

HEE North West Office

Postgraduate Medical and Dental Education

Guidance on Stopping and Starting the ‘Training Clock’ for Prolonged Absences

Guidance on Stopping and Starting the 'Training Clock' for Prolonged Absences

Document Title	Guidance on Stopping and Starting the 'Training Clock' for Prolonged Absences
Purpose	To provide guidance to HEE North West office staff and trainees on how the process should be managed when trainees are absent from the workplace for two weeks or more. The absence includes all forms of sickness, maternity, compassionate paid/unpaid leave and exclusion from the workplace. It does not apply to trainees who are formally out of programme for experience, training or research or on study or annual leave.
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Background

This guidance is based on the GMC position statement – November 2012 on Time out of Training (appendix 1). Foundation trainees are covered by the UK Foundation Programme Reference Guide (appendix 2).

Trainees, whether they be foundation, specialty or dental trainees, sometimes encounter difficulties in their training, which necessitates them taking time out of the clinical environment. Sometimes this is because of ill health, sometimes because there has been an incident that results in them being excluded from the workplace by their employer to ensure patient safety while the matter is investigated.

This document sets out how this process should be managed in the HEE North West office. It includes absences from the workplace of 2 weeks or more for sickness, maternity, compassionate paid/unpaid leave and exclusion from the workplace. It does not apply to trainees who are formally out of programme for experience, training or research or on study or annual leave.

Stopping the ‘training clock’

When a trainee is absent from the workplace for two or more weeks, the implications of this absence will need to be considered. Where it is felt that this absence will impact upon normal progression within the training programme, the trainee should be advised that their ‘training clock’ has been stopped and will be restarted when they return to work. This will affect the predicted CCT date.

If a trainee is involved in an incident that necessitates them being excluded from the clinical environment, in addition to the employment procedures there must be an educational meeting, which should involve the trainee and their BMA representative, the TPD (and educational supervisor where relevant), HEE Associate Dean or Director (GP/Dental) and the employer. Those present at the meeting will need to consider whether or not to stop the ‘training clock’ and decide what, if any, activity the trainee can be engaged in, such as regular teaching or work in a simulated environment. The trainee must be informed as to whether or not they are able to use the library and other educational resources. A note must be made in the HEE training file and on the e-portfolio.

As with any other suspension, the position in respect of trainees whose ‘clock is stopped’, for whatever reason, should be reviewed every four weeks by the TPD, together with the employer. The HEE Associate Dean/Director should be informed of the outcome in writing.

Restarting the ‘training clock’

Once the employer has advised that the trainee is ready to return to work there must be an additional meeting with the trainee, their BMA representative, the TPD (and educational supervisor where relevant), the HEE Associate Dean or Director (GP/Dental) and the employer to review the length of time away from the clinical environment and the activity that the trainee has been doing during the intervening period.

Using the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges return to practice guidance (appendix 3) and any specialty specific return to work policies, a return to work programme and return to training programme should be agreed and a provisional revised CCT date or completion of foundation training postulated, (which will be subject to College agreement). After agreement with the College, the revised CCT date or end of core training date should be confirmed at the next ARCP.

Specific guidance for Foundation trainees on ‘Making up Missed time’ is also available <https://www.nwpgmd.nhs.uk/foundation-policies-and-processes>

It would be good practice for the TPD and educational supervisor to meet with the trainee four to six weeks after returning to training to review training progress, in addition to more regular (weekly) meetings between the trainee and their clinical supervisor.