t



**Less than Full-time Training**

**Health Education England Wessex Process for Managing Less than Fulltime Medical Training**

**Author: Associate Dean with responsibility for LTFT**

**Original publication date: March 2009**

**Updated: February 2010, May 2013, April 2014 in light of implementation issues being raised, January 2018, December 2021, February 2023**

**Next Review date: February 2024**

# 1.0 Introduction

This process is for the following:

* New applications for Less Than Full Time Training (LTFT)
* For existing LTFT trainees wishing to change percentage
* For existing LTFT trainees wishing to return to full time training

Health Education England, working across Wessex (HEE WX) offers support to all trainees who 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 General Medical Council (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 continue their training on a full-time basis for a well-founded individual reason.
* To promote career and personal development as well as work/life balance and wellbeing.
* To ensure continued training in programmes on a time-equivalent (pro rata) basis

**Applications need to be submitted no less than 16 weeks before the rotation start date,** rather than the date you wish to start your LTFT training.  Applications may be considered outside of this time period for exceptional circumstances, but evidence of Medical HR approval will be required as a supplement to this application.

For rotations with a duration of 12 months we will accept an application in time for the 6 month point.

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

All doctors in training can apply for LTFT training, the only requirement being a well-founded individual reason. A list of illustrative examples of reasons for requesting LTFT training is detailed below.

We may need to prioritise requests - if so, this will be in accordance with the provisions of the Equality Act related to protected characteristics, favouring applications related to Health and Disability, Caring responsibilities and roles relating to religious convictions.

**Reasons for requesting LTFT training – illustrative list:**

* Trainees with a disability or ill health – This may include ongoing medical procedures such as fertility treatment.
* Trainees with caring responsibilities (e.g. for children, or for an ill/disabled partner, relative or other dependant)
* Welfare and wellbeing – There may be reasons not directly related to disability or ill health where trainees may benefit from a reduced working pattern. This could have a beneficial effect on their health and wellbeing (e.g. reducing potential burnout).
* 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 train for more information.

**Overseas Sponsorship and LTFT Training**

Those trainees on a Tier 2 or Skilled Worker visa must comply with the UK Visas and Immigration requirements for minimum salary and minimum hours. HEE cannot approve any LTFT requests where they do not meet these requirements regardless of the reason for the LTFT request.

Full details of minimum salary and hours requirement can be reviewed here [Less Than Full Time (LTFT) minimum salary requirements](https://medical.hee.nhs.uk/medical-training-recruitment/medical-specialty-training/overseas-applicants/overseas-sponsorship-guidance/less-than-full-time-ltft-minimum-salary-requirements) or by contacting the HEE National Overseas Sponsorship team, sponsorship@hee.nhs.uk

# 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 placed in a full time slot or a slot share depending 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 [h](https://www.gmc-uk.org/education/postgraduate/27071.asp)as 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. Please refer to the [GMC position statement](https://www.gmc-uk.org/education/standards-guidance-and-curricula/position-statements/less-than-full-time-training) for full details.

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 shares 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. Supernumerary placements are subject to funding availability and will be for no more than six months.

Supernumerary posts will not automatically attract out-of-hours working requirements.

# 4.0 Application Process

Trainees should discuss a potential application for LTFT training with their Educational Supervisor, Training Programme Director (TPD) and Education Programme Manager or Officer 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 [websit](https://wessex.hee.nhs.uk/trainee-information/trainee-journey/less-than-full-time-training/)[e a](http://www.wessexdeanery.nhs.uk/policies__procedures/less_than_full_time_training.aspx)long with the application form.

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 Education Programme Manager or Officer 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 Local Education Provider (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 may occur on different days of the week. The trainee must make personal arrangements to access training so that the educational and legal requirements of training are always met.

We also need to ensure that a balance is maintained between the LTFT training arrangements, the educational needs of both full-time and LTFT trainees, and the needs of the service.

Therefore, trainees must bear in mind that for example: they may need to change days of attendance for children at nursery or make other caring arrangements. It is the trainee’s responsibility to make these arrangements, as trainers and supervisors are not expected to revise their working timetable 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 specialty 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.

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 timetable 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 hours 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 Annual Review of Competence Progression (ARCP)

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.

**12.0 LTFT Training in a General Practice (GP) based post**

For guidance on working LTFT in a GP practice based post, please see the [NHS Employers website.](http://www.nhsemployers.org/your-workforce/pay-and-reward/medical-staff/doctors-and-dentists-in-training/terms-and-conditions-contracts/work-scheduling-templates-and-guidance)

# 13.0 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 they should ensure that the Postgraduate Dean as their designated Responsible Officer (RO) is aware of all additional work undertaken within their remit of holding a licence to practise.

Please refer to the [COPMeD Guidance on undertaking additional work](https://www.copmed.org.uk/publications/guidance-on-undertaking-additional-work) for further information.

# 14.0 Returning to Full Time Training

Trainees wishing to return to full time training should apply using the LTFT application form and give a minimum of 16 weeks’ notice in advance of the date of rotation of their intended return to full time training. 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.

# 15.0 Additional guidance

##  15.1 Statutory Leave

LTFT Trainees should notify the relevant Education Programme Manager or Officer of anticipated start and end dates of parental leave as well as informing other relevant bodies, e.g., employing Trust/Foundation School, to ensure any LTFT arrangements are updated.

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

#  15.2 Study Leave

LTFT trainees are entitled to periods of study leave pro-rata to their sessional commitments. Appropriateness of and eligibility for study leave will be subject to the same criteria as for full-time trainees. Further details can be found here: [Study Leave](https://wessex.hee.nhs.uk/trainee-information/trainee-journey/study-leave/)

 **15.3 Annual Leave**

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

# 16.0 Changes to Post

Any proposed changes to a post, including working hours, should be agreed with the TPD 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.

# 17.0 Appeals

If a trainee has an issue with the LTFT decision, they should in the first instance email the LTFT.wx@hee.nhs.uk giving details of their concern. The Associate Dean for LTFT will then attempt to resolve any issues informally in discussion with the trainee.

Should informal resolution not be possible, the trainee should complete the PGMDE Complaints form on the HEE website: [Complaints Form](https://healtheducationengland.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/g/Comms/Digital/EdVN5EcYpqlIpfA8CO0fPM0BU6Sabu6-SZm-O0TFu9TvSg?e=PKcdfI) and email it to complaints.wx@hee.nhs.uk The Postgraduate Dean will appoint a Case Manager who will investigate the issue.