

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
 - complete all their work-based assessments and competences in order to receive their Certificate of Completion of the STP
3. Trainees who are due to sit their OSFA, must note that it is a high-stakes assessment and requires them to have read and understood the OSFA Regulations, and appropriately apply/adhere to the terms set out in all related OSFA policies.
4. The National School of Healthcare Science (NSHCS) is tasked 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 work-based assessments
 - deliver the OSFA
5. Throughout this document the National School of Healthcare Science will either be referred to as 'the School' or 'NSHCS'.
6. Throughout this document, policies and guidance related to specific items and the OSFA Regulations, will be highlighted in bold.

Regulations governing the OSFA

7. The Regulations govern the content and conduct of the OSFA and have been approved by the Healthcare Science governing body. Any major revisions are approved prior to publication. For further information please email: nshcs@hee.nhs.uk
8. The Regulations should be read in conjunction with all 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**
9. All OSFA Regulations and policies are available on the School website www.nshcs.hee.nhs.uk. All OSFA events are governed by the OSFA regulations and related policies and guidance.
10. All third year STP trainees are eligible, unless otherwise informed, to take the live OSFA and will automatically be included in the schedule for the relevant year.
11. By registering, trainees are declaring themselves fit to sit the OSFA. Please refer to the 'Mitigating circumstances, deferment and withdrawal' section below.

Conduct of the OSFA

12. The live OSFA is usually held in July, once every academic year. The School may decide, subject to notice, to alter the number of sittings in any year. The live OSFA will be held in two parts
 - the Generic OSFA, comprised of 3 professional practice assessment stations
 - the Specialist OSFA, comprised of 9 specialty skills assessment stations
13. All OSFA stations are assessed in the same way, and all stations are weighted equally.

14. The outcome from the OSFA is based on an aggregation of station level results from parts a and b. Trainees must achieve or exceed 9 out of 12 station passes, with no red flags from assessors concerning patient safety or trainees' attitudes or behaviours.
15. An Examination Board convened by the School, will review trainees' results from the live OSFA or any retakes.
16. The Board will operate under the **NSHCS OSFA Examination Boards Terms of Reference** and for each trainee will make a recommended outcome to the Head of School for ratification.
17. Trainees will receive their outcome within three weeks of sitting their OSFA. The outcome will also be sent to their designated training officer. The outcome release date will be published on the School's website www.nshcs.hee.nhs.uk

Failures, feedback and retakes of the OSFA

18. A trainee has a maximum of three attempts to pass their OSFA. All attempts must be within two years of taking their first OSFA e.g. one live OSFA and two retakes. If a trainee fails their third and final attempt, they will have failed the STP and will not be awarded a Certificate of Completion.
19. If a trainee fails to pass their live OSFA, they are entitled to re-sit a full OSFA (Generic and Specialist parts). This is subject to
 - completion of their work-based assessments
 - award of their MSc in Clinical Science by the published date or agreed extension, under the **NSHCS Exceptional Extenuating Circumstances Policy**
20. A trainee will receive feedback if they fail their OSFA; a copy of the feedback will also be sent to their designated training officer. They will also be offered support and advice from the School. This includes input from a senior specialist in the trainee's specialty, as appropriate. A trainee must email the School at nshcs@hee.nhs.uk to request the support. The School recommends that all feedback conversations, whether virtual or face to face, should include the trainee's designated training officer.
21. If a trainee fails the OSFA, they must inform the School directly (proxy notification will not be accepted) by the deadline provided in the OSFA results email, that they wish to retake their

OSFA. If notification is not received by the School, the trainee will be removed from the OSFA schedule.

Re-calculations, complaints and appeals

22. A trainee may not 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.
23. Appeals against the academic judgements of OSFA assessors or the Examination Board are not permitted.
24. If a trainee feels that there was an irregularity in the provision of their OSFA, which had a detrimental effect on their ability to carry out their assessment, they can submit a complaint. All complaints should be submitted as per the **OSFA Complaints and Appeals Policy** and will be processed as outlined in the policy.
25. If a trainee feels that there was an irregularity in the conduct and decision-making process of the Examination Board, they may appeal their results. An appeal must be submitted, together with supporting evidence, as per the **OSFA Complaints and Appeals Policy**. Any appeal will be processed as outlined in the policy.
26. Any submissions must not be addressed directly to, or be submitted via
 - a training officer
 - an OSFA assessor
 - the Academy for Healthcare Science
 - any other individual, which includes all School staff

Reasonable adjustments

27. A trainee with registered disabilities, learning difficulties or specific conditions, may request suitable reasonable adjustments for their needs. This must conform with the **OSFA Reasonable Adjustments Policy**.

Mitigating circumstances, deferment and withdrawal

28. All trainees are expected to sit their OSFA at the scheduled time.
29. If a trainee cannot attend their scheduled OSFA due to recent illness or other unforeseen circumstances, they must inform the School as soon as possible. This must conform with the **OSFA Mitigating Circumstances Policy**. The notification 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.

30. If a trainee wishes to attend the OSFA but has mitigating circumstances that they feel may affect or may have affected their performance at the assessment, they must inform the School as soon as possible. This must conform with the **OSFA Mitigating Circumstances Policy**.
31. If a trainee wishes to consider deferring their OSFA, they must review the **OSFA Exceptional Arrangements Policy** to ensure that they have eligible reasons for deferment. To request a deferment a trainee must submit a 'Request for Exceptional Arrangements' form to the School. The form must be submitted as soon as the potential circumstances prompting their request for deferment are known. All requests will be processed as outlined in the **OSFA Exceptional Arrangements Policy**.
32. If a trainee wishes to withdraw from the OSFA, they must email the School as soon as possible, stating their reasons for withdrawal. The School will acknowledge the notification and contact the trainee in accordance with the NSHCS STP exit procedure.

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.