

Name of Document	Less Than Full Time Training
Category	Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) This SOP is applicable to all doctors and dentists in training within NHS England.
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 Foundation, Core and Specialty Training' (The Dental Gold Guide). Please refer to the most recent versions. Since 2020, Foundation Training is embedded within the Gold Guide. Therefore, the NHS England suite of SOPs applies to all doctors in training, including Foundation, unless specified otherwise. Within the SOP, whenever reference is made to the Postgraduate Dean, it refers to the Postgraduate Dean or their nominated representative who will be responsible for managing the process on their behalf. Throughout the document, unless otherwise stated, the term 'trainee' refers to postgraduate doctors in training and also applies to postgraduate dentists in training and public health trainees with a medical or non-medical qualification. Within this SOP whenever reference is made to ARCP, in relation to dentistry this also refers to Review of Competency Progression (RCP). This SOP is intended to be a guide to encourage consistency of practice across England. Due to the complex nature of training, there will be occasions where Postgraduate Deans will apply their discretion in enacting this SOP to take account of individual circumstances and varying local structures (e.g. Lead Employer). Local offices should ensure they review the associated Process Alignment Group (PAG) document with regards to Trainee Information System (TIS) implications. English Deans are committed to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), with a duty to eliminate discrimination, promote equality and ensure inclusive opportunities are available to all with regards to age, disability, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion or belief in the design and delivery of all our services. English Deans aim to meet and exceed their statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010 by adopting a continuous improvement approach. This suite of SOPs will be routinely screened against relevant Equality and Diversity documentation.

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1	27/06/2017	HEED	Document signed off at HEED
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4	28/04/2021	HEED	Document signed off at HEED
5	11/10/2022	HEED	Document signed off at HEED
6	19/07/2023	HEED	Document signed off at PGMDE Operational Oversight Group
7	17/10/2024	English Deans	Document signed off at PGMDE Operational Oversight Group
8	23/09/2025	English Deans	Document signed off at PGMDE Operational Oversight Group

Related Documents

- *Gold Guide 10th Edition: A Reference Guide for Postgraduate Foundation and Specialty Training in the UK:*
<https://www.copmed.org.uk/publications/gold-guide>
- *Dental Gold Guide: A Reference Guide for Postgraduate Dental Foundation, Core and Specialty Training in the UK:*
<https://copdend.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/DGG5-2025-v5.pdf>
- *GMC Position Statement: Conditions for Less Than Full Time Training updated December 2024:*
<https://www.gmc-uk.org/education/standards-guidance-and-curricula/position-statements/less-than-full-time-training>

1. Introduction

All doctors and dentists in training including academic doctors can apply for LTFT training.

This SOP is drawn from the Gold Guide (10th edition) and the Dental Gold Guide, the NHS Employers document [Doctors in flexible training - Principles underpinning the new arrangements for flexible training](#) and the GMC position statement on [LTFT training](#).

2. Eligibility for LTFT Training

All employees have a [legal right to request flexible working](#) – not just parents and carers. Therefore, all trainees can apply for LTFT training, the only requirement being a well-founded individual reason.

All well-founded reasons will be considered, however support to progress the application may be dependent on the capacity of the programme and the effect the request may have on the training available to other doctors and dentists in training on the programme.

3. Overseas Sponsorship and LTFT Training

Those trainees on a Skilled Worker or Tier 2 visa must comply with the UK Visas and Immigration requirements for minimum salary. NHS England 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 requirements and LTFT sponsorship guidance can be found on [NHSE - Less than full time minimum salary requirements](#) or by contacting the National Overseas Sponsorship team, england.sponsorship@nhs.net

4. Applying for LTFT Training

Trainees will need to apply for LTFT training to their local NHS England Office. The application form and process will vary so the trainee must access their local NHS England office policy. All trainees must inform their TPD or other nominated Senior Educator as detailed in their local NHS England office policy prior to submitting an application to advise them of their intent to apply for LTFT training.

Whilst there is no common application form across the NHS England local offices the forms must include the minimum data fields which can be found in appendix A.

The application form must be submitted along with any supporting documentation (as required) to the NHS England local office with at least 16 weeks' notice before the proposed start date for a change in working hours or before the next rotation change dependent on local NHS England Office processes. This is to allow at least 12 weeks' notice to the employer of the proposed changes in line with code of practice.

Where a trainee wishes to increase or decrease their percentage of whole time equivalent (WTE), except in exceptional circumstances they must make an application to their local NHS England office providing at least 16 weeks' notice before the proposed start date for a change in working hours or before the next rotation change dependent on local NHS England office processes. The percentage of WTE should be calculated and negotiated over the full training year in accordance with the current GMC position statement on LTFT. For those trainees on a Skilled Worker or Tier 2 visa please refer to section 3 of the SOP. Any increase in working hours will be subject to training programme capacity.

5. Approval of LTFT application

The NHS England local Office will assess the application for LTFT training and where necessary prioritise according to the provisions of the Equality Act relating to protected characteristics.

Approval of the LTFT training plan may be subject to the agreement of the employer / host training organisation before the placement can commence. Each local NHS England Office will agree the process for approval of LTFT requests with their local education providers.

Approval to work LTFT will normally be given for the duration of the training placement / programme or dependent on the illustrative list under which they have applied but may be subject to annual review around renewal. This is likely where the reasons for requesting LTFT working are no longer applicable, i.e. a request to undertake professional development such as a management course is completed or where the demand for LTFT working exceeds the capacity of the programme to provide it.

Correspondence will be sent to the trainee and other stakeholders as necessary to confirm the outcome of the LTFT application, in order that all parties are aware of the decision and can respond accordingly in terms of rotational notification. To comply with Code of Practice requirements, employers will receive 12 weeks' notice of a change in status of LTFT. We recognise in exceptional circumstances that it is not always possible to give the required notice. In this situation the request would be discussed with all relevant parties (TPD, LEP etc.).

6. Refusal of LTFT application

Where a request to work LTFT is rejected a member of the NHS England Faculty (HoS, TPD, Postgraduate Dean or nominated deputy) should in accordance with local NHS England guidance meet with the trainee to explain the reasons for the decision. The reason should align to the business reasons set out in the current legislation (<https://www.gov.uk/flexible-working/after-the-application>): -

If following discussion, there is new information or an omission it may be possible to accept the LTFT request with modifications. This may include working a different WTE or a change to the proposed start date.

7. Appeal

Where a request to work LTFT has been rejected the trainee has the right to appeal that decision. The trainee must follow the appeal process within the local NHS England office.

8. Progressing in a LTFT Placement

All trainees, full-time or LTFT, need to meet the requirements for progression in training as set out in the relevant approved curriculum and will be assessed in accordance with the ARCP process. Where an extension to training is required, trainees on a Skilled Worker or Tier 2 visa will be able to have their sponsorship extended. Trainees must contact the National Overseas Sponsorship team (england.sponsorship@nhs.net) approximately 4 months before the expiry of their visa to request an extension.

Where trainees have been approved on a time limited basis, they should be appropriately managed back to their full-time basis on their training programme.

Key points relating to LTFT trainees: -

- Trainees training LTFT should have an ARCP not less than annually but at intervals of no more than 15 months but may need an ARCP at a critical progression point in their training.
- LTFT trainees are expected to demonstrate the capabilities relevant to their stage of training
- Training extensions awarded after the award of an outcome 3 or 10.2 will be pro-rata
- Day time working, on-call and out of hours duties will be undertaken on a pro-rata basis to that worked by full time trainees in the same grade and specialty. The only exceptions to this are circumstances for LTFT training

which make this impossible, provided that legal and educational requirements are met.

- LTFT trainees will normally be expected to move between posts within rotations on the same basis as a full-time trainee in the same specialty, to ensure they receive a coherent programme of training that is educationally comparable with full time trainees.
- LTFT trainees can be interviewed for a consultant post 6 months prior to CCT/CCST, this is a fixed-term time basis and not pro-rata
- LTFT trainees can apply to act up as a consultant in their final year of training. This will normally be for three months but can be extended to reflect the LTFT training percentage.
- The purpose of the period of grace is to provide trainees (excluding those in General Practice) time to secure a Consultant or other post following attainment of their CCT/CCST. The maximum duration of the period of grace is six months whether the doctor is full time or LTFT.

9. Funding of LTFT Trainees

Funding of LTFT trainees should be in accordance with the current approved LTFT Funding Policy document which is effective from 1 April 2023 and applies to postgraduate medical placements that would be eligible for the [Education and training tariffs 2025 to 2026](#)

For postgraduate medical placements that are not eligible for this tariff, such as GP practice placements, Public Health placements and Private, Independent and Voluntary Organisation (PIVO) placements, current arrangements will remain in place, as the individual postgraduate medical trainee is funded, as opposed to the placement.

APPENDIX A – NATIONAL DATA SET

The eligibility application process should include the following data set:

Personal Details

- Surname (used in training)
- First Name
- Other Surname (if different from surname used in training)
- GMC/GDC Number
- Email Address
- Phone Number
- Are you a Tier 2 / Skilled Worker Visa Holder?

LTFT Eligibility

- i. Trainees with a disability or ill health
- ii. Trainees (men and women) with caring responsibilities
- iii. Welfare and wellbeing
- iv. Unique opportunities
- v. Religious commitment
- vi. Non-medical development
- vii. Flexibility for training and career development

Other Application Details

- Proposed LTFT Placement and Training Plan
- Level you will be working at
- Name of Training Programme
- LTFT Start date
- LTFT End date (if known)
- Proposed Percentage
- Applicant Declaration