

Specialty Advisory Committee

Updated Terms of Reference and Standing Orders 2024

Terms of Reference

SACs will report to the Joint Committee for Postgraduate Training in Dentistry (JCPTD) via the Advisory Board for Specialist Training in Dentistry (ABSTD) and will:

1. Develop curricula for dental specialty training in collaboration with stakeholders for JCPTD to recommend to the GDC.
2. Give advice to exam boards and be involved with developing speciality assessments.
3. Maintain a national register of specialty trainees, including trainees. The register will include information on the trainees start and anticipated completion dates and progress through specialty training.
4. Be available to the GDC and other parties to advise on principles of specialty training.
5. Alert the GDC and other stakeholders in specialty training in dentistry to trends and important changes in the practice of the respective dental specialties.
6. Be available to the Statutory Education Bodies (SEBs) to advise on matters pertaining to prior training and learning in relation to the duration of specialty training.
7. Maintain a national register of those undertaking a programme of post-CCST development in the relevant specialities.
8. Liaise with the SEBs to ensure that trainee information is up to date.
9. Be available to provide advice when requested on the development of new training programmes, changes or difficulties in existing programmes, trainees in difficulties or any other aspect of training in the specialty as requested.
10. Provide external assessors to attend RCP panels.
11. Contribute to the monitoring of training outcomes nationally in conjunction with the ABSTD and the Joint Committee for Postgraduate Training in Dentistry (JCPTD).

Standing Orders

Membership

Normally, SAC membership will not exceed twelve individuals who should be nominated to provide a reasonable balance in terms of geography and academic/non-academic experience.

The core membership of an SAC will comprise:

- 4 Faculty representatives (one from each of the faculties of dental surgery RCS Edinburgh, RCS England, RCPS Glasgow and RCS Ireland)
- 1 Postgraduate Dental Dean (Lead Dean)
- 4 members from relevant professional associations (to include at least one academic)
- 1 trainee representative
- The Chair of the Tri Collegiate Fellowship examination board

The core group is common to all SACs and each individual SAC has additional membership to suit its particular circumstances. Additional membership can be drawn, with the approval of ABSTD, from:

- Lay member
- Specialist practitioner representative(s) (to cover those working in the General Dental Services, private practice and the Salaried Primary Care Dental Service)
- Trainees in different aspects of training (e.g. in post-CCST development or from differing training pathways where relevant)
- Appropriate sister Colleges
- Specialist societies for component specialties
- Specialty lead for national recruitment or e-portfolio (if not already an SAC member)
- Training programme director (if there is not already a member who is a TPD)

Term of Membership

Members serve for a maximum of five years, except that those appointed as Chair may serve for three years from the date of their appointment as Chair if that takes them beyond their five-year limit.

Members are not normally expected to return to the SAC within two years of demitting. However, this may be permitted in exceptional circumstances with the prior agreement of JMDF.

Trainee representatives serve for a maximum of two years.

Membership should normally transfer to the new representative immediately following the final SAC meeting of a member's term of office.

Members should not normally continue to serve on the SAC for more than one year after retirement from their NHS or academic appointment.

SACs may invite recently demitted members to assist with specific activities e.g. ARCP Panels or Specialist Listing Panels.

Alternates

If a member is unable to attend a meeting, they should send an alternate in their place. The alternate should be appropriate to the member's nominating constituency and the member should gain the prior approval of the SAC Chair. If the nominating body wishes to appoint a deputy, that individual will be the automatic replacement if the member cannot attend. The SAC member will be expected to make arrangements with their deputy and ensure that they are appropriately briefed.

Co-opted Members

There will be no co-opted members.

Invitees and Observers

Non-members may attend meetings by invitation for the discussion of specific items or to observe if appropriate.

Potential Conflicts of Interest

Nominating bodies and individuals nominated should consider potential conflicts of interest before proposing individuals as members of SACs. Such potential conflicts of interest should be kept under review during their term of membership and appropriate action taken if such a conflict of interest should arise at a later date.

Meetings

Meetings will normally be held twice per year at approximately six-month intervals to co-ordinate with meetings of the ABSTD and JCPTD.

Additional meetings may be arranged at the instigation of the Chair.

In the absence of the Chair, those present will decide who chairs the meeting.

Quorum

Quorum will be fifty percent of members. A meeting that is not quorate may discuss issues but any decision would be subject to the approval of a majority of members.

Voting

All members will be eligible to vote.

If a vote is held at a meeting this will be by simple majority of members present at the meeting.

In the event of a tied vote, the SAC Chair will have a casting vote.

SAC Chair

The Chair will be elected from the serving members of the SAC at the time of the election.

The Chair will represent the SAC on the ABSTD.

Term of Office of SAC Chair

The term of office will be for three years, non-renewable.

In exceptional circumstances the term of office of an SAC Chair may be extended by one year.

If the Chair has served less than five years on the SAC, they may remain on the SAC after their term as Chair ends, until their full term as a member expires.

Election of Chair

The secretariat will call for nominations requiring a proposer and seconder.

If there is more than one nomination, an election will be held by single transferrable vote. Votes will be cast by post or e-mail and the secretariat will act as the returning officer.

The Chair will normally transfer from the outgoing Chair to the new Chair at the end of the ABSTD meeting immediately following the last SAC meeting for which they were Chair. The election will be completed six months in advance to allow time for handover.

Prolonged Absence of SAC Chair due to Unplanned Leave

In the event that the SAC Chair is unavailable due to a prolonged period of leave, which will affect the delivery of SAC business, this should be alerted to the Chair of ABSTD. With agreement of the Chairs of ABSTD and JCPTD a 'Cover SAC Chair' should be elected from the existing SAC membership in accordance with the usual practices and principles set out in these TORs. The Cover Chair will remain in post until the elected SAC Chair is able to resume their responsibilities, resigns or comes to the end of their term of office. Any proposed variances from this framework should be referred to the Chair of ABSTD in the first instance.

Removal

SACs are small committees which undertake considerable amount of work and in fairness to other SAC members and those relying on SACs to deliver work, it is necessary for a member to be removed if they persistently fail to participate or act in a manner contrary to the terms of reference or standing orders. If there are concerns, the nominating body will be contacted in the first instance. The Joint Meeting of Dental Faculties (JMDF) will ultimately make the decision whether to remove a Specialty Advisory Committee member. It is anticipated that removal will be an infrequent occurrence.

Review

The Terms of Reference and Standing Orders for SACs should be reviewed after one year in the first instance and every two years thereafter in conjunction with the reviews for the ABSTD and JCPTD. Any proposal to alter the terms of reference or standing orders of an individual SAC should be submitted to the JCPTD for consideration.

May 2024