

A GUIDE TO LESS THAN FULL-TIME TRAINING

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Many doctors and dentists (male and female) are seeking different working arrangements, often because of domestic responsibilities. The purpose of less than full-time (LTFT) training is to retain within the health service doctors who might otherwise leave because they are unable to train on a full time basis. This is in line with European Law (EC Directive EC 93/16/EEC).

APPOINTMENT TO TRAINING PROGRAMMES

The process for appointment to a training programme is the same for both full-time applicants and those wishing to work less than full-time. Entry is through competition and is judged on merit alone. Applicants wishing to apply for LTFT training should indicate on their application form whether they wish to train less than full-time if appointed. This information will be protected and will not be seen by selection panels. If successful, appointment on a less than full-time basis may not be automatic as the applicant may have to wait for a LTFT training opportunity to become available. Placement within training programmes will be determined by the relevant specialty training committee with the agreement of the employing Trust and will normally coincide with the August and February changeover dates.

APPLICATION FOR LESS THAN FULL-TIME TRAINING

Applicants wishing to work less than full-time should confirm their eligibility with the Postgraduate Dean. Application forms can be obtained from Pauline Dardis on 90400004 (e-mail pauline.dardis@nimdta.gov.uk) or downloaded from the NIMDTA website. The complete process from evaluation of the application to entry into a programme requires careful planning and it is best to give as much notice as possible.

The Postgraduate Dean will ascertain whether an individual's request for LTFT training is based on well-founded individual reasons

Doctors and dentists unable to work full-time will be placed in the following categories and prioritised accordingly:

Category 1

- Disability or ill-health (this may include those on in vitro fertility programmes)
- Responsibility (men and women) for children
- Caring for ill/disabled partner, relative, or other dependant

Category 2

- Unique opportunities for personal/professional development eg training for national/international sporting events or short-term extraordinary responsibility eg a national committee
- Religious commitment - involving training for a particular religious role which requires a specific amount of time commitment
- Non-medical professional development such as management courses, law courses, fine arts courses or diploma in complementary therapies

Having established eligibility the Postgraduate Dean will determine the feasibility of acceding to the request. This will depend on the availability of resources, the identification of a training opportunity and educational approval from PMETB

If a LTFT training opportunity is not immediately available applicants will be placed on a waiting list.

APPEALS PROCEDURE

In the event of a suitable training opportunity not being identified to facilitate less than full-time training, the trainee may wish to appeal in writing to the Chairman of the Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency (NIMDTA).

LESS THAN FULL-TIME TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Supernumerary Posts

Less than full-time training opportunities may be identified by the creation of supernumerary posts additional to the normal complement of training posts. These posts are funded regionally by the Postgraduate Dean and must be compliant with the New Deal for Junior Doctors and the European Working Time Directive and are dependent on funding being available.

Slot Shares

Slot shares can be created, by dividing the duties attached to a full-time substantive post between two trainees, where this is feasible. As with supernumerary placements any additional funding to support slot-sharing arrangements will be dependent on the availability of resources.

Full-time Placements

Some part-time trainees may be placed in “full-time” slots but working less than full-time with the agreement of all those concerned. This may be particularly useful for those wanting to work 80% or 90% of full-time.

FUNDING FOR SUPERNUMERARY POSTS

The Postgraduate Dean has limited funds available for LTFT training and it may be easier to fund trainees for short-term periods of time, as overall funding may vary from year to year. Continued funding will depend upon satisfactory progress and the availability of resources. Those interested in pursuing the option of less than full-time training are advised to speak to the Postgraduate Dean at the earliest opportunity so that the availability of funding can be assessed and planned.

If funding is identified for a supernumerary placement the Postgraduate Dean will allocate funding to the relevant Trust for payment of the trainee’s salary on the basis of 1.05 of a full-time post, calculated at the mid point of the salary scale. Those placed on a waiting list for funding will be notified as soon as funding becomes available.

EDUCATIONAL APPROVAL

All training programmes/placements require educational approval from the Postgraduate Dean and PMETB

The LTFT trainee will need to discuss his/her training needs with the training programme director and the educational supervisor. The educational supervisor will suggest appropriate training sessions, depending on the trainee's needs and the hospital's priorities. Sometimes the best training sessions may be available on days that are inconvenient or difficult for the trainee. The best compromise between the service/hospital needs and the trainee's restrictions will be agreed. In addition the on-call commitment must be considered. An induction programme should be arranged at the start of the new placement.

The training programme director should ensure that the agreed training programme is submitted to PMETB, if required. In addition copies of the training programme should be forwarded to the Postgraduate Dean for approval. Time for protected teaching/study/research/audit should be included within the normal working week pro rata, as organised for full-time trainees.

PAY ARRANGEMENTS

LTFT trainees are required to undertake at least 50% of a normal working week. Day-time working, on-call and out-of-hours duties should be undertaken on a basis pro rata to that worked by full-time trainees in the same grade and specialty, unless the circumstances which justify LTFT training make this impossible, provided that legal and educational requirements are met. The trainee's salary is determined by the actual hours of work, as derived initially from the rota and confirmed by monitoring. A division into 4-hour bands based on hours of actual work enables some averaging to take place, and the pay for each band is based on the lower hours limit.

Thus:

F5 is 20 or more and less than 24 hours of actual work a week and attracts 0.5	} of the full time basic salary.
F6 is 24 or more and less than 28 hours of actual work a week and attracts 0.6	
F7 is 28 or more and less than 32 hours of actual work a week and attracts 0.7	
F8 is 32 or more and less than 36 hours of actual work a week and attracts 0.8	
F9 is 36 or more and less than 40 hours of actual work a week and attracts 0.9	

Added to this is a supplement, paid as a proportion of the basic salary identified above, to reflect the intensity of the duties. The supplements are applied as follows:

Band FA (basic salary + 50%)

Trainees working at high intensity and at the most unsocial times

Band FB (basic salary + 40%)

Trainees working at less intensity at less unsocial times

Band FC (basic salary + 20%)

All other trainees with duties outside the period 8am to 7pm Monday to Friday

No supplement (basic salary)

No work outside the period 8am to 7pm Monday to Friday

CONTRACT

The employment contract is issued by the employing Trust. The terms and conditions of employment, which should comply with those laid down in the Terms and Conditions of Service Handbook for Hospital and Medical Staff (Northern Ireland). The contract should be the same for both full-time and LTFT trainees, the only difference being in the hours of work contracted.

The length of the training programme is usually extended pro-rata of a full-timer so that an equivalent training is completed. Where trainees in specialty training programmes have already been given an expected date for the certificate of completion of training (CCT), the date will require to be recalculated and the educational contract adjusted. As with full-time trainees, LTFT trainees will be entitled to 6 months post CCT. Funding, however, for supernumerary training opportunities will cease at the date of CCT. Only in exceptional circumstances will trainees be permitted to retain their supernumerary status during their "period of grace".

EDUCATIONAL SUPERVISION

All trainees must have an educational supervisor ie a named consultant/trainer responsible for supervising their placement. All training programmes will comply with regional educational standards and PMETB guidelines. Trainees will have their training needs assessed, be given educational objectives and the opportunities to achieve them. Trainees will be appraised and given feedback on their performance at appropriate intervals. Specialty trainees will be formally assessed annually by the appropriate specialty training committee.

STUDY LEAVE

Trainees working less than full-time are entitled to study leave pro-rata ie a trainee working 50% of full-time will have approximately half the study leave entitlement of the full-timer. Thus the LTFT trainee will take less study leave per year but over a longer period of time. The study leave may fluctuate from year to year according to need. If the total study leave required exceeds the year's entitlement this can be decreased the following year as compensation.

All trainees should agree their educational objectives with their educational supervisors. Study leave will be approved by the appropriate Training Programme Director/Specialty Adviser in accordance with NIMDTA's study leave guidance.

ANNUAL LEAVE

The number of weeks of annual leave is the same for both full-time and LTFT trainees remembering that the latter's working week is shorter than full-time. For example the total year's entitlement for a LTFT trainee working 60% (24 standard hours or 6 half days per week) and 5 weeks annual leave per year is 30 half days or 15 full days per year.

BANK HOLIDAYS

A LTFT trainee is entitled to pro-rata of a full-time trainee. The LTFT trainee should be able to claim Bank Holidays in proportion to their hours of work per week compared to full-time. As LTFT trainees can claim a proportion of Bank Holidays, in return they might be required to work some of these Bank Holidays.

TERMINATION OF LESS THAN FULL-TIME TRAINING

A trainee wishing to transfer to full-time training should inform his/her Programme Director and the Postgraduate Dean. It is best to give as much notice as possible for this to be planned. Usually the trainee can transfer as soon as there is a vacant full-time training opportunity available.

INTER-DEANERY TRANSFERS

As with full-time trainees, those working less than-full time can apply for a transfer to another Deanery within the United Kingdom. Each application will be considered individually. LTFT status and funding will not transfer with the trainee.