

## Clinical oncology tasters for foundation trainees

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# 1 Why should we set up a foundation taster in clinical oncology?

The majority of applicants to clinical oncology specialty training will choose geography (staying in the region they are already in) over specialty. Therefore to fill training posts it is vital that training programmes attract local applicants.

There is generally very little exposure to clinical oncology during medical school or foundation training and tasters are an excellent way of addressing that gap, giving foundation doctors an opportunity to experience the specialty. This can help to focus key career decisions. A good experience in a taster can have a significant impact on local recruitment.

## 2 Aims of a taster

- ❖ To introduce the specialty of clinical oncology to junior doctors.
- ❖ To present a clear and accurate picture of the variety of work of a clinical oncologist.
- ❖ To inspire possible future colleagues.
- ❖ To aid foundation trainees' future career decision making (a trainee deciding clinical oncology is not the career for them after a taster is just as valuable as one deciding it is).
- ❖ To increase knowledge of the specialty and to promote the specialty to others.

## 3 Benefits of tasters to foundation trainees

- ❖ Tasters give them an insight into a specialty they would otherwise have little experience of.
- ❖ Tasters can help to develop both clinical and personal skills.
- ❖ Tasters present an opportunity to meet current clinical oncology trainees and consultants.
- ❖ Tasters expose foundation trainees to new clinical experiences.

## 4 Application/eligibility

Tasters are frequently only open to F2s, but if possible should be made available to F1s as well to widen their reach. Some foundation schools permit transfer of taster options between F1 and F2. If possible tasters should also be open to core trainees.

Some form of application may be required when spaces are limited but what that process is and what is required will be for local departments to decide. It is likely that the local Foundation Programme Office will be able to advise and may have a standard application form. (*For links to local foundation offices see section 12*)

Applications should be signed off by the foundation trainee's educational supervisor (this will be required for them to access leave).

## 5 How to set up a taster

*These steps are suggestions only. Exactly how it should be done will vary from centre to centre. Anyone wishing to establish a taster should consult with their local Foundation Programme and other departments that already have such programmes in place.*

- ❖ Discuss the idea and your intentions with:
  - Consultant and trainee colleagues (they will need to be involved and enthusiastic to make it successful)
  - Other colleagues that might be involved (medical oncologists, nurses, radiographers, physicists etc)

- Medical Education Department
  - Foundation School Training Programme Director
  - Administrators that might be involved in organisational details
  - Relevant contacts at the deanery/LETB
- ❖ Consider whether the taster will be just be for clinical oncology or whether it will be a more general “oncology” taster covering medical as well as clinical oncology.
  - ❖ Is your taster going to be a formal programme run at specific times of the year, or will it be more informal and available to any interested trainee in any given week on an ad hoc basis?
  - ❖ Consider capacity within the department
    - Can full-week tasters be accommodated (the ideal) or are 2-3 day tasters more realistic? *One-day or evening tasters also have value (see separate guidance).*
    - If you are running fixed taster weeks how many times a year can it be run?
    - How many trainees can be accommodated on each taster?
  - ❖ Identify a lead contact who will be responsible for the trainees taking part.
  - ❖ Develop a comprehensive programme and timetable (see sections 7 and 10 below)
    - Will your timetable be set in stone or will participants be able to choose which clinics/planning sessions/MDTs they attend?
  - ❖ Ensure the local Foundation Training Programme Director is kept informed of developments and is fully briefed so that the taster can be included in the Foundation Programme’s register of tasters, and promoted via local department of medical education.
  - ❖ Consider how and where the taster will be advertised
    - Foundation Programme website (it is vital that is included in the FP’s register of tasters)
    - Hospital/Department website/intranet
    - Deanery/LETB website
    - Medical Education Department website
    - Any relevant social media accounts/pages (Facebook/Twitter)
    - Word of mouth
  - ❖ Consider who the taster will be open to:
    - F1 and F2 or just F2 (may depend on local FP rules)
    - Locally based trainees only or...
    - Open application from trainees anywhere in the country
  - ❖ Develop and agree the application form and process.
  - ❖ Develop an evaluation form for trainees taking part to complete. This will be invaluable in refining the programme offered and evaluating success.

## **6 Things you will need to make it a success**

- ❖ Named consultant to oversee the whole programme
- ❖ Named co-ordinating registrar (point of contact for the trainees)
- ❖ Enthusiastic consultants, trainees, therapy radiographers, nurses, physicists etc. to lead sessions
- ❖ Named point of contact for each session
- ❖ Strong administrative support (use the medical education department if there is one)

## 7 What to include in any taster programme

All tasters should include a good mix of clinics, RT planning, multi-disciplinary team meetings and talks from specialty registrars, training leads, and other team members. Visiting departments such as pharmacy and nuclear medicine gives a real sense of what specialty training involves.

### 7.1 *Vital:*

- ❖ Outpatient clinics (new patients and follow-up patients)
- ❖ Hands-on RT planning (let them have a go)
- ❖ MDTs
- ❖ Chemotherapy suite
- ❖ Different cancer sites
- ❖ Inpatients (a session on the ward)

### 7.2 *Other sessions to consider:*

- ❖ Sit in on an SpR teaching session
- ❖ A talk from a trainee and a consultant on what training and a career in oncology entails (include time for a Q&A)
- ❖ A practical session with the therapy radiographers to see how RT is delivered (use the VERT system if you have one in your centre)
- ❖ Shadowing the acute oncology service
- ❖ Sessions in both cancer centre and DGH settings if possible
- ❖ A session with the nuclear medicine department
- ❖ A session with a pharmacist
- ❖ A talk on the patient journey (delivered by a specialist nurse or patient expert/volunteer)
- ❖ A talk from an academic clinical oncologist about opportunities for academic pathways and involvement in research as a clinical oncologist
- ❖ Networking – time to meet and talk in depth to SpRs and consultants about the specialty (make it a social event)

*Some example timetables are included below.*

## 8 Information to send to participants

- ❖ Timetable
- ❖ Contact details for lead consultant and lead registrar
- ❖ Names of the leads for each session
- ❖ Any other practical information they may need e.g.
  - Car parking charges;
  - Lockers;
  - Access codes etc.

## 9 Potential difficulties you may encounter:

- ❖ Availability of consultants/trainees/allied health professionals during specified week
  - plan well in advance and get buy-in from everyone you want involved
- ❖ Clashes with other commitments in foundation calendar
  - liaise with the foundation programme director and get their support
- ❖ Attracting trainees to your taster over others on the programme when they have limited time available to them
  - Make the timetable as varied and engaging as possible. Participants will tell their colleagues about it so it's really important that they have a positive experience.
  - Target your advertising and use word of mouth – tell trainees you come across about it and get your colleagues to do the same
- ❖ Securing the necessary administrative support
  - If your hospital has a medical education department make use of them
  - Work with the local foundation programme office to ensure they include it in their communications

## 10 Template timetables

How programmes are structured will depend entirely on local arrangements and ways of working. These templates are intended simply to give you ideas of what can be included and how a varied programme might be built.

### 10.1 Template 1: Three day clinical oncology taster

	Morning		Afternoon	
	Session lead	Clinic & location	Session lead	Clinic & location
<b>Monday</b>	SpR	Sign-in and short welcome talk on what to expect	Clinical Oncology Consultant	Physics planning
	Clinical Oncology Consultant	Site specific MDT & Clinic (new patients)	Nuclear medicine department	Nuclear medicine
Senior therapy radiographer			Radiotherapy	
<b>Tuesday</b>	Clinical Oncology Consultant	Site-specific MDT/clinic (existing patients)	On-call SpR	Shadow SpR on the oncology ward
			Specialist nurse / patient expert	The patient journey
<b>Wednesday</b>	Clinical Oncology Consultant	Radiotherapy planning	AOS	AOS MDT and shadow AOS service
			SpR/Programme Director/RCR Tutor	Career in oncology talk and Q&A session
			Consultants/SpRs	Networking opportunity

## 10.2 Template 2: Five day clinical oncology taster

	Morning		Afternoon	
	Session lead	Clinical & location	Session lead	Clinic & location
<b>Monday</b>	SpR	Sign-in and short welcome talk on what to expect	Specialist nurse	The patient journey
	Senior Clinical Oncology SpR/Consultant	Site-specific MDT and/or clinic	Senior therapy radiographer Chemotherapy nurse	RT practical demonstration Intro to the chemotherapy suite & the outpatient clinic
<b>Tuesday</b>	Clinical Oncology Consultant	Site-specific MDT/clinic (new patients)	Nuclear medicine department	Nuclear medicine
			Clinical Oncology Consultant	Physics planning
<b>Wednesday</b>	Clinical Oncology Consultant	Radiotherapy planning	Acute oncology service	AOS MDT
			SpR	Training in clinical oncology talk
			TPD/RCR Tutor	SpR Teaching session
<b>Thursday</b>	Clinical Oncology Consultant	Site-specific MDT/Clinic (existing patients)	Acute oncology service	Shadow Acute Oncology Service
			Senior Pharmacist	Pharmacy
<b>Friday</b>	On-call SpR	Shadow SpR on the oncology ward	SpR/TPD	Career in oncology talk and Q&A
			Consultants/ SpRs	Networking opportunity

## 10.3 Template 3: Five day oncology taster (CO and MO)

Based on the South Wales Oncology taster programme – more details on the programme and how it was set up are available at [https://www.rcr.ac.uk/sites/default/files/cardiff\\_good\\_practice\\_-\\_developing\\_a\\_foundation\\_taster.pdf](https://www.rcr.ac.uk/sites/default/files/cardiff_good_practice_-_developing_a_foundation_taster.pdf)

	Morning		Afternoon	
	Session lead	Clinic & location	Session lead	Clinic & location
<b>Monday</b>	SpR	Sign-in and short welcome talk on what to expect	On-call SpR	Shadow SpR on the oncology ward
	Medical Oncology Consultant	MDT & Clinic Acute Oncology Service		
<b>Tuesday</b>	Clinical Oncology Consultant	DGH based MDT/clinic	Clinical Oncology Consultant	DGH based MDT/Clinic
<b>Wednesday</b>	Medical Oncology Consultant	MDT/Clinic	Clinical Oncology Consultant	Physics planning
			TPD	SpR Teaching
<b>Thursday</b>	Clinical Oncology Consultant	Clinic	Senior Pharmacist	Pharmacy
			SpR/Programme Director	Career in oncology talk and Q&A
<b>Friday</b>	Clinical Oncology Consultant	Radiotherapy planning	AOS	AOS MDT
			Nuclear medicine department	Nuclear medicine
			Senior therapy radiographer	Radiotherapy

#### 10.4 Template 4: Five day “create your own” oncology taster (CO and MO)

Based on the Newcastle Oncology taster programme. More information about Newcastle’s programme is available in a case study here [https://www.rcr.ac.uk/sites/default/files/oncology\\_tasters-case\\_study.pdf](https://www.rcr.ac.uk/sites/default/files/oncology_tasters-case_study.pdf).

	Morning	Afternoon
<b>Monday</b>	Choose one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upper GI and HPB FU <b>Clinic</b> (MO)</li> <li>• <b>Radiotherapy planning</b> 3 consultants with site specialist interest of lung/lower GI <b>OR</b> breast/head and neck</li> <li>• Early phase <b>trials unit</b> (MO)</li> <li>• Breast <b>Clinic</b> (CO)</li> <li>• <b>Radiotherapy</b> review “floor” clinic (CO)</li> </ul>	Choose one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ward</b> - ward SHOs</li> <li>• Breast <b>clinic</b> (CO)</li> <li>• Lung/upper GI <b>clinic</b> (CO)</li> </ul>
<b>Tuesday</b>	Choose one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Radiotherapy planning</b> (lung, male GU)</li> <li>• <b>Radiotherapy</b> review clinic level</li> <li>• Lower GI <b>clinic</b> (CO)</li> <li>• Nurse led oral chemo <b>clinic</b> day unit</li> <li>• Melanoma targeted therapies <b>clinic</b> (MO)</li> </ul>	Choose one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Melanoma <b>clinic</b> (Joint MO/CO)</li> <li>• <b>Ward</b> –ward SHOs</li> </ul>
<b>Wednesday</b>	Choose one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lymphoma <b>clinic</b> (CO)</li> <li>• Upper GI <b>clinic</b> (MO)</li> <li>• <b>Radiotherapy planning</b> (lung upper GI)</li> </ul>	Choose one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colorectal <b>MDM</b></li> <li>• Uro-oncology <b>clinic</b></li> <li>• <b>Consultant ward round</b> (GI team)</li> </ul>
<b>Thursday</b>	Choose one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urology <b>clinic</b></li> <li>• HPB/NET <b>MDM</b></li> <li>• Head and Neck <b>clinic</b> (CO)</li> <li>• Breast <b>clinic</b></li> </ul>	Choose one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Trials unit</b> (MO)</li> <li>• <b>Radiotherapy planning</b> (head and neck, breast) (CO)</li> </ul>
<b>Friday</b>	Choose one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upper GI <b>mdm</b></li> <li>• <b>Ward</b></li> <li>• <b>Radiotherapy planning</b> (breast/lung)</li> </ul>	Choose one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upper GI <b>new patient clinic</b> (MO)</li> <li>• <b>Clinic</b> (upper GI/lung) (CO)</li> </ul>

## 11 Top Ten Tips for Tasters

1. Plan carefully and get buy-in from all your colleagues
2. Secure support from the local Foundation Programme Director early in the process
3. Make a decision on the duration, capacity and frequency of the programme
4. Advertise the opportunity widely
5. Decide at the outset whether it will be clinical oncology specific or have a more general oncology focus
6. Include radiotherapy planning and let them have a go at it
7. Make the timetable as varied and as comprehensive as possible
8. Include time in the clinics
9. Allow time to talk to participants about career paths in clinical oncology
10. Make sure you get feedback and use it to refine the programme

## 12 Useful links

### 12.1 RCR Links

Clinical Oncology Careers website: <https://www.rcr.ac.uk/clinical-oncology-careers>

Clinical Oncology Recruitment Information: <https://www.rcr.ac.uk/clinical-oncology/careers-recruitment/specialty-recruitment>

Clinical Oncology Specialty Training web pages: <https://www.rcr.ac.uk/clinical-oncology/specialty-training>

### 12.2 Foundation School Links

Where possible the links below will take you to the page that lists the key personnel in each foundation school.

East Anglia	<a href="https://heeoee.hee.nhs.uk/node/2686">https://heeoee.hee.nhs.uk/node/2686</a>
Essex, Beds, Herts	<a href="https://heeoee.hee.nhs.uk/node/3667">https://heeoee.hee.nhs.uk/node/3667</a>
East Midlands	<a href="https://www.eastmidlandsdeanery.nhs.uk/page.php?id=1628">https://www.eastmidlandsdeanery.nhs.uk/page.php?id=1628</a>
North Central Thames	<a href="http://www.ucl.ac.uk/medicalschoo/nctfs/about-nctfs/#contact">http://www.ucl.ac.uk/medicalschoo/nctfs/about-nctfs/#contact</a>
North East Thames	<a href="http://netfs.dev.itcs.co.uk/about/us">http://netfs.dev.itcs.co.uk/about/us</a>
North West Thames	<a href="https://www.imperial.ac.uk/medicine/study/nwtf/staff/">https://www.imperial.ac.uk/medicine/study/nwtf/staff/</a>
South Thames	<a href="http://www.stfs.org.uk/whos-who-stfs">http://www.stfs.org.uk/whos-who-stfs</a>
North West	<a href="https://www.nwpgmd.nhs.uk/foundation-training/foundation-programme-directors">https://www.nwpgmd.nhs.uk/foundation-training/foundation-programme-directors</a>
Northern	<a href="https://madeinheene.hee.nhs.uk/foundation_training/Contact-Us">https://madeinheene.hee.nhs.uk/foundation_training/Contact-Us</a>
Northern Ireland	<a href="http://www.nimdta.gov.uk/foundation-training/programme-information/foundation-programmes/">http://www.nimdta.gov.uk/foundation-training/programme-information/foundation-programmes/</a>
Oxford	<a href="http://www.oxforddeanery.nhs.uk/specialty_schools/foundation_school/the_team.aspx">http://www.oxforddeanery.nhs.uk/specialty_schools/foundation_school/the_team.aspx</a>
Peninsula	<a href="http://foundation.peninsula.pgme.carboncrayon.com/contact">http://foundation.peninsula.pgme.carboncrayon.com/contact</a>



Scotland	<a href="http://www.scotlanddeanery.nhs.scot/trainee-information/scottish-foundation-school/meet-the-team/">http://www.scotlanddeanery.nhs.scot/trainee-information/scottish-foundation-school/meet-the-team/</a>
Severn	<a href="http://www.foundation.severndeanery.nhs.uk/staff-contacts/">http://www.foundation.severndeanery.nhs.uk/staff-contacts/</a>
Wales	<a href="https://foundation.walesdeanery.org/trainers-0">https://foundation.walesdeanery.org/trainers-0</a>
Wessex	<a href="http://www.wessexdeanery.nhs.uk/foundation_school/contact_us.aspx">http://www.wessexdeanery.nhs.uk/foundation_school/contact_us.aspx</a>
West Midlands Central	<a href="https://www.westmidlandsdeanery.nhs.uk/Foundation/Foundation-Schools/West-Midlands-Central-Foundation-School">https://www.westmidlandsdeanery.nhs.uk/Foundation/Foundation-Schools/West-Midlands-Central-Foundation-School</a>
West Midlands North	<a href="https://www.westmidlandsdeanery.nhs.uk/Foundation/Foundation-Schools/West-Midlands-North-Foundation-School">https://www.westmidlandsdeanery.nhs.uk/Foundation/Foundation-Schools/West-Midlands-North-Foundation-School</a>
West Midlands South	<a href="https://www.westmidlandsdeanery.nhs.uk/Foundation/Foundation-Schools/West-Midlands-South-Foundation-School">https://www.westmidlandsdeanery.nhs.uk/Foundation/Foundation-Schools/West-Midlands-South-Foundation-School</a>
North Yorkshire & East Coast	<a href="http://www.yorksandhumberdeanery.nhs.uk/foundation_training/contacts/nyec_trust_and_hospital_contacts/ftpds/">http://www.yorksandhumberdeanery.nhs.uk/foundation_training/contacts/nyec_trust_and_hospital_contacts/ftpds/</a>
South Yorkshire	<a href="http://www.yorksandhumberdeanery.nhs.uk/foundation_training/contacts/syfs_trust_and_hospital_contacts/ftpds/">http://www.yorksandhumberdeanery.nhs.uk/foundation_training/contacts/syfs_trust_and_hospital_contacts/ftpds/</a>
West Yorkshire	<a href="http://www.yorksandhumberdeanery.nhs.uk/foundation_training/contacts/wyfs_trust_and_hospital_contacts/ftpds/">http://www.yorksandhumberdeanery.nhs.uk/foundation_training/contacts/wyfs_trust_and_hospital_contacts/ftpds/</a>

### 13 Share your experiences

If you have a taster programme in place that works well, or any other effective activities that showcase the specialty to junior doctors, and you want to share your experiences with your colleagues please let us know. We are keen to build up a bank of resources for others to refer to when setting up their own activities. Please email [clinicalcareers@rcr.ac.uk](mailto:clinicalcareers@rcr.ac.uk)

### 14 Careers resources

If you would like to be sent a pack of clinical oncology careers materials, including leaflets and promotional items, to give to trainees taking part in your taster weeks contact [clinicalcareers@rcr.ac.uk](mailto:clinicalcareers@rcr.ac.uk)

June 2017