

Health Education England's Health & Care Professions Council Return to Practice Programme

Introduction

Health Education England (HEE) runs a programme to support Allied Health Professionals (AHPs), Healthcare Scientists (HCS) and Practising Psychologists to return to practice by supporting them to return to the Health Care Professions Council (HCPC) register.

The programme follows the HCPC guidance on return to practice (RTP) and supports accordingly. The programme will support clinicians with a professional healthcare qualification gained in the UK or from overseas whose qualification is recognised by the HCPC.

The national RTP programme has been designed to provide the opportunity for returnees to update skills and knowledge in their chosen profession and within their scope of practice.

The programme can offer clinical, financial and academic support (where applicable) to support the returnee to meet the minimum criteria to RTP and therefore meet the minimum requirements of the HCPC register.

The programme will not arrange clinical placements or recommend specific organisations, but has been set up to support and assist returnees to follow the HCPC RTP guidance.

If you are returning to practice, to re-register with The HCPC they need you to update your knowledge and skills as follows:

0 to 2 years out of practice – no requirements

2 to 5 years out of practice – 30 days of updating

5 or more years out of practice – 60 days of updating

NB: One day is equal to 7 hours

Please find below some of the frequently asked questions on RTP.

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Frequently Asked Questions

1. COVID-19: I am currently on the RTP programme and would like to support my profession with COVID-19. Can I be placed on the temporary register?

If you have been out of practice for between 0-3 years, your name should already be on the temporary register, click [here](#) to view. If your name is on this list, and you would like to offer to support your profession in the COVID-19 pandemic then you need to ensure you meet [HCPC standards for RTP](#).

The HCPC standards will only apply to people on the COVID-19 temporary register if they go back into practice and not if they simply remain on the temporary register without practicing. If you decide to RTP as you are on the temporary register then you need to meet HCPC standards. HCPC standards for RTP include a need to update your knowledge and skills as follows:

0 to 2 years out of practice – no requirements

2 to 5 years out of practice – 30 days of updating

NB: One day is equal to 7 hours

You also need to meet HCPC standards for RTP to achieve your permanent registration with HCPC.

If you have been out of practice for 3 years or more, based on our current risk assessment you will be unable to join the temporary register. You will therefore need to continue the RTP programme in order to re-join your profession. For any further queries regarding this please contact e-regtemp@hcpc-uk.org.

You may also wish to complete the NHS online survey to support matching you to potential COVID-19 employment by clicking [here](#)

For more information on the temporary register please click [here](#)

2. COVID 19: I want to support during COVID-19 but have been de-registered for more than 3 years. What can I do?

Currently, the temporary register is only eligible for individuals who have de-registered in the last 3 years. However, you can support the NHS in other ways such as by practising in an assistant role or under a non-protected title which reflects your current level of skills and knowledge. If you get in touch with your local NHS trust, they will be able to advise you on what support they need / roles are available. You can also search websites such as NHS jobs where you can find specific roles relating to COVID-19 such as therapy support workers or health care assistants.

You may also wish to complete the NHS online survey to support matching you to potential COVID-19 employment by clicking [here](#)

3. COVID-19: Will I be able to use any paid employment or volunteering I do during COVID-19 as evidence for RTP days to permanently re-register with The HCPC?

Any paid employment or volunteering you undertake alongside a member of your own profession can be used to count towards your hours on the RTP programme and submitted to the HCPC as evidence for registration. If you are not working alongside a member of your own profession then you cannot use this as evidence of updating skills and knowledge for HCPC purposes. For clarification, working alongside may mean you are working within a team with a registered professional from your profession and not necessarily working in same room as the registered professional.

4. COVID-19: I joined the temporary register during COVID-19 and would now like to return to practice permanently. What do I need to do?

You need to register with the RTP programme by clicking [here](#). Someone from the RTP team will be in touch to support you with the process. You may also like to read more information on HCPC website and HEE RTP page.

5. How do I join the RTP programme?

You need to register with the RTP programme by clicking [here](#).

6. What are the Inclusion criteria for the HEE RTP programme?

The programme will support the following health and care professionals:

- Qualified AHPs, HCS and Practising Psychologists living in England who want to return to the HCPC register to work in a health, education or social care environment in England.
- Those health and care professionals previously registered with the HCPC
- Those health and care professionals who qualified in the UK but have not registered with the HCPC in the last five years. If you have not registered with the HCPC since qualifying and it is over five years, please use [HCPC contact details](#) to contact the HCPC for advice.
- Registered with the HCPC and looking for a period of clinical updating as you have remained on the register but have not practised in a patient facing role for at least 2 years.

7. What are the exclusion criteria for the HEE RTP programme?

- Currently the programme is not open to AHPs, Healthcare Scientists and Practising Psychologist who have qualified abroad and have not been registered with the HCPC. Please see [HCPC guidance for overseas registrants](#)

- Returnees looking to work outside England when returned to the HCPC register
- Excludes any individual that has a fitness to practice issue cited against them on the HCPC register.

The programme is unable to support Biomedical Scientists looking to undertake a period of updating to meet their Certificate of Competency. The programme is unable to support training posts.

8. Why should I consider returning now?

You already have some of the skills and experience that can make a big difference to patients, clients, carers and their families. Healthcare, education and social care providers are looking at developing and growing their workforce. They need skilled AHPs, HCS, and Practising Psychologists to join their workforce by returning to practice.

9. Do I need to re-train?

No; you do not need to retrain.

You hold a qualification in your chosen profession. Returning to practice is about gaining registration with the HCPC for you to be able to use a protected title and work for an approved health, education or social care organisation. The amount of updating of skills and knowledge required is stipulated by the duration of time you have been off the HCPC register. The period of updating is set by the HCPC; see their [website](#) for more details.

The route you take can be individualised to your learning needs to a large extent. There are a variety of options to suit individual learning needs including: private study, formal study, and supervised practice days. Please note however that no more than 50% of the total hours required can be private study. Please click [here](#) for more information.

10. What should I consider when planning how I will complete the updating of my skills and knowledge?

It is advised that you set some time aside to write down a plan of what skills and knowledge you need to update before you embark on the RTP process. You also then need to identify how you intend to achieve this updating.

The HCPC advise that activities you carry out to update your knowledge and skills will depend on:

- the area in which you plan to work when you begin practicing again;
- your prior experience;

- any relevant skills you gained whilst out of practice; and
- any relevant developments in your profession during the time when you were out of practice.

Some universities in England are running profession specific RTP courses, although they are limited. They are not validated or endorsed by HEE or the HCPC. You can find these courses on the individual universities' websites.

If you opt to arrange some supervised practice, the NHS, education or social care organisation will work with you on an induction back into their setting. The organisations supporting supervised practice can only support you with updating your skills and knowledge if you present them with a clear structured plan of what you are aiming to achieve. Remember the organisation is not obliged to provide a placement in the area you request, therefore some flexibility may be required. It is worth considering trying to secure some supervised practice days in an NHS, education or social care service that you may wish to consider applying for a job at once you have returned to the HCPC register. This helps you to build up a local professional network of contacts that may prove useful to you in helping you to find employment once you return to the HCPC register.

11. Part way through the RTP programme I will be over 5 years out of practice how many days updating do I need to complete?

As you will be 5 or more years out of practice by the time you apply to the HCPC for registration then you will need to complete 60 days of updating. NB: One day is equal to 7 hours.

12. Do I have to do full days to meet HCPC requirements to register?

The HCPC consider one day to be equivalent to 7 hours so you need to complete the equivalent amount of hours to 30 days (210 hours) or 60 days (420 hours) as required. If you are not able to complete full days (7 hours) you can complete the required hours/days flexibly.

13. How do I join the closed facebook group?

The programme has a closed Facebook page supported by the programme team. Its members are past and present returnees.

You will be invited to join the closed facebook group using your unique reference number once you have signed up to the RTP programme. This group is only open to people registered on the RTP programme. Please do not invite others to join who are not registered on the programme.

The group is useful for posting queries to other members that may be able to support you and have conversations about the RTP process. It is also a good source of information on free on-line courses others have used for private study or to understand more about formal study options other returnees may have undertaken.

Please note we expect polite, courteous, and well- mannered interactions on the group. Any behaviour considered disruptive, rude or offensive to others in the group

will not be tolerated and such posts removed and individuals asked to leave the group if necessary.

Please adhere to HCPC [social media guidance](#) and guidance from your own professional body when using the facebook group.

14. Will I need to take any exams?

No. You need to show through evidence you have updated your skills and knowledge by a variety of Continuing Professional Development (CPD). However, some universities may ask you to complete an assignment as part of their course. It is about you providing evidence to the HCPC that you are competent. For more information visit: [HCPC CPD](#).

15. Who will assess I am competent to practice?

The HCPC will assess competency to practice through the evidence you provide. When submitting your evidence, you will self-declare you are fit and competent to practice and have updated your skills and knowledge with your scope of practice. You are advised to read the [HCPC RTP guidance](#) and [HCPC Standards of Proficiency](#).

16. Will my return phase be funded?

Funding is available to support formal study, private study and supervised practice. Further information can be provided by the National RTP Team. Please note we can only provide funding if you are being supported by a NHS, educational and social care commissioned service.

17. Can I work as a support worker to update my skills?

Yes. Several returnees who are qualified clinicians use support worker roles to update their skills. Some organisations will offer these roles to support RTP. Please check the NHS jobs websites such as NHS Jobs and Tracs for potential roles that may accommodate your needs. The other common route is working voluntary with an organisation under an honorary contract.

18. Do I require a DBS and who funds this?

Yes. You will be required to have a Disclosure Baring Service (DBS) completed prior to any supervised practice or prior to commencement of some university programmes. Funding of this will depend on organisational policy. HEE has asked that any cost for DBS is not passed onto the returnee, although HEE is unable to enforce this. Should you be charged for a DBS your out of pocket expenses will cover this.

19. Do I need indemnity insurance?

The HCPC requires all registrants to have adequate indemnity insurance at registration. All providers of health and social care have indemnity insurance so if you are employed to support your supervised practice or provided with an honorary contract this should provide cover. Please discuss this with your supervised practice provider or your professional body to confirm. HEE will not provide indemnity

insurance and cannot be held responsible for your practice and adequate cover. Indemnity insurance in most cases is provided by professional bodies if you join or register with them.

20. Will the HEE HCPC programme lead directly into employment?

The programme cannot guarantee to lead directly into employment. The programme has been designed to support you to return to the HCPC register and get you into a position where you can seek employment. Some supervised practice providers may provide or offer opportunities of employment post re-registration.

21. I have retired and received an NHS pension, but I am interested in returning part time – is this possible?

In respect of employment, we recommend reading the factsheet on the [NHS pension's website](#).

22. Will I be able to work flexibly if I return?

Flexible working for returnees is an option, but we suggest you discuss this with local health, education and social care providers on an individual basis.

23. Is there anything I can do to prepare before I return to practice?

Do not underestimate the time and effort it will take to RTP. The health, education and social care settings have changed and therefore you will be required to show to the HCPC your learning and understanding meets with the requirements of the present systems.

Some local trusts and universities may offer open days so that you can visit and look around.

You are encouraged to read key policy documents that can be found on the Department of Health website.

Sit down and create a plan of how you intend to undertake your updating, but be clear what you consider the areas you need to update are. Read [HCPC Return to Practice Information](#) .

24. How do I confirm how long I have been out of practice?

The HCPC hold a record of all AHPs and HCS currently and previously registered with them. Details of how to contact the HCPC are on this link [HCPC contact details](#). You can contact The HCPC to ask them to provide you with a letter confirming the date you left the register and if there are any fitness to practice issues on your record. A copy of this letter can be provided as evidence to any organisation offering a supervised practice placement.

In some circumstance you may have not been added to the register or your profession joined the HCPC registration since you left, therefore you may not have a HCPC number. Please contact the HCPC for further advice.

25. What other documents will I need?

All organisations will require you to undertake a DBS (Disclosure and Baring Service) and provide a certificate. Other useful documents to have at hand are your birth certificate, national insurance number, qualification certificates, passport and if required to use your car please ensure your car insurance covers you for business use. You may be asked to complete a health check questionnaire or medical for occupational health.

26. How long does it take to return to practice?

The HCPC stipulates that you have a maximum of a year to complete the relevant period of updating.

How long it takes for you to RTP will depend on several factors such as how quickly you are able to complete the stipulated number of days/hours of private study, formal study and supervised practice.

27. How do I apply to return to the register?

Please click [here](#)

Once you have completed the required days, you will be required to get a fellow AHP from your profession who is HCPC registered to sign to say you have completed the hours you are stating. They are not signing to say you are competent or safe to practice, that it is your responsibility to justify your competency to the HCPC. You need to be aware some organisation may request you understand and adhere to any national or local competencies if they provide clinical experience for you. The signatory is only signing to confirm to the best their knowledge that the evidence you have provide is correct and to confirm any days clinical you have completed.

28. How long does it take to be placed back on the HCPC register once I apply?

In most cases it can take up to 10 working days for your name to be added to the relevant profession HCPC register. On some occasions it may take longer if verification of the information is required. The most common reason for delay is that the form has not been completed fully and therefore returned to the applicant. The HCPC advice you read all the information correctly and check before submitting. You will appear on the on-line register before receiving your certificate and paperwork. If you already have been issued with a HCPC this is the number you will use when registered.

29. I haven't practiced in my chosen profession for a long time. Does this matter?

The RTP programme is open to all, regardless of how long you have been out of practice. It is important you understand that the delivery of health, education and social care will have changed from when you last practised. It is also important you gain the correct support and meet the minimum requirements stipulated by the HCPC.

30. How will HEE ensure my data remains protected?

Throughout the programme any data you provide will be held securely by HEE and used for the purposes of the programme only. Please see [HEE's privacy notice](#) for more information.

Should you not find the answer to your question in the above FAQs then please email R2PAHP-HCS@hee.nhs.uk and the team will endeavour to answer your query.

Good luck!

Health Education England HCPC Return to Practice team