



Stage A and B Cervical Cytology Training Guidance

This guidance is for all trainees in Stage A and B of the [2015 Histopathology curriculum](#).

Background

Changes in the laboratory aspect of cervical screening across the UK will mean a reduction in the number of samples requiring cytology to one sixth of the current level. The consequences of this are that the forty-nine laboratories in England involved in this work will reduce to eight by April 2020, with two centres in Scotland and one in Wales. The model for Northern Ireland has yet to be agreed. The geographic distribution of these cervical cytology laboratories is not uniform, which is impacting on the delivery of cervical cytology training for Stage A and B Histopathology trainees.

Following recent discussions at the Cytopathology Specialty Advisory Committee (SAC) and the Cellular Pathology College Specialty Training Committee (CSTC), and with the support of the General Medical Council, the following guidance is being issued in order to ensure that current trainees can still meet the requirements of the histopathology curriculum by using the flexibility inherent within it.

Current curriculum requirements

Trainees should ensure that they are aware of the requirements as outlined in the content of the curriculum (pages 35-36 and 51-52 for Stages A and B, respectively). The curriculum 'is a competency based curriculum and as such *there are no absolute minimum numbers*'. The College is therefore re-iterating that the numbers stated in the curriculum are indicative only and that other evidence can be collected by trainees to demonstrate that they have met the cervical cytology requirements of the curriculum.

Cervical Cytology Training Guidance

The delivery of cervical cytology training will depend on the circumstances in each deanery/LETB, and the aim is for training to be delivered according to what best suits their programme. Deaneries/LETBs should discuss with their relevant cervical cytology training centre what training is required and ensure that suitable resources are made available. This guidance is not intended to be proscriptive but rather intends to outline suggestions for the delivery of cervical cytology training.

Training in cervical cytology can be delivered via:

- Formal courses/training days provided by a cervical laboratory or cytology training school sufficient to cover the curriculum.
- Glass slide sets or digital images developed for direct teaching (this may or may not require a visiting trainer), which could be shared between training programmes.
- Use of any available suitable e-learning packages.
- Any other suitable learning experiences as outlined in pages 13-14 of the histopathology curriculum.

All of these learning experiences are suitable for the delivery of directed workplace-based assessments which are outlined on pages 126-128 of the current curriculum and a mix of the above is recommended.



Trainees attending an ARCP should present appropriate evidence that they have completed the requisite cervical cytology training for the completion of Stages A and/or B via any of the above or other suitable learning experience, including the completion of any directed workplace-based assessments.

Future arrangements

The histopathology curriculum is currently being developed in order to meet the revised GMC standards. The curriculum working group is aware of the issues around cervical cytology and have ensured that the new histopathology curriculum takes cognisance of this.

Information about the new curriculum is available on the [College website](#). This guidance will remain valid until the introduction of the new histopathology curriculum and requisite transitional arrangements.

Further information

Anyone requiring further information or clarification regarding cervical cytology training can contact Joanne Brinklow, Director of Learning, joanne.brinklow@rcpath.org.