

Regulations governing the Objective Structured Final Assessment for the Scientist Training Programme

Introduction

1. This document describes the Regulations that govern the Objective Structured Final Assessment (OSFA) required for the Scientist Training Programme (STP).
2. Trainees on the STP are required to pass the OSFA, be awarded their speciality specific MSc in Clinical Science and complete all of their workplace based assessments and competences in order to receive their Certificate of Completion of the STP.
3. Trainees due to sit their OSFA must note that it is a high-stakes assessment and requires them to take responsibility in ensuring that they have read and understood the OSFA Regulations and will appropriately apply/adhere to the terms set out in all related OSFA policies.
4. The National School of Healthcare Science (NSHCS) is remitted by Health Education England (HEE) to oversee the provision of all elements of the STP, provide the portfolio for the collation of evidence pertaining to workplace based assessments and deliver the OSFA.
5. The Academy for Healthcare Science (AHCS) is the School's quality assurance body and will provide the Certificate of Attainment on successful completion of the requirements of the STP. The Certificate of Attainment confers eligibility to apply for registration as Clinical Scientist with the statutory regulator, the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).
6. The terms 'NSHCS' and 'the School' are synonymous and will be used as appropriate to the text.
7. Policies and guidance associated to specific items throughout and related to the OSFA Regulations and where mentioned are underlined. All such OSFA Regulations and policies are made available on the NSHCS website: www.nshcs.hee.nhs.uk.

Regulations governing the OSFA

8. These Regulations govern the content and conduct of the OSFA and have been approved by the Healthcare Science Implementation Network Group (HCSING) chaired by the Chief Scientific Officer and Education and Quality Director for Health Education England; approval for any updates or revisions follows the protocol agreed with HCSING.
9. These Regulations should be read in conjunction with all of the associated OSFA policies and guidance, including:
 - Reasonable Adjustments
 - Use of Electronic Devices
 - Dress Code
 - Late Arrival
 - Behaviour and misconduct
 - Complaints and appeals
 - Exceptional arrangements
 - OSFA resits
10. All OSFA Regulations and policies are made available on the NSHCS website: www.nshcs.hee.nhs.uk. All OSFA events will be governed by these OSFA regulations and related policies and guidance.
11. All trainees in the third year on programme are eligible to take the live OSFA and will automatically be included in the schedule for the relevant year unless otherwise informed.

Conduct of the OSFA

12. There will normally be one sitting of the live OSFA in each academic year, normally in July. The NSHCS may at any time decide, subject to notice, to alter the number of sittings in any year. The sitting of the live OSFA will be in two parts:
 - a. the Generic OSFA comprised of 3 assessment stations; and
 - b. the Specialist OSFA relating to the trainee's STP curriculum and comprised of 9 assessment stations.
13. All OSFA stations are assessed in the same way, and all stations are weighted equally.

14. An Examination Board will be convened by the NSHCS to review trainees' results from the sitting of the live OSFA.
15. The Board will operate under the NSHCS OSFA Examination Boards Terms of Reference and make the OSFA outcome recommendation for each trainee to the Head of School for ratification.
16. Outcome from their OSFA will be released to trainees, copied to their designated training officer within three weeks of sitting their OSFA; specific date for release will be published on the NSHCS website.

Failures, feedback and retakes of the OSFA

17. If the trainee fails to pass their live OSFA, they will be entitled to resit a full OSFA (Generic and Specialist parts) subject to completion of their workplace based assessments and award of their MSc in Clinical Science.
18. A trainee is permitted a maximum of three attempts to pass their OSFA, within 2 years of the first take. If the trainee fails their third and final attempt, they will have failed the STP and will not be awarded a Certificate of Completion for the STP.
19. A trainee who fails the OSFA will receive feedback, copied to their designated training officer and be offered support and advice from the NSHCS, including input from a senior specialist in the trainee's specialty. If the trainee wishes to take up the offer of support and advice, they should request this directly by contacting the School, usually by email. The School recommends that all feedback conversations, whether virtual or at a face to face meeting should include the trainee's designated training officer.
20. A trainee who fails the OSFA must inform the NSHCS directly (proxy notification will not be accepted) by the given deadline provided in the OSFA results transcript that they wish to retake their OSFA. If notification is not received as indicated, the trainee will be removed from the OSFA schedule.

Re-calculations, complaints and appeals

21. A trainee is not able to request a re-calculation of their OSFA result. The process of collation and calculation of scores is done electronically and is not subject to miscalculation errors.

22. Appeals against the academic judgements of OSFA assessors or the Examination Board are not permitted.
23. If the trainee perceives that there has been an irregularity in the provision of their OSFA on the day which they feel had a detrimental effect to carry out their assessment to the best of their ability, they can submit a complaint in accordance with the OSFA complaints and appeals policy. Complaints will be processed as outlined in the policy.
24. If the trainee perceives that there has been an irregularity in the conduct and decision-making process of the Examination Board and wish to appeal their results, they may do so together with supporting evidence and in accordance with the OSFA complaints and appeals policy. Appeals will be addressed as outlined in the policy.
25. In no circumstances may such submissions be addressed directly to or be submitted via a training officer, OSFA assessor, Academy for Healthcare Science, or any other individual, to include all NSHCS staff members.

Reasonable Adjustments

26. Trainees with registered disabilities, learning difficulties or specific conditions will be able to request the reasonable adjustments that they feel will best suit their needs in accordance with the OSFA Reasonable Adjustments policy.

Mitigating circumstances, deferment and withdrawal

27. All trainees are expected to sit their OSFA at the scheduled time.
28. Where a trainee is not able to attend their scheduled OSFA, due to recent illness or other unforeseen circumstances, they must inform the School as soon as possible and in accordance with the OSFA Mitigating Circumstances policy. The submission will be acknowledged and forwarded to the Chair of the relevant Examination Board to inform them of the reason for the trainee's absence and if necessary, to allow them to update the panel.
29. Where a trainee wishes to attend the OSFA but has mitigating circumstances that they feel may affect or have affected their performance at the assessment, they must inform the School as soon as possible and in accordance with the OSFA Mitigating Circumstances policy.
30. Where a trainee wishes to consider deferring their OSFA, they must review the OSFA Exceptional Arrangements policy and ensure that they have eligible reasons for deferment. To

request a deferment of their OSFA they must complete and submit the Request for Exceptional Arrangements form to the NSHCS. The request must be made as soon as the potential circumstances dictating their request for deferment are known and will be processed in accordance with the process outlined in the [OSFA Exceptional Arrangements policy](#).

31. Where a trainee wishes to withdraw from the OSFA, they must inform the School by email as soon as possible, together with their reasons for withdrawal. The School will acknowledge the notification and contact the trainee in accordance with the NSHCS STP exit procedure.

END

The OSFA Regulations are subject to review and revision as dictated by the NSHCS quality improvement and assurance procedures. Trainees affected will be alerted to any amendments made to the Regulations and associated policies.