



**Annual Review of Competence Progression (ARCP) guidance for
Chemical Pathology and Chemical Pathology (Metabolic Medicine)
during the COVID-19 outbreak 2021**

Introduction

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

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

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

The Chemical Pathology College Specialty Training Committee (CSTC) is cognisant that a disruption in training due to examination deferral, temporary redeployment out of specialty and/or temporary suspension of training is beyond the control of the trainees concerned and that training progression and ARCPs should adjust expectations accordingly. While there are flexibilities in place to recognise the disruption to training caused by COVID-19, the view of the CSTC is that ARCP panels must make a global judgement about the progress of the trainee; ensuring that there is appropriate depth and breadth of training from the evidence presented.

General guidance for trainees and trainers in the chemical pathology specialties

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

Stage A

Trainees in the following categories must submit all appropriate satisfactory workplace-based assessments for their previous and current year of training as part of the evidence to demonstrate that they have completed Stage A of training:

- all trainees who entered ST1/3 chemical pathology (+/- metabolic medicine) training from August 2019.
- all current ST1/3 chemical pathology (+/- metabolic medicine) trainees (beginning August 2020).
- any trainees who entered chemical pathology (+/- metabolic medicine) training prior to August 2019 who have not passed the Stage A examination.



The College has approval from the GMC to remove the Stage A examination as a requirement of the Chemical Pathology curriculum.

Critical progression points for chemical pathology and chemical pathology (metabolic medicine)

- The critical progression points are for trainees moving from stages B to C and stages C to D as well as any trainees in Stage D who have sufficient evidence to demonstrate that they have completed their training. Trainees in these situations should be prioritised for their ARCP.
- Trainees in Stages B and C who have sufficient evidence to present to the ARCP panel of the curriculum defined competences and who are in possession of the FRCPath Part 1 (for progression to Stage C) and FRCPath Part 2 (for progression to Stage D) may proceed to the appropriate stage of training may be awarded an outcome 1 and progress to the next stage of training.
- Trainees in Stages B and C who are not in possession of the FRCPath Part 1 (for progression to Stage C) and FRCPath Part 2 (for progression to Stage D) should be awarded an outcome 10.2 where the delay has been caused by COVID-19 disruption, or an outcome 3 where it has not (e.g. related to repeated examination failure).
- Trainees in stage D who have sufficient evidence to present to the ARCP panel of the curriculum defined competencies may be awarded an outcome 6 and apply for CCT if they are within 6 months of their projected CCT date.
- It is noted that PYAs are suspended.

The minimum data set for each year of training

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

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

- any workplace-based assessments completed. The number of workplace-based assessments required for each year or stage of training is indicative¹. These can include any undertaken during redeployment which demonstrate evidence of generic or other relevant skills.;
- any indicative cases undertaken;
- an MSF (although trainees who have not completed a required MSF but are otherwise satisfactory must undertake their MSF in the following year);
- suitable and appropriate alternative evidence (see 'Learning Experiences' listed in each curriculum for guidance);
- any College exams completed prior to COVID-19.

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

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

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

¹ Please see pages 10-12 of the [Chemical Pathology curriculum](#) and pages 63-64 of the [Metabolic Medicine curriculum](#) for information about indicative numbers.

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

Conducting the ARCP

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

The ARCP outcome should be recorded on the revised [RCPath Amended ARCP Outcome Form](#) (under 'College Guidance and Advice'). For trainees awarded an outcome 10.1 or 10.2, the 'Supplementary documentation for ARCP Outcome Form' must also be completed detailing what is required for a trainee to complete during the subsequent year of training. These forms should be emailed to the Royal College of Pathologists (training@rcpath.org). Outcomes will be recorded in the Royal College of Pathologists database which records trainee progress and subsequently updated in the trainee's e-portfolio.

Criteria for non-progression

The criteria for non-progression is as follows:

- Trainees who are on course to receive an outcome 3, 4 or 5 outwith COVID-19 derogations.
- Trainees who have not passed FRCPATH Part 1 (for progression from Stage B to C) or FRCPATH Part 2 (for progression from Stage C to D). This includes where examinations have been deferred. Trainees will not be penalised by the ARCP process if their examination has been deferred by the RCPATH. Trainees should be given an outcome 10.2 extension to training in order to allow them the necessary time to revise and sit the requisite examination. This may affect trainees hoping to transition from stage B to stage C and from Stage C to Stage D.

Circumstances where a complete ARCP panel would be required

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

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

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

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

Trainees who have spent additional time in Stage C while waiting to complete their FRCPATH Part 2 examination may, if they are on track to complete their training satisfactorily, spend reduced time in Stage D (a minimum of six months), and/or may accumulate evidence of competences during an acting up position within a defined training and development plan. Six months is the minimum period allowable for Stage D in order to ensure that trainees have been able to obtain suitable competencies prior to the award of the Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT) and taking up a consultant post. Trainees are encouraged to follow the course of action that is right for their individual circumstances and with the support of their Educational Supervisor/Training Programme Director.

References

[Contingency planning for ARCPs – COVID 19 outbreak](#)
[Derogation to GG8: 4.91 in response to COVID pandemic and impact on trainee progression assessments \(ARCP\)](#)
[Gold Guide 8th edition](#)
[Curricula and ARCP guidance](#)

Curricular component	Comment	Recommended ARCP outcome
Chemical Pathology and Chemical Pathology (Metabolic Medicine) ST1-ST5/ST3 - 7		
Stage A examination	Trainees moving from Stage A to B last year or this year must complete appropriate workplace-based assessments. Trainee on course to complete requirements for year/stage of training.	ARCP 1
Stage A examination	Trainees moving from Stage A to B last year or this year must complete appropriate workplace-based assessments. Concerns raised about trainee (including probity and patient safety as well as general progress).	ARCP 2, 3 ARCP 4 (with a preceding outcome 3)
Stage A examination	Trainees moving from Stage A to B last year or this year must complete appropriate workplace-based assessments. COVID-19 has caused disruption to training including redeployment.	ARCP 10.1
COVID-19 has caused disruption to training including redeployment	E.g. Limitation of exposure to samples, clinics and experience, MDT, courses, QIPs and research opportunities.	ARCP 10.1
FRCPATH Part 1 examination not passed	Completion necessary for progress to Stage C. Balance between satisfactory progress and pressurising by extra requirements in already busy Stage C.	ARCP10.2 (if due to COVID-19) or ARCP 3 (if not due to COVID-19)
FRCPATH Part 2 examination not passed	Completion necessary for progress to Stage D. Balance between satisfactory progress and pressurising by extra requirements in already busy Stage D.	ARCP10.2 (if due to COVID-19) or ARCP 3 (if not due to COVID-19)
No disruption to training	Trainee on course to complete requirements for year of training, including acquisition of relevant examination.	ARCP 1
No disruption to training	Concerns raised about trainee (including probity and patient safety as well as general progress)	ARCP 2, 3 ARCP 4 (with a preceding outcome 3)
Completion of training	Trainee on course to complete training, including acquisition of relevant examination.	ARCP 6