

Mandatory Research Activity during Training in Obstetrics and Gynaecology

Formal research experience is a requirement for training towards FHKAM (O & G). The following are the regulations governing the minimal research requirements during training in Obstetrics & Gynaecology.

General

1. All communication to the Educational Committee on Research Training should be by e-mail, so as to minimise any unnecessary delay.
2. All trainees are encouraged to start their research training early in their specialist training.
3. Supervision of research activities should be a continuous exercise within the training unit. Under the training system of the College, every trainee should have a named trainer. This trainer should also be responsible for the supervision of this trainee's research training. Trainer of each trainee should see to that the trainee starts research training early. If a particular trainer feels that he/she is unable to provide such supervision and training, it should be his/her responsibility to find a suitable supervisor for this trainee.
4. The HKCOG undertakes through its Research Subcommittee to provide assistance in research to all training units and trainees. All trainees who have difficulties or who anticipates difficulties in their research training are encouraged to seek suggestions or assistance from the Research Subcommittee or the Educational Committee as early as possible. Seeking assistance shortly before completion of their 6-year training program may result in inevitable delay in their Exit assessment.

Category 1 - Trainees who have or will be applying for an elective period of training (one year or six months) in research:

1. Trainees in this category should show evidence that they have attended the College Research Course.
2. Trainees in this category should submit their research proposal and programme for the entire period, including courses to be attended, and their involvement in clinical and other duties, to the Education Committee for assessment not less than 3 months before the scheduled commencement of their elective training. If the proposal is deemed unsatisfactory and rejected, the training period may have to be deferred until a satisfactory proposal is received and accepted by the Education Committee. In case minor revision is required, the proposal and programme must be revised where necessary according to the recommendation from the Education Committee and be resubmitted within one month of the commencement of the Elective Training. If the revised

submission has not been received by the Education Committee within one month of the commencement of Elective Training, the Elective Training may not be recognised.

3. A named supervisor to supervise the research projects(s) and training. The supervisor must have relevant and appropriate experience in medical research on the proposed research field.
4. The elective period in research should be protected time for research.
5. Clinical work undertaken within this period should only be related to research.
6. Trainees doing research should not do night duty more than normal trainees.
7. The Education Committee reserved the right of approval of the duration of research according to the trainee's final report (the actual time spent in research would be considered).
8. Following the completion of Elective Training, the trainee should submit the final report within 3 months. Only when the Education Committee accepts the report as satisfactory could the trainee then proceed to apply to sit the next available Exit Assessment. The trainee will normally be informed of the initial outcome of the assessment of the report within two months.
9. A trainee who undertakes the Elective Year of Training in Research in the second year of the Higher Specialist Training may not be eligible to sit the exit assessment to be held within the coming few months following the completion of his/her training. Therefore, it is recommended that a trainee should not undertake Elective Training in Research in the last year of the Higher Specialist Training if the trainee does not wish to delay his/her exit assessment.

Category 2 - Trainees who do not intend to do an elective period in research will be governed by the following rules:

1. A trainee must be personally in charge of at least 1 "acceptable" research project.
2. To fulfil the research training requirement, the trainee may take one of the following two options:
 - i. Category 2A: A publication arising from the "acceptable" project is sufficient. No prior application for approval of anything is required. The trainee only needs to apply to the Education Committee for recognition when he/she believes that he/she has fulfilled the requirement.
 - ii. Category 2B: The Category is retained for compatibility with previous requirement. A trainee will be required to submit a proposal to the Education Committee for approval before commencement of the study. A formal report, or a publication, is required for submission to the Education Committee for approval and recognition.

3. A trainee must decide whether they would like to be assessed under Category 2A or Category 2B. The submission of a research proposal for prior approval is considered as a decision to follow the regulations under Category 2B, and such decision is irrevocable, meaning that the trainee cannot subsequently submit a publication requesting for assessment under Category 2A. A trainee who has never submitted a research proposal for prior approval will be assumed to have opted for Category 2A.
4. The full regulations are detailed below.

Category 2A:

1. Trainees in this category should show evidence that they have attended the College Research Course.
2. Trainees in this category are required to personally in charge of at least 1 “acceptable” research project during the entirety of the candidate’s training. “Acceptable” research projects are those that fulfil the following requirements:
 - i. Must be relevance in the field of Obstetrics and Gynaecology
 - ii. Could be prospective or retrospective studies. Could be randomised trials, observational studies, case-controlled studies or survey. The study must have a clearly defined objective, and contain original data or data analysis. Data obtained by extraction of information from existing medical records are considered original. Analysis of data extracted from existing clinical or audit databases are acceptable. A formal meta-analysis of current medical literature with appropriate statistical analytical tools is acceptable.
 - iii. Must result in a publication (or acceptance for publication) in a peer-reviewed local, regional or international medical journal. The trainee must be the first author of the publication.
 - iv. Case reports and pure literature reviews are NOT acceptable.
3. To apply for recognition of their research training, trainees in this category should apply to the Education Committee, with details description of their research activities, their role in the study, and all relevant research outputs. A publication or acceptance for publication, of an “acceptable” project in a peer-reviewed journal as a first author would be considered as fulfilling the minimal requirement for research training. A reply from the Educational Committee should be expected within 3 months. Therefore, the submission should be made to the Education Committee well before their planned exit assessment, in order to avoid delay in the exit assessment in case the application is unsuccessful.
4. Each publication can only be submitted by one trainee for the application of fulfilment of research training requirement.

Category 2B:

1. Trainees in this category should show evidence that they have attended the College Research Course.
2. Trainees in this category shall personally *oversee* (be in charge) of at least 1 worthwhile research project during the entirety of the candidate's training which should ideally be published.
3. "Worthwhile" project should have the following requirements:
 - i. Project must have relevance in the field of obstetrics & gynaecology
 - ii. All the components of a normal research projects should be present if appropriate
 1. hypothesis
 2. ethics committee approval
 3. grant proposal
 4. original data collection
 5. formal data analysis
 6. presentation at a public forum
 - iii. Literature reviews, without additional input of original data, shall not be acceptable. Meta-analyses likewise shall not be considered to be acceptable.
4. Definition of "*oversee*": The candidate must be the co-ordinator of a research project. If it is a multi-centre project, the candidate(s) has to be the local co-ordinator. For every project, only 1 trainee may present it to the College as proof of satisfactory completion of research requirement, except in case of a multi-centre study in which up to 2 trainees who are both local co-ordinators from different centres may submit the same project as proof of satisfactory completion of research requirement.
5. Trainees in this category will have to submit their research proposal of their prospective studies to the Education Committee at least 12 months prior to their Exit Assessment. The projects should be designed realistically to be completed in time for the final report to be submitted to the Education Committee at least 3 months before their Exit Assessment. These proposals will be assessed by the Research Subcommittee. The Research Subcommittee will submit the recommendation to the Education Committee within 1 month, and suggestions to improve the study will be given to the trainees if necessary. The final report including all outputs, on the primary project which has been evaluated before, should be submitted to the Educational Committee for assessment by the Research Subcommittee at least 3 months before their Exit Assessment. The assessment result will be sent to the Exit Assessment Board 1 month before the Exit Assessment.
6. Publication: Publication must be in a public domain instrument that has a credible audience. All international, national and local scientific journals shall be considered acceptable. Abstracts in conferences, if the proceedings are published, shall constitute

publication for the purposes of satisfying research requirements. Publication of the work, shall, *ipso facto*, constitute satisfactory completion of research requirements except for attendance of the research course.

7. Not published at time of Exit Assessment: Should the work not be published, it must be written up in the form of a publication (in original paper format) and submitted to the Research Committee. After evaluating the report, the Research Committee shall advise the Exit Assessment Board whether in the opinion of the Research Committee, the candidate has satisfied minimal research training requirements. Final discretion still rests with the Exit Assessment Board, which shall assess its adequacy in relation to introduction and original hypothesis, materials and methods, presentation of results, statistical analysis and discussion.

Special consideration:

Category 3 - Trainees who have been recruited before 1st July 1998 and who will not undertake elective training in research has the option to follow these governing rules previous approved by the College:

1. Trainees in this category should show evidence that they have attended the College Research Course.
2. Trainees in this category may decide to follow the general requirement as in Category 2, or as in this category.
3. Trainees in this category should show evidence that they have performed a research project as described in section above.
4. Trainees in this category should submit their research activities, including involvement/participation as co-investigator in prospective and/or retrospective studies conducted in their training centre or in collaboration with another training centre. All research outputs, including abstracts and manuscripts ready for submission/submitted but pending decision of the editorial board, in addition to published articles, should be submitted as supporting evidence. This submission should be made to the Education Committee at least 6 months before their planned exit assessment, in order to avoid delay in the exit assessment in case remedial action is needed.

Candidates with research degrees

The possession of a research degree, such as a Doctor of Medicine (MD) [postgraduate] or a PhD, MA and M.Phil will constitute satisfying research requirements for training provided the degree has an original research component and is in the field of clinical medicine. The

final discretion shall lie with the Education Committee. The possession of an undergraduate degree will not in normal circumstances satisfy research requirements even if there is a component of research in the programme.

HKCOG Research Course

The HKCOG, through its Research Subcommittee will conduct a research course at least every 3 years depending on the number of trainees. The course usually will take a full day with full 8 hours of instruction.

The aims of the course are:

- (a) To teach basic statistical methodology of clinical medical research
- (b) To teach the proper conduct of a research project

endorsed by Council on 8th March 2007