
Absences from training in the Foundation Programme

GMC position statement – June 2013

What is this document for?

To provide clear guidance to postgraduate deaneries, local education and training boards, foundation schools, medical schools and doctors in the UK Foundation Programme on the management of absences from training in the Foundation Programme.

This replaces the *Guidance on sick leave for doctors with provisional registration and a licence to practise* dated 26 July 2011 v1.2.

Who is covered by this guidance?

- All doctors with provisional registration and a licence to practise in the first year of the Foundation Programme.
- Doctors with full registration and a license to practise in the second year of the Foundation Programme.

A separate GMC position statement – *Time Out of Training* (November 2012) – covers all postgraduate doctors in training in GMC approved training, including fixed term posts such as locum appointments for training or Fixed Term Training Appointments.

Background

The Foundation Programme is a two-year generic training programme forming the bridge between medical school and specialist/general practice training.

Doctors with provisional registration and a licence to practise in the first year of the Foundation Programme (F1) are required to meet the learning outcomes for full registration in *The Trainee Doctor*, which are mirrored in the Foundation Programme curriculum. They must also satisfactorily complete 12 months training (full time

equivalent) in an approved foundation programme before they are eligible for a Certificate of Experience and to apply for full registration¹.

Doctors in the second year of the Foundation Programme (F2) who satisfactorily meet the learning outcomes in the Foundation Programme curriculum and complete 12 months training are awarded the Foundation Achievement of Competence Document (FACD).

Absence from training other than for study (including foundation taster weeks) or annual leave may have an impact on a doctor's ability to demonstrate the learning outcomes.

Position

The GMC has determined that 20 days (when the doctor would normally be at work) is the maximum permitted absence within each 12 month period of the Foundation Programme (F1 and F2). Where a doctor's absence goes above 20 days (when a doctor would normally be at work), this will trigger a review of whether they need to have an extra period of training.

The administration of the absence and any extension to training will be undertaken by the relevant postgraduate deanery/foundation school. The GMC support deaneries implementing this guidance flexibly to reflect the nature and history of absence, the timing and the affect of the absence on the individuals' competence. The decision and the reasons for the decision must be documented.

What does 'normally at work' mean?

A doctor's pattern of work will vary. Where a foundation doctor is absent during their scheduled time away from work (including study leave), this does not count towards the period of absence. When less-than-full time foundation doctors are absent during their scheduled non-working time, this does not count towards the period of absence.

Equality

The absence includes all forms of absence such as sickness, maternity, compassionate paid/unpaid leave other than study (including taster weeks) or annual leave.

¹ Section 10A(2)(e) of the Medical Act 1983 allows the GMC to determine the arrangements for certification that a person has satisfactorily completed a programme for provisionally registered doctors.

This guidance is concerned with the effect of absence on a doctor's ability to satisfactorily demonstrate the competency requirements of the Foundation Programme and eligibility for a Certificate of Experience or a Foundation Achievement of Competence Document. It is not concerned with the doctor's position as an employee and does not affect the doctor's right to annual, sick, maternity, compassionate or other leave.

When will this come into effect?

To apply from the August 2013 Foundation Programme start/changeover date.