

Less than Full-time Training

Health Education England Wessex Process for Managing Less than Full-time Medical Training

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1.0 Introduction

Health Education England, working across Wessex (HEE WX) offers support to all trainees who, for well-founded individual reasons, wish to be considered for Less than Full-time Training (LTFT). The intention is to keep doctors within the NHS who might otherwise leave due to an inability to work on a full time basis. LTFT is available to all training grades within HEE WX.

All LTFT training of any kind must take place in posts and programmes prospectively approved by the GMC for training purposes. LTFT training is subject to eligibility, the identification of a suitable placement and availability of resources.

The key aims of LTFT training are:

- To retain doctors within the NHS workforce who are unable to train on a full time basis
- To promote career development and work/life balance for doctors training within the NHS
- To ensure continued training in programmes on a time-equivalent (pro rata) basis
- To maintain a balance in LTFT arrangements with regards to educational needs and those of the service

New LTFT training applications must be submitted a minimum of 3 months in advance of planned start date.

Newly appointed trainees should be aware that training posts are offered on a full-time basis and a request for LTFT training does not guarantee that it will be in place for the post start date.

2.0 Eligibility

Those wishing to apply for LTFT must demonstrate that training on a full time basis would not be practicable for them. The following categories have been described by consensus to serve as guidelines for prioritisation of LTFT requests. The needs of category 1 will take priority.

Category 1: Those doctors in training with:

- disability or ill health. (This may include ongoing medical procedures such as fertility treatment.)
- responsibility for caring (men and women) for children
- responsibility for caring for an ill/disabled partner, relative or other dependant

Category 2:

- **Unique opportunities:** A trainee is offered a unique opportunity for their own personal/professional development and this will affect their ability to train full time (e.g. training for national/international sporting events or a short-term extraordinary responsibility such as membership of a national committee or continuing medical research as a bridge to progression in integrated academic training).
- **Religious commitment:** A trainee has a religious commitment that involves training for a particular role and requires a specific time commitment resulting in the need to work less than full time.
- **Non-medical development:** A trainee is offered non-medical professional development (e.g. management courses, law courses or fine arts courses) that requires a specific time commitment resulting in the need to work less than full time.

Please see page 32, paragraphs 3.90, 3.91 and 3.92 of the [Gold Guide](#) Seventh Edition for more information.

3.0 Placements

LTFT training in HEE WX is normally supported in placements at 50% up to 80% of full-time contracts. Day time working, on call and out of hours work should be undertaken on a basis pro rata to full time trainees in the same grade and specialty. Trainees will be encouraged to occupy a full time slot or slot share dependant on the capacity of the programme.

Should a trainee wish to train at a percentage other than 50% up to 80% this will require written support from the TPD and the authorisation of the Associate Dean (AD) for LTFT training. Such applications must be for well-founded reasons. The [GMC](#) has produced a position statement on LTFT which states that trainees should be required to train at no less than 50%. In the exceptional cases where less time is requested, 20% is the absolute minimum. It is expected that trainees would only work less than 50% for a maximum of 12 months.

The programme for a trainee working LTFT should contain the same educational elements as that of a full-time trainee, i.e. access to departmental meetings, audit, research, teaching and ideally including out-of-hours work, which would be funded by the employing organisation.

LTFT training can in theory be undertaken in one of three ways. The Dean will endeavour to accommodate agreed LTFT training placements using the options in the following priority order.

3.1 Occupying a Full-Time Slot

A trainee occupies an established full-time post but works reduced hours. The full-time post is funded from the Educational Contract so no additional funding is required from the Dean. The Trust in which the trainee is employed must give their written approval to support this arrangement.

3.2 Slot Share

Slot-sharing works on the basis that two trainees share one full-time post and share any out-of-hours commitment between them. Each doctor may work up to 60% whole time equivalent (WTE) and is paid individually on the basis of actual working hours.

Additional Dean's funding will be needed to meet the additional hours over and above the 100% of the full-time slot. The Trust will need to meet any additional out-of-hours pay and thus need to agree in writing any slot-share arrangements.

Slot share above 60% may be approved at the discretion of HEE WX and employing Trust.

3.3 Supernumerary Placement

In some instances, a supernumerary placement may be required, particularly in cases related to health. All supernumerary LTFT placements require approval from the AD for LTFT training. Supernumerary placements are subject to funding availability and will be for no more than six months.

Supernumerary posts will need GMC approval and agreements by the Trust. They will not automatically attract out-of-hours working requirements. The substantive post on the rotation can be re-filled by the employing Trust using the Educational Contract Funding.

4.0 Application Process

Trainees should discuss a potential application for LTFT training with their Educational Supervisor, Programme Director and Programme Manager to clarify the process and the implications of LTFT training.

Trainees should follow the HEE Wessex application and approval process for LTFT training which can be found on the [website](#) along with the relevant forms.

If trainees have a general enquiry regarding LTFT training they can email LTFT.WX@hee.nhs.uk or if they wish to discuss their needs and eligibility they should contact their relevant Programme Manager for whom individual contact email addresses and telephone numbers are available on the application and approval guidance.

5.0 Research and Academic Trainees

Research should be accommodated within the standard training programme. By working with TPDs nearly all trainees should be able to pursue research as part of this programme, whether they are working full time or LTFT. It is not the purpose of LTFT training to subsidise trainees doing research. Academic trainees should refer the GMC position statement on academic training when designing their pattern of work.

6.0 Period of Grace

LTFT is available to trainees who are undertaking an agreed period of grace (up to 6 months), with the same principles in the policy adhered to. Supernumerary funding would not be available however to any trainee in their period of grace.

Ideally trainees in their period of grace should be accommodated into a full time slot, although this is at the discretion of the TPD and employing LEP.

7.0 Rotations

It is not possible to guarantee that the rotation initially offered to a trainee at recruitment will be replicated in the LTFT training rotation.

Trainees who are training LTFT must rotate through placements designated by the HEE WX training programme.

If or when a trainee rotates the training and educational opportunities occur on different days, the trainee must make personal arrangements to access training. Trainees must bear in mind that this may mean changing days of attendance for children at nursery or making new child care arrangements. It is the trainee's responsibility to make these arrangements, as trainers and supervisors are not expected to revise their working time-table to suit LTFT training.

8.0 Inter-Deanery Transfers

Inter-Deanery transfers who are accepted by HEE WX who are already training LTFT in their existing post will need to re-apply. Every effort will be made to accommodate them in a timely fashion. They should contact the TPD of their speciality as well as HEE WX in relation to LTFT training as soon as the transfer is confirmed, to ensure they follow the appropriate application process.

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Inter-Deanery transfers who are currently training full-time, but would wish to apply for LTFT on transfer to HEE WX, should apply for LTFT training following the standard process, and giving as much notice as is possible after transfer has been confirmed.

It may not be possible to accommodate them immediately into a LTFT placement. Trainees may subsequently have to consider the options of starting full-time or waiting until a placement is available.

9.0 Out of Hours Work

LTFT trainees will normally be required to do pro-rata out of hours work. Their in-hours timetable should mirror the time-table of the full-timers over the whole of each training post. In slot shares, this will require the two halves of the slot share dividing the out of hours work between them.

The payments for any out of hour's work which is agreed must be agreed by the contractual employer prior to the commencement of the placement.

10.0 Examinations

Trainees working LTFT will still be subject to the same maximum number of attempts at any examinations as full time trainees.

11.0 ARCPs

LTFT trainees must still adhere to the ARCP process. The expectation at the ARCP review will be that the LTFT trainee has completed a pro rata amount of the curriculum, assessments etc. The annual review process for trainees in LTFT training will take place at the same frequency as for full-time trainees, that is to say at least once per calendar year.

It is recommended that less than full-time trainees speak to their Educational Supervisor at the start of their placement to discuss any difficulties they may anticipate experiencing with unexpected work commitments/clinical emergencies.

15.0 LTFT Training in a GP Practice-based Post

For guidance on working LTFT in a GP practice-based post, please see the [NHS Employers website](#).

12.0 Ad Hoc Hours/Additional Employment

Trainees on LTFT placements are not precluded from undertaking other work although they should ensure that in undertaking this work, they practise according to the GMC's standards in Good Medical Practice and that this does not impact negatively on their training. By utilisation of their annual Form R submission or the alternative IT solution in Scotland, they should ensure that the Postgraduate Dean as their designated RO is aware of all additional work undertaken within their remit of holding a licence to practise.

13.0 Returning to Full Time Training

Trainees wishing to return to full time training should give as much notice as possible of their intention to both the TPD and HEE WX. The return to full-time training should, if possible, be planned to coincide with rotation dates.

Returning to full time training will be at the discretion of the TPD and subject to the programme being able to accommodate the trainee in a full time capacity. If a Trainee has returned to full time training but then finds that they need to recommence LTFT, they will have to re-apply following the standard process.

14.0 Additional guidance

14.1 Statutory Leave

Trainees becoming pregnant during training should notify the relevant programme manager of anticipated start and end dates of maternity leave as well as informing other relevant bodies, e.g. employing Trust/Foundation School. If there is a change to the originally approved LTFT training end date, trainees must request a LTFT training extension using the LTFT application form.

LTFT trainees returning from maternity leave are not guaranteed to be placed in the post they occupied prior to the maternity leave or guaranteed a post with out-of-hours commitment.

14.2 Study Leave

LTFT trainees are entitled to periods of study leave pro-rata to their sessional commitments. The funding provided to the employing Trust for the trainees is the same as the full-time trainees (i.e. not pro-rata). Appropriateness of and eligibility for study leave will be subject to the same criteria as for full-time trainees.

14.3 Annual Leave

Annual leave and public holidays for LTFT trainees are calculated on a pro-rata basis.

15.0 Changes to Post

Any proposed changes to a post, including working hours, should be agreed with the Programme Director to ensure that the educational approval is not affected.

No change in working hours requiring a change in funding can occur without approval by the Postgraduate Dean or their representative.

Any changes to your LTFT status will necessitate a new funding form to be completed i.e. if your slot share partner leaves and not replaced with the same %, if you change your % hours, maternity leave.

16.0 Appeals

The Dean will attempt to resolve any issues informally in discussion with the trainee.

Should informal resolution not be possible the trainee is referred to HEE Wessex's complaints and appeals guidance on the [website](#).