

Less Than Full Time Training

Also known as Flexible Training

Policy & Guidance

Approved by the Oxford Deanery Executive Team:
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1. Introduction

Less than Training Full Time Training (LTFTT) is an option for doctors and dentists who are unable to train full time and therefore wish to train on a less than full-time basis.

The Oxford Deanery manages **Core Specialty Training, Higher Specialty Training, GP Specialty Training and Foundation programmes** within Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Buckinghamshire.

2. Aims

The Improving Working Lives (IWL) initiative, NHS Policy 2002, aims to improve doctors working lives by improving their work/life balance and providing employment conditions which enable all doctors to work and train in the NHS at their full potential. LTFTT is included as one of the Improving Working Lives (England) standards. Therefore, subject to demand, NHS Trusts should be taking steps to meet the Department of Health target of a minimum of 20% flexible trainees identified in 2010. The Deanery aims to promote opportunities for LTFTT and to promote the development of main-stream posts via slot shares. The Deanery aims to use the budget efficiently so that the waiting list is minimised.

3. Eligibility criteria

LTFTT is available to doctors and dentists in training who are unable to work full-time for “well founded individual reasons” (European Union Council Directive 93/16-/EEC 1993), including General Practice (GP) trainees. Eligible applicants include those who are:

- disabled or in ill-health
- caring for an ill/disabled partner, relative or other dependent;
- personally providing care for young children

In order to qualify for flexible training a doctor must secure a training post in **open competition**. Eligibility is reviewed on an annual basis and trainees must contact the Deanery should their circumstances change following initial approval.

All requests for flexible training will be treated positively. However, the overall training capacity of a training programme and service commitment will have to be taken into consideration. Return of trainees to full-time training, should this be required, will be facilitated but will depend upon the availability of training capacity and funding. There may be a delay in transferring back to full-time training and the trainee will have to wait until a full time vacancy on the scheme arises..

Access to flexible training is resource-limited. Whilst accepting there is no automatic right to flexible training, provisions should be made for those who meet the criteria and comply with the procedural requirements. However, trainees do need to be aware that there is no guarantee that the content of the less than full time training programme (ie post) or employing Trust will be the same as their full time placement, although preferences will be considered. To avoid missing valuable educational opportunities, the trainee is also encouraged to be as flexible about their working pattern as is

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reasonably practicable.

Trainees will not normally be permitted to engage in any other paid employment whilst undertaking flexible training.

4. Application procedure

To apply for LTFTT in GP Specialty training and Core and Higher Specialty training, trainees should contact the Administrator of the LTFTT Programme (currently Jan Harris) for an application form to assess eligibility for flexible training. The completed form is then returned to the Deanery and an appointment is made with the Associate Dean to establish eligibility and to discuss training needs. The eligibility is then confirmed to the trainee in writing and to the Training Programme Director, and options for training less than full-time are discussed. Both slot shares and supernumerary LTFTT posts are subject to funding availability. Written funding approval is required from the Deanery before these placements can go ahead. The funding will only be available for a maximum period of 6 months from the trainees specified preferred start date. If the trainee does not commence flexible training within this time i.e. the time of being notified that funding is available, they will need to apply again.

5. Approval

5.1 Educational approval

The Deanery is responsible for ensuring that all less than full time training of any kind is undertaken in posts and programmes that have been prospectively approved by the GMC and meet the statutory requirements of the General and Specialist Medical Practice (Education Training and Qualifications) Order 2003.

It is very important that trainees remain in regular contact with the Deanery to communicate any changes to their preferred start date for LTFTT during the application and approval stage. Trainees are required to return a form to the administrator of the LTFTT programme every 6 months to indicate their continued eligibility for LTFTT and that the posts they are moving into have educational approval.

6. Less than full-time training options

LTFTT may be undertaken in one of three ways. These are listed below.

6.1 Slot-sharing

Slot-sharing works on the basis that two trainees share one full-time post and manage the out-of-hours between them. However, each doctor may work up to 60% whole time equivalent (WTE) and is paid individually on the basis of actual working hours. Slot-sharing is distinct from job-sharing as it does not restrict the postholders to work 50% of a full-time post. This option tends to provide the

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most effective means of meeting the trainee's educational needs **and must be explored before any alternative options are considered**. LTFTT Trainees must work a minimum of 50% to ensure educational approval in normal circumstances. For short periods and for exceptional reasons trainees may be able to work less than 50% and have educational approval for this period.

6.2 Reduced sessions in a full-time post

A trainee occupies an established full-time post but works reduced hours. No additional funding is required from the Deanery as the full-time post is already funded from the Educational Contract. However, the trainee would still need to complete the LTFTT Training Application Form. The Trust would also need to confirm their written approval to support this arrangement.

6.3 Supernumerary placements

If neither of the above two options are possible, Oxford Deanery will seek to fund trainees in supernumerary placements gained in open competition subject to funding availability. Once a substantive post has been secured and the employing Trust has agreed to accommodate the trainee, a new post is created in addition to the full-time post. The substantive post can then be re-filled by the employing Trust. The programme for a trainee working less than full time should contain the same educational elements as that of a full-time trainee, including out of hours, access to departmental meetings, audit, research and teaching.

7. Pay

This section is based on the national guidance from NHS Employers which was published in June 2005 with the aim of improving access to flexible training [*Equitable pay for flexible medical training, 2005*]. The system for paying flexible trainees is one where the basic salary is determined by the actual hours of work, as derived initially from the rota and confirmed by monitoring.

A division into four-hour bands based on hours of actual work enables some averaging to take place, and the pay for each band is based on the lower hours limit.

Thus:

F5 is 20 or more and less than 24 hours of actual work a week and attracts 0.5	
F6 is 24 or more and less than 28 hours of actual work a week and attracts 0.6	of full-
F7 is 28 or more and less than 32 hours of actual work a week and attracts 0.7	} time basic
F8 is 32 or more and less than 36 hours of actual work a week and attracts 0.8	salary
F9 is 36 or more and less than 40 hours of actual work a week and attracts 0.9	

Added to this is a supplement, paid as a proportion of the basic salary identified above, to reflect the intensity of the duties.

This system has the advantage of proportionality, and loses the image of ‘a full basic salary plus a supplement’ for part-time work that the service finds so difficult to accept. It also benefits from being based on hours of actual work, and is thus demonstrably equitable.

$$\text{Total salary} = \text{salary}^* + \text{salary}^* \times \begin{matrix} 0.5 \\ 0.4 \\ 0.2 \end{matrix}$$

*salary = F5 to F9 calculated as above.

The supplements will be applied on the basis as set out below:

- **Band FA** - trainees working at high intensity and at the most unsocial times.
- **Band FB** - trainees working at less intensity at less unsocial times.
- **Band FC** - all other trainees with duties outside the period 8am to 7pm Monday to Friday.

Band	Supplement payable as a proportion of the calculated basic
FA	50%
FB	40%
FC	20%

8. Additional guidance

8.1 Statutory Leave

Trainees who discover they are pregnant during training should notify the Deanery of anticipated start and end dates of maternity leave as well as informing other relevant bodies, e.g. employing Trust/Foundation School. If there is a change to the initially approved flexible training end date, trainees will need to request a flexible training extension.

8.2 Study Leave

LTFTT are entitled to periods of study leave with funding pro-rata to their sessional commitments. At the discretion of the District Clinical Tutor, funding in a year *may* be the same as that allowed for full-time trainees. This will enable flexible trainees to undertake a necessary course of study, which requires the entire annual funding allowance. However, LTFTT trainees should not expect to go on similar courses two years in succession and will not be granted extra ‘time out’ of sessional commitments.

8.3 Annual Leave

Annual leave and public holidays for flexible trainees is calculated on a pro-rata basis.

9. Changes to personal circumstances/post

Where there is a change in the trainee's personal circumstances, e.g. contact address/telephone, this should be notified to the Deanery as soon as reasonably practicable. This can be emailed to: jan.harris@oxforddeanery.nhs.uk. In addition, any changes to the current flexible training post, e.g. working hours, should also be notified as soon as possible. Delay in notification could impact on communication of important information.

10. Appeals

It is recommended that trainees first attempt to resolve any issues informally in discussion with the Deanery.

11. Resources

Trainees who are interested in training less than full time should first visit the Deanery website at www.oxforddeanery.nhs.uk and type 'Less Than Full Time Training' in the search section before making contact. Trainees are also advised to discuss their potential application with their Clinical/Educational Supervisor and, where applicable, Foundation School Manager, who may be able to offer invaluable advice on the educational implications of training less than full time.

12. How to contact us

The Flexible Training Scheme is contactable through Postgraduate Medical Personnel at the Oxford Deanery, email: jan.harris@oxforddeanery.nhs.uk or telephone 01865 740659.

13. Queries

Any queries regarding this policy and guidance should be directed by email to: jan.harris@oxforddeanery.nhs.uk

14. Review of policy

This document will be reviewed in two years from the date of publication or earlier if the need arises.

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