



FRIDAY 29 JUNE 2012

**Welcome to the FOM Training Newsletter.**

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## From the Director of Training: Dr Ian Aston

Welcome to the second Training Newsletter from the Faculty of Occupational Medicine. The newsletter is aimed at trainees, who are working towards the successful award of MFOM, and trainers (Educational Supervisors and Clinical Supervisors). There is a regular section from the Trainee Representative on the Faculty Board, currently Dr Hazem Gallagher-Alagha.

In this edition, our Chief Examiner and Deputy Chief Examiner for research methods have set out some very practical advice on how to avoid unnecessary delays to the dissertation assessment process. We also provide some useful updates from the General Medical Council (GMC) and the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges (AoMRC).

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As mentioned in our first newsletter, I would like to say to trainees that the Faculty seeks to be as helpful as possible to you throughout your training and so please do ask if you need information or advice. As Director of Training, I am happy to respond to questions about any aspect of training; please email Emma Cox-Smith ([emma.coxsmith@fom.ac.uk](mailto:emma.coxsmith@fom.ac.uk)) who will forward the messages to me.

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## Trainee e-portfolio

The Faculty has secured funding to develop a trainee e-portfolio, a provider has been chosen and the development process will begin shortly. The e-portfolio will be a web-based system that will allow trainees to manage their training progress. This will replace the current paper-based training record. We hope to introduce this in 2013.

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## Revalidation for doctors in training : ARCP Forms

As you may be aware, revalidation is set to be introduced by the end of 2012 and will apply to all trainees.

The process to revalidate for trainees will be built around, and run alongside, appraisal within the existing educational supervision/ARCP system. However, some amendments to the ARCP forms have been made to fulfil all of the requirements for revalidation.

Upon completion of training, those of you who work outside the NHS, or with an employer which is not a Designated Body and you are a member of the Faculty (any category of membership) would need to use the Faculty's Responsible Officer, to revalidate.

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## GMC statement on less than full-time training

Following consultation with key interest groups, the GMC's Postgraduate Board has reviewed its requirements and concluded that a minimum time requirement for less than full-time training (LTFT) should be re-established for specialty trainees working towards a Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT).

In effect, trainees will be required to undertake no less than 50% of full-time training.

Postgraduate deans will have flexibility to reduce the time requirement further in exceptional cases, to an absolute minimum of 20% of full-time training, with an expectation that this will be for not more than 12 months.

[http://www.gmc-uk.org/education/education\\_news/11915.asp](http://www.gmc-uk.org/education/education_news/11915.asp)

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## Submission of MFOM dissertations

Below, Dr Katherine Venables (Chief Examiner, Research Methods) and Dr Richard Preece (Deputy) give some useful guidance on how to submit the MFOM dissertation, to avoid delay to the assessment process. They also outline the importance of timely submission of the MFOM dissertation.

### **Presentation of dissertations**

Every year, some MFOM dissertations require revision not because of substantive

difficulties in the posing of questions, gathering of evidence, or presentation of findings but because of avoidable errors in presentation. This is important; all specialist occupational physicians should be able to prepare concise, accurate documents which are clear, intelligible and influential. Remember that mastery of a subject implies the ability to explain it clearly to others who are not experts. Here are a few simple guidelines which should prevent these errors:

- Keep to the recommended word limit of 8,000 to 10,000 words (excluding the abstract, index, references, tables, figures and appendices).
- Adhere closely to the Faculty guidance.
- Make use of sub-headings to structure your text.
- Proof-read carefully – ask someone else to read the final draft for you, especially if English is not your first language. The spelling and grammar must be accurate.
- Ensure there are no errors in word spacing or line spacing.
- Avoid unnecessary variation in layout, such as in font type, font size, or margins.
- Number your pages consecutively and in a consistent style.
- Check your indexing.
- Check that table totals add up.
- Check that numbers mentioned in both the text and in tables/figures are consistent.
- Do not unnecessarily duplicate information in the text and in tables/figures, or in different text sections.
- Use a consistent referencing style.
- Check the citations in your reference list meticulously. They must meet the published standards for the referencing style you have chosen.

### **Timely submission of dissertations**

The Faculty recently analysed dissertation submission dates for 2009 – 2011. It was restricted to full time trainees with complete training dates and suggests that many trainees are submitting their dissertations too late. It is recommended in the Faculty's Membership Regulations (in the guidance under M29) that dissertations are submitted to the Faculty by the end of ST5. The findings showed that only 9% of trainees submitted their dissertation before the end of ST5; 63% submitted during ST6 and 28% of trainees submitted their dissertation after their expected CCT date. Submitting your dissertation before the end of ST5 will leave you with plenty of time to have your dissertation marked before you aim to complete training. If the dissertation is submitted any later than this, you may need to extend your training in order to complete the dissertation component of the MFOM qualification, especially if any revisions are needed before approval. This is equally important for those submitting their MSc dissertation or other equivalent evidence.

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## **Dissertation Training Day**

The Faculty held a dissertation training day for trainees on 24 April 2012 in the Faculty's office in London. The day was of particular relevance for those at the early stages of planning their dissertation. You can view the presentations from the day [here](#).

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## **Medical Statistics Workshop : new one-day**

## course

The BMA Library is offering a new one-day training course in medical statistics, covering standard statistical notions and methods commonly applied in medical research, suitable for doctors in all specialties. [Get further details/booking information.](#)

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## Funding for research

The Bupa Foundation's [Philip-Poole Wilson Seed Corn Fund](#) is now open for applications. The fund offers grants to researchers with an interest in health or social care.

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## Part 2 MFOM Examination : advice to candidates

The third diet of the Part 2 MFOM examination was held in February 2012. 67% of candidates were successful overall, which is an increase from the previous diet where 50% of candidates passed. However, although the overall standard of candidates was deemed to be higher, feedback from examiners on the candidates' performance has highlighted some areas where candidates in general performed less well. The items below will be useful for candidates to consider when preparing for these exams.

### **OSPE**

The examiners noted that there was a clear distinction between those candidates who had practised and perfected examination techniques, and those who had not. Candidates are therefore advised to ensure that they are well practised and competent.

Skills in history taking and knowledge of important occupational health issues (such as the Equality Act and GMC's Confidentiality (2009) guidance) were areas also highlighted as areas of weakness in some candidates.

### **Photographic/Hygiene section (part of the OSPE)**

The photographic section was again answered poorly. Candidates should ensure that they allocate sufficient time to this topic when preparing for the examination.

Candidates are reminded that details of each examination component are available in the guidance to candidates for the Part 2 Membership (MFOM) examination located within the Regulations for the Part 2 MFOM:

<http://www.fom.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/mfom-pt2-r2010.pdf>

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## How many attempts will be allowed to pass an examination?

In April 2011, the GMC asked the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges (AOMRC) to reach a consensus on national professional examinations relating to the currency, timing and number of attempts at the examinations, with Medical Royal Colleges,

Postgraduate Deaneries, trainees, patients and the public and representatives of the NHS.

### **Number of attempts permitted**

The AoMRC proposed an approach to national professional examinations, setting out a backstop position on the currency and number of attempts and the GMC has agreed to this. No candidate will normally be allowed more than six attempts at an examination, although individual Colleges may decide to set a lower limit. In order to sit an examination once the limit of six has been reached (or, if appropriate, the College's lower limit) a candidate will have to demonstrate additional educational experience for each re-sit.

### **Validity of examination passes**

It is agreed that there should be a seven year limit on any single examination pass with the option of flexibility in individual cases subject to detailed review of circumstances.

The GMC has agreed this to be the way forward and the AoMRC is now working on a plan for implementation. This will mean that the Faculty will be required to update its Membership Regulations, to reflect the changes.

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## **From the Trainee Representative : Dr Hazem Gallagher-Alagha**

### **How to avoid delays with your dissertation**

Following on from the useful guidance written by Dr Venables and Dr Preece, about the timely submission of dissertations most trainees spend the first few months getting to know a new specialty or focusing on passing their academic learning course exams, as well as the Part 1 MFOM examination. While these are an important part of your training, early planning for your dissertation is essential to avoid delays.

Those of you who have some experience in occupational medicine should be able to identify a subject for your dissertation early on in your training, while others who are new to the specialty may need a few months to do so.

Choosing a subject which you have an interest in, perhaps related to your previous experience in clinical medicine, would be a good start and should help with motivation. However, it may also be sensible to choose a subject relevant to your employer and the nature of work undertaken. This is likely to encourage your employer to offer you good support.

You may be aware that assessors are volunteers who offer their valuable experience in their own time, with no financial reward. A cause for delay in identifying assessors is a poorly written abstract. When assessors are invited to evaluate a dissertation, they only see the abstract, it is therefore important that your abstract is very well written and presented.

In summary, an early planned, well prepared dissertation with a robust abstract is likely to minimise delays and help you to achieve this competency early in your training.

Delayed completion and submission of the dissertation is the most common cause of delays in obtaining MFOM.

## **Trainee Representative Vacancy**

I am about to step down from my role as trainee representative and I would like to take this opportunity to encourage you to apply for the post.

I have been the trainee representative for the past year and I have enjoyed this role. I have particularly enjoyed getting to understand how the Faculty works, contributing to the work of the Faculty Board and working with members. The role has given me the opportunity to spend one to one time discussing training matters with the current President of the Faculty, Dr Carlton.

Through this role I have gained experience in addressing the challenges which face a small specialty like ours. In October, I attended the Faculty Board and Executive away day, where I contributed to workshops and took part in policy discussions.

I have also had the opportunity to represent trainees in occupational medicine on external committees such as the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges Trainee Doctors' Group (ATDG) where I became the vice-chair and contributed to ongoing work on current issues, such as revalidation. I was also part of the Academy's transferable competencies framework working group and helped to shape the final recommendations.

The role is suitable for someone who is in their first or second year of specialty training, and who is at least 18 months away from their CCT date. Most meetings are based in London; however travel is not always necessary, as there are facilities to teleconference for some meetings.

The average time commitment is for one day per month, which could be taken as part of your study leave. You will undoubtedly achieve a few of your management and communication competencies through some of these meetings. The total commitment per year will be around 10-12 working days plus the AGM, with some months busier than others.

I am happy to discuss the role in more detail. Please feel free to get in touch with me through the Faculty office.

The post will be vacant as of August 2012. The position will be advertised in the main Faculty Newsletter.

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## **CCT, CESR and CEGPR fees are now tax deductible**

Please visit this [link](#) on the GMC's website for news about HM Revenue & Customs' decision to make CCT, CESR and CEGPR fees tax deductible.

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## **Diary dates**

Dates of forthcoming examinations:

### **Part 2 MFOM Examination**

The next sitting of the Part 2 MFOM examination will be in September/October 2012. The written examination will take place on Monday 24 September, at the

Royal College of Anaesthetists in London and the clinical examination will take place on Tuesday 9 October at the Sheffield Northern General Hospital. **The closing date to enter this examination is Monday 30 July at 5pm.**

### **Part 1 MFOM Examination**

The next sitting of the Part 1 MFOM examination will take place on Monday 19 November 2012 at the Camden Centre, London. **The closing date to enter for this examination is Monday 24 September at 5pm.**

### **September Conference**

'Should they stay or should they go?' joint with the Faculty of Travel Medicine at SOAS, London, 11 September 2012. [More information.](#)

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With best wishes



Ian Aston  
Director of Training

