

Period of Grace (POG) Guidance

Review dated: September 2019 - reviewed in line with nationally agreed process

Next review: September 2020

Introduction

Please note that the following Guidance regarding the Period of Grace does not apply to General Practice trainees or those completing core training.

The Gold Guide states:

'A trainee may apply for a consultant post, and be interviewed up to 6 months prior to the anticipated CCT/CESR (CP) date, if progress has been satisfactory and it is anticipated that the outcome of the final ARCP will recommend that training will be completed by the time the recommended CCT date is reached.

Once a doctor has been entered on the specialist register they are able to take up a substantive, fixed term or honorary consultant post in the NHS'¹

Although trainees are able to apply for Consultant posts up to six months before their anticipated CCT/CESR(CP) date, not all are either able to do this or are successful in their applications. The Period of Grace enables doctors who have completed training and not yet obtained a Consultant post to continue in the Specialty Registrar grade contract for a time limited period whilst they find employment, usually in a consultant level post.

The doctor is no longer considered to be in training, but in post for the purposes of service. As the doctor is no longer in training, they are not eligible to make applications or enter into arrangements during their period of grace which are normally available to trainees (e.g. Inter-Deanery Transfer, Out of Programme etc). However, the trainee will retain their NTN during the Period of Grace.

Once a trainee has accepted a Consultant post or Locum Consultant post they must resign from their training programme with effect either from the CCT date or following the appropriate period of notice (see Termination below for full details). In doing so the trainees National Training Number (NTN) is relinquished and the right to a Period of Grace is given up; there is no option to return to training in that training programme.

Please see Appendix 1: Period of Grace Flow Chart.

Length of Period of Grace

The standard Period of Grace is six calendar months following the date of CCT/CESR (CP). There is no pro-rata modification for Less Than Full Time (LTFT) trainees.

In exceptional circumstances the Postgraduate Dean may agree to extend the Period of Grace up to a maximum total of twelve calendar months. To do this, the trainee must gain the support of their Training Programme Director and then write to the Postgraduate Dean within the normal timeframe for requesting a Period of Grace (see below).

Requesting a Period of Grace

Trainees are required to notify their HEE Education Team of their intent to take up a Period of Grace at a minimum of 6 months prior to the date of CCT/CESR/(CP) using the Period of Grace intent form

¹ Gold Guide 2016, Section 5.41 – 5.43, Pg23

The trainee should enter into discussion with their Training Programme Director (TPD) prior to the mid-point of the training year to support their decision as to whether or not a Period of Grace will be required.

If the Period of Grace Request form is not submitted by the required deadline the Training Programme Directors will not arrange a period of Grace for the trainee. The trainees NTN will be relinquished at point of sign off for CCT/CESR (CP).

It is not possible to guarantee the availability of a post for a trainee to complete a Period of Grace. All posts will be offered subject to availability within the training programme.

Confirmation of a Period of Grace

Once the Period of Grace Request Form has been received the Training Programme Directors will work to accommodate the requests within the available posts in the training programme and/or within Trusts.

Trainees will receive the offer of the post no later than fourteen weeks prior to the date of CCT/CESR (CP). The Trainee will then have two weeks in which to accept or decline the post. Once the post has been accepted the trainee, is expected to work from the expected CCT/CESR(CP) date to the end of the agreed timeframe or to work a normal notice period commencing from the expected CCT/CES(CP) date if opting to leave early.

If the offer of the post is declined the trainee will relinquish their NTN and the right to a Period of Grace is given up; there is no option to return to training in that training programme.

Commencing in the placement

A doctor can only commence a Period of Grace post if they have been recommended to CCT/CESR (CP) by receiving an ARCP outcome 6 signifying the satisfactory completion of either Higher Specialty Training or Run through Training. It is not possible to complete a Period of Grace at the end of a Core Training Programme to bridge any gaps between commencement of a Higher Specialty Training Programme.

The Period of Grace commences from the date of the recommendation for CCT/CESR (CP) indicated on the ARCP Outcome 6 form. The Period of Grace is time-limited, and can only be taken up by a trainee who is yet to relinquish their NTN.

Statutory Leave during the Period of Grace

If a doctor takes statutory leave during the Period of Grace, the period is suspended on the date the statutory leave starts. The trainee will need to submit a new Period of Grace intent form for the remaining time (maximum 6 months' total time inclusive of time used prior to statutory leave and time following return from statutory leave) to request continuation of the Period of Grace on return from leave. The Application will be considered as detailed in point below.

Placement Location and suitability

The Period of Grace is offered at the discretion of the relevant Specialty School and the employing Trust. Whilst every effort should be made to enable STR's to continue for the six-month period of Grace in suitable posts if they so wish; placement is subject to the availability of posts within the programme and service needs of the employing Trust. Therefore, specific location placement of specific sub-specialty attachments may not be possible.

Termination

Once the trainee has accepted the offer of the Post for the Period of Grace three months' notice commencing from the expected date of CCT/CESR (CP) is required to terminate in line with NHS Employers' Junior Doctors Terms and Conditions for StR level trainees². This is to ensure that the employing Trust are given adequate time to make provision to fulfil service needs.

Once the trainee has commenced the Period of Grace, should they wish to leave the post prior to the end of the agreed POG the usual notice period of three months from the date of the resignation letter is required.

If the trainee chooses not to accept the Period of Grace, they will relinquish their NTN number and the right to the Period of Grace is given up. They are not required to follow the resignation procedure; their training post will simply come to an end at the expected CCT/CESR(CP) date subject to satisfactory completion of the training programme.

Extension

It may be that doctors with a CCT have difficulty in obtaining a Consultant level post and have not achieved employment by the end of the six-month Grace Period.

Extension is typically not available. However, a trainee may (after gaining Head of School support) write to the Postgraduate Dean to ask for an extension if they believe their circumstances to be exceptional. Lack of availability of suitable consultant posts within the trainee's specialty is not considered to be exceptional.

Trainees are advised to keep a log-book of their efforts to obtain a consultant level post on completing training. This can then be used to support the application for Grace Period Extension should it be required.

Employment rights

Doctors in the Grace Period will not be expected to undertake research or other training orientated sessions except as explicitly agreed with the employer.

Doctors will be eligible for study leave, Annual leave, and Sick Leave according to local Trust policy.

² NHS Employers' Junior Doctors Terms and Conditions of Service, Paragraph 196