



NHS Education South Central

(Incorporating Oxford Deanery)

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Oxford Deanery Guidance on the GP Retainer Scheme

The aim of the scheme is to ensure that doctors who are able to work part-time only for personal reasons are able to remain in practice to keep their skills up-to-date. The scheme is a combination of service commitment and professional development. Doctors on the scheme have both clinical and educational supervision so that they will be equipped to return to general practice in either a salaried post or partnership at the end of their time on the scheme. Details of the guidance from the Department of Health (HSC 1999/004) and GPC are shown on the Oxford PGMDE website.

Information for doctors who wish to join the scheme

A doctor wishing to join the scheme should contact the GP office at the Oxford PGMDE who will send out an application form OXR1 and information sheet.

Doctors joining the scheme will do so on the understanding that they will eventually return to general practice as partners in a practice or in a salaried post. The scheme lasts for five years and extensions to time on the scheme are only made in exceptional circumstances.

Approval for inclusion on the scheme needs to be made by both the Deanery and the PCT in which the doctor is intending to work and copies of the application will be forwarded by the Deanery to the relevant PCT.

Once the application is approved, and the practice the doctor intends joining is an approved practice, the doctor will be able start work and will be able to receive £310 each year to help towards the costs of medical indemnity and GMC registration.

Each year the Deanery will offer the doctor renewal of membership of the scheme (Forms OXR2 and OXR3). In reply, the doctor should send back evidence of professional development in the form of their most recent PDP and evidence that they have had a GP appraisal in the last 12 months (a copy of the sign off sheet from Form 4 is enough).

If there are any matters relating to their educational supervision in practice the doctor should let the Deanery know; it is important that the doctor should be employed in a practice where they may have time for learning and are encouraged to develop.

If there are any issues relating to education which might cause the doctor to leave the practice it would be helpful for the doctor to discuss it in the first instance with the course organiser for the scheme honor.merriman@ntlworld.com.

At the start of the fourth year on the scheme doctors will be invited to discuss their exit plans with the course organiser. She will be happy to meet any member who wishes to discuss career options at the end of the five years.

The application form will confirm:

- The doctor's resolve to return to general practice at the end of five years

- Details of the employing practice(s) and their PCT(s)
- Work plan in the practice with educational supervision proposed (not more than 52 sessions worked per quarter)
- Other work the doctor may wish to do (to maintain clinical skills)
- That registration with the GMC and membership with a medical defence organisation will be maintained.
- That at least 28 hours of medical education will be undertaken each year.
- Yearly participation in GP appraisal (as offered by the PCT on whose performers list the doctor is held).

Extension for doctors on the scheme

This will be possible only in exceptional personal circumstances: the scheme will only be available for 5 years. In the event of a special circumstance the doctor is advised to be in touch with the Deanery as soon as possible

Information for practices wishing to employ a doctor under the retainer scheme

The deanery determines suitability for employment of a doctor on the Retainer scheme on three criteria:

1. The ability of the practice to offer a good environment for learning with an appropriate case load for the retained GP (neither too much work nor too light a case load to offer real experience). This is why the application form requests details of list size and local population health needs. The practice educational responsibilities are defined below.
2. The suitability of the applicant (who should not work more than half time in GMS or non medical work in addition to the retainer sessions), and who genuinely wishes to stay in general practice after their time on the Scheme.
3. The local PCT may have specific plans for the local workforce and all applications should be discussed with them before deanery application

If the practice is already approved for training GP registrars no approval visit is usually needed, although an application form will need to be completed and the list size stated. If there has been a query about the quality of education offered by the training practice to retained GPs in the past a visit will be required

If the practice is not a training practice they will need to apply to the Deanery for assessment. The Deanery will send out an application form OXR4. On receipt of the application form the GP office will arrange for the practice to be assessed by the local CPD tutor who will visit the practice and then report on Form OXR4.

If the practice is approved, the doctor may then be employed. A copy of a model contract of employment for doctors on the scheme is available on the BMA website and is regularly updated. Practices are expected to use the latest version of the contract. Practice approval is usually for five years. At the end of that time another assessment visit is needed unless information from the CPD tutor of an employed doctor indicates that an earlier visit is needed.

In the event of a practice not being approved to employ a doctor on the scheme there is an appeals procedure and details of this are held in the PGMDE general practice office.

Criteria for approval of practice not approved to train GP registrars

Practices wishing to employ a doctor on either of these schemes will need to provide an environment which encourages that doctor's professional development. They need to meet or be moving towards the following standards (in order to comply with HSC 1999/004 which is the most recent guidance from the Department of Health about the retainer scheme).

The practice should:

1. Define the doctor's weekly timetable and who will be available at each session for clinical supervision and advice
2. Name an educational supervisor for the doctor who will ensure that the doctor is able to attend educational meetings held at the practice and meet the doctor regularly to discuss professional development. As a minimum there should be an educational review of the retained GP's needs quarterly in the form of a meeting between the GP and their educational supervisor
3. Offer the GP a contract with similar terms to the most recent model contract on the BMA website

Education:

1. Arrangements should allow the doctor 28 hours of paid time for education.
2. The practice should aim to be a learning organisation. Attainment of all nGMS education and training QOF points would demonstrate this. Other educational arrangements which meet some of these standards are acceptable provided there is a plan to improve year on year.

Practice organisation:

The practice should demonstrate a commitment to working towards attainment of the following nGMS quality indicators:

1. Records and patient information
2. Medicines management
3. Patient experience
4. Chronic disease management

Achievement of QOF indicators will be adequate for these criteria. Practices who do not intend to try for these targets should be able to show that they have adequate patient records, prescribing, patient satisfaction surveys and audit of chronic disease management (as defined by nGMS indicators).