



***East Anglian***  
***Foundation Programme***



***East of England***

Multi-Professional Deanery

## ***East Anglian Foundation School***

# **Guidance on the Provision of Specialty Tasters for Foundation Doctors**

**July 2010**

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# ***East Anglian Foundation School***

## **Provision of Specialty Tasters for Foundation Doctors**

### **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 There is evidence that any experience in a speciality, however brief, can be influential in a career choice. There are over 50 medical specialties in the UK, and Foundation Doctors are currently exposed to a maximum of four specialties before they apply for specialty training. In order to ensure that Foundation Doctors have access to a wider range of specialties in a variety of care settings prior to selecting a career path, the East of England Multi-Professional Deanery (“the Deanery”) and the East Anglian Foundation School (EAFS) encourage the provision of short taster sessions in other specialties for Foundation Doctors.
- 1.2 This document has the following purposes:
- a) To outline the Deanery policy regarding specialty tasters for Foundation Doctors in the EAFS.
  - b) To assist Local Education Providers (LEPs) in designing high-quality taster sessions.
  - c) The LEPs in the East of England that are linked to the North Thames Foundation School (NTFS) will apply the London and KSS deanery policy to ensure consistency for their trainees.
- 1.3 It is expected that all LEPs and the EAFS review regularly their practices against this policy and make any appropriate adjustments necessary.
- 1.4 The Deanery will monitor the EAFS and LEPs against this policy through their quality management processes.

### **2 Definition and Purpose of a Taster**

- 2.1 A taster is a period of time, usually 2-5 days, spent in a speciality in which the Foundation Doctor has not previously worked, which enables the development of insight into the work of the speciality and which promotes careers reflection.
- 2.2 The purpose of a taster experience is to:
- a) give a Foundation Doctor some understanding (taste) of what the speciality could offer them as a future career, including examples of research and educational academic tasters.
  - b) develop their understanding of the speciality and its contribution to the care and safety of patients.
- 2.3 A taster experience offers time-limited exposure to the work and lifestyle of those involved in a speciality. This experience may have a positive effect on the Foundation Doctor and confirm that a particular choice is appropriate for the individual. Conversely, a Foundation Doctor may learn through this experience that the speciality is not what s/he had expected and may be excluded as a future career choice.

### **3 Principles of Tasters**

- 3.1 Taster opportunities should be available for all Foundation Doctors who need support on deciding their career. The decision on whether provision of a taster opportunity is appropriate to support the Foundation Doctor's career decision-making process should be made during careers discussion between the Foundation Doctor and the Educational Supervisor / Foundation Training Programme Director.
- 3.2 A Foundation Doctor who would benefit from a taster opportunity should undertake a taster programme in the specialty of their choice either during the last two placements of Foundation Year 1 or early within Foundation Year 2. In order to facilitate this, it is required that LEPs provide taster opportunities for Foundation Doctors.
- 3.3 Resources to enable taster programmes are normally taken from the Foundation Year 2 study leave allowance. As there is no study leave available for F1 Doctors, it is proposed that F1 Doctors undertaking a taster during their final two placements of the F1, and the Trust is able to support them without compromising patient care, they may 'borrow' up to 5 days of their F2 study leave (i.e. they will have used up to 5 days of their F2 study leave allowance before commencing F2).
- 3.4 Foundation Doctor undertaking a taster programme in their Foundation Year 1 should be communicated along with the number of days taken to their Foundation Year 2 Local Education Provider through the F1-F2 Transfer of Information form.
- 3.5 Foundation Doctors are expected to continue to attend core foundation teaching sessions during a taster.
- 3.6 Tasters need to be organised in close collaboration with educational supervisors, Foundation training programme directors and the relevant specialty for the taster, as well as the parent specialty for trainee. Provision of tasters should not compromise provision of patient care.
- 3.7 Whilst tasters are normally up to five days, a flexible approach may increase opportunities, such as a day per week basis.

### **4 Availability of Taster Programmes**

- 4.1 Tasters are usually developed on an ad hoc basis when Foundation Doctors and their Educational Supervisors identify the aspiration and need to explore specific specialties.
- 4.2 LEPs should develop and maintain a Register of Taster Opportunities available locally.
- 4.3 It is the responsibility of LEPs to review and update their registers of available taster opportunities on a regular basis.
- 4.4 When compiling the list of specialties offering tasters, it is important to identify and include specialties that Foundation Doctors may want to experience as tasters, as

well as 'shortage specialties', those with recruitment difficulties and those where career enquiries have been made.

- 4.5 In order to ensure that all Foundation Doctors within the EAFS are aware of the available taster opportunities within their 'host' Local Education Provider, the registers of available taster opportunities should be published on the EoE website within the Foundation pages.

## **5 Planning of a Taster Programme**

- 5.1 The Foundation Doctor and their Educational Supervisor / Foundation Training Programme Director should discuss the requirements for a Taster programme early in Foundation Year 1.
- 5.2 The taster should usually be undertaken within the Foundation Doctor's 'host' Local Education Provider. If both the Foundation Doctor's Foundation Year 1 and Foundation Year 2 'host' LEPs do not provide taster programmes in the specialty of the Foundation Doctor's choice, or are unable to accommodate the Foundation Doctor, the Foundation Doctor can apply for an external taster programme.
- 5.3 Where a proposal for a taster opportunity has been agreed with the Foundation Doctor and the Educational Supervisor / Foundation Training Programme Director, the Foundation Doctor with the support of FTPD should coordinate the planning of the taster experience with a relevant specialty contact within the 'host' Local Education Provider or Foundation Training Programme Director in another Local Education Provider.
- 5.4 Foundation Doctors should be informed that in case of an external taster, no travel or subsistence costs should be claimed by the Foundation Doctor from either the Foundation School, the Foundation Doctor's 'host' Local Education Provider or external Local Education Provider hosting the Taster.
- 5.5 The Local Education Provider hosting the external taster is not entitled to claim any financial compensation from either the Foundation School or the Foundation Doctor's employing Local Education Provider.
- 5.6 An honorary contract will be required for the Foundation Doctor undertaking an external taster.

## **6 Tips for a specialty: Ensuring the best taster experience for the Foundation Doctor**

- 6.1 Discuss each individual placement in advance to give the foundation doctor the opportunity to identify what they wish to achieve / see /do during the placement
- Welcome at start of day 1 with person who will be their main contact, explain programme again, introduce to the department, explain who to contact in an emergency, explain trainee is expected to undertake all the agreed activities, encourage reflective notes in Foundation Portfolio.
  - Explore why individual is undertaking taster – expectations vs. reality

- Meet with foundation doctor regularly during the week to ensure satisfaction with experience so far, anything else they would like to do?
- At end of week, meet to review the week, review reflective notes in Foundation portfolio, and ensure evaluation form is completed.

6.2 The timetable should also explicitly state:

- where the Foundation Doctor is to go for each half day
- the start and finish times
- who is acting as the nominated Clinical Supervisor for the taster (i.e. who will act as the main contact for the Foundation Doctor during the taster programme).

6.3 More detailed guidance on what could be taken into account when designing the content of a taster programme and sample timetables for Foundation Doctors can be found in Appendix 1 and 2.

## **7 Records of Taster Programmes Undertaken**

7.1 The Foundation Doctor is required to complete a Taster Report Form (see Appendix 3) at the end of the taster programme. The contents of the reflective part of the form should be discussed with the Foundation Doctor's Educational Supervisor and stored in their e-portfolio.

7.2 LEPs are required to maintain a list of taster programmes undertaken by their Foundation Doctors and submit them to the Foundation School at the end of the academic year (see Appendix 4).

## **8 Quality Management**

8.1 The Taster Report Form also contains an evaluation section which should be sent to the relevant Postgraduate Centre and reviewed by the relevant Specialty Lead and the Foundation Training Programme Director in order to allow ongoing development of all components of the programme.

8.2 The Deanery and the EAFS will quality manage the taster programmes through their quality management processes. For North Thames Foundation Schools with East of England deanery programmes, taster opportunities will be quality managed as part of deanery QM processes.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1

### Guidance on the Content of a Taster Programme

During the Taster session, Foundation Doctors should obtain an appreciation of:

- The way that the specialty contributes to individual patient management in a range of settings and for different patient groups, including prevention, diagnosis, treatment and follow-up, and contributes to health protection.
- The importance of infection control and the specialty in supporting patient safety.
- Optimum use of diagnostic tests for common clinical conditions.
- The general principles underlying therapeutics and prescribing in the specialty.
- The scope of career opportunities in the specialty, including academic (research and teaching) and managerial potential.

Depending on local circumstance, one or two Foundation Doctors can be accommodated concurrently in the specialty. However, as such attachments are intended to provide hands-on experience of the specialty, they are not suited to a course or tutorial-based approach.

### Educational Programme

The Foundation Doctor should review his/her understanding of the specialty before commencing the placement:

**Clinical aspects:** the Foundation Doctor should attend clinical rounds and outpatients with senior trainees or consultants, including the ITU, SCBU and specialist units where appropriate to learn how the specialty works in practice and to understand how the specialty contributes to the care and safety of patients. The Foundation Doctors should make a contribution to the care of patients under supervision even on a short attachment.

**Diagnostic aspects:** the Foundation Doctor should become conversant with diagnostic aspects of the specialty in order to learn how to use resources more effectively and appropriately.

**Management aspects:** the trainer should select a small number of real-time clinical cases that demonstrate common but important problems in the specialty and use the cases to explore the diagnosis, management, review and follow up of the patient over the duration of the programme. The training experience would include presentation of cases at the departmental clinical meeting.

Health protection and prevention aspects: the trainer should select examples from clinical cases that promote health protection and prevention and ensure that these aspects are discussed.

Academic opportunities in the specialty: where available, in research and in teaching should be included.

## **Contribution of Taster Programme to the Development of Foundation Programme Competences**

There is likely to be considerable scope for such a programme to support the Foundation Doctor in the development a number of areas of Foundation Programme competence:

- Help develop a range of clinical competences supported by understanding the better use of diagnostic and management approaches in the specialty; how to approach the 'undifferentiated' patient, opportunity to see and interact with a range of clinical conditions and other specialties.
- Contribute to the development of an understanding of clinical priorities and their management.
- Support the development of communication and team-working by experiencing and participating in the dynamics of the specialty and the other healthcare professionals who work in it.
- Improved understanding of the use of resources and using an evidence base for making decisions about these.
- Support an understanding of health promotion as well as healthcare and support generic principles around such issues as patient safety (from the viewpoint of the specialty) and infection control in the specialty.
- Improved skills in case development and presentation skills.
- Potential for academic development opportunities if individual Foundation Doctors wish to develop/continue an academic relationship with the department.

## Appendix 2

### Example Taster Programme Timetables

#### *Example 1 – Taster in Anaesthetics*

	AM (08.00 – 12.30)	PM (13.30 – 17.30)	Notes
<b>Monday</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet Dr A at 9.30, discuss work of specialty</li> <li>Plan for week</li> <li>Induction to department</li> <li>Tour of theatres / ITU</li> <li>Meet consultants and trainees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Theatre with Dr B</li> <li>Inpatient list</li> <li>Ward visit for pre-assessment</li> <li>Preparing the theatre with OPD</li> <li>Communication skills</li> </ul>	
<b>Tuesday</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Day surgery theatre with Dr C</li> <li>Suitability for day surgery</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chronic pain clinic with Dr D</li> </ul>	
<b>Wednesday</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acute pain ward round with Dr E</li> <li>Prescribing for acute pain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intensive Care Unit with Dr F</li> <li>Outreach programmes</li> <li>Care of the acutely ill patient</li> </ul>	Department teaching for trainees at lunchtime
<b>Thursday</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Obstetric theatre with Dr A</li> <li>Explore future developments in specialty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On call with Dr F until 21.00</li> <li>Emergency theatre</li> </ul>	Long day shift – end at 21.00 after handover to night shift.
<b>Friday</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Theatre with Dr C</li> <li>Airway management</li> <li>Visit recovery room</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend simulator session with trainees</li> <li>Review meeting with Dr A</li> <li>Discuss the week and career planning for anaesthesia and critical care</li> </ul>	Complete evaluation and hand in. Reflective entry in portfolio.

#### *Example 2 – Taster in Cardiology*

	AM (08.00 – 12.30)	PM (13.30 – 17.30)	Notes
<b>Monday</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet Dr A at 9.30, discuss work of specialty</li> <li>Plan for week</li> <li>Induction to department</li> <li>Tour of ward / catheter lab</li> <li>Meet consultants and trainees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Catheter Lab with Dr B</li> <li>Inpatient list</li> <li>Ward visit for pre-assessment</li> <li>Preparing the environment</li> <li>Communication skills</li> </ul>	
<b>Tuesday</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outpatients with Dr C</li> <li>Long term follow up</li> <li>Links with GP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cardiac rehab clinic with Nurse Consultant</li> </ul>	
<b>Wednesday</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ward round with Dr C</li> <li>Prescribing for cardiology patients</li> <li>Management of acute admissions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coronary Care Unit with Dr A</li> <li>Care of the acutely ill patient</li> </ul>	Department teaching for trainees at lunchtime
<b>Thursday</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outpatient clinic with Dr A</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On call with Dr F until 21.00</li> <li>Emergency admissions</li> </ul>	Long day shift – end at 21.00 after handover to night shift.
<b>Friday</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research with Dr B</li> <li>Role of academic medicine</li> <li>Explore future developments in the specialty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend simulator session with trainees</li> <li>Review meeting with Dr A</li> <li>Discuss the week and career planning</li> </ul>	Complete evaluation and hand in. Reflective entry in portfolio.



### Example 3 – Taster in General Practice

	AM (08.00 – 12.30)	PM (13.30 – 17.30)	Notes
<b>Monday</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet Dr A at 9.30, discuss work of specialty</li> <li>• Plan for week</li> <li>• Induction to practice and locality</li> <li>• Tour of surgery</li> <li>• Meet trainees, partners and practice staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Afternoon visits / surgery with Dr B</li> <li>• Practical skills</li> <li>• Communication skills</li> </ul>	
<b>Tuesday</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surgery with Dr C</li> <li>• Long term follow up</li> <li>• Links with hospitals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diabetes clinic with practice nurse</li> </ul>	
<b>Wednesday</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minor ops session with Dr C</li> <li>• Developing a special interest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Afternoon visits / surgery with Dr B</li> <li>• Management of admissions</li> </ul>	Practice teaching for trainees at lunchtime
<b>Thursday</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surgery with Dr A</li> <li>• Explore GP contract</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend half day release for GP STR</li> </ul>	Evening shift with out of hours service, finish at 21.00
<b>Friday</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Morning with practice manager</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review meeting with Dr A</li> <li>• Discuss the week and career planning for GP</li> </ul>	Complete evaluation and hand in. Reflective entry in portfolio.

## Appendix 3

### Foundation Doctor Specialty Taster Report Form

Part 1 – Personal Details		
Surname		
Forename		
GMC Number		
Foundation Programme “host” LEP		
Part 2 – Taster Details <i>Please attach a copy of your taster timetable</i>		
Taster specialty		
Venue and department		
Name and grade of taster supervisor		
Dates of taster	From	To
Part 3 – Reflection on the taster		
Please outline the reasons for completing this taster:		
Prior to the taster, in what specific ways did you think you might be suited to this specialty?		
Prior to the taster, did you have any specific concerns about ways in which you might not be suited to the specialty?		
What did you find the most valuable learning experiences and how did they match your needs?		
What areas did you find the most challenging?		
To what extent do you think that you were able to get a representative picture of clinical practice in this particular specialty during the taster?		
Do you have any remaining questions about the specialty that you were not able to answer on the taster? If so, how could you have these questions answered?		

Did the taster differ from your expectations? Has it changed your ideas or thoughts on a career direction? If so, how?

What are the next steps you are going to take on the basis of having completed the taster?

Signature of Foundation Doctor

Name of Foundation Doctor

Date

Signature of Educational Supervisor

Name of Educational Supervisor

Date

#### Note for the Foundation Doctor

- Please store the completed form in your e-portfolio once you have discussed with your Educational Supervisor / FTPD. Please also send a copy to the Postgraduate Centre so that they can record that you have undertaken a taster.
- Please complete the taster's evaluation form on the next page and return it to the relevant Specialty Lead / FTPD.

## Foundation Doctor Specialty Taster Feedback

Part 1 – Personal Details		
Surname		
Forename		
GMC Number		
Foundation Programme “host” LEP		
Part 2 – Taster Details <i>Please attach a copy of your taster timetable</i>		
Taster specialty		
Venue and department		
Name and grade of taster supervisor		
Dates of taster	From	To

Part 3 – Please return this page to your Specialty Lead / FTPD and keep a copy for your e-portfolio			
What was good about your taster?			
What could have been improved?			
Would you recommend this taster to another Foundation Doctor?	<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>
Any additional comments?			

**Appendix 4**

**Record of Taster Programmes Undertaken**

**August to July**

To be completed on an annual basis covering the period of Foundation training from August to July.  
Please return to the Foundation School Coordinator by 31 July.

<b>Name of Trust</b>		<b>Year</b>	
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LEP	Site	GMC Number	Foundation Doctor Surname	Foundation Doctor Forename	Grade (F1 / F2)	Taster speciality	Taster duration (days)