

# Addressing National Barriers for UK Clinical Oncology Trainees in Radiotherapy Research

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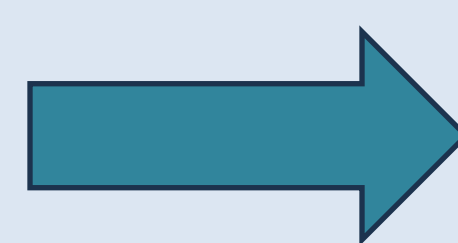
## BACKGROUND

Previous work has shown that clinical oncology trainees in Wales have a strong interest in research but have limited awareness of available opportunities and face barriers including clinical workload and infrastructure. To enhance engagement and awareness of research, a research competency framework for trainees in Wales is being developed.

## METHODS

Oncology consultants (n=13) and trainees (n=11) ranked research activities and competencies from basic to advanced to establish expectations at each training stage, including but not limited to, components of the clinical oncology curriculum (figure 1). A modified delphi method involving research-active oncology consultants (n=20) provided feedback on these competencies for each training year.

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Figure 1: Methods process to establish competencies for each training year.

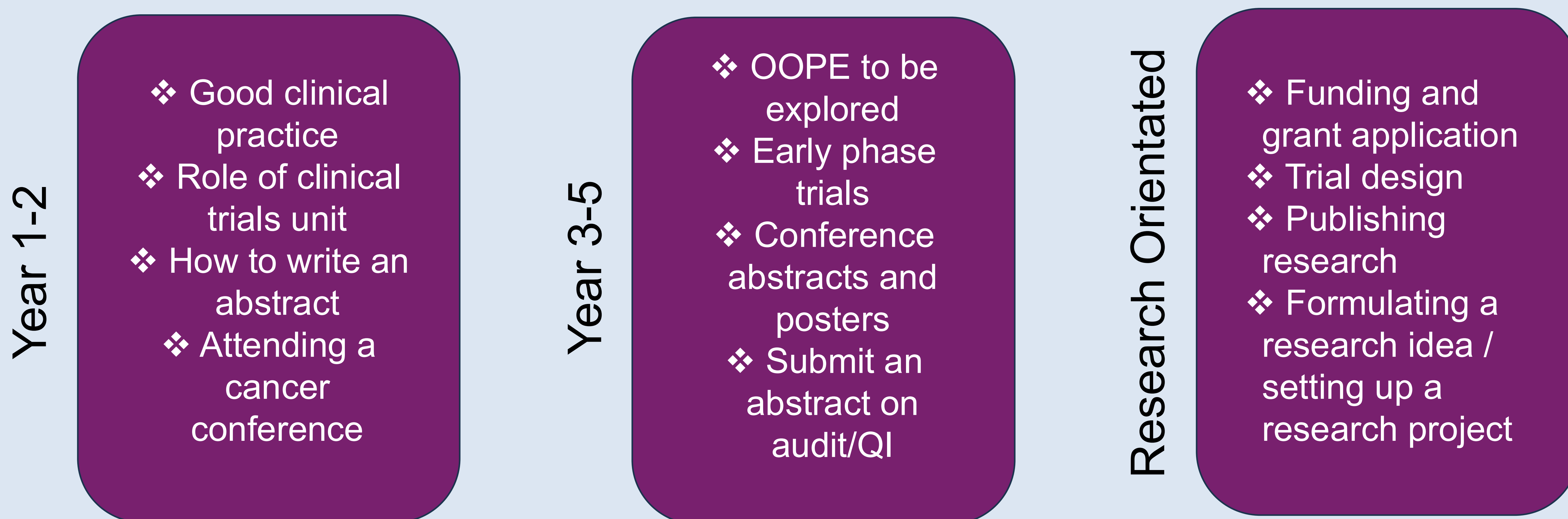


Figure 2: Examples of competencies included in the framework categorised by training year.

## RESULTS

Forty research competencies were categorised into three groups: years 1-2, years 3-5 and research-oriented trainees (figure 2). Good clinical practice accreditation, writing abstracts, and higher degrees were among the included competencies. The training program will be responsible for supporting trainees to achieve these competencies. Initiatives for trainees including regular teaching sessions, dedicated time in an early-phase trial unit, academic representatives at each training site in Wales and an online platform to host research resources are being developed.

## CONCLUSION

Wales is leading the implementation of a research-activity competency framework, providing a guide for oncology trainees and the training programme. This will equip trainees with the essential skills for a research-driven speciality. In view of the critical decline in academic oncologists, this initiative will inspire the next generation of researchers and has the potential to transform and strengthen the national research landscape.