

Out of programme opportunities

This page outlines the different types of out of programme opportunities (OOPs) as well as important points to consider before deciding to take time out.

You may wish to take time out from your specialty training to undertake research, do some additional study or work abroad. Some schemes can count towards the [Certificate of Completion of Training](#) ^[1] (CCT ^[2]).

The following time-out programmes can count towards [CCT](#) ^[2]:

- OOPT – time out for approved clinical training
- OOPR – time out to undertake research

The following programmes will not usually count towards [CCT](#) ^[2]:

- OOPE – time out for clinical experience, eg Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO).
- OOPC – taking a planned career break

Important points to consider:

- apply well ahead of time; the approval process can be lengthy. You can refer to the [Gold Guide](#). ^[3] Be aware there is a detailed application process and not everyone will be approved for OOPs
- consider the financial implications
- bear in mind your continuation of service may be affected if you work outside the NHS
- you'll be expected to have undertaken at least a year of training before requesting the OOP
- you could instead consider taking time out (ie not an official OOP) after finishing [foundation training](#) ^[4] and before starting specialty training. However, be careful of the entry rules for some specialties, you could be ineligible for training if you have more than 18 months' post-foundation experience in that specialty. You may be also ineligible if you take too long a break from medicine, since many person specifications ask that that you have evidence of achievement of the foundation competencies in the three years preceding the intended start date. Check what it says on the [person specification](#) ^[5]
- during Higher Specialty Training many programmes have links to specialist centres in other countries, where you can spend time out to get experience. For example, London Postgraduate Medical and Dental Education offers OOPs for GPs in South Africa and India

- if you want time out to count for CCT [2] you will need approval from the GMC before starting. This is submitted by your Local Education and Training Board (LETB) on your behalf
- if your time out doesn't count towards CCT [2] you will still need to contact your relevant Royal College, college of faculty for approval and so they can amend your CCT [2] completion date
- if you are going to work abroad, before you go, check your indemnity insurance, tax and NI contributions, GMC registration and NHS pension

Source URL: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/medical-specialty-training/out-programme-opportunities>

Links

[1] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Certificate_of_completion_of_training [2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#CCT> [3] <http://www.copmed.org.uk/publications/the-gold-guide> [4] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Foundation_training [5] <http://specialtytraining.hee.nhs.uk/Recruitment/Person-specifications/2017-person-specifications>