
Human Factors *(1-2 Modules per year)*								
Name of HF Module Attended:	1.Leadership ☐ 2. Advanced Communication: Advocacy & Negotiation ☐ 3. Safety Management ☐ 4. 21st Century Professionalism ☐							
Research Methodology								
Publication *(1 per training)*								
Intl Presentation *(1 per training)*								
Audit *(1 per year)*								
Local/Nat Presentations *(1 per rotation)*								
CBDs *(2 per rotation)*								
Logbook *(1 per rotation)*								
HST Assessments	OKAP:				OSCE:			
Exams	EBOD:				FRCSI:			
Mandatory Courses	Anterior Vitrectomy:			Date:				

FINAL CAPA SIGN OFF			
Final CAPA Satisfactory:	Yes ☐ No ☐	**3 Years of scheduled rotations completed:** **4 Years* of scheduled rotation completed:** **From July 2021 inclusive*	Yes ☐ No ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐
Programme Director Signature:			
Dean Signature:			
CCST to be Awarded:		Yes ☐ No ☐	

8. Courses

- **Mandatory Courses**
  Human Factors, RCSI
  Research Methodology, RCSI
  School for Surgeons & Interactive Classroom
  Anterior Vitrectomy Course, ICO

- **Recommended Conferences & Meetings**
  ICO Annual Conference:
  ARVO; Association for Research & Vision in Ophthalmology
  AAO; American Academy of Ophthalmology
  ESCRS; European Society for Cataract & Refractive Surgeons
  BEAVRS; British & Eire Association of Vitreo Retinal Surgeons
  EU Retina

- **Recommended Management Course**
  The college recommends that a management course be completed.
  There are a range of courses available from short courses to Diplomas.
  Please contact the College if you need any guidance when selecting a course.

- **Recommended Subspecialty Course**
  Strabismus Course, Waterford
  Oculoplastics Course, RCOphth
  Vitreo Retinal Course, Moorfields Eye Hospital
  LASIK Course, Moorfields Eye Hospital
  Glaucoma Course, Moorfields Eye Hospital
  Medical Retina Day, Limerick·
  Medical Retina Course, Moorfields Eye Hospital
  Neuro-Ophthalmology Afferent & Efferent Course, Birmingham

- **Wet Labs**
  Artisan IOL wetlab, ESCRS
  DSAEK wetlab, ESCRS

9. Certificate of Completion of Specialist Training (CCST)

Trainees must achieve the surgical, clinical, personal and professional competencies defined in the surgical curriculum, fulfil the mandatory assessment requirements, pass the FRCSI Exit Examination and have completed training approved, accredited posts in Ireland to be awarded CCST.

At the final CAPA assessment session, CCST is confirmed if the following mandatory components of the training programme have been successfully attained:

- Satisfactory outcome at all CAPA assessment sessions HST4 – HST7
- Cumulative Record of HST Assessment Forms
- Clinical Case Based Discussions and Presentations of Major Clinical Topic
- Logbook Final Six-Monthly Logbook and HST Summary Logbook
- Audit
- Peer Reviewed Paper Publication
- International Presentation
- Participation in teaching activities and School for Surgeons
- Completion of the Human Factors in Patient Safety programme
- Completion of the Research Methodology course unless exempt
- Exams: EBOD Exam and FRCSI Exam
- Mandatory Courses: Anterior Vitrectomy

Award of the CCST will allow the Higher Surgical Trainee to be registered on the ophthalmic surgery registrar of the Irish Medical Council and will indicate that the Trainee has reached the curricular standards of competence to practice independently as an Ophthalmic Surgeon in Ireland.

10. Checklist for Completion of Specialist Training (CCST)

TRAINEE CHECKLIST:

- ☐ HST subspecialty assessment forms for each six months
- ☐ 2 Case based discussions for each six months
- ☐ 1 Local/National presentation of a Major Topic for each six months
- ☐ 1 Audit for each year
- ☐ 1 Publication of a peer reviewed paper
- ☐ 1 International presentation
- ☐ SFS – Achieved 60% in assignments and attended 60% of interactive classrooms
- ☐ Completion of the Human Factors in Patient Safety programme
- ☐ Completion of the Research Methodology course
- ☐ HST summary logbook for each six months
- ☐ Satisfactory CAPA Year 4, Year 5, Year 6 and Year 7
- ☐ Successfully attained EBOD examination
- ☐ Successfully attained FRCSI examination
- ☐ Mandatory Courses: ICO Anterior Vitrectomy Simulation Course

11. Surgical Fellowships & Awards

The ICO seeks industry support to help make funding available to ophthalmology trainees to access training opportunities outside of the formal programme. Details on a range of scholarships and travel grants/bursaries as they are confirmed will be circulated. The RCSI also provides several grants and bursaries for education. Further information is available on the College website. The HSE, through the Dr Richard Steeven's Scholarship annually funds several senior trainees to take up overseas fellowship posts. For information on the Richard Steeven's Scholarship please visit: http://www.rcsi.ie/steevensscholarship. Applicants must be Fellows or Members of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland who are in good standing.

12. Recognition of Prior Posts (Retrospection)

Retrospective recognition of prior learning is not considered for trainees who commenced BST after 2015.

13. Leave

The ICO recognizes that for a variety of exceptional reasons a trainee may require time off the training program. If such a situation arises please contact the ICO at the first available opportunity to discuss this in more detail. If a trainee takes leave an annotation to the training agreement may be required and this will be discussed with and agreed upon the Dean and Programme Director.

If you are returning from leave the ICO will endeavour to ensure you have access to a suitable training post but for reasons outside our control this may not always be possible

14.1 Unplanned Leave

Any period of unplanned leave, beyond the normal entitlement to study and annual leave, may interrupt the acquirement of skills during each six-month rotation. Therefore, a period of unplanned leave in excess of two weeks per six months, may require a further period of training to be undertaken.

14.2   Maternity Leave

As maternity leave affects CCST date, Trainees are required to inform the Programme Director and the College of their Maternity leave start and finish dates when they have them. Trainees must also inform their employer as per their HSE contracts.

If a trainee takes maternity leave an annotation to the training agreement may be required and this will be discussed and agreed upon by the Dean and Programme Director.

15.3 Paternity Leave

Under the Paternity Leave and Benefit Act 2016, - for further information see here, a period of two weeks of paid Paternity Leave may be availed of. Trainees intending to take Paternity Leave must inform the College in advance stating the start and finish dates once confirmed. Trainees must also inform their employer as per their HSE contracts.

If a trainee takes paternity leave an annotation to the training agreement may be required and this will be discussed and agreed upon by the Dean and Programme Director.

14.4 Career Break

Please see here the HSE circular in relation career breaks. NCHDs who travel abroad can now apply for a career break and if approved will remain on the superannuation scheme. NCHDs wishing to avail of a career break under this arrangement must apply to their Employer in sufficient time before the expiry of their current contract. For those NCHDs participating in a Specialist Training Scheme they must also apply to the relevant postgraduate training body i.e. the ICO and obtain the formal written approval of the same. This formal written approval must be attached to the career break application to their employer. Please see here for the list of agencies with public service employees funded by the HSE.

For further information please visit: http://www.rcsi.ie/TraineeInformationFAQ

If a trainee takes a career break an annotation to the training agreement may be required and this will be discussed and agreed upon by the Dean and Programme Director.

Continuing Communication Agreement while on leave

A Continuing Communication Agreement will be made between the trainee and the College to ensure the trainee is kept informed of relevant training matters. Trainees on statutory leave are under no obligation to respond to the communication whilst on leave.

Return to training following a period of leave

The trainee may return to higher training at the appropriate stage, although the nature of training rotations is such that returning to the same posts as planned at the outset of their training rotation may not be possible. The College cannot guarantee the date or the location of the trainee's return placement. It is therefore important that the College is advised well in advance of a trainee's wish to return to clinical training. The College will attempt to identify a placement as soon as possible but trainees should indicate their intention and preferred time of return as soon as they are able to do so. If a trainee, having indicated that they are returning to the training program, subsequently declines the place offered, there is no guarantee that another place can be identified although every effort will be made to do so.

Trainees on extended leave will be assessed on their return to the program, to establish their eligibility for recommencing the training pathway. This may result in repeating a period of training on the program or progressing to the next stage of training with specific learning targets identified by the Dean, Programme Director and the Educational Supervisor. This will be reflected in an annotated training agreement.

16. Voluntary Exit

A doctor who has left the programme voluntarily may reapply to specialty training but prior training will not be recognised.

17. Flexible Training

15.1 HSE National Flexible Training Scheme

The HSE National Flexible Training Scheme for Higher Specialist Trainees is a national scheme managed and funded by the Health Service Executives National Doctors Training and Planning (NDTP) Unit. The scheme provides for a limited number of supernumerary places to facilitate doctors at higher specialist training level to continue their training in a flexible manner for a set period.

The HSE NDTP Guidance Document sets out the current details of the National Flexible Training Scheme and provides information for trainees about the programme and the application process. Applications generally open at the beginning of August and close in December for the training year commencing the following July. Applicants will then be notified of the outcome of their application for the scheme by the end of January each year.

To view the HSE NDTP Guidance Document and access the Application Form, please visit https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/leadership-education-development/met/ed/flex/

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the necessary approval is obtained from both the training body and the employer in a timely manner, a minimum of three months prior to commencement of the post.

The ICO Flexible Training Policy and application form are available on the trainee portal.

16.2 Post Reassignment Request

The post reassignment process has been established to support trainees who have had an unforeseen and significant change in their personal circumstances since the commencement of their training programme which requires a change to their training allocation. This process is

managed by the Dean of Postgraduate Education and governed by the College. The policy is available on the Trainee portal.

In order to provide a consistent, transparent and robust process for all trainees, the ICO will make all decisions on eligibility and allocations in accordance with these guidelines and criteria.

Trainees can apply for a change to their agreed rotation if they have a significant and unforeseen change in their personal circumstances relating to:
• Their own disability or ill health.
• Responsibility for caring for ill/disabled partner, relative or other dependent.
• Responsibility for caring for school age children.

Other well-founded reasons may be considered dependent on the particular situation.

Please note that reassignments are not an entitlement. A request for a change will depend on compliance with eligibility criteria, vacancies in the region into which trainees are applying to move and training requirements.

Changes to personal circumstances must have occurred before making an application and applications cannot be based on expected or anticipated future events.

Please review the Post Reassignment Policy which is available on the Trainee portal before submitting an application.

Application Process

1. Trainees must complete the **Post Reassignment Application Form** which is available on the Trainee Portal and submit it to the College by email.

2. Applications made under the reassignment policy must be received prospectively, no later than **six months** before the rotation is due to commence or within a reasonable timeframe concurrent with the knowledge of change in circumstances.

3. Trainees may be required to provide documentation and evidence to support their application.

Decision Process

Applications will be considered by the College in accordance with the governance structures of the training programme.

Applications will generally be considered as part of the allocation process.

Priority will be given to trainees with a significant change in circumstances due to their own disability.

Applications from trainees with a change in circumstances related to caring or parental responsibilities will then be considered.

Applications from trainees with a change involving a committed relationship will be considered afterwards.

If the availability of appropriate vacancies is insufficient to accommodate all requests, eligible trainees will be selected on a first come, first served basis.

The following principles will be adhered to during the decision making process:
- No existing trainee can be disadvantaged by the reassignment. For example, a trainee cannot have their rotation changed without their agreement to accommodate a request for reassignment from another trainee.
- The reassigned post must meet the training requirements appropriate to a trainee at that level.
- The reassignment should not result in the trainee having to undertake extra training to fulfil training requirements.

If a trainee declines the post offered as a result of the reassignment application process this will mean that the trainee has withdrawn their application. No subsequent offers will be made and the trainee will remain assigned to their original rotation.

Trainees whose applications for reassignment are not successful will be informed of this decision by the ICO. A reason for the decision will be provided.

The ICO will do its best to accommodate such requests but applicants must be aware that requests will be dealt with on an individual basis and decisions will be taken based on post availability and other criteria.

15.3 Job-sharing

Postgraduate trainees can avail of job-sharing opportunities for a set period. Job sharing works on the basis that two trainees will share one full-time post with each trainee working 50% of the hours. The aim of the job-sharing policy is to retain doctors within the medical workforce who are unable to continue training on a full-time basis.

Important. Please note that flexible training options are currently under review with the HSE NDTP. Any resulting changes to flexible training will be communicated to you but you may also wish to check the HSE NDTP Flexible Training webpage for updates https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/leadership-education-development/met/ed/flex/

16. Support Structures

The College recognises that trainees may face stressful situations during the program which can impact on their performance and progress. Trainees may underperform and not achieve the desired performance requirements of the curriculum. There may be many reasons for this underperformance. Coping with the demands of a busy profession, maintaining skills and knowledge and balancing family and personal commitments can be difficult. The College is committed to providing support to trainees to assist them appropriately through difficult situations. Trainees can contact the College if they wish to discuss any aspects of their training with the Dean of Postgraduate Training and an appointment can be organised on their behalf.

The support escalations are outlined below:
1. Consultant Trainer.
2. Educational Supervisor
3. Programme Director or the Dean of Postgraduate Education, both of whom may, in appropriate situations, bring problems to the attention of the Training Advisory Committee.

Further information on available supports can be found on the RCSI mSurgery website here: https://msurgery.ie/home/trainee-support-section/

All trainees are encouraged to use those resources available to them during their time on programme should they encounter any problems during their training or wish to seek career advice.

17. Appeal

Trainees have a right to appeal a decision of the Dean, Programme Director and Training Committee that affects their progression through the program. The appeals procedure is available from the ICO and on the trainee portal page.

18. HSE National Healthcare Communication Programme

The National Healthcare Communication Programme is designed to support healthcare staff to learn, develop and maintain their communication skills with patients, their families and with colleagues. The Programme is underpinned by the Core Values of Care, Compassion, Trust and Learning and builds on these values with a focus on Person-Centred and Clinical Communication Skills.

The Programme takes a skills-based approach to the facilitation and learning of how to communicate with patients and their families because, through this approach, specific, describable behaviours can be identified, which staff can then learn and use in their interactions with patients and their families.

The programme gives you the opportunity to explore a range of communication issues including:

- Expressing empathy
- Informed consent
- Delivering bad news
- Dealing with strong emotions - anger, anxiety, sadness
- Disclosing an error
- Inter-professional communication

The programme is organised around four core modules as follows:

Module 1: Making connections
Module 2: Core consultation skills
Module 3: Challenging consultations
Module 4: Communicating with colleagues and promoting team work

Each of the modules will have a number of additional mini-modules on specific topics under this heading - for example staff who attend Module 3 may wish to attend a module on Informed Consent or Telephone Consultations if this area of communication is applicable to them in their role.

Staff will have different levels of knowledge, experience and skills for carrying out person-centred consultations, however all staff can reflect on their skills and perhaps identify areas for further learning and development. The National Healthcare Communication Programme recommends that all staff attend Module 1 and all clinical staff attend Modules 2, 3 and 4 of the programme. Progress through Modules 1- 4 is not necessarily linear – some staff may want to extend learning covered in individual modules before progressing on to other modules. In addition, some teams may wish to take a multi-disciplinary approach to the Programme where all staff - clinical and non-clinical, on their team, will progress through each of the Modules.

To access the online modules, please visit the HSE website: https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/our-health-service/healthcare-communication/about/communication-skills.html

Clinical Handover

As part of the programme, a specific Module has been developed by the HSE in collaboration with the RCSI to address Clinical Handover. The module aims to support clinicians to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to effectively prepare and participate in clinical handover. The course demonstrates how good communication skills can achieve continuity and safety of patient care during handover. The application of ISBAR3 is examined in a variety of clinical settings using video analysis of everyday handover situations.

Trainees are encouraged to review this module in advance of a rotation change or as required. The online content for Module 4 can be found here:https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/our-health-service/healthcare-communication/module-4/

19. HSE National Coaching Service

The HSE offers a National Coaching Service to all its employees in recognition that coaching aims to help people when they feel stuck and want to bring about personal change in their lives and work, to shift their perspective, reflect on their choices and realise their individual potential. The National Coaching Service offers 4-6 one to one sessions over the phone with each session lasting a maximum of one hour.

To find out more about the coaching service please visit https://healthservice.hse.ie/staff/training-and-development/coaching/

You can apply for a coach confidentially by email hr.nationalcoachingservice@hse.ie

20. HSE National Doctors Training & Planning

The Irish College of Ophthalmologists wish to acknowledge the support provided by the HSE National Doctors Training & Planning and its contribution to the development of postgraduate medical training in Ireland in an evolving health service. https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/leadership-education-development/met/ed/

21. Funding

Funding is available to Trainees via four different funds. Please see the table below for a brief overview of all funds.

SPECIALIST TRAINING FUND	▪ Run by RCSI on behalf of HSE/NDTP. ▪ For training courses/activities, equipment, books, expenses. ▪ €500 per year per Trainee. ▪ Funding is carried over year-on-year e.g. three years unclaimed will give the Trainee €1500 to claim.
CLINICAL COURSES & EXAM FUND	▪ Run by HSE/NDTP for courses and exams only on the approved list. ▪ Trainees must claim for this fund through the HR Departments in their hospital within six months of attending the exam/course.
SURGICAL LOUPES FUND	▪ The Surgical Loupes fund is open to trainees in years ST3-ST8. ▪ Applications open in February each year and close at the end of March. ▪ Applications will be emailed directly to trainees with a link to the webpage for further information. ▪ Amount of funding available depends on the number of claims.
Training Support Scheme	▪ Additional Training Support Funding has been made available to by HSE/NDTP to NCHDs from July 2019 onwards. ▪ Funding is allocated based on grade for each registration training year, July – July. ▪ €2,000 is available to each SpR for certain approved clinical courses, conferences and examinations

As of July 2019, the Mandatory Training Fund ceased and was replaced by the Training Support Scheme.

Further information is available on the HSE website here.

RCSI pays fees for Trainees for the following:

STATISTICAL PACKAGE FOR SOCIAL SCIENCES (SPSS Statistics Package)	▪ Available to all Trainees on the ST Programme and should help with research. ▪ This can be downloaded using your RCSI login through https://vle.rcsi.ie/, then follow the path: Support ☐ IT Support ☐ 4. RCSI Software Library ☐ SPSS ▪ Normal purchase cost €1100 per Trainee.
ENDNOTE	▪ Available to all Trainees on the ST Programme and should help with research. ▪ This can be downloaded using your RCSI login through https://vle.rcsi.ie/, then follow the path: Support ☐ IT Support ☐ 4. RCSI Software Library ☐ Endnote ▪ Normal purchase cost €300 per Trainee.

22. ICO Member & Trainee Portal

The ICO uses a member's portal to communicate with its members, trainees and affiliates.

For all trainees, this will be the college's primary means of communication for the duration of your training. On commencement of the Training Programme with the ICO, you give your permission for the college to create a trainee profile on our portal and to be contacted via the portal.

Trainees <u>must not</u> unsubscribe from these communications as by doing so, you will not receive pertinent information regarding your training, which may in turn adversely affect your training.

It is the responsibility of the trainee to ensure they are receiving emails. Should you encounter any difficulty in receiving these emails, firstly check that they are not going into your spam folder. Should this happen you will need to mark the emails as "not spam". If the problem persists, please contact the ICO who will be able to assist you.

In addition to the portal being used as a communication tool, the portal will also contain all relevant training information including but not limited to; training requirements, policies, training guides etc. Any changes to this information will be updated on the portal.

Accessing the portal

To login to the portal, go to the ICO website and click the "login" button in the top right-hand corner of the screen.

Alternatively click here: https://www.eyedoctors.ie/members/login/

To login, please enter the below information:

Username: email address provided to the college
Password: This will be your IMC number and your initials in capitals, for example: 123456JS.

You can change your password by clicking "Forgot Password" on the login page, or alternatively once logged in you can click on the blue member icon and select "change password".

If you experience any technical difficulty in accessing your profile, please contact the College who will be able to assist you.

23.   Training Events Calendar

A calendar which lists upcoming training events including courses, exams, eTutorials, CAPA deadlines etc. is available on the trainee portal page or via the link below:

Link:
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Ke59jsg13vFyZQ63sogAwD4j_aBaZ_I41oE7_GdmqJ8/edit?usp=sharing

Dates may be subject to change and any amendments will be updated in the calendar. Trainees should therefore check the calendar regularly to have the most up to date information.
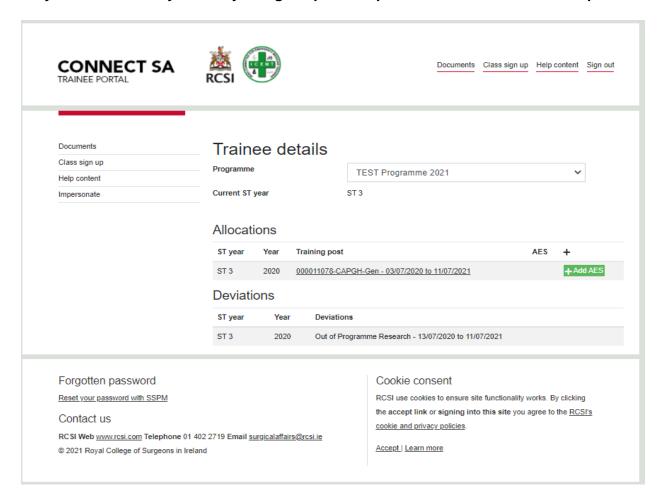
24. RCSI Trainee Portal - Connect SA

When you log into your trainee portal using your RCSI credentials you will see all your rotations displayed.
You can sign up for your classes, mandatory workshops, Human Factors etc.
You can also upload specific documentation related to your Training journey as a document library is available specifically for all trainees.

If you encounter any difficulty using the platform please contact the RCSI IT Helpdesk.

25. Data Protection

Data Protection is an increasingly important issue for all organisations. Like all organisations that hold and use personal data, the ICO must meet certain obligations relating to the manner in which it collects, stores, uses and disseminates personal data of individuals.

The ICO is committed to meeting its obligations under the Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003 and the General Data Protection Regulation 2018. The ICO needs to collect personal data, as defined by the Acts, for a variety of purposes, in order to conduct its business as a professional and post graduate training body. The ICO collects data relating to trainees who come into contact with the college in the course of its activities. Personal data is collected, managed and used for a variety of purposes including, but not limited to, the admission, assessment and examination of trainees and their clinical performance.

The ICO is committed to compliance with the eight principles of data protection as set out in the Acts:
1. *To obtain and process personal data fairly.*
    ICO will obtain and process personal data fairly in accordance its legal obligations.
2. *To keep it only for one or more specified and lawful purposes.*
    ICO will keep data for purposes that are specific, lawful and clearly stated and the data will only be processed in a manner compatible with these purposes.
3. *To use and disclose it only in ways compatible with the stated purpose(s).*
    ICO will only use and disclose personal data in ways that are necessary for the purpose/s or compatible with the purpose/s for which it collects and keeps the data.
4. *To keep it safe and secure.*
    ICO will take appropriate technical and organisational security measures against unauthorised access to, or alteration, disclosure or destruction of the data and against their accidental loss or destruction.
5. *To keep it accurate, complete and up-to-date.*
    ICO will take appropriate measures to ensure high levels of data accuracy and completeness and to ensure that personal data is kept up to date.
6. *To ensure that it is adequate, relevant and not excessive.*
    Personal data held by the College will be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose/s for which they are kept.
7. *To retain it for no longer than is necessary for the purpose for which it was collected.*
    ICO will have a defined retention period policy for personal data and appropriate procedures in place to implement such a policy.
8. *To give a copy of his/her personal data to an individual, upon request.*
    ICO has procedures in place to ensure that data subjects can access a copy of his/her data held by ICO, in compliance with sections 3 & 4 of the Data Protection Acts.

The ICO does not share personally identifying data with third parties unless requested to do so for a specific regulatory purpose by the HSE or the Irish Medical Council.
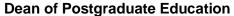
26. Important Contact Numbers / Emails / Portals

Irish College of Ophthalmologists
121 Stephen's Green, Dublin 2, D02 H903
Tel: 01 402 2777
www.eyedoctors.ie

Dean of Postgraduate Education
Miss Yvonne Delaney
Email: dean@eyedoctors.ie

Training Programme Manager
Ms Rebecca Martin Albuquerque
Email: rebecca.martin@eyedoctors.ie
Phone: 086 075 7603

Senior Training & Operations Administrator
Ms Andrea Farrell
Email: andrea.farrell@eyedoctors.ie
Phone: 086 440 9291

Training & Education Support Administrator
Ms Chloe Moran
Email: chloe.moran@eyedoctors.ie

ICO Training ePortfolio   https://training.eyedoctors.ie/

ICO Trainee Portal: https://www.eyedoctors.ie/members/login/

School for Surgeons: https://vle.rcsi.com/login/index.php

ICO National eTutorial Series: https://ico.wildapricot.org/sys/website/?pageId=1075258

ICO National Masterclass Series: https://ico.wildapricot.org/sys/website/?pageId=1075264

Training Events Calendar:
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Ke59jsg13vFyZQ63sogAwD4j_aBaZ_l41oE7_GdmqJ8/edit?usp=sharing

RCSI National Surgical Training Centre (NSTC) - Administration Offices
Ms Roisin Scally
Email: roisinscally@rcsi.ie

RCSI Human Factors

RCSI Trainee Portal   https://connectsatrainees.rcsi.com/
Section Mailbox
Email: humanfactors@rcsi.ie

RCSI Research Skills Course
Ms Aoife Murphy
Email: aoifemurphy@rcsi.ie

RCSI Exams Office
Portal   https://postgradexams.rcsi.ie/public/openexams

Section Mailbox
Email: pgexams@rcsi.ie

Ms Emma Scally, Examinations Manager.
Email: escally@rcsi.ie
Phone: +353 1 402 8617

RCSI Reception
121 Stephens Green   01 402 2422
123 Stephens Green   01 402 2263

RCSI IT Dept   01 402 2273
Email: helpdesk@rcsi.ie

RCSI Library   librarian@rcsi-mub.com

RCSI mSurgery   https://msurgery.ie/