

Policy Title	Progression Through Training: Higher Specialist Training
Approvers	SMG, Executive Board
Author(s)	Training and Faculties Office
Applies to	RCPI HST Postgraduate Trainees
Policy Number	PTE-004

Overview

Progression of Training for Higher Specialist Training (HST) is delivered through the HST Annual Evaluation of Progress (AEP). The AEP is the formal method by which to evaluate Trainees' progression through the training programme.

An AEP meeting is held in the Spring. It is through this meeting that a Trainee's progression through her/his training programme is monitored and recorded each year.

The Trainee's progress is reviewed by an AEP Panel at the AEP meeting and is recorded by the Trainee and Trainer in the Trainee's e-Portfolio.

Purpose of HST Annual Evaluation

- Enhance learning by providing formative evaluation, enabling trainees to receive specific feedback, measure their own performance and identify areas for development;
- Drive learning and enhance the training process by making it clear what is required of trainees and motivating them to ensure they receive suitable training and experience;
- Provide summative evidence that trainees are meeting the curriculum standards during the training programme;
- Ensure Trainees are acquiring competencies within the domains of the Medical Council's Guide to Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Medical Practitioners
- Assess Trainees' performance in the workplace;
- Inform training of a particular Trainee, identifying any requirements for targeted or additional training where necessary and facilitating decisions regarding progression through the training programme;
- Identify Trainees who require further career advice and mentoring;
- Confirm that training credit may be awarded towards the completion of the certificate of satisfactory completion of specialist training.

Structure of the Annual Evaluation Meeting

The AEP Panel meets the trainee and reviews training records, progress, experience of relevant training year, and discusses plans for the progression of the Trainee.

The AEP Panel comprises the Chairperson and External Assessor. See Appendix 1 for a detailed outline on the role of the panel members. In the event of a penultimate year evaluation an External Assessor who is a consultant in the relevant specialty of the Trainee and from outside the Republic of Ireland will sit on the AEP Panel.

Trainers' attendance at the Annual Evaluation Meeting is mandatory. If it is not possible for the trainer to attend in person, teleconference facilities can be arranged if appropriate. The AEP Panel discusses the Trainee's progress with the Trainer (either in person or teleconference).

At the end of the Annual Evaluation Meeting, all AEP Panel members and the Trainee shall agree to the outcome of the evaluation and the recommendations for future training. If the Trainee does not agree with the recommendations the Trainee may append his/her comments to the report.

This is recorded on the AEP form, which is then signed electronically by the RCPI Programme Coordinator on behalf of the AEP Panel and Trainee. The completed form and recommendations will be available to the trainee and trainers within their ePortfolio

Evaluation Types

AEP – Annual Evaluation of Progress for 1st, 2nd & 3rd year HST trainees

25 min + 5 min at end for sign off*

1st, 2nd, 3rd year trainees

If proceeding to next year of training they receive their AEP1, 2 or 3 confirming training credit awarded for the year of training under review

(P)AEP – Annual Evaluation of Progress for Penultimate Year

45 min + 5 min at end for sign off*

4th year trainees or trainees about to embark on their last year of training

If proceeding to next year of training they receive their AEP/P confirming training credit awarded for the year of training under review

(F)AEP – Annual Evaluation of Progress for Final Year

25 min + 5 min at end for sign off*

The assessment panel determines if the trainee has completed all the outstanding requirements identified at the AEP/P

If trainee has successfully completed all their training requirements, they are awarded a CSCST upon completion of their final training post

**The length of the evaluations as described above are the recommended guideline but the meeting length may be shorter or longer depending on the discussion required.*

Outcome of AEP Meeting

There are three possible outcomes of the AEP process:

- Satisfactory Progression;
- Satisfactory Progression but further documentation required;
- Unsatisfactory Progression.

Satisfactory Progression

Trainees whose progress is satisfactory will be awarded the relevant training credit for the training year under review. The recommendations from the AEP Panel will be shared, in confidence, with the Trainer assigned for the Trainee's next post.

Trainees who are being certified as having completed training receive their final AEP and are eligible for a Certificate of Satisfactory Completion of Specialist Training (CSCST).

In some cases the AEP panel may recommend training credit is awarded but it is necessary to schedule a "review meeting" before the next AEP meeting. The purpose of the "review meeting" is to discuss the Trainee's progress on the specific recommendations.

Satisfactory Progression but further documentation required

Trainees who need to provide further documentation or other minor issues, will be given two weeks (maximum of eight weeks) from the date of the Annual Evaluation Meeting to meet the

requirements. The AEP outcome will be postponed until the deadline to meet the requirements has passed or until the requirements have been met.

Following satisfactory submission of the documentation, the trainee will be awarded the relevant training credit for the training year under review. The recommendations from the evaluation panel will be shared, in confidence, with the Trainer assigned for the Trainee's next post

If the trainee does not produce the required documentation including a complete ePortfolio they will progress as if the original outcome of the Annual Evaluation Meeting was "unsatisfactory progression", unless the Training Body is satisfied that there are exceptional reasons for finding otherwise (e.g. the difficulty is that a trainer, through no fault of the trainees, has not engaged with ePortfolio Sign Off/Completion).

Unsatisfactory Progression:

Trainees who are experiencing difficulties and/or need to meet specific requirements for that year of training will not be awarded the training credit for the training year under review. The evaluation panel will:

- provide the trainee with specific milestones to be achieved and schedule a date for an interim AEP Evaluation Meeting

The milestones and date of interim evaluation will be confirmed in writing to the trainee following the AEP meeting.

Trainees who are experiencing difficulties may be referred to the RCPI Professional Support Unit for further support.

Where a trainee has failed to progress through the AEP process the information should be transferred in confidence, with the knowledge of the Trainee, the NSD and the Training Body, to the Trainer at the Trainee's next placement location (if the trainee is permitted to continue in the training program). All parties involved in the process (i.e. NSD, Trainer, the trainee and training body) must keep a record of the information. This should be factual information reporting on process and outcome(s). Great care must be taken to ensure factual accuracy in the transmission of such information is adhered to.

When a trainee has failed to progress through the AEP process the training post allocation for the trainee may be reviewed. In some circumstances it may be required to change the recommended training post allocation due to training requirements identified by the AEP or interim AEP panel.

Sufficient notice (at least eight weeks) must be provided to the Trainee to change the recommended training post allocation.

The Dean of Postgraduate Specialist Training is available to provide advice and support during this process.

Process following Outcome of Unsatisfactory Progression

Trainees who are not awarded training credit for the year under review at the annual evaluation must undergo an interim evaluation. The date for the interim evaluation will be determined at the AEP meeting.

Diagram 1.0 depicts graphically the process following the outcome of Unsatisfactory Progression.

Interim Evaluation of Progress

The interim AEP will review the progress of the Trainee and assess the progress toward the required milestones.

There are two possible outcomes following the interim AEP:

- Satisfactory Progression
- Unsatisfactory Progression

Satisfactory Progression – Interim Evaluation

The interim AEP will review the progress of the Trainee and assess the progress toward the required milestones. Trainees who successfully complete the milestones will be awarded training credit for the year of training under review.

The recommendations from the evaluation panel will be shared, in confidence, with the assigned Trainer.

Unsatisfactory Progression – Interim Evaluation

Trainees who fail to achieve the milestones at the interim evaluation will not be awarded training credit for the year of training under review. The date on which the trainee will be considered for an award of a Certificate of Satisfactory Completion of Specialist Training (CSCST) shall be extended appropriately. The Trainee will be provided with further milestones to be achieved by their next Annual Evaluation Progress meeting. These milestones will be confirmed in writing to the trainee following the interim evaluation meeting. The milestones will be shared with the assigned Trainer. The interim evaluation panel reserves the right to request a regular review of the Trainee's progress ahead of the next Annual Evaluation meeting.

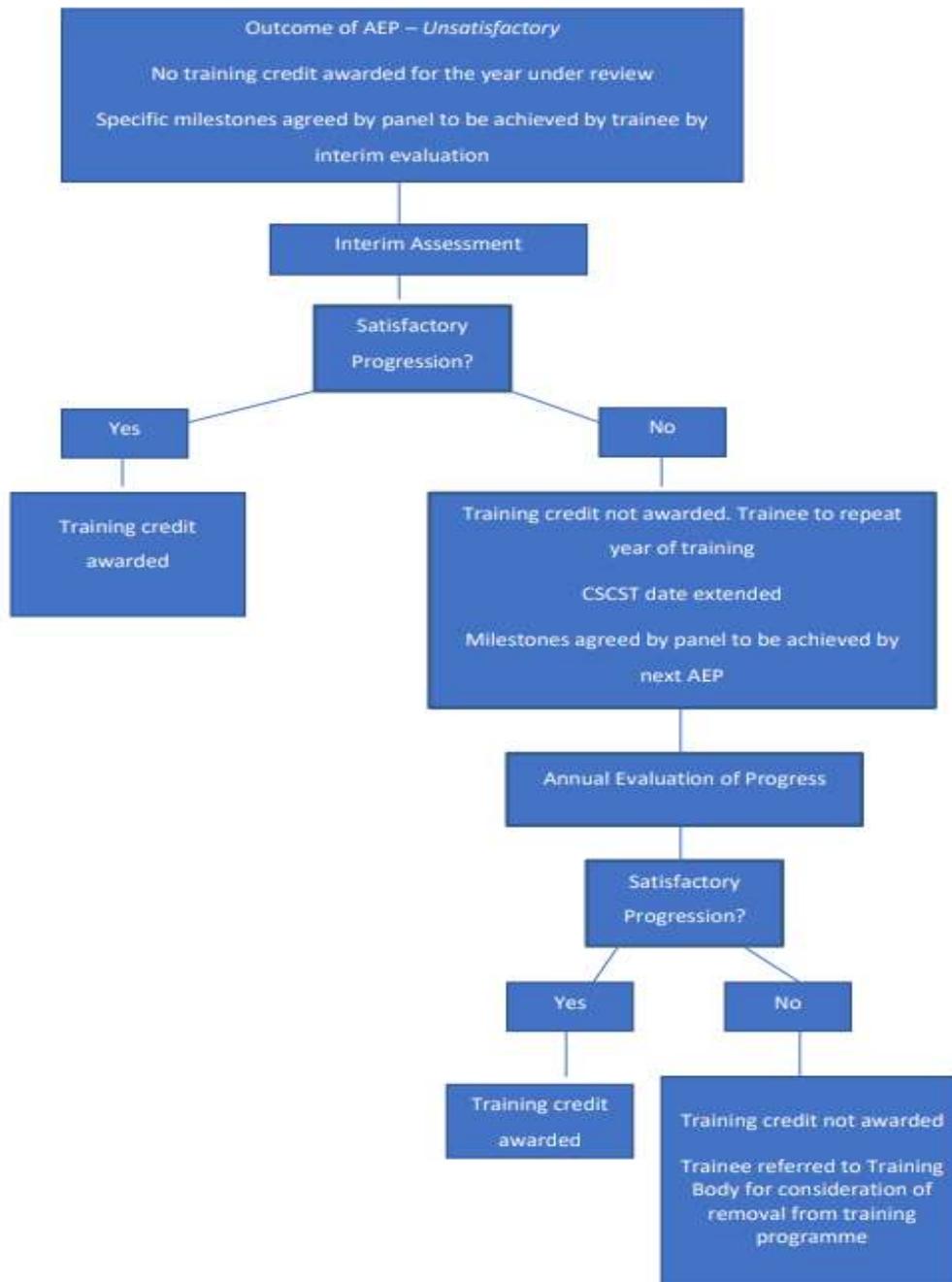
The milestones agreed at the interim evaluation meeting will be assessed at the next Annual Evaluation Progress meeting. Trainee progress on the identified milestones and requirements of curriculum will be evaluated.

Trainees who fail to achieve the milestones and fail to demonstrate appropriate progression during the year will not be awarded training credit for another training year. The trainee would then have two consecutive years of unsatisfactory progression.

Failure to Progress

A Trainee with two consecutive years of unsatisfactory progression will be referred by the evaluation panel to the Training Body for consideration of removal from the training programme on the basis of Failure to Progress.

Diagram 1.0 - AEP Process following Unsatisfactory Progression



Feedback Received Outside the Annual Evaluation Process

During the training year feedback can be forwarded to the training body/National Specialty Director (NSD) from the designated trainer or employer regarding individual trainee performance. Where this type of unsolicited feedback is received outside the AEP process it will be acknowledged and all written feedback will be followed up. Verbal feedback alone will not be accepted.

Written feedback will be reviewed in the first instance by the NSD. A meeting will be arranged with the Trainee if the written feedback raises concerns relating to:

- Failure to reach the appropriate level of clinical standards
- Failure to reach the appropriate level of clinical knowledge
- Failure to reach the appropriate level of competency

At this point the NSD should consider if it is more appropriate for the matter to be considered under the disciplinary process (e.g. if it is an issue of professionalism, conduct).

Concerns or issues documented in the End of Post Evaluation form or the quarterly supervisor assessments will also be reviewed and a review meeting outside of the formal AEP process will be arranged if deemed necessary by the NSD.

Review Meeting

If a review meeting is deemed necessary, the trainee will be informed of the reason for the meeting. The trainee may be accompanied at any meeting by a person of their choice.

Attending this review meeting will be the NSD, second clinician (if necessary) and RCPI administration personnel. The structure of this meeting will be as follows:

- Panel meets with the trainee
- Panel meets with the trainer
- Panel meets with the trainer and trainee together

The panel will review the concerns raised and determine if specific milestones or actions are required to be taken prior to the next Annual Evaluation of Progress meeting. These milestones will be reviewed as part of the next Annual Evaluation of Progress.

Following the meeting the recommendations and milestones will be confirmed to the Trainee in writing.

Training Credit

Review meetings held outside the AEP process will not discuss or review training credit which has already been awarded. Training credit can only be awarded through the formal AEP process.

The training post allocation for the trainee may be reviewed as part of the review meeting. In some circumstances it may be required to change the recommended training post allocation due to training requirements identified by the review panel. Sufficient notice (up to eight weeks) must be provided to the Trainee to change the recommended training post allocation.

During this process the RCPI Professional Support and Development Unit will be available to provide advice and support.

Review

This Policy shall be subject to review every three years from the date of approval of this document by the Executive Board

Approved By:	Date
Senior Management Group	12/06/19
Executive Board	14/06/19
Review	
Review by Executive Board	March, 2022

Appendix 1 – Roles & Responsibilities

Role of the Chairperson:

Chairs the meeting in its entirety ensuring that the AEP is carried out fairly, with due regard to trainee, trainer and NSD input and feedback

Ensures that the evaluations are undertaken in accordance with the policy and procedures of the College

Shows the trainee into the room, puts him/her at ease and introduces the panel, explaining each member's role

Explains to the trainee that the evaluation will be conducted as follows:

- A discussion with the trainee on their experience during the training year. The NSD will lead the discussion or the external assessor in the case of a penultimate AEP
- The trainee then leaves the room and the panel speaks to the trainer in person or via teleconference
- The trainee returns to the room and the panel's final recommendations are discussed and relevant forms are prepared and signed

Reviews the trainee's ePortfolio/paper logbook ensuring all areas are completed as listed

Completes the "AEP Chair's Report"

Provides the coordinator the opportunity at the end of the assessment to ask any outstanding questions or clarify any information.

Role of the External Assessor

The External Assessor is a Consultant from outside the Republic of Ireland in the relevant specialty who will:

Independently evaluate the trainee's training from year one to the current AEP based on a comparison of the records within the trainee's ePortfolio against the minimum requirements of the curriculum.

Take the lead in conducting the AEP using the ePortfolio Progress Report to guide the discussion.

Identify gaps in training to date and make recommendations for the final year of training

Complete the External Assessors Evaluation form giving feedback on the higher specialist training programme and the end of year assessments.

Where possible, attend all assessments, not just penultimate AEPs, pertaining to trainees in their specialty

Role of the NSD

Once the Chair has advised the trainee of how the Evaluation is to proceed the NSD will:

Conduct the rest of the rest of the Evaluation process, except in the PYA where the external assessor conducts the evaluation process.

In the case of a Penultimate Year Evaluation, ask high level questions about the training year, leaving the specialty-specific questions to be asked by the External Assessor

Go through the year of training with the Trainee using the minimum requirements document (paper logbook) or the Progress Report(ePortfolio) as a guide when asking the recommended questions

Go through the year of training with the trainer, asking the questions in the *Recommended Guide for Questions to ask Trainees at Evaluation* (see below)

Based on the assessment, make recommendations to the trainee regarding correction of deficiencies e.g. *completion of relevant courses or specialty requirements*. This advice must be clear and provided as a list for the trainee so that no doubt exists as to what is required

Role of the Trainer

Trainers are required to sign off and approve their Trainee's activities throughout the training year

The Annual Evaluation Trainer Form must be discussed with the trainee and completed by the trainer in the presence of the trainee in advance of the assessment. Any issues of concern should be identified prior to the AEP meeting. This form is available in ePortfolio and will provide a format for the discussion at the AEP.

Trainers must attend the AEP. Where possible, attendance should be in person but for non-penultimate years, attendance via teleconference may be arranged. If attendance is not possible, this must be discussed with the NSD prior to the AEP. Attendance in person is mandatory for penultimate year assessments and highly recommended for first year AEPs

The role of the trainer is to provide an impression of the trainee's performance throughout the training year and to impart a sense of the trainee's knowledge and skills, based on observation of performance throughout this time

The trainer should provide honest and constructive feedback at all stages of the review and provide an informed opinion as to the suitability of the trainee to progress to the following year

Role of the Trainee

Trainees must have their ePortfolio up to date by the given close-off date. Incomplete log books will result in a delayed AEP for that year of training.

Each trainee must complete the Annual Evaluation Trainer Form with their Trainer, in advance of the AEP.

Each trainee must bring their paper logbook where required and any supporting documents to the AEP.

The trainee should come to the AEP prepared to discuss their achievements during the training year and should consider their training plan for the following year

Role of the RCPI Administrator

Before the AEP commences, advise the Chair that in keeping with the requirements of GDPR that the trainees must be informed:

- that the outcome and the recommendations of their evaluation will be emailed to their future trainer
- update Eportfolio with recommendations from panel

Recommended Guide for Questions to ask Trainees at Evaluation

Training Year: What were the Trainee's major achievements over the training year? What skills and knowledge in particular do they feel they have improved? Does the trainee have any thoughts on areas in which they need to improve?

Training Plan: Did they agree a training plan with their trainer, were there any major achievements or disappointments.

Audit: Discuss the trainee's audit report(s). The Audit results and their application, real or potential, should be discussed.

Publications/Presentations: What publications/presentations have they submitted? What was the impact of their research on the development of their own skills, relevance to practice etc.

Trainees Report: Any issues raised in the report that the trainee wants to discuss? (*E.g. hospital issues/trainer issues*).

Specific Requirements: Ask trainee to comment on any recurring themes from the WBA comments – both positive and negative, and discuss how these issues might be addressed.

Recommended Guide for Questions to ask a Trainer

Whether a trainer attends in person or by teleconference you should ask the trainer the following recommended questions:

Performance: How did the trainee perform during the year? Discuss any issues raised in the Trainer Evaluation Form

Relationships: Did they work well with all members of the team (trainer, colleagues, nurses etc?)

Achievements: Did they have any significant achievements or disappointments during the year?

Any feedback on training in general?

Any feedback on the use of the ePortfolio system, where relevant?