

Education of the staff grade

A memorandum on the above topic was produced following publication of *Achieving a Balance: Plan for Action* and comments on this memorandum were received from the Court of Electors, Education Committee, Executive and Finance Committee, the Collegiate Trainees' Committee, and Psychiatric Tutors Sub-Committee. The following is a distillate of comments from these various sources:

Right of staff grade to continuing medical education

The College accepts the right of holders of staff grade posts to continuing medical education, in the same way that consultants have this right. Staff grade doctors appointed in psychiatry should have continuing education built into their contractual arrangements; it is recommended that the grade should be allocated a separate study leave budget.

Staff doctors are psychiatrists

The holders of staff grade posts in psychiatry are psychiatrists and should be regarded as such. They should not be carrying out purely general practice duties and their continuing education should be within some area of psychiatry. There is a need for the Royal College of Psychiatrists to establish a link with staff doctors in psychiatry who have not passed their MRCPsych examination. At present the nature of the link has not been determined. In order to establish a formal link between staff grade doctors working in psychiatry with the College, the College will need to keep an accurate and up-to-date listing of who these staff grade doctors are. It will be important for the staff grade to be represented at an appropriate point within the College.

Career advice

Entry into the staff grade may occur with a minimum of three years experience in the SHO grade, which may not necessarily wholly or even partly be in psychiatry. It will therefore be difficult for staff psychiatrists to obtain career registrar posts. The decision to take a staff post should therefore not be taken lightly and the College should ensure that trainees are properly advised of the long-term career implications. The clinical tutor would be the appropriate person to make sure that this advice has been given.

Education for specific needs

All staff psychiatrists require continuing education. Broadly this will be of two types: (1) for the clinical duties of the particular post, and (2) for the

MRCPsych examination; this will be unusual, but should be made possible for individual doctors.

Staff grade posts will have security of tenure. Such doctors will work with an individual named consultant. There should be a formal appointment committee for staff grade posts. As the holder will work with a consultant in a specific area of psychiatry e.g., rehabilitation, family therapy, psychiatry of mental handicap, so the continuing education should be appropriate to that special area of working, in terms of lectures, seminars, courses and so on, which may require the post holder to travel to receive such education.

In some instances staff grade doctors may wish to apply to sit the MRCPsych examination. The approval of training for such doctors to sit the examination will need to be carried out on an individual basis by the Dean of the College and should be at the same level as for other approved posts for training. This will require the employing authority to enable the staff doctor to carry out training in psychiatry in different subspecialities to fulfil the needs of the Statement on Approval. Such training will need to be carried out in a hospital that is already fully approved by the College. The arrangements for this training must be agreed with the College before the doctor starts the period of training for the examination: it cannot be granted in retrospect. There must also be time allowed for the doctor to attend an appropriate MRCPsych course. It is accepted that staff psychiatrists being eligible to sit the MRCPsych examination will be infrequent as some will already have attempted the examination and failed their possible attempts, others will not be able to be released by their employing authority to fulfil the requirements of approval, and yet others may already have passed the MRCPsych.

Staff psychiatrists should be fully able to take part in educational activities within their hospital or district. This education should be equally available to those who are training for the MRCPsych and also those who are not.

Promotion to Associate Specialist

Most holders of staff grade posts will probably remain within the grade long-term. However, some doctors will wish to move to another grade and the natural progression would be promotion to Associate Specialist within their existing post in their hospital or district. It would be appropriate that passing the MRCPsych examination should be a requirement for such promotion.

There may be some instances in which a staff grade doctor will wish to return to the main career ladder in psychiatry. If this is so, the doctor should obtain a registrar post in psychiatry before proceeding to senior registrar and consultant. This means of progression is necessary for manpower purposes.

College requirements and employing authorities

The Royal College of Psychiatrists' requirements for contractual arrangements for holders of staff grade

posts in psychiatry should be made known to employing authorities including Regional Health Authorities, and District Health Authorities. The Regional Adviser should also be informed and job descriptions for staff grade posts should be seen by the Regional Adviser or Deputy before advertisement.

*Approved by Council
June 1989*

Quarterly and Annual Meetings of the Royal College of Psychiatrists

Members are reminded that they may need to apply for study leave in advance of the College's Quarterly and Annual Meetings in order that their registration fees are re-imbursed. The daily registration fees are as follows: Inceptors and Retired Members: £20; Members and Non-Member Psychiatrists: £30; Non-Members: £60.

The provisional programmes for these meetings in 1989–1990 are as follows:

Autumn Quarterly Meeting 1989, 25 and 26 October 1989 at Kensington Town Hall, Hornton Street, London W8

Wednesday 25 October 1989: Computers in psychiatry, psychotherapy in the elderly, an up-date on problems with benzodiazepines, cognitive therapy, the young brain damaged, casualty psychiatry; The Maudsley Lecture will be given by Dr T. J. Crow and a lunch-time lecture by Dr K. Jamison.

Thursday, 26 October 1989: Biological markers in depression for the 90s, history of psychiatry, CPNs – a rival service?, Quarterly Business Meeting, rape, and two short paper sessions.

Winter Quarterly Meeting 1990, Tuesday, 23 January and Wednesday 24 January 1990 at The Royal Society of Medicine, 1 Wimpole Street, London W1.

The Maudsley Bequest Lecturers will be Drs G. M. Goodwin, M. Abou-Saleh, T. R. E. Barnes, J. F. K. Deakin, J. Hamilton, S. Hollins, Professor N. Kreitman, Drs S. Lewis, R. Littlewood, M. Robertson, A. Ryle, E. Welldon and S. Wolkind. The Eli Lilly

Lecture will be given by George Winokur, MD, The Paul W. Penningroth Professor and Head, Department of Psychiatry, The University of Iowa, USA, on Tuesday, 23 January 1990. The Blake Marsh Lecture will be given by Frank J. Menolascino, Professor and Chairman, University of Nebraska Medical Center, USA on Wednesday, 24 January 1990.

Spring Quarterly Meeting 1990, Tuesday, 10 April and Wednesday, 11 April 1990 at the University of Galway, Ireland

The scientific programme will include sessions on anxiety disorders, new clinical and legal issues in tardive dyskinesia, control of mental health, alcohol clinical studies, community care – evaluation, post-traumatic stress disorder, personality disorder, serotonin, child and adolescent psychiatry, family studies, and short paper sessions. Details of hotel accommodation and group travel will be available in due course.

Annual Meeting 1990, Tuesday, 10 July–Thursday, 12 July 1990 at the Birmingham Metropole Hotel, National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham

It is hoped that the scientific programme will include sessions on diagnostic issues of panic disorder, problems of overlap in depression, post-natal depression, in-patient psychotherapy, developmental psychiatry, forensic psychiatry, Birmingham alumnae, epilepsy in psychiatry, and short paper sessions. The Annual Dinner will be held on Tuesday, 10 July 1990 at the Birmingham Metropole Hotel.