

JFICMI Flexible Training Policy

Introduction:

The Joint Faculty of Intensive Care Medicine of Ireland supports the concept of “less than full time training” (LTFTT) for doctors on the ICM Higher Specialist Training Programme. The Training Committee will endeavour to structure rotations to facilitate LTFTT within the constraints of protecting training opportunities for other trainees and maintaining a high-quality clinical service. All applications will be reviewed positively but cannot be guaranteed. Training should be completed where possible within the training year timelines from July to July. All requests will be considered on an individual basis and in line with current training allocation processes.

To ensure the quality of training is maintained the following principles must be incorporated:

- All efforts will be made to provide flexible training where possible.
- No existing trainee can be disadvantaged by the application for flexible training options.
- The flexible training position must meet the training requirements and be appropriate to the trainee’s stage of training.
- Flexible training should not extend the duration of training beyond the parameters laid out in the training regulations of an individual training body.
- Flexible trainees will have their equivalent full-time salary protected and will continue to hold the NCHD contract.
- Trainees who require flexible training at short notice and/or in exceptional circumstances should have their applications dealt with on a case-by-case basis.
- It is important that a flexible trainee has similar exposure to learning and experience as their full-time colleagues thus they are expected to partake in on-call duties on a pro-rata basis. They should also be afforded the opportunity to regularly attend tutorials, education meetings and multidisciplinary clinical activities.
- Recognition of training time will be in proportion to the hours worked. For example, a 12-month post at 50% of normal hours will be recognised as equivalent to 6 months full-time training.
- For doctors in Clinical Fellow (year 1) and Advanced Clinical Fellow (year 2) posts, recognition of ICM training requires a minimum of six months to be spent in a single ICU. Therefore, for a trainee working 0.5 WTE, this would require a total period of 12 months in a single ICU. Accordingly, six months part-time work in one hospital combined with six months part-time work in a different hospital would not be recognised as a total of six months ICM training.
- Flexible training cannot be granted to pursue other paid employment, paid non-medical interests or to engage in research.

Flexible Training Options:

There are currently various flexible training options available to the trainee.

a) HSE National Supernumerary Flexible Training Scheme

This scheme, funded and managed by the HSE National Doctors Training and Planning (NDTP), is open to all doctors in recognised post graduate training schemes. The scheme provides for a limited number of supernumerary places to facilitate doctors at all levels of training to continue their training in a flexible manner for a set period of time. These posts are on a 0.5WTE basis with the working pattern being managed over a maximum of a two-week reference period.

To be eligible for the flexible training scheme trainees must:

- Be enrolled in a specialist training programme under the auspices of one of the Postgraduate Training Bodies recognised by the Medical Council in Ireland at the time of commencement of flexible training and throughout their flexible training post.
- Be registered on the Trainee Specialist Division of the Register of Medical Practitioners
- Have a well-founded reason for flexible training e.g. responsibility for caring for others, health issues (physical or mental) or personal family circumstances.

The NDTP provides funding to cover the flexible trainee's salary and associated employer's PRSI directly to the employing authority. This funding does not cover other costs such as overtime or on-call allowances which must be paid locally. Overtime is paid at single time until standard weekly WTE hours are reached i.e. 39 hours per week.

Applications must be made directly to the NDTP within the designated time frame (<https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/leadership-education-development/met/ed/flex/flexible-training-policy-2025-docx.pdf>).

Due to the limited number of flexible training posts, posts will be approved for a 12-month period and will begin in July each year. If the trainee wishes to continue flexible training after this time they will need to reapply. Participation on this flexible training scheme will be restricted to a maximum of two years. Deferral of these FTPs is not possible.

b) Locally Organised Less Than Full Time Training

Any trainee can apply via the Training Committee (jficmi@coa.ie) for LTFTT. Every effort will be made to accommodate requests however, this cannot be guaranteed as several factors influence the ability to provide flexible training. These factors include but are not limited to the availability of a suitable post at the required training level and ensuring that no existing trainee is disadvantaged (for example a trainee should not have their rotation changed to accommodate another trainee's LTFTT request without prior mutual agreement). Any flexible working arrangements must meet the training needs of the trainee but also the needs of the hospital. All requests will be considered by the Training

Committee of the JFICMI and the decision communicated to the trainee. Applications will generally be considered prior to or at the time of post allocation. LTFTT will be granted for a period of one year and reviewed by the Training Committee if a further request is made. During LTFTT, salaries are on a pro-rata basis and payment of overtime will be at a standard rate until standard working week hours have been achieved.

c) Job Sharing:

The objective of job sharing is to retain doctors within the medical workforce who would otherwise be unable to continue training on a full-time basis. All trainees can avail of job-sharing opportunities within the ICM HST programme for a maximum of two years. For job sharing, two trainees will share one full-time post with each trainee working 50% of the hours. Applications should be made in writing to the Training Committee (jficmi@coa.ie) for consideration at the next Training Committee meeting.

d) Swaps

Trainees can only swap with trainees in the same year of the training programme. The request for a potential swap must be submitted at least six months in advance of the start date (30th June deadline for a January swap and the 31st December deadline for a July swap). All swap requests should be submitted in writing to the Chair of the Training Committee of the Joint Faculty (jficmi@coa.ie) with the reason for the request clearly outlined. Requests will be reviewed and approval considered at the subsequent JFICMI Training Committee meeting. When considering swap requests, the Training Committee will evaluate whether key components of training are adversely affected for either of the doctors involved. A swap may not proceed until approval is given by the Training Committee. Requests to change a hospital allocation without including a replacement doctor will only be accommodated in specific circumstances.