



# Charter *for* Medical Training



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Successive independent Inquiry reports and a number of surveys conducted by the Royal Colleges throughout Scotland and the UK have highlighted major difficulties within medical training which have the potential to undermine the future provision of high quality and safe patient care. Heightened by the impact of the European Working Time Regulations, the effects of which are still to be fully realised, many doctors in training to become consultants are currently receiving an inadequate level and quality of training. The balance between service needs and learning has been eroded and it is essential that the importance of providing high quality medical training is more widely recognised and that trainees and their trainers are better supported.

Against this background, the Charter for Medical Training has been developed by the RCPE Trainees & Members' Committee and has the full support of the RCPE. The purpose of the Charter is to improve the quality of training by targeting areas where there is a need for improvement. There are a number of issues that require urgent attention, including the need to ensure:



**It is essential that, in addition to delivering patient care, trainee doctors and their trainers receive protected time for training. Failure to do so could lead to a generation of inadequately trained doctors and compromise patient safety.**

Dr Neil Dewhurst, President RCPE, 2011

- adequate time to learn;
- a balance between service provision and learning;
- adequate supervision and feedback;
- Trainees are given work appropriate to their level of experience and competence and relevant to developmental needs; and
- Trainers are properly equipped and have adequate time to provide training.

While it is outwith the scope of the RCPE to oversee the implementation of the Charter, we urge the Scottish and UK Governments along with postgraduate Deaneries, the National Health Service, trainers, trainees, universities and regulatory bodies to ensure that it is implemented. The adoption of these commitments will support a high standard of training and a safe, quality health service for the future.

Dr Neil Dewhurst  
President, Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh  
May 2011

# Commitment to quality medical training across the UK

Trainees, deaneries, National Health Service employers, universities, supervisors, medical Royal Colleges and others involved in training make the following commitments to postgraduate medical training.

## I. Guiding Principles

Patient safety and care is paramount.

All parties recognise that training and service elements must be balanced.

Trainees are valued for their service contribution.

Trainees are actively engaged in the training process.

Training is fair, based on principles of equality and fosters the development of professionalism.



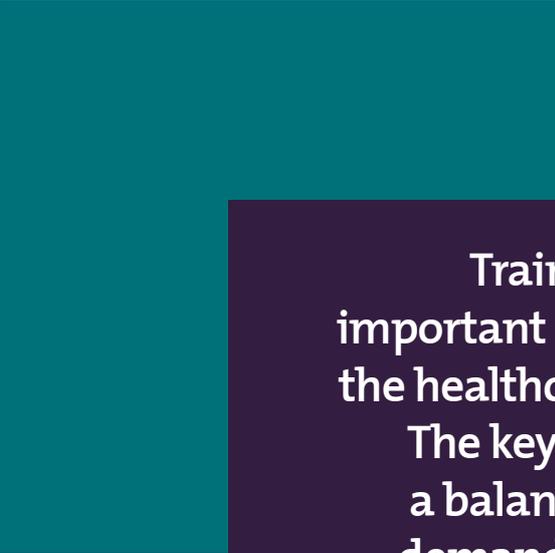
## II. Commitments to training

### 1 Ensuring quality patient care and safety

- 1.1 The duties, workload and work patterns of trainees ensure patient safety and quality care.
- 1.2 Trainees work (and are directed to work) at a level appropriate to their level of competence and experience, seeking assistance where appropriate.
- 1.3 Trainees receive supervision and support with their clinical case-load appropriate to their competence and experience.

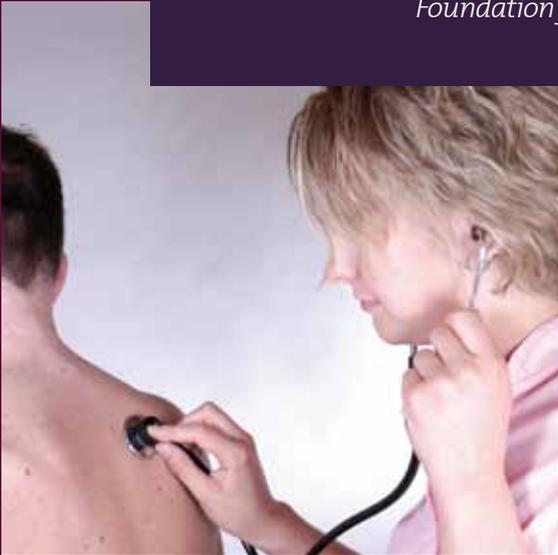
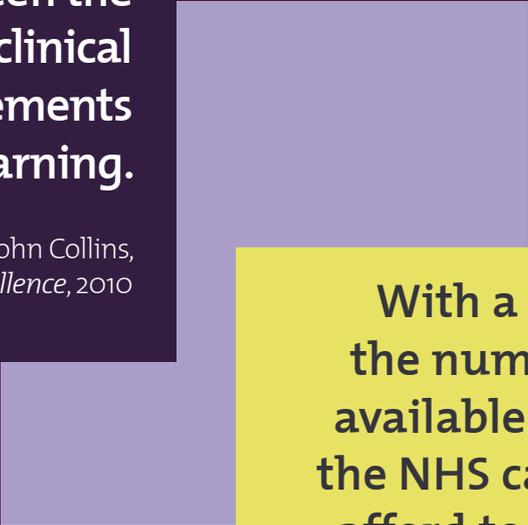
### 2 Recruitment and induction

- 2.1 Processes for recruitment, selection and appointment are open, fair and effective. Specific details regarding training posts are available at the time of application.
- 2.2 Trainees receive a proper induction prior to commencing a new post.
- 2.3 Each trainee is allocated a clinical and an educational supervisor ('trainers') with whom they will develop a training agreement and/or personal development plan.
- 2.4 Trainee numbers will be based on accurate workforce planning.



**Trainees provide an important contribution to the healthcare of patients. The key is maintaining a balance between the demands of the clinical service and the requirements for their learning.**

Professor John Collins,  
*Foundation for Excellence, 2010*



**With a reduction in the number of hours available for trainees, the NHS can no longer afford to sacrifice the training of the medical workforce of tomorrow to cover service today.**

Sir John Temple, *Temple Review, 2010*

### **3 Balancing training with service provision**

- 3.1 Service and training needs are considered in parallel, recognising the importance of developing clinical competencies through on-the-job training while maintaining safe, seamless patient care.
- 3.2 Trainees and trainers receive protected time for clinical training, including time for trainees to attend mandatory and non-mandatory training days.
- 3.3 Trainees demonstrate professionalism and respond flexibly to service needs.
- 3.4 Trainees have access to a sufficient breadth and depth of clinical work to enable them to achieve clinical competencies and develop as physicians.
- 3.5 Trainees are empowered and engaged by being encouraged to feedback suggestions for improving service and training and participating in activities that examine training quality.
- 3.6 Trainees are supported in monitoring and accurately documenting working patterns.



## 4 Ensuring quality training

- 4.1 Trainees have regular access to their educational supervisor and training programme director when required. All parties have a clear understanding of the training programme and their respective roles.
- 4.2 Trainees engage in the training process, demonstrating a commitment to meet with their supervisor, participate in assessments and reviews, and attend a prerequisite number of mandatory training days.
- 4.3 Trainers are selected and appropriately trained for their role and have a suitable job plan, appropriate workload and time to develop trainees. Trainers are supported by a post-graduate medical education team and external parties including the Royal Colleges.
- 4.4 Trainees receive regular, constructive feedback during training and at appraisal and take forward agreed actions plans to address development issues with suitable support.
- 4.5 Trainees have equitable access to a personal, ring-fenced study leave budget over the period of their training. Trainees are advised of the budget at the commencement of training and are expected to manage it appropriately to address their learning needs.
- 4.6 Trainees have access to a range of relevant, high-quality, targeted educational events from a variety of providers, including the Royal Colleges.
- 4.7 Trainees are supported in pursuing research and/or relevant out of programme experience.

## 5 Assessment and curricula

- 5.1 Trainees progress by achieving defined competencies and standards set by the Royal Colleges and specialist societies, who ensure that curricula are updated to reflect innovations and match clinical practice.
- 5.2 Trainees are assessed using robust, reliable and fair formative and summative assessment systems, developed by the Royal Colleges.
- 5.3 Trainees and trainers are familiar with the curriculum and assessment methods.

## 6 Support and development

- 6.1 Trainees, particularly those in difficulty, have access to pastoral support from deaneries.
- 6.2 Additional support is provided to those undertaking less than full-time training.
- 6.3 Trainees receive support, advice and representation in relation to education and training through the Royal Colleges, and can access meaningful career advice and guidance from Colleges and deaneries.

*The Charter for Medical Training is based upon the views and practical experiences of RCPE trainees and builds upon a range of source documents including earlier General Medical Council standards (recently collated in the *Trainee Doctor*).*

*Developed by Trainees and Members' Committee, Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh (RCPE) and endorsed by Council, RCPE.*

## The Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh

The Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh (RCPE) is a professional standard-setting body and membership organisation concerned with promoting the highest quality of patient care, predominantly in the hospital sector, both nationally and internationally.

Along with our sister Colleges in Glasgow and London, we are responsible for overseeing:

- **Examinations** for entry into specialist training in the UK for doctors who wish to undertake postgraduate training to become hospital consultants. The Membership of the Royal College of Physicians (UK) exam is an internationally recognised standard of clinical excellence.
- **Training** of UK doctors through the Joint Royal Colleges of Physicians' Training Board which oversees the development of curricula for trainee doctors in 30 specialty areas of medicine.

In parallel to our standard-setting activities, the RCPE provides education and support to around 10,000 Fellows and Members worldwide, including around 2,500 in Scotland, covering 30 medical specialties as diverse as palliative medicine and cardiology.

The RCPE also acts in an advisory capacity to Government and other organisations on aspects of healthcare and medical education and seeks to ensure that the views and practical clinical experience of our members are taken into account by policymakers when developing health policy.

The RCPE Trainees and Members' Committee represents more than 4,000 trainees, new consultants and medical students, providing a number of services including,

- educational events;
- advocating the views and concerns of trainees to Government and other training-related organisations;
- updates about enrolment and training; and
- bimonthly email newsletter and Twitter feeds.

Further information on the Trainees and Members' Committee, including information on how to join, is available at [www.rcpe.ac.uk/training/index.php](http://www.rcpe.ac.uk/training/index.php).

### Further information

Further information regarding the *Charter for Medical Training* is available online at: [www.rcpe.ac.uk/policy/charter-for-medical-training.php](http://www.rcpe.ac.uk/policy/charter-for-medical-training.php)

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For further information on the RCPE please visit [www.rcpe.ac.uk](http://www.rcpe.ac.uk) or call 0131 225 7324.