

Returning to Training Guidance: April 2018

Section 1: Introduction

Trainees may be absent from training and clinical practice for a number of reasons including maternity/paternity leave, research, OOP and ill health etc. The purpose of this guidance is to promote patient safety and quality of care, whilst giving trainees an opportunity to regain their confidence and previously acquired skills more quickly and safely.

The programme is designed to be flexible to take into account the differing nature and length of absence, as well as the stage of the trainee, to ensure that the individual can safely and confidently return to training. It is also recognised that there may be differing needs between trainees that should be identified and addressed.

Section 2: Overview of Programme

Participation in the programme is compulsory for absences of 3 months or more. It can be “opted into” for absences shorter than 3 months if desired, but any phased return/training plan devised by occupational health or HR should take precedence.

Section 3: Pre-Absence Meeting

Planned absence: Where possible the trainee should meet their Education Supervisor or LTFT Champion at a Pre-Absence meeting to discuss how the trainee might keep up to date and any particular concerns they may have about returning. The trainee and Educational Supervisor should complete the Pre-Absence Form (Form A) detailing the discussion and then send a copy of this to the Training Programme Director (TPD). The trainee should also upload a copy onto their portfolio.

Unplanned absence: If the absence is unplanned, then this meeting could be held at a later date

Section 4: During Absence

What clinical practise the trainee does during the absence will be dependent on the nature of the absence and what the trainee chooses to do. Keeping in touch (KIT) days are strongly encouraged and can be used for a number of things such as:

- Supervised clinical work
- Attendance of courses and meetings relevant to training e.g. RTW courses
- Attendance local or regional teaching days
- Attendance at departmental induction days nearest to return to work

Section 5: Prior to Return

Once a timeframe for return is known then the trainee should meet with their Educational Supervisor or LTFT Champion for an Initial Review (using Form B). The

aim of the meeting is to agree an individualised plan for return accommodating any specific concerns, learning needs and required assessments.

It is advised that this takes place 10-12 weeks prior to the estimated date of return, allowing enough time for the trainee to be incorporated into the rota appropriately. However, this should be flexible depending on the needs and circumstances of the trainee.

Section 6: Supervised Period

Upon return to work there should be a period under increased supervision during which time workplace-based assessments should be performed. As a guide it is suggested that 10 days of fully supervised activity with no on calls during this period. The on call will need to be 'made up' at another time to be fair to other trainees. It is also recommended that a formal ALMAT assessment (or similar depending upon stage of training) be conducted towards the end of this period.

After this supervised period the trainee and Educational Supervisor should meet at a review meeting (using Form C) to discuss the trainee's progress, review the assessments, address any concerns, arrange any further targeted training and if necessary extend the supervised period. Once the trainee and Educational Supervisor are both satisfied with the trainee's progress then the trainee can be signed off to return to 'normal duties'.

This is a guide only and if trainees have used KIT days or attended a RTW course less time may be necessary.

Section 7: Return review

Towards the end of the supervised period the trainee and educational supervisor should meet and discuss the trainee's progress, review assessments, address any concerns and arrange any further targeted training (see below). If the trainee and educational supervisor are satisfied with the trainees progress then the trainee can be signed off and return to normal duties.

Section 8: Extension of supervised period

In some cases, an extension of the supervised period may be required. If so, a further Return Review Meeting (using Form C) should take place after an agreed period to review progress with a view to the trainee being signed off to return to 'normal duties'.

References:

Return to Practice Guidance Revision Academy of Medical Royal Colleges, June 2017
http://www.aomrc.org.uk/wpcontent/uploads/2017/06/Return_to_Practice_guidance_2017_Revision_0617-2.pdf

Recommendations for Supporting a Successful return to Work after a period of absence, Royal College of Anaesthetists, March 2011,
<http://www.rcoa.ac.uk/document-store/career-breaks-and-returning->