

Deferrals Standard Operating Procedure

Yorkshire and the Humber Deanery

Workforce Training and Education, Yorkshire and Humber, NHS England





Name of Document	Deferrals		
Category	Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) - Trainee management		
Purpose	This document is one of a suite of Standard Operating Procedures to support the management of trainees across England. This SOP is aligned to the principles of 'A Reference Guide for Postgraduate Foundation and Specialty Training in the UK' (The Gold Guide) and 'A Reference Guide for Postgraduate Dental Core and Specialty Training' (The Dental Gold Guide). Please refer to the most recent versions.		
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Next Review Date	SOP to be reviewed in line with any future Gold Guide revisions, or every 12 months, whichever comes first.		
Document Author	Hannah Glew, Programme Support Manager		
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Version	Date	Author/Reviewer	Notes Reason for Change, what has changed, etc
1	20/03/2025	Hannah Glew	New guidance
2	20/01/2026	Hannah Glew	Updated to reflect publication of Dental Gold Guide 2025 and changed reference from Local YH Sponsorship Team to National Sponsorship Team.

Document Status

This is a controlled document. Whilst this document may be printed, the electronic version posted on the SharePoint site is the controlled copy. Any printed copies of this document are not controlled.

This document is not intended to be interpreted as a policy statement. This is a local guidance document for faculty and staff in the Yorkshire and Humber Deanery to enable consistency of application; it is recognised there may be exceptional circumstances when deviation from this guidance may be required.



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1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

When postgraduate doctors and dentists in training (PgDiTs) are appointed to a training programme within Yorkshire and the Humber, a start date for the training programme will have been advertised as part of the recruitment process.



If a PgDiT is unable to commence the training programme on the advertised start date, due to statutory reasons, they may apply for a deferral.

1.2 Purpose of this guidance

This guidance outlines the arrangements for approval of deferral applications within NHS England's Yorkshire and the Humber Deanery.

This guidance should be read in conjunction with:

- Gold Guide 10th Edition: A Reference Guide for Postgraduate Foundation and Specialty Training in the UK
- Dental Gold Guide 5th Edition: A Reference Guide for Postgraduate Dental Core and Specialty Training in the UK

1.3 Doctors and dentists covered by the guidance

This guidance applies to all medical doctors appointed to GMC approved training programmes (Gold Guide 3.38) and all dentists appointed to GDC approved training programmes (Dental Gold Guide 4.5).

This includes PgDiTs appointed to foundation, core and specialty training programmes.

This includes PgDiTs appointed to Academic training programmes.

This also includes PgDiTs appointed to the Defence Medical Services.

1.4 Equality and diversity

The Yorkshire and Humber Deanery is committed to ensuring that the principles of equality and diversity are always applied in the delivery of education and training. This guidance is based upon the principles of natural justice, fairness, equality and reasonableness, as supported by legislation, and should be applied with those principles in mind.

2. Deferrals

2.1 Eligibility for a Deferral

The start of training may normally only be deferred on statutory grounds, e.g. maternity, paternity, adoption leave, ill health (Dental Gold Guide 4.5; Gold Guide 3.38).

In exceptional circumstances, the Postgraduate Dean (or nominated deputy) may allow a deferral for a non-statutory reason, for example, if the offer of a training programme is made at short notice and the PgDiT has a contractual notice period within another role that they must honour.

Deferral of the start of training applies equally to PgDiTs who have returned to programme following a prior period of statutory leave as well as to applicants for whom the period of statutory leave coincides with the proposed start date of the programme.



Foundation doctors who are approved for a deferral but subsequently do not graduate from medical school, will have their offer of a training programme withdrawn.

2.2 Defence Medical Services

For the Defence Medical Services only, training may also be deferred in order for a PgDiT to meet operational requirements.

2.3 Sponsored PgDiTs

PgDiT that are approved to defer their training are responsible for notifying the relevant sponsorship teams of any change to their start date. If their Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) has already been issued at the point their deferral is approved, they may be responsible for reimbursing NHS England for the cost of their initial CoS, before they can be re-issued with a CoS prior to the start of their training. Please note that a CoS can only be issued 3 months prior to the start date of training in line with Home Office rules

PgDiT who have deferred and require visa sponsorship are responsible for ensuring they have alternative immigration status if they wish to remain in the UK during their deferral period.

2.3 Length of Deferral

The approved period of deferral would not normally exceed one year. However, in exceptional circumstances, and with the Postgraduate Dean's approval, it could be extended to a maximum of two years. If the PgDiT is unable to join after this time, they will need to reapply for a training post via the relevant recruitment process.

3. Application Process

3.1 How to Apply for a Deferral

Any PgDiT wishing to apply for a deferral needs to submit a Deferral Application form (Appendix 1) to the Yorkshire and Humber Deanery Programme Support Team via their relevant School inbox, as detailed on the application form.

The application form must be completed in full and include the requested deferred start date.

Wherever possible, applicants are asked to give as much notice as possible of the need to defer the start date. This may allow the placement to be offered to another candidate (Gold Guide 3.40).

3.2 Review of Application

Upon receipt, the Yorkshire and Humber Deanery Programme Support Team will log the deferral request on the Deferral Tracker spreadsheet. They will then arrange for the application to be reviewed by the Postgraduate Dean/Postgraduate Dental Dean or their nominated deputy (usually a Deputy Dean or Head of School).



The Programme Support Team will notify the PgDiT of the outcome, via email.

Where the deferral application is approved, the outcome will also be communicated to:

- the PgDiT's Training Programme Director
- the Local Education Provider(s) affected by the application
- the Sponsorship Team, where applicable
- the National Recruitment Office, where another candidate will be appointed due to the deferral

The Programme Support Team will save a copy of the application form, update the Trainee Information System, and ensure the rotation grid is updated to reflect the new agreed start date.

Where the deferral application is not approved, the PgDiT must commence the training programme on the start date stated in the offer letter or resign from the training programme.

The decision of the Postgraduate Dean (or nominated deputy) is final. There is no appeals process.

3.3 Academic Training Programmes

If a deferral is approved for a PgDiT who has been appointed to an academic training programme, it is the responsibility of the PgDiT to confirm the outcome of the deferral with the relevant Academic Institution.

3.4 Start Date

A PgDiT should request a start date on their Deferral Application Form. However, it is at the discretion of the School whether this date can be accommodated. In some cases, it may be necessary for the deferral start date to be in line with the rotation dates, to allow for rotation management.

3.5 Implications of a Deferral

When applying for a deferral, PgDiTs must be aware that there will be implications for their training programme.

A PgDiT will not be issued with their National Training Number (NTN) until they reach the agreed deferred start date and commence the training programme.

A PgDiT's completion of training date will be extended in line with the deferral.

Due to the change of start date, the placement/rotation originally allocated may not be available when the PgDiT commences their Training Programme. They may be allocated to any placement within the Yorkshire and the Humber training programme that they were appointed to, at the discretion of the Training Programme Director. For example, a PgDiT appointed to a Cariology training programme within West Yorkshire will still be allocated to a post within West



Yorkshire but this may be at a different Trust to the one in which they were originally due to start.

PgDiTs that require visa sponsorship are responsible for ensuring they have alternative immigration status if they wish to remain in the UK during their deferral period. They must also ensure they have an approved Skilled Worker visa prior to commencing in post.

3.5 Extending a Deferral

Any request to extend an approved deferral will require a new Deferral Application form to be completed, submitted and reviewed, in line with the process outlined in sections 3.1 and 3.2.

The Programme Support Team will notify the PgDiT of the outcome of their extension application, via email.

Where the deferral extension application is approved, the outcome will also be communicated to:

- the PgDiT's Training Programme Director
- the Local Education Provider(s) affected by the application
- the Yorkshire and Humber Deanery Sponsorship Team, where applicable
- the National Recruitment Office, where another candidate will be appointed due to the deferral

The Programme Support Team will save a copy of the application form to the PgDiT's file, update the Trainee Information System and ensure the rotation grid is updated to reflect the new agreed start date.

3.6 Curtailing a Deferral

If a PgDiT wishes to start their training programme sooner than their agreed deferral date, they must contact the Yorkshire and Humber Deanery Programme Support Team, providing as much notice as possible. The Programme Support Team will then liaise with their Training Programme Director.

It will only be possible to commence in the programme earlier than the approved deferral date where the Training Programme Director can identify that there is a suitable vacancy on the rotation for the PgDiT to occupy. Consideration must also be given to the Local Education Provider to ensure they have sufficient notice to conduct their pre-employment checks.

4. Equality Impact Assessment

Under the Equality Act, the need for public bodies in England to undertake or publish an equality impact assessment of their policies, practices and decisions was removed in April 2011 when the 'single equality duty' was introduced. Public bodies must still give "due regard" to the need to avoid discrimination and promote equality of opportunity for all protected groups when making policy decisions and are required to publish information showing how they are complying with this duty.



5. Monitoring Compliance and Effectiveness

This Operational Guidance will be reviewed in accordance with updated or new guidance published by COPMeD, COPDEND, NHS England, the General Medical Council, the General Dental Council, or any other organisation as applicable. New iterations of this guidance will be ratified by the Postgraduate Dean's Senior Team within the Yorkshire and Humber Deanery.



6. Appendix 1 - Deferral Request Form

Sections A – D should be completed by the Postgraduate Doctor/Dentist in training.

PART A – Personal Information			
Surname:		Forename:	
GMC/GDC No.		Contact number:	
Email Address:			
Do you require a Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) from NHS England or are you in the process of obtaining a CoS from NHS England for a skilled worker visa?			Yes / No

PART B – Appointment Information	
Training Programme appointed to:	
Grade appointed to:	
Date offer letter received:	
Start date stated in offer letter:	

PART C – Deferral Request	
Requested deferred start date:	
Reason for deferral:	<input type="checkbox"/> Statutory parental leave, including adoption leave <input type="checkbox"/> Ill health/Statutory sick leave <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Please provide further details of the reason for your deferral below. If you have selected the “Other” category, please detail whether this change has occurred since you have accepted the offer of the training programme.	

PART D – Trainee Declaration	
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I am requesting approval from the Postgraduate Dean to defer the start of my Training Programme as detailed above. I understand that:

- If my request is not approved, I must commence my Training Programme on the start date stated in my offer letter or resign from the Training Programme.
- If I resign from the Training Programme, I may be required to work a period of notice by the employing organisation for my first placement. To re-enter training, I will need to re-apply in open competition.
- Extensions to the approved deferral period will require submission of an additional Deferral Request Form and approval by the Postgraduate Dean (or nominated deputy).
- The placement/rotation originally allocated to me may not be available when I start my training programme. I may be allocated to any placement within NHSE YH at the discretion of the Training Programme Director or Head of School.
- Where applicable, I will not be issued with my National Training Number (NTN) until I reach the agreed deferred start date and commence my training programme.
- I must inform the Programme Support Team if my contact details change at any point during the deferral period.

Signed:		Date:	
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Please submit your application form to the relevant email address below:

- For Foundation Training - england.foundation.yh@nhs.net
- For Dental Training – england.dentalsupport.yh@nhs.net
- For General Practice Training - england.gpplacements.yh@nhs.net
- For all other Core and Specialty Training Programmes - england.stp-programmemanagement.yh@nhs.net

Decision To be completed by Postgraduate Dean or Nominated Deputy			
APPROVED / NOT APPROVED		Please delete as appropriate	
Signature:		Date:	
Comments: <i>Must be provided when an application is not approved</i>			