



Less Than Full Time Training Guideline

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Author	Emily O'Reilly	
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1.0 Purpose

The Irish College of GPs (“College” of “the College”) supports the option of less than full time (LTFT) training for trainees. This guideline has been designed to support trainees who wish to pursue LTFT training and to ensure those trainees in LTFT training can continue to meet the requirements of the GP training programme.

The guideline aims to:

- Support trainee career progression while they manage other responsibilities;
- Support the retention of trainees who are unable to continue their training on a full-time basis;
- Ensure that the implementation of LTFT training is fair and equitable;
- Support the trainee’s ability to achieve all the necessary requirements of the GP training programme;
- Maintain a balance between LTFT training arrangements, the educational requirements of both full time and LTFT trainees, and clinical service requirements.

1.1 Legislation

Employees have a right to request a flexible working arrangement if they are a parent or carer, as set out in the Work-Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023.

2.0 Scope

2.1 Within scope

2.1.1 GP trainees

This guideline applies to trainees enrolled on the GP training programme under the auspices of the College.

2.1.4 GP training programme

This guideline applies to the General Practice Specialist Training Programme - the programme of training delivered by the College through its constituent Training Schemes and accredited by the Irish Medical Council to meet the requirements for doctors entering the GP Specialist Register.

2.2 Out of scope

This guideline relates to LTFT training only and it is not designed to primarily address performance-related challenges trainees may face during their training. In such instances, the reader is referred to the Trainee Support Policy.

3.0 Guideline statement

3.1 General principles

- The application for LTFT training is a **two-stage process**, subject to approval by both the GP training programme and the HSE (or relevant voluntary hospital), as the employer. An application is successful, only when it has been approved at both consecutive application stages
- The GP training programme assesses an application for LTFT training from an educational standpoint; the HSE, as the employer, assesses a LTFT training request in matters relating to employment
- While all applications will be considered on merit, it may not be possible for the GP training programme, or the HSE as the employer, to accommodate all requests
- No existing trainee will be disadvantaged by an application for LTFT training
- All applicants must have well founded individual reasons for LTFT training requests which may include but are not limited to responsibility for caring for others (e.g. children or elderly relatives), personal family circumstances, health reasons, other personal circumstances. Applications made to pursue other paid work, paid non-medical interests or to engage in research will not be considered. If the arrangements are not being used for the agreed purpose, LTFT working arrangements may be terminated and a disciplinary action procedure may be initiated by the College
- The process for applying and approving LTFT training will be transparent and fair
- Trainees are eligible to request LTFT training from commencement but must have 6 months' continuous full-time service in a training post while enrolled on the GP training programme before an arrangement can start
- LTFT training is applied for during a specified application window
- Where a trainee is successful in their application for LTFT training, it will commence in the subsequent academic year (normally commencing in July)
- A LTFT training arrangement is not automatically renewed. Where a trainee wishes to continue a LTFT training arrangement, they must apply for this annually during the application window
- The LTFT training post must meet the training requirements and be appropriate to the trainees' stage of training

- A trainee in a LTFT training arrangement must have similar exposure to learning and experience (including on call and out of hours duties) as their full-time colleagues. Therefore, trainees availing themselves of LTFT training arrangements will be expected to meet all GP training programme requirements, including, among others, partaking in on call rotas on a pro-rata basis
- Trainees who avail of LTFT training while simultaneously availing of other statutory leave entitlements are required to:
 - Inform the scheme director of all other flexible training applications/arrangements, and
 - Maintain a working week of no less than 0.5 WTE, to ensure sufficient clinical and learning experience is gained on an ongoing basis.
- Trainees who need LTFT training at short notice and /or in exceptional circumstances will have their applications dealt with on a case-by-case basis

3.1.1 Examples of LTFT training

LTFT training can refer to a range of examples whereby trainees can access less than full time training while continuing to attain the required competencies and range of experience.

Examples of LTFT training may include:

- Trainees in hospital placements:
 - Job sharing¹ where two trainees agree to share a post at 0.5 WTE each.
 - Reduction in working week to a 0.5 or 0.8 WTE.
- Trainees in practice placements:
 - Reduction in working week to between a 0.5 and 0.9 WTE.
 - Job sharing where two trainees agree to share a post at 0.5 WTE each.

3.1.2 Trainee considerations prior to applying for LTFT training

Trainees should carefully consider the following implications before applying for LTFT training:

¹ Additional funding is available in some circumstances, allowing trainees to work at greater than 0.5 WTE for the duration of the job share via the HSE National Flexible Training Scheme's job-sharing pilot.

- **Day Release Implications:** To ensure the correct ratio of clinical experience to educational training days are maintained over the extended training duration, attendance at day release is on a pro-rata basis. Trainees, trainers, and scheme directing teams must liaise closely to plan day release attendance in advance to preserve the continuity of the day release curriculum.
- **Extended CSCST Date:** The duration of training will lengthen, and the Certificate of Satisfactory Completion of Specialist Training (CSCST) date will be extended accordingly.
- **Salary Implications:** Understand how reduced hours may affect salary and benefits.
- **Statutory Leave:** All leave will be pro-rata including study leave and annual leave.

3.1.3 Trainee considerations when in LTFT training

In addition to the standard six-monthly competency progression meetings, it is recommended that the trainee consider arranging a brief meeting with their scheme mentor two months after commencing LTFT training. This early review could help identify and address any challenges or areas of difficulty, ensuring timely support and adjustments.

3.2 Application Procedure for LTFT training

1. **Expression of Interest:** Trainees should meet with their scheme director (or delegate) to express their intention to apply for LTFT training and engage in confidential discussions as early as possible and before formally applying for LTFT.
2. **Submit Application:** A call for applications will be announced annually. Trainees should submit the completed application stage 1 form (per Appendix 1) to their scheme **via GPEP** during the application window from 01 September to 30 September.
3. **Consideration:** The application for LTFT is a two-stage process, the scheme directing team, in consultation with relevant stakeholders (e.g. the trainee and HSE medical manpower department for hospital-based posts or the trainee, HSE primary care unit managers and GP trainers for practice-based posts) will consider the application. Efforts will be made to accommodate requests based on:
 - a. Well-founded reasons for making a LTFT training application
 - b. The trainee's whole time equivalent request
 - c. Training pathway competency progression to date, and
 - d. The availability of relevant training posts.

4. Duration: LTFT training is approved annually before commencement of each academic year for a specified duration. A LTFT training arrangement is not automatically renewed.
 - a. GP trainees in GP training practice placements: maximum duration of approval is 12 months.
 - b. GP trainees in hospital placements²: maximum duration of approval is 16 months, minimum duration of approval is 8 months, e.g. approval of 1 hospital post @ 0.5 WTE = 8 months, or approval of 2 hospital posts @ 0.5 WTE = 16 months, or approval of 4 hospital posts @ 0.8 WTE = 16 months.
5. Application outcome: Application results will be issued via GPEP by the end of December. If an application is unsuccessful, reasons will be provided at this point.
6. Review of outcome: If a trainee believes their application has not been managed in accordance with the guidelines, the application may be reviewed by the Regional Programme Director and referred to the GP training Directorate, up to one month after the application outcome is communicated.
7. Withdrawing an Application / Declining an Offer: If a trainee withdraws their application / declines an offer, no further offers will be made at that time. The trainee may reapply without penalty if they wish to pursue LTFT training in subsequent years.
8. Exiting LTFT Training: Trainees exiting a LTFT training arrangement must review their training pathway with their scheme mentor at the primary reviewer 1:1 meeting in advance of the regularly timed competency progression committee (CPC) meeting immediately prior to their scheduled date for exiting LTFT training, in order to confirm the plan for completion of the requisite duration of whole-time-equivalent training in both hospital and practice posts.

4.0 Related and supporting documentation

- [Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023](#)
- [Parental Leave \(Amendment\) Act 2019](#)
- [HSE National Flexible Training Scheme](#)
- [Trainee Support Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Policy on Managing Absences from Training](#)
- [Educational Grievance Policy and Procedures](#)
- Appendix 1 - Flowchart of LTFT Training Guidelines

² Per the non-GP clinical rotations policy. Mandatory rotations must include a minimum of four months in each of: paediatrics and internal medicine. In general, rotations are of 4 months in duration but may be recognised for a maximum of six months' duration.



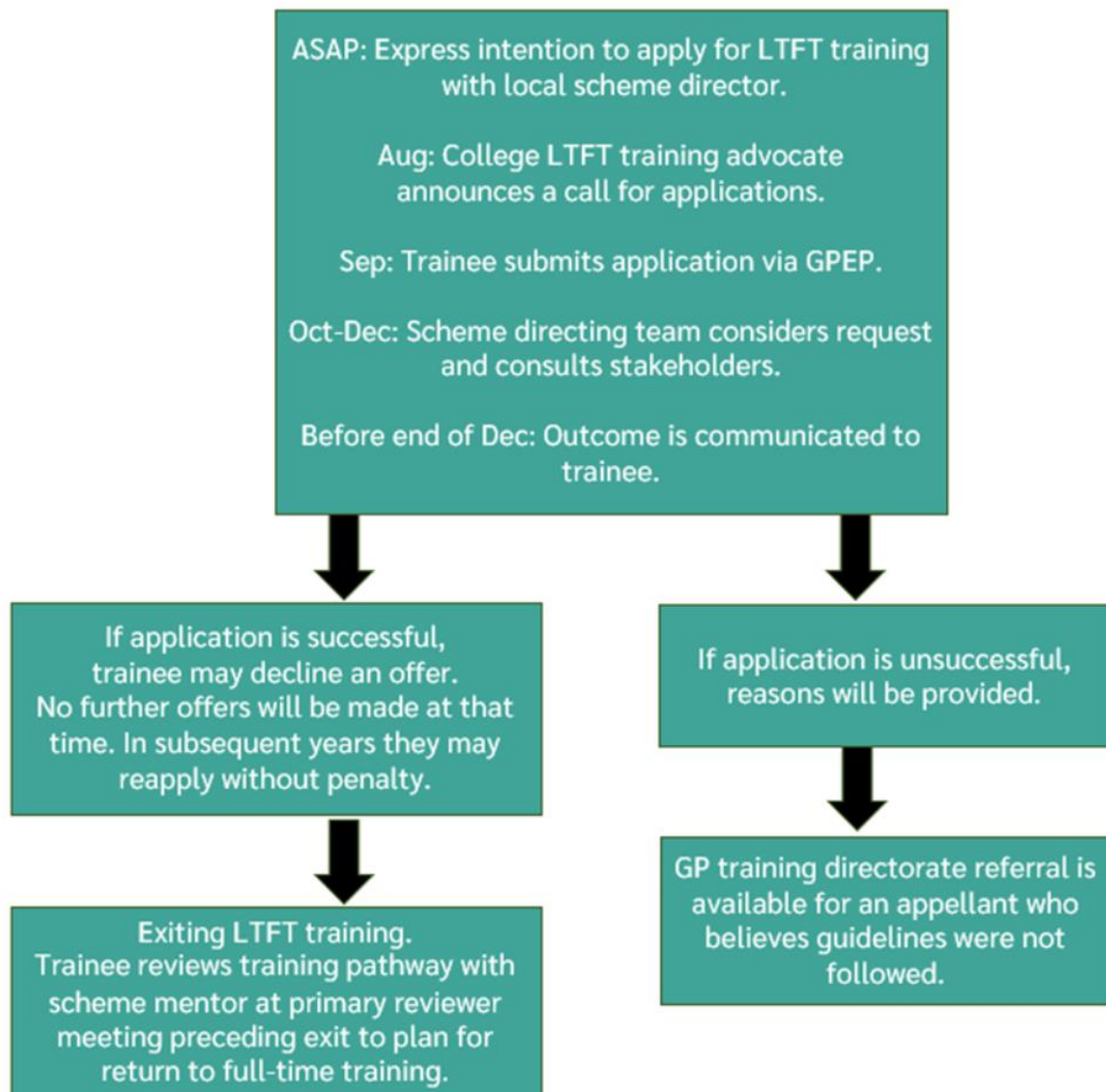
- Appendix 2 - LTFT Training Application Stage 1 Form

5.0 Contact

Emily O'Reilly
emily.oreilly@icgp.ie

Appendix 1: Flowchart of LTFT Training Guidelines

Flowchart of LTFT Training Guidelines





Appendix 2: LTFT Training Application Stage 1 Form

The application process for LTFT training is a **two-stage process**, an application is not successful until the trainee has been approved at both consecutive application stages. Whether or not a trainee is able to train on a LTFT basis is ultimately down to the HSE being able to facilitate it.

- Application Stage 1: Approval by the GP training programme as postgraduate medical training body.
- Application Stage 2: Approval by the HSE as employer.

Please review the associated Less Than Full Time Training Guideline on the College website [here](#) prior to commencing the application process **via GPEP**.

Applicant Details	
Name, IMC Number, Commencement Date, Expected CSCST Date.	Auto-populated
Key Confirmations	
I have read and understood the College's Guideline document associated with LTFT Training	Yes – Proceed with application
I have expressed an interest in making this stage 1 application with my local scheme directing team	Yes – Proceed with application
Training Details	
GP training posts completed to date, including the from and to dates.	Text Box
Future planned GP training posts to be completed, if known, including the from and to dates.	Text Box
Reason(s) for application	Text Box
Please outline the details of your request including the proposed number of hours per week	Text Box
Intended duration of LTFT Training, including the start and finish dates:	Text Box
Detail all other flexible training applications/arrangements, e.g. if you are currently using statutory leave entitlements, such as Parental / Parent's Leave, etc	Text Box

I understand that moving to LTFT training will lengthen the training pathway, my expected CSCST date will be amended, and I have considered those implications prior to application.	Yes – Proceed with application
I understand that moving to LTFT training will have salary implications and I have considered those implications prior to application.	Yes – Proceed with application
I understand that this stage 1 application does not guarantee that a LTFT training pathway can be provided.	Yes – Proceed with application
I confirm that all information provided in this application is accurate and true and understand that the College reserves the right to institute disciplinary action where a trainee is found to have submitted false or misleading information, or to have withheld relevant information.	Yes – Proceed with application
Applicant signature	
Date	
Scheme director	
Application stage 1 review outcome:	<p>Decline Stage 1 application, based on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - unjustified reasons given for LTFT training application. - training pathway competency progression to date means LTFT training is deemed unsuitable. - Trainee's whole time equivalent request is not feasible. - non-availability of relevant training posts. - other – please specify. <p>OR</p> <p>Proceed with application Stage 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HSE approval to be sought by scheme directing team.
Scheme director signature	
Date	



Appendix 3: LTFT Training Application Stage 2 Form

Application Stage 2 Form	
HSE review outcome:	<p>Yes - Approved by HSE, proceed with confirmation of future GP training posts.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>No - Declined by HSE, based on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Trainee's whole time equivalent request is not feasible. – non-availability of relevant training posts. – other – please specify.
Confirmation of future planned LTFT training posts, including WTE, from and to dates, etc.	Text Box
Scheme director signature	
Date	
Applicant's review outcome:	<p>Yes – Agreed by applicant trainee</p> <p>OR</p> <p>No – Declined by applicant trainee</p>
Reason(s) for decline:	Text Box
Applicant signature	
Date	