



Frequently asked questions from Doctors working Less than Full Time (LTFT)

Thank you to all of the Doctors who have asked questions via the webinars or the return of their census paperwork. Below are a selection of questions we have received, divided into the following broad categories (click on category to jump to section):

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All of these topics are covered in detail in the policy, the questions in this FAQ cover specific trainee circumstances

Census

1. Should I use the census for renewal if I am currently working LTFT?

If you are a Doctor in a currently approved LTFT post you should have completed the census, the closing date of which was extended to Dec 18th 2022. We are in the process of confirming the results of the census with individual specialty TPDs to confirm your information. If you did not complete the census your TPD will contact you to ask you to complete it, which gives you the advantage of not filling in any further renewal paperwork. If you do not wish to stay LTFT from Feb 2023 you should inform your TPD ASAP and if you are planning to stay LTFT beyond Aug 2023 should complete an application in the February window. Completing the census would be the best option for you.

2. Do I need to complete the census if I have not started LTFT?

If you are not currently LTFT, DO NOT COMPLETE the census but submit an application on the old system up until Jan 31st 2023 for posts commencing before August 2023, or in the new system of application windows for posts commencing after Aug 2023. Full details of the application windows are found on the HEIW LTFT webpage and the LTFT Pilot policy (page currently under revision).

3. I am currently working Full Time and plan to go LTFT next year – should I complete the census?

Do not complete the census. Discuss your plans with your TPD and then submit an application in the February application window.

4. I have submitted an application form on the old system, but I have not heard whether I have been successful or not – should I complete the census?

Do not complete the census. Please email your TPD to ascertain the progress of your application.

5. Will I be required to apply for LTFT every year?

No. If you have completed the census you will have signed off to say you wish to stay LTFT until the end of your programme. Trainees who wish to change their hours up or down should complete a new application in the specified application windows.

LTFT application windows

6. Is the application window the same for trainees that rotate in September and November?

The application windows are the same whatever time of year you rotate. Specialties rotating in September who have an anticipated start date of LTFT between August 2023 and Jan 2024 should apply in the February application window.

7. What if my paperwork is not submitted by the required deadline or application window?

For the purpose of equity to all involved in the LTFT process, applications must be submitted in the published LTFT windows. No application will be accepted outside of this window. HEIW along with the TPD and host will only allow exceptional health circumstances outside of the LTFT window OR applicants applying within a given National Recruitment window to a 'new' training programme in Wales

8. I am a new applicant to LTFT – how long will it take to process my application?

If you apply in the February window, firstly we will acknowledge your application has been received. Programme managers and TPDs across all specialties will review all new applications and revise their programmes. This information will go to Health boards who will respond to us within 2 weeks. We will confirm with you after May 10th 2023 whether your application has been successful. Sometimes we are able to give information sooner than this in the specialties that are smaller with fewer applicants.

9. What if my LTFT application is refused?

We will contact you if we are unable to slot share you, or the host organisation is unable to accommodate you in a reduced hours post.

We will discuss with you and your TPD other options for placement i.e. in another hospital. As outlined in the policy should there be insufficient capacity on your rotation or insufficient funds to support a slot share, we will hold a waiting list for trainees wishing to work LTFT.

You have the right to appeal this decision. The appeals process is outlined in the policy.

Maternity Leave

10. The application window for trainees on maternity leave seems very rigid and I have not worked out when I am returning to work – will there be a change to the current windows of application?

We recognise there are changes of circumstances whilst on maternity leave; if you are going on maternity leave and want to submit your application in an earlier window, you are able to do so. We do ask that trainees try and anticipate their return date and the amount of accrued annual leave they have to take. Once they have worked through this detail this gives an anticipated return to work/training date which can be used to specify and plan your LTFT start date. We will roll out this pilot policy for one year and review whether the application windows are working effectively.

11. I am currently on maternity leave; I have accrued annual leave of 8 weeks at the end of my maternity leave and plan to go LTFT after this – what should I put on the application form?

You would enter your LTFT start date as being after the 8 weeks of accrued leave.

Trainees should note that annual leave counts as training time/ time in programme. Recurrent maternity leave with accrued annual leave can significantly reduce your training time. Trainees should consider this when planning modules and estimating finish dates on the training programme.

For GP Trainees it should be noted The Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) takes the position that if the period of absence cannot contribute towards training, then the leave accrued during the absence should not contribute either. therefore, annual leave that has been accrued whilst the GP trainee has not been in training (i.e. on maternity leave or long periods of sickness) cannot count towards a training programme.

Work pattern, out of hours and annual leave

12. I choose to change my LTFT status depending on where my placement is. How am I able to do this in the current system?

We work with our TPDs to help them plan their rotations one year in advance, we do not encourage trainees to frequently change their LTFT percentage for travelling times but encourage them to maintain a percentage of work that allows them to rotate between all hospitals on their rotation. Please choose a percentage that allows you to do this.

Even small changes in percentage have a significant knock-on effect for slot shares and finance which need to be planned ahead.

13. I am currently working X % but wish to change my LTFT percentage from March 2023 – what should I do?

As outlined in the policy and the letter sent to trainees in November 2022, you must complete a new application on the old system as soon as possible.

If you do not do this before 31st Jan 2023 – you will then need to apply in the application window but the change in your LTFT status will not take effect before August 2023.

14. I currently have a fixed working pattern of days but in my new placement the teaching day will change. Who should I inform about my revised days of work?

Please email your TPD, the LTFT office, NWSSP and your host organisation rota organiser with your revised days of work.

15. How do I contact the host organisation regarding days of work?

Once your LTFT is approved you will receive a letter confirming this with a contact in the host organisation. Trainees already in the system who are rotating between sites will have their placement updated on Intrepid. The list of host organisation contacts can be found on the HEIW LTFT homepage (page currently under revision).

16. Does it matter which day I choose to have off in a given week, as I rotate my days off.

Yes, it does matter which days are chosen to be off. Regional and local teaching days are in set times. Ideally you should make sure one of your working days covers these educational events. Depending upon the other LTFT doctors on your rota or your slot share partner you may need to negotiate the days of the week you request off. This should be done via the rota coordinator/workforce department in the host organisation. A list of contacts can be found on the home page of the HEIW website. Out of hours work including nights and weekends should be shared on a pro rata basis with the full-time working Doctors.

17. I am currently working at 70 % but wish to change to 100% ASAP – what should I do?

As per the policy and for any change you wish to make, you should let your TPD know of your intention. Prior to Jan 31st 2023, you should apply in the old system and from February 1st in the LTFT application windows. Moving up a % of work in your specialty may require you to wait until a gap in the training scheme opens up if there are a large amount of LTFT trainees.

18. What proportion of on call will I have?

Again, this should be pro rata and requires a proportion of all out of hours shifts to be covered in line with the percentage of whole time worked. This may not always be possible due to service/funding requirements. Host organisations may approach trainees to work a different out of hours percentage.

19. Is my annual leave entitlement the same as a Full-time trainee?

Annual leave is provided on a pro-rata basis. e.g. those working 60% LTFT would be entitled to 60% of the annual leave allowance. Bank holidays will also be pro-rata.

Considerations about salary when choosing to work LTFT

20. By moving to LTFT will my pay be affected?

Your pay will reduce by a proportionate amount. This will also depend upon the OOH worked and the banding at the host organisation. You should consider this in all of the hospitals you rotate to as a 20 % decrease in your net salary as an example is a significant shortfall in income per month. You should also consider the long-term impact this will have on pension contributions.

21. How do I find out my pay banding?

Pay for LTFT trainees is very hours sensitive and due to the different contract arrangements may well change in each part of a rotation. The method for calculating pay for LTFT trainees can be found in the following national guidance from NHS Employers; please click [here](#) for details. Your employing organisation will be able to assist you with pay enquiries. It is vital that you organise your new rota arrangements well in advance of commencing LTFT training.

22. Can LTFT doctors do locum shifts?

LTFT doctors have the same access to locum shifts as full time Doctors

Doctors must declare on their Form R the number of locums worked. Trainees should discuss their plans to undertake locum work with their ES and TPD. Doctors who are working locums that are over and above working their own Whole Time Equivalent post may be approached by the TPD to discuss whether full time working may be a better option.

Trainees who are working LTFT for health and wellbeing should consider the impact of working locum shifts on their health and wellbeing.

Working flexibly and working LTFT are different concepts. It may be that reasonable adjustments can be made to your working rota to enable you to work full time, this can be discussed with your TPD and your employer.

Consideration for the progression of training

23. By moving to LTFT, will my training programme be extended?

Yes, your time in the training programme will be extended. An indicative time in the programme is given in the table below:

%WTE	Sessions	6 Months	12 Months	18 Months	24 Months	30 Months	36 Months
50%	5 sessions a week = 6 months per year	12 months	24 months	36 months	48 months	30 months	72 months
60%	6 sessions a week = 7.2 months in each year	10 months	20 months	30 months	40 months	50 months	60 months
70%	7 sessions a week = 8.4 months in a year	8.5 months	17 months	25.5 months	34 months	42.5 months	51 months
80%	8 sessions a week = 9.6 months in each year	7.5 months	15 months	22.5 months	30 months	37.5 months	45 months

The vast majority of trainees will continue to have their programme extended. Those wishing to reduce time whilst working less hours should apply to accelerate. The medical royal colleges differ in their approach to this so please review their respective websites. Although many curricular have moved to a competency-based system, the acceleration of training whether LTFT or full time needs to be prospectively approved through the formal process and the evidence presented at the ARCP.

24. I have failed an exam and I am likely to require an extension to training, will I be able to work LTFT in my extension?

You should discuss your exam failure with your TPD and look at when the next iteration of the exam is. You will be supported into an extension for exam failure up until the point of the exam where this would be reviewed again. Assuming you are currently LTFT you will be able to remain working LTFT during your extension for the pro rata equivalent. E.g. if the exam is 3 months ahead you will be able to work LTFT during this period. The extension is not a fixed period of time, it is dependent on the requirement of the trainee up to a maximum amount, the detail of which can be found in The Gold Guide. If you are not already LTFT, you would need to apply during the standard application window.

25. Will I have an annual ARCP if I am working LTFT?

Less than full time doctors will have an ARCP at points where decisions relating to progression in training are required and should be assessed not less than annually. There should be no more than a 15-month interval to facilitate revalidation. Consequently, LTFT doctors in training will have more ARCPs than a full-time doctors in training.

26. Do I still have the same grace period post CCT?

Yes, it remains at six months; this remains at the discretion of the Postgraduate Dean. GP trainees do not have a period of grace.

How does LTFT affect Foundation placements?

27. How does applying for LTFT affect the Foundation scheme placements?

The Foundation placements are 4 months in duration. Trainees should expect their placement to be extended in the following way depending on the percentage worked

% training	50%	60%	70%	80%
4 month block	4 months	4 months	4 months	4 months
LTFT equivalent	8 m	6.5months	5.2 months	4.8 months

How LTFT works with OOP

28. I am currently working LTFT and am anticipating an OOPE in August 2023, do I need to reapply for LTFT during my OOPE?

It is essential that you communicate your wishes with the TPD once your OOPE/T/C is approved. If you have indicated in your census that you wish to remain LTFT we will honour the same arrangement on your return. If, during your OOP, you wish to change your working arrangements you should submit a new application in the same timelines as other trainees on the rotation (February and August windows)

29. I am currently working LTFT and have been successful in obtaining a Fellowship OOP which I intend to work full time - who do I need to inform about this?

If you intend to count your OOP towards your training time you will need to let your TPD and medical royal college know about your change of status, so they can accommodate this in your CCT date calculation. Should you wish to change your hours of work on return from OOP you should resubmit a new application. It will be assumed that you are returning into programme under the same % working hours if there is no paperwork submitted.

30. I would like to go back full time in the last year of my rotation – how do I do this in the new system?

You should discuss with your ES and TPD in your penultimate year (or as soon as possible), your intention to return full time in your last year. Following this, submit an application in the application window.