

Curriculum Requirements and COVID-Related Absences

We have received a number of enquiries from FSDs regarding interpretation of the '20 day rule' in the curriculum and how this should be interpreted in the context of COVID-related absence, either in regard to short term periods of isolation or extended absence for those in the highly vulnerable group. The following principles should be followed:

- Foundation trainees (like all employees) should adhere to government, public health, and employer guidance on risk assessments, COVID-related leave, and sick leave.
- Derogations have been made to the ARCP requirements during COVID, but the standards for completion of foundation training remain. Foundation trainees must evidence all 20 foundation professional capabilities to complete their foundation training.
- If trainees are unable to complete the curriculum requirements for any reason, then extensions to training would be required.
- For trainees who are unable to carry out clinical facing duties for COVID-related reasons and who are not considered to be on sick leave, an individualised approach should be taken at the earliest opportunity to consider all options for remote working, e.g. QI/audit, e learning, remote consultations. These may enable acquisition of some of the required competencies, but do not guarantee progression.
- There is a need for F1 to last 12 months in order to meet the requirements of the EU directive on duration of medical training, but when looking at how to manage absences within that timeframe, the review should be of competencies and outcomes for the trainees, rather than a focus on time. The '20 day rule' is indicative only and if exceeded, should trigger a review of progression by the Foundation Programme Director and Associate postgraduate dean. An individualised approach to each case should be taken and a decision should be made based on the evidence for each of the foundation professional capabilities and the judgement of supervisors (i.e. decision based on competency and not time).
- Where there are concerns or queries relating to decisions concerning individual trainees these should be escalated via the Associate Postgraduate dean to the PG Dean or nominated Deputy.