

FOUNDATION AND SPECIALTY TRAINING

LESS THAN FULL-TIME TRAINING POLICY

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A GUIDE TO LESS THAN FULL-TIME TRAINING

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of less than full-time (LTFT) training is to retain within the health service doctors and dentists 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).

The Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency manages LTFT training for doctors and dentists in training grade posts and is available to all trainees who have a well-founded reason for being unable to work full-time.

LTFT training must be completed on at least a half-time basis in order to comply with the requirements of the General and Specialist Medical Practice (Education, Training and Qualifications) Order 2003.

ELIGIBILITY

Doctors and dentists wishing to work less than full-time will be required to have their eligibility confirmed by NIMDTA. Those in the following groups are eligible but Category 1 trainees will take priority for funding.

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

Doctors and dentists wishing to spend part of the week on research or an academic course eg a Masters Degree are not eligible for LTFT training.

APPLICATION FOR LESS THAN FULL-TIME TRAINING

Information on applying for LTFT training is available on NIMDTA's website www.nimtda.gov.uk. Application forms can be downloaded from the website or obtained

from the Chief Executive's Office. Contact Pauline Dardis on 90400004 or via e-mail pauline.dardis@nimdta.gov.uk). 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. On receipt of a completed application form NIMDTA will confirm eligibility and inform the Head of School/Training Programme Director of the individual's request for LTFT training.

APPOINTMENT TO A LTFT TRAINING POST

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.

Appointment to a LTFT training post is dependent on the identification of a suitable training opportunity availability and educational approval from PMETB. Where a supernumerary appointment is the only option NIMDTA will seek to identify the funding required.

If a LTFT training opportunity is not immediately available applicants will be placed on a waiting list and advised accordingly. Placement within training programmes will be determined by the relevant Specialty/Foundation School with the agreement of the employing Trust and will normally coincide with the August and February changeover dates.

For further advice on the availability and funding of LTFT training opportunities contact NIMDTA's Administrative Director at margot.roberts@nimdta.gov.uk. Trainees can also contact the Associate Dean for Careers and Personnel Development (john.collins@nimdta.gov.uk) for careers advice.

LESS THAN FULL-TIME TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

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.

Whilst it may be possible to review existing applications in order to identify potential slot-share partners for trainees, it is more likely that the trainee will be better placed to identify a suitable partner who has similar experience and ability with whom they feel they could share a post.

Where slot shares break-down due to maternity or out of programme leave consideration will be given to the following options:

- A slot share arrangement with another trainee
- Revert to full-time
- Reduced sessions in a full-time post
- Supernumerary LTFT training post

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 a full-time trainee. However, this arrangement may create difficulties for service delivery and is often not feasible within the acute specialties.

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.

FUNDING

NIMDTA's budget for LTFT training is limited. Funding is available recurrently for 40 supernumerary training posts although it is possible that additional funding may be identified for short-term placements or to support a financial shortfall in a slot share arrangement. Continued funding will depend upon satisfactory progress and the availability of resources.

Funding for a supernumerary placement will be allocated 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 appropriate salary scale. The trainee must obtain the agreement of the employing Trust before the sessional commitment is confirmed.

WAITING LIST

Where it has not been possible to identify a LTFT training opportunity, the trainee will be placed on a waiting list for supernumerary funding and notified as soon as funding becomes available or when an alternative arrangement becomes feasible.

EDUCATIONAL APPROVAL

The LTFT trainee will need to discuss his/her training needs with the training programme director and educational supervisor. The educational supervisor will suggest appropriate training sessions, depending on the trainee's needs and the hospital's priorities. Time for protected teaching/study/research/audit should be included within the normal working week pro rata, as organised for full-time trainees. In addition the out-of-hours commitment must be considered. In general a LTFT training programme should be equivalent pro-rata of a full-time programme to include out-of-hours. If, for example, a trainee is working 60% of full-time, she/he should be doing 60% of the out-of-hours. Where it is possible to obtain experience of emergency work within normal working hours some Colleges are prepared to accept this but this must be agreed in writing with the College.

Once the weekly training timetable has been drawn up, a LTFT Programme Form should be completed and forwarded to NIMDTA for approval. It should also be forwarded to the relevant Royal College for revision of the CCT date. If the post has already been approved

by PMETB no further action is required. If the post is additional to the usual complement of training posts NIMDTA will apply to PMETB for post approval.

NIMDTA must be informed of any changes to the agreed timetable.

PAY ARRANGEMENTS

LTFT trainees are required to undertake at least 50% of a normal working week for the post to be recognised for training. General practice trainees are also required to complete one week of full-time training during the hospital placements and the GP Registrar year. 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

CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS

Although NIMDTA can advise on banding arrangements it can not negotiate banding supplements on behalf of individual trainees as the employment contract is the responsibility of the employing Trust.

The terms and conditions of employment 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".

FTSTA posts are for a fixed duration ie one year and this applies whether working part-time or full-time. They are not extended pro rata.

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. Application forms can be obtained from Lyn Bickerstaff on 90400008 or by e-mailing lyn.bickerstaff@nimdta.gov.uk.

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.

MATERNITY LEAVE

Trainees must inform the NIMDTA in writing if maternity leave is required and give an indication as to the date of return.

When planning to return from maternity leave trainees should contact their programme director so that the appropriate arrangements can be made. As all training programmes are rotational it may not always be possible to place trainees in the post to which they were originally posted.

CAREER BREAKS

Where LTFT training is not immediately available trainees may wish to consider taking a career break for which the approval of the Head of School and Associate Dean for Careers and Personal Development is required and the appropriate documentation completed. Trainees will be required to arrange an appointment to meet with the Associate Dean before approval is granted. Trainees will normally be entitled to one year in the first instance, up to a period of two years.

APPEALS PROCEDURE

NIMDTA recognises that a trainee may wish to question or appeal against a decision regarding their application for LTFT training. If a trainee has been refused access to LTFT training due to eligibility or funding issues he/she may wish to lodge an appeal with NIMDTA

Before formally appealing against a decision made trainees are advised to contact the Administrative Director (margot.roberts@nimdta.gov.uk) so that their circumstances can be fully explained.

Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Associate Dean for Careers and Personal Development within 15 working days of a final decision being made. The Appeal hearing date will be confirmed in writing within 10 working days of the appeal being lodged. The trainee will be required to submit a Statement of Case and will be allowed at least 10 working days to prepare this. The Statement will need to be submitted to the Associate Dean, at least 5 working days before the hearing and should include:

- A list of events in date order
- Copies of all relevant correspondence
- A reason for the appeal.

The Appeal will be heard by the Associate Dean and a non-executive member of the NIMDTA Board. The Administrative Director will also be invited to the hearing to explain why the initial decision was made. The trainee may be accompanied by an official of the BMA, BDA, defence organisation or colleague.

The decision will be confirmed to the trainee in writing within 5 days of the Appeal being heard. The decision of the Associate Dean is final.

LTFT TRAINING FORUM

NIMDTA has established a regional forum for discussing issues pertinent to less than full-time training and with a view to clarifying the process for the identification and funding of LTFT training opportunities and sharing experiences across specialties. The forum, to which all trainees are invited, meets annually.

