The New Curriculum
for Trainees and Trainers

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In 2020, a new Curriculum for postgraduate Otolaryngology training will be introduced and implemented. The last Curriculum update was as recent as 2017; the curriculum in 2020 may be entirely different to the previous iterations of the curriculum, but the final document is yet to be made public.

If the content is drastically different, this will have an impact on both those trainees currently in training as well the 2020 intake from the National Recruitment process. What might be overlooked is that this will also impact on the Consultants responsible for training, in roles either as Clinical Supervisors or Educational Supervisors.

There is also an impact on those consultants in Training Programme Director roles, or Clinical Lead positions, who must work with departmental management to ensure trainees allocated to their unit are able to meet curriculum content, annual review competencies and requirements.

Data collected by AOT suggests that trainees’ confidence in those responsible for their training and their understanding of the curriculum is limited. Trainees’ average confidence in Assigned Education Supervisors understanding of the ARCP process was at only 67%, and even lower at only 60% for Clinical Supervisors. Regarding the process of work-based assessments, the trainees’ confidence in Assigned Educational Supervisors understanding of the level 0-4b grading was only 62%, whilst for Clinical Supervisors, this was only 57%.

Simultaneously, in another survey, data suggests there is at best a lack of understanding amongst the trainees about the curriculum and the syllabus they are accessing, and what they are reading as curriculum. Only 50% of trainees had read the curriculum; 15% had read only part of it.

If this data is representative of practice throughout the country, then even with the current curriculum, training is not being delivered as intended.

The new curriculum will be implemented in 2020, and as such AOT and ENTUK have proposed to work together early, and pre-emptively, to maximise best use of the new curriculum. The consensus is that a new curriculum, despite the concerns previously raised and the initial efforts by trainees have an input on the content, should be used as an opportunity to improve current curriculum use and engagement. Both trainees and trainers should be encouraged to, and feel enabled to, share challenges, solutions and experiences of use of the curriculum, to aim for excellence and success with it. One expects that confidence and understanding of the process should achieve higher scores than have been identified.

It was on this background that AOT and ENTUK are collaborating to both support trainers and trainees as the new curriculum is introduced, but also to collect key data regarding the use of the new curriculum.

We will be grateful for your support, in responding to surveys that will help us to monitor the success of use of the curriculum, and collect useful data. In addition, there will be a forum for sharing experience, success and good practice with the use of the new curriculum, and also to support each other by discussing challenges identified and/or addressed once the new curriculum is implemented from the summer of 2020.

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