

Medical Training Initiative (MTI) placements

Academy of Medical Royal Colleges statement

02 March / 2021

The contribution of both UK trainee doctors and overseas doctors on the Medical Training Initiative (MTI) to the NHS throughout the COVID-19 pandemic has been immense. It is important that this is acknowledged and put on record.

However, COVID-19 has had a significant impact on progression of trainees such that some trainees have not gained sufficient experience/capabilities to progress along the training pathway. This includes both UK trainees and those who are in the UK as part of the MTI. Due to the effects of the pandemic, the Statutory Education Bodies (SEBs) and the NHS are having to manage increased numbers of trainees requiring additional support and, in some cases, extensions to their training.

This is particularly true of the medical and surgical specialties but does not apply equally to all specialties or regions, as some have been less severely impacted by the loss of training opportunities.

As a result, opportunities for a number of new MTI placements may need to be reduced in some specialties and in some regions on a temporary basis.

It is important, however, to state at the outset that this is NOT a blanket ban on the approval of MTI places.

In the light of the situation, the English Deans have made the following statement which will be on their website:

“English Deans fully support and value the MTI programme and will continue to make decisions on placements based on the published principles and national standards ([AoMRC MTI Standards 2018](#))

This includes ensuring that UK trainees/trainees on HEE programmes will not be disadvantaged.

In continuing this approach, Deans, together with all stakeholders and applicants, are mindful of the current additional curriculum pressures for UK trainees as a result of the pandemic. It is hoped that any impact on incoming MTI trainees affecting some specific specialties in specific geographical areas will be temporary.

The Academy of Medical Royal Colleges has made a statement on how best to manage the current temporary situation.”

In practice this means:

- In cases where there is not a shortage of posts for UK trainees who are unable to progress their training, the MTI scheme must continue as normal
- Deans must be enabled to make a decision on each potential MTI placement right at the outset of the process
- It will be for the Deans to take a broad view of whether MTI placements should be approved.



This is identical to what they have had to do up to now, but must be carefully considered in the light of this difficult situation.

- It is essential that approval of MTI placements should be evaluated individually on a case-by-case basis allowing some flexibility of approach.

Practical implications of this situation are:

- There should be no blanket ban on approval of new MTI placements and wherever possible the MTI scheme should continue as normal. This will be the case in those specialties or regions where training progression has been impacted to a minor extent.
- However, in those specialties that have been severely impacted by loss of training progression, Deans may not be able to approve new MTI placements for a period
- In which case:
 - Each application should be considered on a case-by-case basis allowing some flexibility by region
 - Discussions with the Dean must take place at an early stage in planning any MTI placement, so that they are able to make early decisions to enable recruitment to proceed unhindered where this is possible or help minimise and manage any unfulfilled hopes for places and ensure recruitment efforts are not wasted
 - If a placement is not approved, the Postgraduate Dean should make clear reasons why and what conditions need to be met to allow the application to proceed and when that is likely to be
 - This will be for a limited period of time and is more likely to be the case in surgical and medical specialties
 - Where possible, in specialties or regions where there is greater pressure, where an application process has already begun but is in the early stages, we would support a temporary deferral and not a cancellation of places, so that the placement can commence as soon as circumstances permit
- We would expect that existing offers to MTI applicants who are a long way down the process, who have already received assurances and have made financial commitments, are honoured. MTI applicants should not suffer significant, direct financial loss
- MTI applicants who find themselves in an uncertain situation with regards to their placement should be treated sensitively and on an individual basis
- The Academy will work with college MTI leads on guidance to ensure that there is clear understanding by all parties as to where applications can continue and how best we can support the MTI applicants and trainees during this challenging period
- We anticipate a return to normal sign off for applications submitted in a timely manner as the Covid-19 situation eases.

The Academy, as the Tier 5 national sponsor for MTI applicants, regrets the position that has arisen, but recognises that a reduction in the number of MTI trainees in some specialties and in some regions may be necessary on a temporary basis. We recognise the pressures on the training system that have been caused by the pandemic, and the need to ensure UK trainees are able to complete their training and progress safely and appropriately.

The Academy and Colleges are working with HEE, GMC, the NHS, and the four UK Departments of Health to develop solutions to the challenges of ensuring training progression, which otherwise threatens the future supply of doctors, and to support the continuing employment of MTI doctors.



The future

The essential continuation in the supply of doctors in training but also the contribution to the NHS of short- and long-term international recruitment are recognised and supported.

Going forward, it will be important to know that we have an effective system for the agreement and sign-off of MTI posts which complements the UK training system and also enable efficient and timely recruitment processes for MTI doctors. This is an issue which can be picked up in the current MTI review being undertaken by the Academy in partnership with the four SEBs.