

Top tips for planning a public health training attachment – A guide for new educational supervisors

This document is a guide for planning training, with prompts for training actions at the beginning, middle and end of a training attachment with you.

1. Planning ahead

Before one or more Specialty Registrars start in the team make sure facilities are in place:

- Desk, phone, IT equipment and secretarial support
- Someone to welcome them on day 1

Have a plan:

- How much time will you offer?
- Who will meet the dedicated educational time requirements of the person in training?
- What will you do with them for the first week?
- Who in the organisation do you want them to meet? It's good practice to have sorted some key appointments in advance and be able to give them a schedule of meetings on their start day

2. What does a training placement involve?

Day 1

A first meeting should include introductions to the team and to the organisation, a short briefing on the team, and what workplace behaviours you expect. This should be carried out by you as the trainer - if you can't be present for these yourself then make arrangements for someone to deputise for you.

For new registrars discuss Learning Agreements and how particular Learning Outcomes will be achieved. Give them an idea of what you expect them to get involved in (e.g. people/teams to meet, meetings to attend, who to shadow, what strategic meetings they should experience etc.)

For experienced registrars discuss their previous placement, including any particular achievements, any barriers to progress, any outstanding commitments or upcoming exams. Agree how you will work together. Check portfolio is up to date; review how their Learning Outcomes sign off is progressing. What phase of training are they at? What was the advice and outcome of their last ARCP? Be clear that you will give feedback, both positive and negative.

Beginning the placement

Finalise Learning agreement for 6 or 12 months. Be specific, and measurable, and stretching. Agree timescales. Find occasions to assess performance: a report, communications, presentations, contribution to meetings, and feedback from others. Confirm tasks, projects and responsibilities that meet learning needs as well as are of value to the team/ organisation. Get at least one Activity Summary Sheet completed. Agree tutorial topics, and identify people to do them.

Middle of placement

Coach and manage the person in training, give levels of responsibility appropriate to their grade, experience and track record. If they have responsibilities elsewhere (for example, the MPH), make sure you have evidence that they are doing okay. If not already in place, give them specific responsibilities in the team, and use them to answer questions and complaints from the public or other health professionals.

Confirm that they know their employer's policies for Health and Well Being, Attendance, Study Leave, Annual Leave etc. Are you developing them as team players and leaders as well as technical experts?

Look for a balance between work for the team and work outside the team. Involve them in the team's forward planning sessions and any away days. Encourage them to develop their professional networks, to write things up for presentations/ posters/ papers. Are they actively engaging with their academic supervisor? How are they preparing for examinations? If they are in Phase 3 of training, are they taking/ being given appropriate responsibility at a near-consultant level? Are they keeping up to date with their portfolio: appropriate evidence, reflection from them and you; 2 or 3 quality pieces of evidence for each Learning Outcome? Any changes necessary to the way you train?

Latter stages of placement

Have they considered their next placement? If they are moving on, how much are they going to deliver before the end of this placement? Have they planned an exit strategy for leaving the organisation and any work areas they have led on? What gaps have you identified? What areas of high performance have you observed that they could develop as outstanding? Remind them to complete an end-of-placement feedback form.

If they are leaving or moving to a new location, how will you mark their leaving? What advice and feedback can they give you and your location?

If they are going on a short attachment, such as to the HPU, ensure the hand over to their new trainer is coordinated and be clear of the expectation on all sides. Are they coming back to you? If so when and have a plan for them to pick up pieces of work to make progress on outstanding learning outcomes.

3. Preparing for ARCP

a) Activity summary sheets

These are for the registrar to reflect on what they learned from what went well and what could be improved, how it will influence their approach in future. It is not for describing the activity.

One activity should not be linked to too many learning outcomes. Conversely a learning outcome should only have 2 to 3 robust pieces of evidence, rather than a lot of weaker demonstrations of work.

Comments by the Educational Supervisors should relate to how the registrar handled each activity and any implications from this.

b) Signing off competencies

The ARCP review is not designed to go through all the signed-off competencies. There isn't the time and it is not the role of the panel. As a consequence, the responsibility lies almost entirely with the trainer to sign off that the registrar has achieved the appropriate level. This is particularly relevant for registrars nearing the end of their training; you are signing them off as 'ready for a consultant post'.

c) Educational supervisor's report

The educational supervisor's report must be congruent with the progress the registrar is making and with comments on activity summary sheets.

Registrars who are not making expected progress need to have particularly good training records. The educational supervisor's report is the formal record for assessment. Any action taken which may result in them being referred to the Doctors in Difficulty panel or being asked to leave the scheme will depend on the evidence in these reports.

d) Multisource feedback

The School of Public Health uses the NHS Leadership Framework 360 Feedback tool. All registrars will have a 360 appraisal at the end of their training running up to their final ARCP or CCT. A number of educational supervisors have been trained to deliver feedback so this can be done in house.