

East of England Foundation Schools

East Anglia Foundation School

Essex Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Foundation School

Making up Missed Foundation Training Time

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Policy on making up missed Foundation training time

The UK Foundation Programme Reference Guide (July 2016) is clear that no more than 20 days (other than annual and study leave) can be taken if sign-off is to occur on time, for both FY1 and FY2 years. This has been clarified by GMC guidance for provisionally registered doctors, and has been defined as twenty working/required attendance days, not including non working weekend days or zero days.

Whilst the Reference Guide can be interpreted as allowing any combination of 11 months' time for sign off, functionally sign-off normally requires three satisfactorily-completed placements, typically of four months each.

It is important to remember when considering this 11 months' time for F1 sign off, that this does not apply to those doctors who only gained their provisional GMC registration at the end of August, and wish to be signed off at the end of the following July. The GMC requires that there be a training period of 12 months completed since the granting of provisional registration, even if one of those months is taken as sick leave, before full GMC registration can be granted.

It is not unusual for trainees who have spent time out of programme for statutory reasons (maternity leave or sickness) to wish to piece together combinations of time spent in different placements over a prolonged period of time in order to achieve sign off as quickly as possible. Whilst some flexibility is desirable, sign-off requires the completion of a coherent programme, not just a total of time spent in what may be a number of short, disparate placements.

Foundation programmes are carefully constructed to ensure that at the end of the year the doctor has the necessary competence to move to the next stage of training, and this is best

judged by three reports from independent supervisors. This policy attempts to allow flexibility and avoid disadvantaging trainees for unforeseen and/or unfortunate events, whilst at the same time recognising the need for a cohesive programme of training, not just serving enough time. There must be a concern that the quality of training could be compromised if the emphasis shifts to meeting a quantity of time requirement.

This guidance was drawn from those available in other areas within the UK, and was open for trainee and trainer commentary, brought to the foundation faculty development day and approved by foundation training directors and Medical education managers there, and also to the Foundation School Board.

General Considerations

Placements of 4 months are the currency of the Foundation e-portfolio. Every effort should be made to have **three complete 4 month placements signed off**. The Foundation Guide implicitly allows for one not to be complete and still allow sign-off, thus a single 3 month placement can be signed off satisfactorily by implication.

The minimum, therefore, whatever other part placements are allowed, should be two completed four month placements. **Periods of time of less than three months should not be counted or totalled up into a satisfactorily signed-off placement**, unless they are in the same unit i.e. a placement was simply interrupted by illness, and then only after discussions with the Foundation School Director. Shorter periods of time in disparate units should not be counted.

Moreover, it is not acceptable for a foundation doctor to work annual leave days or zero days in an attempt to meet the time requirements. The Foundation School Director or deputy will have the final determination of time required.

All time counted must be satisfactorily signed off by clinical supervisors.

All trainees who are likely to require intervention as documented should be notified as soon as the trust is aware to the deputy Foundation School Director and to the programmes team, to enable optimum planning. The FTPD is responsible for this on behalf of their trust.

20 days or less training time missed

Sign off can proceed on time with the rest of the cohort, all other considerations allowing (e.g. competency progression, engagement with the educational process, etc).

Over 20 days of training time missed

If only just over the 20 days is missed in a year spread out over different placements such that each placement can be signed off and has no more than 20 days absence, the foundation training programme director can discuss with the foundation school director what measure of leeway is possible if all other aspects of competency and attendance are in good order.

Quoting from the Foundation Guide 'The maximum permitted absence from training, other than annual leave, is 20 days (when the doctor would normally be at work) within each 12 month period of the foundation programme. Where a doctor's absence goes above 20 days, this will trigger a review of whether they need to have an extra period of training (see GMC position statement on absences from training in the foundation programme – June 2013).'

If the absence is over the tolerated variance from 20 days, or an individual assessment is made that the trainee has not achieved the competencies or maintained the eportfolio to a high standard, then further training time will be offered.

It is important to remember when considering this 11 months' time for F1 sign off, that the GMC requires that there be a training period of 12 months completed since the granting of provisional registration, even if one of those months is taken as sick leave, before full GMC registration can be granted. Trainees cannot start a month late or resign from the programme a month before the end to take up a post elsewhere, for example.

Over one months of training time missed

F1

Once a decision has been agreed that further time is required in F1, prolonged training time into other year cohorts is inevitable. If this is contained within one placement, then a single 4 month extension can be arranged. If it includes 20 days or more in more than one 4 month placement, then a further four month placement will be required for each and strong consideration given to the reasons behind the absence as a restart of F1 may be more beneficial. This decision should be made ultimately by the Foundation School Director and Deputy on consideration of all available evidence in the best interest of the trainee.

If this requirement becomes overt before the recruitment process for the next cohort, a further 12 month post should be reserved.

If FY1, this means blocking out a 2-year track on FPAS which also reserves the FY2 year following on from the repeated FY1 year.

If the accumulation of over two months' training time missed occurs after February in F1 this means extending training beyond the end of July and into the next planned training year until FY1 sign-off.

Single 4 month required:

If an F1 vacancy fortuitously arises in that trust, with the agreement of the Foundation School Director, this can be utilised, with progression in December subject to satisfactory ARCP, to pick up the original F2 rotation at the second post. An F2 post will need to be reserved with the programme team for the following year out of synch.

It may be possible that the first 4 month F2 post is suitable to run at F1 level, with the trust and teams agreement. The trainee then will rejoin F2 subject to satisfactory ARCP

2 x 4 month or whole year:

The trainee will be placed in a vacancy within any trust within reasonable distance, though may be offered the option of trusts further afield, or on advice from the professional support unit. This will be organised centrally by the Foundation School Director and deputy.

F2

Many trainees have a valid concern over starting their core or run-through training programmes. Some of these programmes would allow for a short deferment of start date, though this **cannot be assumed or guaranteed** and would need careful management with the TPD concerned well in advance.

Single 4 month required:

If an F2 vacancy fortuitously arises in that trust, with the agreement of the Foundation School Director, this should be utilised. It may be necessary to fund a supernumary placement.

2 x 4 month or whole year:

The trainee will be placed in a vacancy within any trust within reasonable distance, though may be offered the option of trusts further afield, or on advice from the professional support unit. This will be organised centrally by the Foundation School Director and deputy. Ideally a rotation will have been reserved from F2 LAT recruitment

Programmes Management

We expect all trusts to notify the programmes team and either EBH or EAFS director as soon as they are aware for the need for extended time.

Then with the relevant information, an F1 post can be reserved from national recruitment if required, or F2 post vacancy identified.

With an F1 extension, it needs to be noted that an F2 post will also be required at the end of training

The programmes team will maintain a list of trainees requiring extension and work with the regional deputy FSD and trust teams in February and March to link all trainees to posts.

Trainees identified after national recruitment rounds are processed will be reviewed in between for withdrawn posts.

It is anticipated that most trainees will be identified prior to the end of March.