

<b>Name of Document</b>	<b>Management of Fellowships</b>
<b>Category</b>	Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) <b>This SOP is applicable to doctors and dentists in training within NHS England.</b>
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Within the SOP, whenever reference is made to the Postgraduate Dean, it refers to the NHS England English Dean/Postgraduate Dean or their nominated representative who will be responsible for managing the process on their behalf.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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).</p> <p>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.</p> <p>This suite of SOPs will be routinely screened against relevant Equality and Diversity documentation.</p>
<b>Authorised by</b>	Health Education England Deans (HEEDs), now English Deans
<b>Date Authorised</b>	17/09/2019

<b>Implementation Date (current version)</b>		01/12/2024	
<b>Next Review Date</b>		SOP to be reviewed in line with any future Gold Guide revisions, or every 12 months, whichever comes first	
<b>Document Author</b>		English Deans and Senior Managers Group (formerly HEED & HEED Senior Managers Group)	
<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Notes</b> Reason for Change, what has changed, etc
1	17/09/2019	HEED	Document signed off at HEED
2	28/04/2021	HEED	Document signed off at HEED
3	11/10/2022	HEED	Document signed off at HEED
4	19/07/2023	HEED	Document signed off at PGMDE Operational Oversight Group
5	17/10/2024	English Deans	Document signed off at PGMDE Operational Oversight Group

Related Documents

- *Gold Guide 10<sup>th</sup> Edition: A Reference Guide for Postgraduate Foundation and Specialty Training in the UK:*  
<https://www.copmed.org.uk/publications/gold-guide>

## 1. Introduction

Former HEE established the 'Enhancing Junior Doctors' Working Lives' programme in partnership with the BMA Junior Doctors' Committee, NHS Employers, the GMC and the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges (AoMRC) in March 2016. The programme was established to address a range of issues having a negative impact on the quality of life of trainees.

## 2. Types of Fellowships

There are a number of Fellowship opportunities available across NHS England. Some will be ring-fenced for trainees within the local office whilst others will be available through a regional or national competitive process. Examples include:

- Royal College of Physicians Flexible Portfolio Training
- Royal College of Physicians Chief Registrar Scheme
- Topol Programme for Digital Health Fellowship
- Supported Return to Training (SuppoRTT) Fellowship
- Quality Improvement Fellowship
- Medical Education Fellowship
- Simulation Fellowship
- Leadership and management
- Clinical Informatics

This is not an exhaustive list and there will be a number of initiatives available locally, regionally and nationally.

## 3. Recruitment Process

- Fund holders need to determine the best method of recruitment, either NHS England or through a trust appointment
- Advertisement should normally take place a minimum of 6 months prior to the proposed start date to ensure applications for the time out of training can be processed
- Fellowship opportunities must be advertised to all eligible applicants.
- Details of the Fellowship should be available on the local office / national website.
- The interview date should be identified in the advert and candidates should have at least one weeks' notice of the interview.
- Longlisting and shortlisting as per usual HR processes should occur as required.

- Trainees wishing to undertake a fellowship on a Less Than Full Time basis should apply and have their application given due consideration as per usual HR processes.
- The appointing lead will notify all shortlisted candidates that they are invited for interview. The invite letter should include: -
  - Date and time
  - Venue
  - Details of the selection process
- Panel members must have up to date Equality and Diversity training.
- There should be a minimum of three personnel on the panel.
- Arrangements for recruitment will vary according to local, regional or regional ownership of the programme.
- All candidates must undergo the same process for the interviews, this includes the same title of a presentation if required and the same questions.
- All assessment materials should be retained for 12 months, and panel members should be reminded that candidates may request sight of the interview notes of the panel.
- The panel chair is responsible for providing feedback to applicants.
- Where trainees wish to undertake an OOPT the necessary approvals will need to be sought from the GMC

## 4. Approvals

Fellowships can normally be taken in one of three ways with each application adhering to the relevant timeframes in the groups below:-

1. through an application for Out of Programme Experience or Training OOPE/T (*GG10: 3.157 – 3.163*)
2. through an application for Less Than Full Time Training (*GG10: 3.126*)
3. through undertaking in programme as part of specialty curricular training

- Trainees should be in programme at the point of application for items 1 & 2 above
- Prior to applying the trainee should seek the approval of their Training Programme Director and / or Head of School and also determine which method of application is appropriate.
- NHSE visa sponsored trainees must seek advice regarding their sponsorship.
- The trainee should be in receipt of or on track to receive an ARCP outcome 1.
- There should be no outstanding GMC Fitness to Practise issues.
- If successful at interview the trainee will need to liaise with their Educational Supervisor and employer to agree the protected time for the Fellowship.

## 5. Start Date

- Applications for OOP and LTFT need to adhere to published timescales

- In agreeing the start date, we should be cognisant of the requirements of Code of Practice and therefore employers and trainees must be given a minimum of 12 weeks' notice before commencement of the Fellowship.

## 6. Funding Arrangements

- The funding arrangements may vary depending on local, regional and national approaches to funding the protected time to pursue professional development.
- Role descriptors need to ensure the source of funding is clearly identified

## 7. Out of Hours Working

- Where trainees occupy a training slot on the clinical training programme but have time ring-fenced for the Fellowship the expectation is that they will fully contribute to the on-call commitments required by the employer. Expectations should be made clear in advertisements.
- If a doctor wishes to negotiate a reduced on-call commitment pro-rata to the clinical commitment they will need to negotiate this with their employer.

## 8. Protected Time in Group 2 & 3

- Trainees appointed to Fellowships will have the WTE, as per the advert, protected for project work to support their professional development alongside training in their clinical specialty.
- The protected time will typically be one (20%) or two (40%) days per week but in discussion with the employer and educational supervisor could be undertaken as a block.

## 9. Less than Full Time trainees

- Fellowship opportunities will be accessible to less than full-time (LTFT) trainees.
- If as a result of taking up the Fellowship the clinical component of the role falls below 0.5 WTE, approval should be sought from the Postgraduate Dean given the [minimum requirements](#) for recognition of training as set by the GMC.
- In most cases it is likely that the trainee will develop competences aligned to the GMC curriculum for their clinical specialty, such as leadership and management, and therefore the expectation is that this will be supported for at least 12 months.

## 10. Extension to Estimated Completion Date

- It should not be assumed that the estimated completion date should be adjusted, particularly where trainees are acquiring competencies at the expected speed (or more rapidly than expected). This will need to be considered on an individual basis based on the relevant specialty curriculum

## 11. Recording the Fellowship

- There is currently no mechanism on TIS to record those trainees undertaking a Fellowship alongside their clinical training, therefore this needs to be recorded in their training file.
- Arrangements will depend on the nature of absence, if this is as an OOP, see OOP SOP.
- If this is being done alongside the CCT programme, the ARCP form must document the split between clinical training and protected time for the Fellowship, this is particularly important where the estimated completion date has been adjusted to reflect the reduced clinical component.
- Trainees are not expected to complete an Out of Programme (OOP) form if they remain on the same training programme and working towards the GMC approved curriculum as they will apply for LTFT. However, if the trainee undertakes the Fellowship outside of their parent Deanery or take up a post that is not part of the GMC approved training programme, they will need to complete the relevant OOPE/T application form.

## 12. Employment arrangements

- Employment arrangements and funding for the Fellowship placement should be agreed ahead of recruitment taking place.
- If the Fellowship placement is to be employed by a Lead Employer rather than the host organisation, discussions should take place with the Lead Employer ahead of position offer to ensure all elements of contractual arrangements have been covered.

**The local office must have arrangements in place to ensure quality assurance and appropriateness of any fellowships.**