

Summer ARCP Externality Assessor Report

May – July 2024

Introduction & Purpose

The Externality Report outlines the Good Practice and developmental concerns raised from the individual external assessors reporting for the ARCP panels of summer 2024. The Gold Guide (General Medical Council) specifies for the College to contribute 10% of external representation of regional ARCP outcomes.

The Externality Report will be signed off as part of the Training and Quality Board (TQB) Meeting held in February 2025.

There are also some considerations for TQB about the process going forward.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1. This should set out clearly the recommendations that you would like the committee to consider.

- 1.1.1. *to note the content of the paper.*

- 1.1.2. *to consider how the college can extend the pool of external representatives.*

- 1.1.3. *to consider whether any criteria should be put in place for future external representatives.*

Externality Annual Quality Report

Regions

External representatives were able to attend panels within all schools, although, there was slight increase of engagement from assessors compared to previous years.

There is a specific criterion for selecting external representatives to meet the required 10%, but some reports still need to be returned for a more detailed representation of each panel region.

School	Trainees in school	Trainee % reviewed by externality	10% requirement reached
Wessex	172	No external assessors were available	
Northern (North-East England)	200	35	
Thames Valley	174	1 report yet to return	
London and KSS	1349	No external assessors were available	
East of England	355	35	
Yorkshire and Humber	494	21	1 of 3 reports returned
North-West England (Mersey, Northwestern)	484	No external assessors were available	
East Midlands	353	No external assessors were available	
Scotland	340	10	
Wales	210	12	
Northern Ireland	149	No external assessors were available	
South-West (Peninsula and Severn)	323	1 report yet to return	
West Midlands	373	35	
Totals	4976	148	8 returned reports

Quality and Training Project Support

There has been an ongoing challenge in sourcing assessors from the previous database of eligible external assessors. To address this, the team is working on launching an external assessor webform through the [RCPCH website](#), allowing assessors to volunteer and receive notifications of available dates.

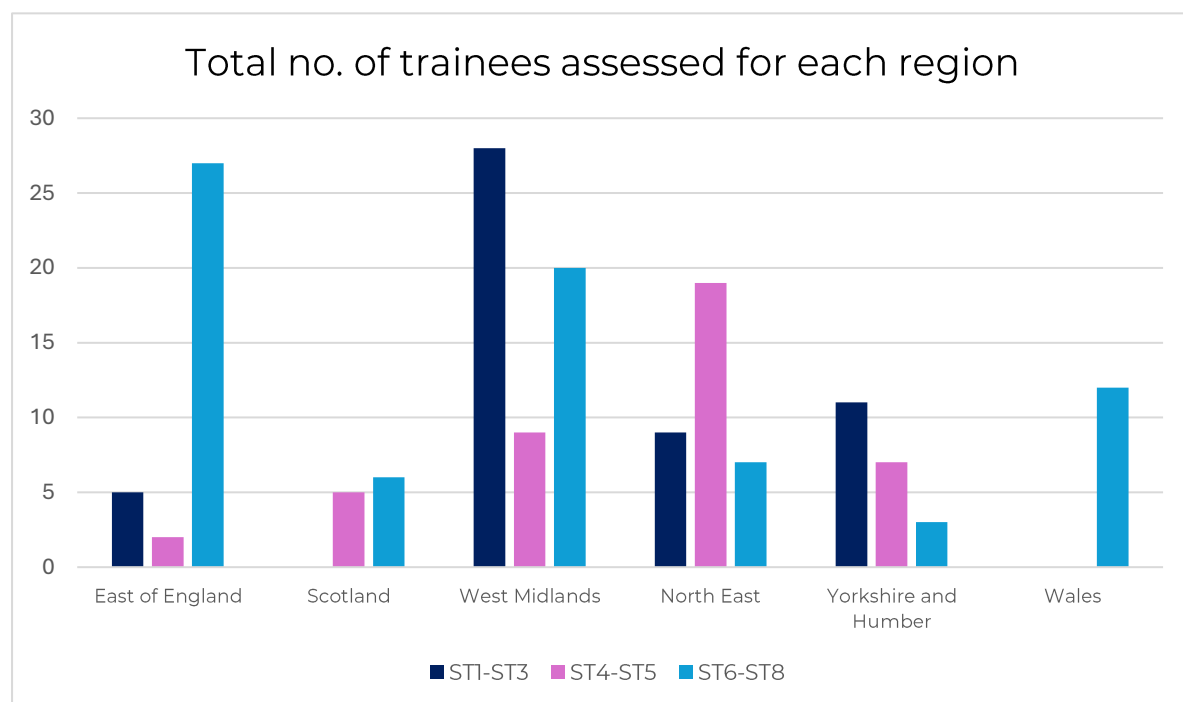
The webform is expected to be launched before the 2025 Summer ARCP reviews are finalised. This will allow assessors to be notified well in advance of the

scheduled dates, with follow-up reminders sent to encourage greater external participation, in line with the Gold Guide. The availability of dates relies heavily on Deanery administration, but the aim is to ensure that all dates across the ARCP schedule are made available sooner - rather than later.

Trainees

The trainee reviews across regional ARCP panels show a higher concentration of senior trainees (ST6-ST8), with East of England and West Midlands maintaining a balanced distribution across all stages. Wales and Scotland have few or no early-stage trainees, suggesting a focus on more experienced professionals.

Regions like Yorkshire and Humber and North-East have a more even spread between ST1 – ST5 trainees but fewer ST6-ST8 trainees. These variations reflect regional differences in training opportunities.



ARCP Process

The external representatives were asked to report on how efficiently the ARCP panels were managed.

Areas of good practice:

- The East of England (EoE) panel conducted an efficient process with clear communication and collaborative approach. Specific portfolio sections were assigned to panel members, ensuring consistency. Dr Kapadia (TPD) led with supportive feedback. Technical issues were managed well, ensuring smooth trainee involvement. The panel also provided a thorough and systematic process, combining e-portfolios, reports, and observations to make informed decisions. The panel also identified non-progression areas and ensures necessary trainee support for their development.
- The Scotland panel showed strong leadership with evidence-based reviews, fair and transparent decisions. Non-progression outcomes focused on supporting development rather than penalising trainees.
- The West Midlands panel demonstrated clear, evidence-based feedback and thorough reviews. The pre-ARCP acceleration panel ensures well-informed decisions. Support staff and TPD Sarah Ellis demonstrated standardised review forms and clear criteria for decisions, particularly on accelerated training. This approach helped make fair, informed decisions while providing targeted support for trainees, such as those with repeated exam failures, to address issues of non-progression.
- The North-Eastern panel provided detailed, structured reviews with clear feedback. Portfolio reviews are divided by training units for fair comparison. Advance access to portfolios for trainees with concerns ensures targeted support.
- The Yorkshire and Humber panel provided a well-structured and efficient panel with detailed, actionable recommendations. Transparent decision-making, with non-progression linked to health issues rather than a lack of training opportunities.
- The Wales panel demonstrated an evidence-based decision-making with thorough reviews, pre-meets, and wash-up sessions. Administrative support ensured all forms were submitted, promoting consistency. Wash-up sessions provided transparency, especially for trainees with unmet competencies.

Areas for further consideration

- Some panels could have addressed evidence gaps sooner, especially for trainees added last minute. Ensure timely submission of CSAC reports and planning for trainees on parental leave. Additionally, attention should be given to improving e-portfolio engagement, providing tailored exam support, and strengthening clinical skills in prioritisation and decision-making. Improving feedback integration will help address issues like failure to recognise

deterioration or progress effectively, ultimately supporting trainee development and progression.

- Reports indicated that it would be useful to have clarified criteria for accelerated training requests and ensure transparent communication on progression standards and non-progression decisions. Timely follow-up reviews would support trainees better.
- Some panels could improve on simplifying discussions, provide clearer guidance on required evidence, and set clearer expectations to prevent gaps in trainee evidence. Early identification of issues like repeated exam failures and curriculum gaps is necessary. Standardised decision frameworks for accelerated training and better feedback for non-progressing trainees would strengthen decision-making.
- Some panels could improve on enhancing their review on supplementary evidence (e.g., teaching percentages, Form R) more thoroughly. Flag documentation gaps earlier to allow trainees more time to address them. Streamlining technical queries could avoid delays in decisions.
- Further consideration could be given to tracking the progress of trainees recovering from health issues and ensure fair opportunities for progression.
- It would be beneficial for panels to ensure timely report distribution, provide panel members with advance access to trainee portfolios, and consistently chase up required forms like Form Rs. Additionally, offering more support to trainees struggling with specific competencies could reduce non-progression, particularly in subspecialties where unmet competencies may lead to delays in certification.

Quality

Respondents were asked to comment on key themes and findings from a quality perspective.

Areas of good practice

- The EoE panel produced high-quality supervisor reports with tailored feedback improve report quality. The curriculum provides broad training opportunities for senior trainees. Accessible TPDs offer strong support, especially for non-linear trainees. The panel's objective reviews create a locally focused training environment. Furthermore, the panel showed strong communication between the training school, clinicians, and hospitals. Personalised support, including accommodations for neurodivergent traits and health issues, was effectively provided, with additional assistance from

Professional Support and Wellbeing services for trainees facing challenges, ensuring consistent development and well-being.

- The Scotland panel provided strong data review practices ensure effective curriculum delivery and broad opportunities. Timely, enthusiastic ES reports and efficient administration contribute to a smooth review process.
- The West Midlands panel demonstrated thorough data reviews and clear feedback for non-progressing trainees. The curriculum is well-reviewed, with challenges like the e-portfolio system acknowledged. Experienced panels set clear targets, ensuring transparency and consistency in evaluation. Emphasising Quality Improvement (QI) also supports ongoing professional development, ensuring well-informed trainee progression decisions.
- The North-Eastern panel presented varied data sources and clear actions for non-progressing trainees support fair decision-making. Strong administrative support contributes to an efficient process.
- The Yorkshire and Humber panel was thorough and fair, with comprehensive reviews of ESTRs, CSTRs, and e-portfolios, focusing on trainees at critical points. The curriculum delivery lead ensures alignment with training needs, and the process is efficient and transparent.
- The Wales panel process was well-structured and robust but could benefit from better access to collaborative tools.

Areas for further consideration

- Ensure high-quality supervisor reports remain consistent. Panels could also improve on a structured approach to track trainee progress.
- Panels could improve on engaging trainees on further ePortfolio input and consistency across regions. For instance, implement regular follow-ups for trainees requiring extended support.
- Panels could establish a clear criterion for non-progression cases and continuously evaluate the curriculum delivery and trainee engagement to identify any gaps.
- Panels could streamline panel discussions with clearer guidance on required evidence, such as multi-tagging and reflections, which would help reduce non-progression outcomes. Ensure follow-through on previous suggestions and provide additional training for ARCP Chairs.
- Improve flexibility for non-progressing trainees and enhance tracking of QI and research contributions and proactive management of administrative requirements to prevent non-training-related outcomes like Outcome 5.
- Panels could consider adding personal comments to narratives for better trainee engagement, providing feedback to Educational Supervisors to

improve report quality, supporting LTFT trainees with additional resources, and implementing an alternative briefing approach for panel members. These changes would enhance data quality, decision-making, and curriculum delivery.

- Panels could improve by providing a pre-meeting access to their ePortfolio, and collaborative tools like screen sharing could enhance transparency.

Feedback on the EPortfolio: Some panel members were not aware of how to effectively track curriculum completion using the qualitative/quantitative evidence reports. Need to ensure the ePortfolio guidance is thoroughly utilised to improve the review process effectively.

RCPCH: New webinars tailored for ARCP panels have been created and shared with all deanery administrators to distribute to their respective panels, which describe in detail how to generate evidence reports. The webinars can also be located on the RCPCH [supporting training webpages](#).