

Flexible Training Policy

The Policy and Quality objective:

The College supports the concept of “less than full time training” (LFTT). The Training Committee will structure rotations to facilitate this within the constraints of maintaining a clinical service and protecting training opportunities for other trainees. In exceptional circumstances, the College & HSE National Doctors Training & Planning (NDTP) have agreed a policy on flexible training options. All applications will be treated positively but cannot be guaranteed. Training should be completed where possible within the training year timelines from July to July. Requests for flexible training options will be considered on an individual basis and in line with the current training allocations process.

In order to maintain the quality of training for flexible trainees the following principles should be incorporated

1. The posts should be structured so that flexible trainees benefit from all the essential elements in training i.e. working during normal hours, working outside normal hours (on-call), attendance at tutorials and meetings, study leave etc.
2. Recognition of training time will be in proportion to the hours worked e.g. 12 months working 50% of normal hours in a post will be recognised as equivalent to 6 months full-time training.
3. Recognition of training often requires a minimum of six months spent in one post. For a 50% part-time trainee this will require 12 months in a single post i.e. six months part-time in one hospital and six months part-time in a different hospital would not be recognised as six months training.
4. The title of the post should be 'part-time' or 'flexible' rather than 'job-sharing' to emphasise that the post is structured around the needs of the trainee rather than the service needs of the hospital.

Flexible Training Options:

HSE NDTP - Flexible Training

The HSE National Flexible Training Scheme for Trainees is a national scheme managed and funded by the Health Service Executive - National Doctors Training and Planning (NDTP). The scheme provides for a limited number of supernumery places to facilitate doctors at all levels of training to continue their training in a flexible manner for a set period of time. Trainees must be enrolled in the SAT Programme at the time of commencement of flexible training and throughout their flexible training post. All applicants must have well founded individual reason for flexible training.

Participation on the HSE flexible training scheme will be restricted to a maximum of two years and will only be extended by NDTP in exceptional circumstances. Deferral of flexible training places is not permitted.

If an individual’s application is successful and a period of flexible training is undertaken/completed (normally 12 months), there is no automatic entitlement to continue in flexible training. Such trainees are required to re-apply for any further periods of flexible training.

Additional Flexible Training Options:

Swaps:

Trainees can only swap with trainees in the same year of the training programme. Notice of a potential swap at least six months in advance of the start date, so by 30th June for a January swap and the 31st of December for a July swap. All swaps have to be notified in writing to the Training Department with the reason for the request clearly outlined and approved at the subsequent Training & Education Committee meeting. It needs to be clear whether the swap is for that six months or the complete scheme and neither party can create a situation where a key component of the rotation is compromised e.g. missing a module necessary for Certificate of Satisfactory Completion of Specialist Training (CSCST) or experience in a smaller hospital (minimum six months) or to avoid the general rule that all trainees need to experience anaesthesia training in two geographical regions in a national six-year training scheme. A swap may not go ahead until the approval is given by the Training & Education Committee. Requests to change an allocation without being replaced in the allocated hospital cannot be accommodated. All swaps requests must be in writing and submitted to the Training Department by email to training@coa.ie with sufficient notice given.

Job Sharing:

The aim of the job sharing is to retain doctors within the medical workforce who are unable to continue training on a full-time basis. All trainees can avail of job sharing opportunities within the SAT programme for a set period of time – maximum two year. Job sharing works on the basis that two trainees will share one full-time post with each trainee working 50% of the hours. Applications for this must be in writing and submitted to the Training Department by email to training@coa.ie for consideration by the Directors of Training and approved by the Training & Education Committee at its next meeting.

Policy review date: 2024