IMMUNOLOGY AND ALLERGY
(w.e.f. 1 Jul 2016)

(I) OBJECTIVES

1. To provide a broad training and in-depth experience at a level sufficient for trainees to acquire competence and professionalism of a specialist in Immunology & Allergy.

2. To provide broad-based education towards the understanding of immunological mechanisms underlying clinical diseases.

3. To provide in-depth supervised training in managing patients suffering from immunological disorders.

4. To enhance the appropriate and effective use of immunological investigations in clinical diagnosis and treatment.

5. To stimulate research in Clinical Immunology.

6. To acquire professional competence in training future trainees in Immunology & Allergy.

(II) STRUCTURE

1. This period consists of three years of supervised and accredited training in Immunology and Allergy. The three-year training programme comprises two years of core training in Immunology and Allergy as described below (with a minimum of 12 months of core training to be undertaken in training units that have been formally accredited by the College) plus one year of training in any of the following:

   1.1. The same specialty which may be accredited for a maximum of 12 months, AND/OR

   1.2. A broad-based specialty, defined as Advanced Internal Medicine (AIM), which may be accredited for a maximum of 12 months, AND/OR

   1.3. Overseas training in Immunology and Allergy may be accredited for a maximum of twelve months, with prior approval by the specialty board

2. To ensure the acquisition of a broad-based physician training for all Higher Physician Trainees undergoing Immunology and Allergy training, the College requires that all registered Higher Physician Trainees undergo dual training in a broad-based specialty, defined as Advanced Internal Medicine (AIM), together with training in Immunology and Allergy. Fellows who have been trained in Immunology and Allergy without a broad-based specialty

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will not be accepted as Trainer in any specialty in the future.

3. The structures of dual training programmes approved by the College include the following and Trainees must clearly indicate the programme chosen when applying to be registered as Higher Physician Trainee of the College:

3.1 Concurrent training: A minimum of four years of supervised training is required. The training programme comprises 24 months (cumulative) of core training in AIM and 24 months (cumulative) of core training in Immunology and Allergy.

3.2 Sequential training: A minimum of five years of supervised training is required in Immunology and Allergy. The training programme comprises 36 months training in either Immunology and Allergy or AIM followed by 24 months of core training in remaining specialty.

4. The trainee should rotate through a minimum of two units/institutions to ensure optimal exposure to the practice of Immunology and Allergy.

5. The trainee should acquire clinical experience and become competent in the major areas of immunological practice as listed in Section (III) A. A minimum of 6 months of supervised training in each of Allergy & Hypersensitivity and Primary & Secondary immunodeficiency is required. Supervised training in Autoimmune & immune-complex diseases and Transplantation each of minimum 3 months and maximum 6 months duration is required.

6. Laboratory experience constitutes an integral part of the training programme. In addition, full-time training in laboratory immunology for 3 months is required during the 24-month training. Refer to Section (III) C for core laboratory components.

7. Fellows in related subspecialty may choose to be exempted from training in relevant areas in (III) A.

(III) CONTENTS

(A) Knowledge

The trainee shall acquire a thorough understanding of the structure and functions of the immune system, mechanisms of immunological tissue damage and immunopathogenesis of common diseases. The trainee should be familiar with the following areas which constitute major immunological practices:

1. Allergy and hypersensitivity
2 Primary and secondary immunodeficiency
3 Autoimmune and immune-complex diseases
4 Transplantation

(B) Experience

The trainee should be directly involved in the management of all four areas of major immunological practices in Section (III) A. He/she should develop competence in the diagnosis, management and the use of immunologically-based therapeutic intervention, as well as allergen avoidance and desensitization in patients with allergic hypersensitivity.

(C) Skills

The trainee must acquire sufficient background knowledge in basic and applied immunology through guided learning and exposure to laboratory immunology. He/she should become familiar with diagnostic techniques in Immunology and Allergy, their interpretation, quality assurance and their relevance in the major immunological practices areas. Such immunological investigations include:

1 Autoimmune serology.
2 Immunochemistry.
3 Cellular immunology techniques, including flow cytometry, lymphocyte and neutrophil function tests.
4 Tissue typing.
5 Various forms of allergy tests including skin tests and specific IgE assays.

(D) Additional Knowledge

Commitment to on-going improvement in clinical immunological practices requires that the trainee be involved in research relevant to his/her area of practice. There should be exposure to the development of research strategies, methodology and evaluation. Such opportunities should be available throughout the training period, and may be accredited as training in laboratory as per Section (II) 6.

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(IV) INSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENTS

A trainee in Immunology and Allergy should enrol in at least two College recognised units/institutions

1 The unit/institution providing training must be staffed by a College-accredited trainer in Immunology and Allergy. Local trainer must be a Fellow of the College who possesses at least two years of relevant post-Fellowship experience, and must be a College accredited specialist in Immunology and Allergy. The trainer to trainee ratio should be no less than 1:2 at any one time.

2 In all training units for programmes detailed in Section (III), there should be the following provisions:

   2.1 Education activities to provide the necessary grounding in basic and clinical immunology in general;

   2.2 Relevant laboratory facilities in Immunology and Allergy;

   2.3 Library and facilities for clinical meetings and presentations;

   2.4 Affiliation with extended care facilities;

   2.5 Quality assurance programmes.

3 An immunology laboratory described under Section (II) 6 and (III) C shall be a service laboratory which provides a full range of diagnostic investigations on a routine basis. A trainee may acquire the experience through rotation to more than one laboratory if a full service laboratory is not available or accessible. For those who choose to gain laboratory experience through research, a project which employs a reasonably broad range of immunological investigations should be organised. Supplementary laboratory attachment shall be arranged should the above facilities fail to give adequate exposure to a comprehensive range of immunological investigations.

4 Approval of the Specialty Board should be sought in advance if training in any part(s) of the programme is planned to be undertaken in an overseas institution.