



SUCCEED

A NIMDTA STRATEGY TO
PROMOTE THE SUCCESS
OF POSTGRADUATE
TRAINING IN
NORTHERN IRELAND

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Executive Summary

NIMDTA's role is to commission, promote and oversee postgraduate medical and dental education and training throughout Northern Ireland.

In carrying out this role, NIMDTA seeks to attract and appoint individuals of the highest calibre to approved training programmes and posts and to equip, develop and inspire trainees with the essential knowledge, skills and experience they require to meet the changing healthcare needs of the population in Northern Ireland.

Postgraduate medical and dental training is structured, challenging and rigorous. Completing a programme successfully requires dedication, persistence and planning with eportfolios to complete and examinations to pass in addition to acquiring new knowledge, skills and experience.

SUCCEED is a new NIMDTA strategy which describes a systematic approach to promoting success in training:

- Connecting, informing, supporting, developing and valuing programme leaders, recognised trainers and trainees
- Enabling programme leaders, trainers and trainees to fully understand College/Faculty curricular requirements
- Planning and delivering training and education which thoroughly covers the curricula
- Optimising commissioning of training, allocations and working with training partners to deliver the best possible training
- Ensuring fair access to training opportunities for all
- Supporting trainees so that they can maximise their prospects of success in examinations and at recruitment interviews
- Facilitating trainees to achieve, develop and explore their aptitudes and purpose through providing advice, guidance and wide ranging opportunities

Thomas Edison, the inventor of the electric light bulb among many other devices, said *"Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to **succeed** is always to try just one more time"*. NIMDTA aims to encourage and support trainees to enjoy their training, progress successfully, complete training, equip them for appointment to permanent positions and enhance the care of patients in Northern Ireland.

What is **SUCCEED** aiming to achieve?

As an organisation NIMDTA aspires to facilitate training that is enjoyable for trainees and trainers and that maximises the potential for trainees to successfully progress, complete training and be appointed to permanent posts in Northern Ireland. Our aim is to enhance the care of patients in Northern Ireland by proactively supporting doctors and dentists in training, and their trainers.

Why is **SUCCEED** important?

[‘Health and Well Being 2026 – Delivering Together’](#), the response of the Minister for Health, Michelle O’Neill, to the report from the Expert Panel on the configuration of Health and Social Care (HSC) Services in NI, identified workforce as one of the key challenges facing HSC NI. Minister O’Neill set out eighteen specific actions in her report, including the need to develop a workforce strategy.

‘A Health and Social Care Workforce Strategy – Delivering for Our People’ has been published in May 2018. The overarching aim of this strategy is for the HSC to meet its workforce needs, and the needs of the workforce, by focusing on three objectives:

1. By 2026, the reconfigured health and social care system has the optimum number of people in place to deliver treatment and care and promote health and wellbeing to everyone in Northern Ireland, with the best possible combination of skills and expertise.
2. By 2021, health and social care is a fulfilling and rewarding place to work and train, and our people feel valued and supported.
3. By 2019, health and social care providers are able to effectively monitor workforce trends and issues and be able to take proactive action to address these before problems become acute.

The SUCCEED strategy aligns to the second aim of making HSCNI a fulfilling and rewarding place to work and train and a healthcare system where trainees feel valued and supported.

A regional survey of trainees’ experiences in Northern Ireland highlighted some barriers to progressing through training, which included inadequate time to train due to service pressures and increasing intensity of workload, as well as difficulties with preparing for and passing examinations. It is important that these issues are addressed and that trainees are supported to apply to and progress successfully through training.

As outlined in the Expert Panel report “*The HSC’s workforce is its biggest resource, its biggest strength*”. To ensure the HSC transforms successfully to meet the current population needs it is vital that the workforce delivering patient care is provided with the opportunity to develop the skills needed to succeed in their careers.

Strengths of Training in NI

There is much to celebrate in relation to training in Northern Ireland and it is important that through any transformation of the service the strengths of training in Northern Ireland are preserved and maintained. Nationally, Northern Ireland has been recognised by trainees as providing excellent training opportunities as reflected in the GMC National Training Survey (NTS) 2017. Northern Ireland, in comparison with the other three UK countries, was ranked first in the UK for Overall Satisfaction for Higher trainees and came first across 12 of all the 17 domains assessed. Across all grades of training Northern Ireland was ranked first in 10 out of 17 domains assessed.

The 2017 Royal College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (RCOG) report on Trainee Evaluations documented the high quality of training in Obstetrics and Gynaecology in NI. The unit in Antrim Hospital was identified as first in the UK overall for Obstetrics and Gynaecology training, with the Ulster Hospital being second and Craigavon being ninth highest rated in the UK.

Weaknesses of Training in NI

Doctors and dentists in training are telling us that they are experiencing challenges in their work. Although this problem is not unique to Northern Ireland it is important that we strive to improve working lives for the trainees we work with. There are many factors impacting on trainees’ experiences in training, including increasing demand through increased workload and rota gaps, challenges with balancing life and work, and changing expectations of the workforce.

Northern Ireland is under-resourced in terms of clinical academic posts available to trainees with 4.4 academic training posts per million available in the region. This is significantly less in comparison to Scotland at 23 per million, and to England and Wales with 35 per million. Departments with active research are known to provide better patient care with improved outcomes. If HSCNI wants to provide excellent care to patients, it is essential that trainees have greater opportunities to undertake formal research training so that clinical understanding of diseases can be improved and new or improved tests and interventions can be identified.

Opportunities of Training in NI

[The Expert Panel Report, 'Systems, not Structures'](#), highlighted the need to develop all staff in HSCNI. In particular the report highlighted opportunities to support the development of training. It emphasised the importance of *“changing the model of care to make sure that we create the right kinds of posts for all health professionals working in the system – posts that give our workforce the opportunity to use and develop their skills as part of wider teams, working together to best meet patients’ needs.”*

This SUCCEED strategy offers a basis by which we can support the delivery of high quality training. The introduction of quality indicators to assess training posts would allow us to assess and improve these posts for doctors and dentists in training. This would facilitate better alignment of posts to training opportunities and improve the training experience of doctors and dentists.

The [VALUED strategy](#), launched in June 2017, aims to attract, welcome, develop and celebrate doctors and dentists in training in Northern Ireland and to encourage them to train and remain in Northern Ireland. These strategies work synergistically to develop highly trained and motivated doctors and dentists.

Threats to Training in NI

Across the UK there has been a significant increase in the number of doctors choosing to leave training, particularly after completion of the foundation programme with 57.4% of trainees not progressing to specialty training as recorded in the UK Foundation Programme (UKFP) Destinations Report 2017. In 2012, this figure was 30%.

This move towards taking a career break, or leaving training, results in vacancies in training posts. Those remaining trainees describe working in rotas with gaps, with less opportunity to avail of training opportunities. They report often working alongside locums whom they perceive as having more flexible working arrangements with significantly higher financial benefits. This has the potential to adversely impact trainees' morale and can result in them not feeling valued in their role.

It is important that we endeavour to understand this change in workforce behaviour and to listen and respond to trainee expectations. Workforce behaviours are shifting, and to ensure we retain high quality trainees, the HSC needs to recognise and address the needs of our trainees. NIMDTA is keen to develop innovative approaches to training in response.

What will **SUCCEED** look like?

This strategy aims to promote successful training through seven key actions to support Programme Leaders, Trainers, and Trainees.



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Supporting Training

Understanding the Curriculum

Covering the Curriculum

Commissioning Training

Ensuring Opportunities for All

Enhancing Prospects

Discovering Purpose



Supporting Training

Trainees deserve to receive high quality training in a supportive environment.

To achieve this aim, Programme Leaders, Recognised Trainers and Trainees all need to be supported and valued.



NIMDTA Trainee Ambassadors

For each aim of the SUCCEED strategy, key action points have been developed.

Actions	Programme Leaders	Trainers	Trainees
Connecting	Lead Educators' Forum	Trainer Roadshows	Trainee Ambassadors Trainee Roadshows
Informing	Lead Educator Newsletters	Recognised Trainer Newsletters NIMDTA website	Trainee Representatives & Forum Social media Trainee Newsletters* NIMDTA website
Supporting	1 to 1 advice 'Time to lead' (PAs)	Trainer Engagement Team 'Time to Train' (PAs)	Professional Support Unit (PSU) Peer Mentors Peer Interviewers Trainee Engagement Team Flexible working 'Return to Training'
Developing	Faculty Development Lead Educators' Forum	'Achieving Recognition' 'Maintaining Recognition' (STATUS Programme)	Generic Skills Workshops (Foundation and iQuest) Programme-Specific education Study Leave
Valuing	Dare to Excel Educator Award	Dare to Excel Trainer Award	Dare to Excel Trainee Awards VALUED Strategy

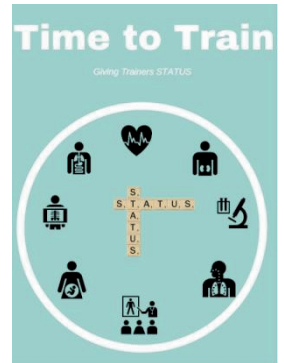
*Dental, Foundation, GP, Specialty, and Specialty Programme specific



Understanding the Curriculum

Trainees require specific information and advice to understand what they need to do to progress successfully through training.

Programme Leaders and Recognised Trainers have important roles in disseminating information and providing up-to-date guidance about curricula. It is therefore vital that they are also up-to-date.



For each aim of the SUCCEED strategy key, action points have been developed.

Actions	Programme Leaders	Trainers	Trainees
Connecting	Royal College Meetings	Training Committees School Boards	Trainee Representatives
Informing	Royal College Meetings Royal College Updates	Training Committees Programme-Specific Updates	Programme Induction 1-1 Educational Meetings
Supporting	SAC Meetings 'Time to Lead' (PAs)	'Time to Train' (PAs)	1-1 Educational Meetings
Developing	SAC Meetings	Programme-Specific Training (STATUS Programme)	1-1 Educational Meetings



Covering the Curriculum

To successfully complete training, trainees need to achieve the competencies described within their curriculum.

Curriculum coverage involves a combination of training and experiences in a variety of high quality training units, comprehensive formal education and easily accessible study leave.

For each aim of the SUCCEED strategy, key action points have been developed.

Actions	Trainees
Connecting	Programme-Specific Regional Education Events Video Conferencing (Zoom and ECHO) Social Media
Informing	Programme Induction 1-1 Educational Meetings Trainee Representatives Programme-Specific Trainee Newsletters
Supporting	Programme-Specific education Easily accessible, funded Study Leave
Developing	1-1 Educational Meetings Personal Development Plans Posts aligned to best training opportunities Allocations based on trainee need Enhanced learning opportunities (VALUED)



Pictured left: Zoom video conferencing technology





Commissioning Training

Trainees will have the best opportunity to develop new skills and obtain valuable experience if their attachments are in high quality, supportive training units.



NIMDTA believes that the use of quality indicators to assess training environments will facilitate evaluation of current posts and enable better alignment of training with the best training opportunities. Selection and approval of new training posts will be guided by quality indicator assessments.

For each aim of the SUCCEED strategy, key action points have been developed.

Actions	Programme Leaders	Trainers	Trainees
Connecting <i>Receiving feedback and sharing good practice</i>	Training Committees School Boards	Training Committees Trainer Roadshows	Educational meetings Trainee Representatives Trainee Roadshows
Informing <i>Communicating Insights into quality</i>	Programme Curriculum College Quality Indicators Deanery Visits GMC Training Surveys	Training Committees Educational meetings Deanery Visits GMC Trainer Survey	Deanery Visits GMC Trainee Survey College Surveys VALUED survey 1-1 Educational meetings
Developing <i>Developing and Implementing Programme Quality Indicators</i>	Programme Leaders supported by Associate Dean - Placement Quality	Trainer Representatives	Trainee Representatives ADEPT fellow – Placement Quality
Valuing	Acknowledging High Performing Units	Acknowledging High Performing Units	Acknowledging High Performing Units

Voice listened to Applaud and acclaim success Life-work balance/support Up-to-date high quality training Enhanced opportunities Distinctive training



Ensuring Opportunities for All

Trainees deserve fair access to practical experience, formal education and support.

NIMDTA is committed to ensuring that opportunities to gain experience, attend educational events and access educational opportunities are promoted widely, and barriers to access are understood and addressed.

For each aim of the SUCCEED strategy, key action points have been developed.

Actions	Programme Leaders	Trainers	Trainees
Informing <i>Promotion of opportunities</i>	Lead Educators' Forum Lead Educator Newsletters	Recognised Trainer Newsletters NIMDTA Website	Trainee Forum Welcome Evenings Social Media Trainee Newsletters NIMDTA Website
Supporting <i>Enabling access to opportunities</i>	'Time to Lead' (PAs)	'Time to Train' (PAs)	<u>VALUED Strategy</u> Peer Mentor Peer Interview 1 to 1 Professional Support
Developing <i>Understanding and addressing barriers to opportunities</i>	Equality and Diversity Training	Equality and Diversity Training	Equality and Diversity Training Careers Advice 1 to 1 Coaching



Enhancing Prospects



In view of the considerable investment that trainees themselves and the government have made in postgraduate training, NIMDTA is extremely keen that trainees should have a successful outcome to their training.

NIMDTA endeavours to enhance the prospects of trainees by enabling them to maximise their potential for success in examinations and at recruitment processes, to improve their CV, to develop special interests and to advance their career.



Pictured above: Trainee Research Day and 'Dare to Excel' Programmes

For each aim of the SUCCEED strategy, key action points have been developed.

Actions	Programme Leaders	Trainers	Trainees
Informing	Lead Educators' Forum Lead Educator Newsletters	Trainer Newsletters NIMDTA Website NIMDTA Roadshow	Trainee Newsletters NIMDTA Website NIMDTA Roadshow
Supporting	'Time to Lead' (PAs) College Examiners	'Time to Train' (PAs) College Examiners	Educational Meetings Peer Interview Peer Mentor Peer Study Groups
Developing			Programme-Specific Education 1-1 Educational Meetings Careers Advice Engage Programme ADEPT Programme ACF/ACL Research Programmes
Valuing	Dare to Excel Educator Award	Dare to Excel Trainer Award	Dare to Excel Trainee Awards Trainee Research Day



Discovering Purpose

Medicine is a rewarding and demanding career with a very wide range of career options and opportunities to become involved in teaching, research, quality improvement and management.

NIMDTA is eager that trainees will enjoy their training, discover/rediscover and strengthen the sense of purpose that led them to choose medicine as a career and thrive in their chosen area of practice.

For each aim of the **SUCCEED** strategy, key action points have been developed.

Actions	Trainees
Connecting	Trainee Ambassadors and Ambassadorial Events Trainee Roadshows Careers Evening Welcome Evening
Supporting	Peer Mentors Professional Support Unit Careers advice Flexible Working
Developing	Longer Duration Attachments Assignment to Clinical Teams, not wards Access to taster modules
Valuing	Dare to Excel Trainee Awards VALUED strategy



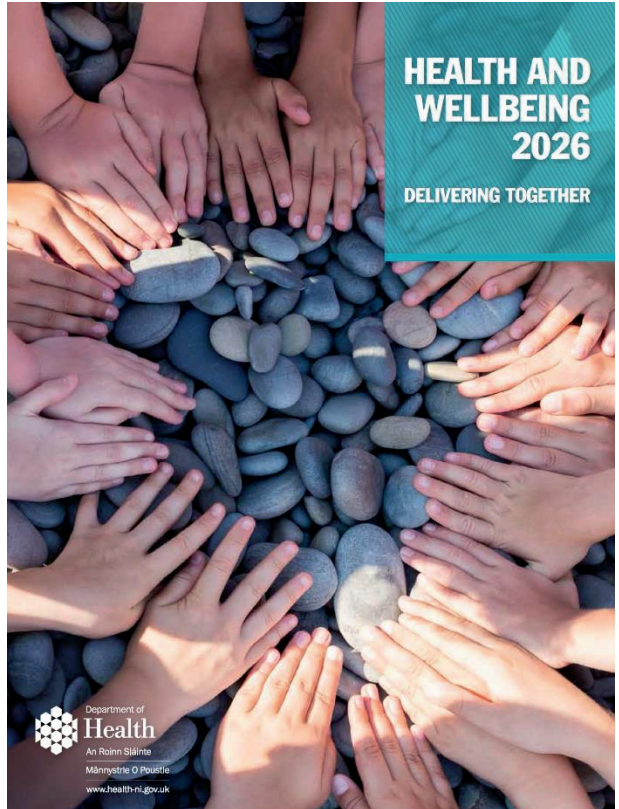
Pictured above: NIMDTA staff at WHSCT Trainee/Trainer Roadshow

How will SUCCEED happen?

The SUCCEED strategy is being launched into a dynamic and complex healthcare system. This strategy will not happen in isolation, but requires the support of training partners and service leaders and will be impacted by external factors within the wider socio-political environment. It is important that we recognise these factors and clearly identify SUCCEED's alignment to HSC's strategic aims and utilise the levers that this alignment brings to progress the strategy.

Alignment to Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together

The aim of **proactively supporting** NIMDTA doctors and dentists in training to thrive, successfully progress, complete training and be appointed to permanent posts in Northern Ireland aligns with the views of the Minister for Health as set out in [Health and Wellbeing 2026](#) in wanting the ***“HSC to be an employer of choice, leading by example and investing in the health and wellbeing of its staff”***, highlighting that the HSC workforce ***“will be listened to, engaged and nurtured at all levels”***.



Alignment with Quality 2020 Strategy

Quality 2020 is the Department of Health's strategy to protect and improve quality in health and social care in Northern Ireland. Key goals within the strategy are to transform the culture and strengthen the workforce. Quality 2020 states that *"No matter how good our systems and procedures are, they all rely on staff that are **motivated, skilled and trained** to implement them."*



Quality 2020 outlines 5 strategic goals to be achieved by 2020. How the SUCCEED strategy aligns with these themes is outlined below.

Transforming the Culture by creating a culture of support for trainees, trainers and programme leaders by introducing innovative approaches to how training is delivered in Northern Ireland.

Strengthening the Workforce by promoting, supporting and encouraging trainees to develop to their full potential and acquire the skills to deliver the health service that the public in Northern Ireland needs.

Measuring Improvement by measuring the impact of the SUCCEED strategy as outlined below.

Raising the Standards by introducing Quality Indicators to assess the quality of training posts and employing an improvement approach in collaboration with training partners to implement positive change. In addition by promoting and celebrating success through 'Dare to Excel' celebration events.

Integrating the Care by better aligning posts to the best training opportunities, providing longer duration placements so that trainees become more fully integrated into teams. By doing, so we will develop trainees with the skills needed to work across organisations and services for the enhancement of patient care.

Alignment to GMC Standards and Guidance

The General Medical Council (GMC) in [Promoting Excellence](#) describes the standards and requirements for delivery of all stages of medical education and training. There are ten standards and 76 requirements organised around five themes - learning environment and culture, educational governance and leadership, supporting learners, supporting educators and developing and implementing curricula and assessment.



Promoting excellence:

standards for medical education and training

The aims of SUCCEED align closely to the themes, standards and requirements of Promoting Excellence:

Working with doctors Working for patients

General
Medical
Council

Standard 1.1	The learning environment is safe for patients and supportive for learners and educators. The culture is caring, compassionate and provides a good standard of care and experience for patients, carers and families.
Standard 2.1	The educational governance system continuously improves the quality and outcomes of education and training by measuring performance against the standards, demonstrating accountability and responding when standards are not being met.
Standard 3.1	Learners receive educational and pastoral support to be able to demonstrate what is expected in Good medical practice and to achieve the learning outcomes required by their curriculum.
Standard 4.2	Educators receive the support , resources and time to meet their education and training responsibilities.
Standard 5.2	Postgraduate curricula and assessments are implemented so that doctors in training are able to demonstrate what is expected in Good medical practice and to achieve the learning outcomes required by their curriculum.

Engagement with essential stakeholders

The SUCCEED strategy can only be successful through engagement with other key stakeholders including:

- Department of Health
- Health and Social Care Board
- Public Health Agency
- HSC Trusts
- GP Practices and General Dental Practices
- Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority
- Business Services Organisation
- Queen's University of Belfast
- British Medical Association

This collaborative working is essential to ensure that this strategy is both comprehensive and sustainable. HSC Trusts can help identify the wide range of trainee and trainer achievements and provide the training that will lead to a successful outcome. There are many stakeholders involved in improving the wellbeing and support for trainees. Through working with these key stakeholders, trainees will be proactively supported in their training, which in turn should provide the best opportunity of having an enjoyable and successful clinical career.



Measuring Progress

The scope of SUCCEED is wide reaching and therefore the ways in which the initiative will be evaluated will include a variety of methods:

Method	Programme Leaders	Trainers	Trainees
Engagement	Specialty School Reviews Lead Educators' Forum	Attendance at Recognised Trainers Events	Trainee Fora Training Committees Trainee Ambassadors Submissions to Trainee Research Day Attendance at educational events
Local feedback	Training Committees	Training Committees Trainer Roadshows	Training Committees VALUED survey Induction processes Trainees accessing Professional Support Trainee Roadshows
National Feedback	GMC Training Survey	GMC Trainer Survey	GMC Trainee Survey College Surveys ARCP outcome analysis
Successes	Dare to Excel Educators Award Programme awards (eg RCOG)	Dare to Excel Trainer Award	Dare to Excel Trainee Awards Recruitment Success Examination Success National Awards

Conclusions

To ensure that the workforce of the HSC is equipped to bring about the changes needed through transformation, it is vital that the whole workforce, including trainees, is provided with the right training environment to fulfil their potential and succeed. We need to support our trainees to acquire the skills they need for a future career in HSCNI. To ensure high quality patient-centred care is delivered, it is essential that we invest in the development of our trainees, support them to remain in training, promote successful progression through training and equip trainees to take up permanent posts within the HSC in Northern Ireland.

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