

# Inter-Foundation School Transfers

## *Guidance*

### ***INDEX***

<b>Section</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Page</b>
1.	Introduction	2
2.	General principles	2
3.	The criteria	3
4.	Process for submission & consideration of applications	5
5.	Appeals process	6
<b>Appendix</b>		
A.	Helping potential applicants be realistic	8

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The *Foundation Programme Reference Guide (2012)* describes two ways for medical students and foundation doctors to transfer from one foundation school to another:
- Inter-foundation school transfer
  - Competitive application process.
- 1.2 This guidance note ONLY describes the arrangements for inter-foundation school transfers.

## **2. General Principles**

- 2.1 The application for an inter-foundation school transfer is based on the premise that the applicant is no longer able to manage their training and their caring/health responsibilities in their allocated/current location.
- 2.2 The criteria for applying for a transfer between foundation schools are the same as those for applying for pre-allocation (i.e. special circumstances) to a particular foundation school prior to the national foundation application process.
- 2.3 Foundation schools will only consider applications for a transfer from medical students if they have been accepted for foundation training, allocated to a foundation school and their circumstances have changed since they originally applied.
- 2.4 Applications for a transfer to another foundation school from a foundation doctor will only be considered if their circumstances have changed since commencing their foundation training.
- 2.5 Transfers will normally take place either before the start of foundation training (F1) or at the start of the F2 year.
- 2.6 Applications for an inter-foundation school transfer may be submitted at any time, but must normally be received before the end of May and transfers must normally be confirmed or denied by the end of June of the relevant year. Transfers may only be considered at other times in exceptional circumstances.
- 2.7 Applicants can only list one potential “receiving” foundation school and this is the school where an approved application will be sent. Where two or more appropriate foundation schools have adjoining geographical borders, and any of them would be suitable for the applicant’s needs, it will be up to those schools to discuss and advise the applicant which is the most appropriate.
- 2.8 Approval for inter-foundation school transfers must be agreed between the originating and receiving foundation school panels, based on the individual medical student’s or foundation doctor’s needs. Transfers will only take place if there is agreement that the medical student or foundation doctor needs to transfer because of a change in their circumstances, which meets the nationally agreed criteria, and there is a place in the receiving foundation school.

2.9 Approval of an application for an inter-foundation school transfer does not guarantee a specific programme within the receiving foundation school.

2.10 In the event that an application for an inter-foundation school transfer is not approved, applicants will be able to submit an appeal which will be considered by an appeals panel.

### **3. Criteria**

**3.1 Criterion 1: The applicant is a parent or legal guardian of a child or children under the age of 18 who reside primarily with them and for whom they have significant caring responsibilities, and their circumstances have changed since submitting their original Foundation Programme application or commencing their foundation training.**

3.1.1 Applicants must describe how their circumstances have changed and why they need to move to meet the caring responsibilities.

3.1.2 If the sole criterion is that the applicant (or their partner) has become pregnant since submitting their Foundation Programme application or since commencing their foundation training, this will not be regarded as a reason for an inter-foundation school transfer.

3.1.3 The applicant is required to supply the following supporting evidence:

- Copy of birth certificate(s) of the child(ren)
- For legal guardians, a copy of the legal document that confirms your status for the child(ren) named in the birth certificate(s).
- Statement confirming that you have significant caring responsibilities for the child(ren).

**3.2 Criterion 2: The applicant is the primary carer for someone who is disabled (as defined by the Equality Act 2010) and their circumstances have changed since submitting their original Foundation Programme application or commencing their foundation training.**

#### **Definition of 'disability' under the Equality Act 2010**

The Equality Act 2010 defines a disabled person as someone who has a physical or mental impairment and that the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

3.2.1 For the purposes of the Act:

- *substantial* means more than minor or trivial
- *long-term* means that the effect of the impairment has lasted or is likely to last for at least 12 months.
- *normal day-to-day activities* include everyday things like eating, washing, walking and going shopping.

Some conditions, such as a tendency to set fires or addictions to non-prescribed substances, are specifically excluded.

People who have had a disability in the past that meets this definition are also covered by the scope of the Act.

There are additional provisions relating to people with progressive conditions. People with HIV, cancer and multiple sclerosis are protected by the Act from the point of diagnosis. People with visual impairments are automatically deemed to be disabled.

3.2.2 For an applicant to meet this criterion, s/he would normally be expected to be caring for a partner, sibling or parent. Applicants must be the primary carer for this person.

3.2.3 If the person they are caring for is not their partner, sibling or parent, applicants will be expected to explain clearly and put a strong case as to why they have the role of primary carer for this person.

3.2.4 Applicants who provide care for a person as part of a group of carers, e.g. a family, are not eligible to apply under this criterion

3.2.5 Applicants will be required to complete a care plan to demonstrate how they will combine the responsibilities of foundation doctor and primary carer and that local support resources have been fully considered.

3.2.6 Applicants will be required to supply the following supporting evidence:

- Statement from GP/Social Services confirming the applicant's role as primary carer for this person
- Care plan.

### **3.3 Criterion 3: The applicant has a medical condition or disability for which on-going follow up for the condition in the specified location is an absolute requirement.**

3.3.1 Applicants must describe how their circumstances have changed and why they need to move and present clear arguments as to why follow up arrangements could not continue as present.

3.3.2 Applicants will be required to supply the following supporting evidence:

- A report by the current medical specialist treating the condition or Occupational health physician in which they will be required to:
  - describe the current medical condition or disability
  - describe the nature of the on-going treatment and frequency
  - state why the follow up must be delivered in a specific location, rather than by other treatment centres in the UK.

## **4. Process for submission and consideration of applications**

4.1 Medical students or foundation doctors, who have special reasons as described above for transferring to a different foundation school, should first discuss the matter with:

- the Foundation School Director and/or Foundation School Manager from their allocated foundation school if they have not yet taken up their appointment;
- or their Foundation Training Programme Director/Tutor (FTPD/T) and/or Foundation School Manager if they are already in a foundation training programme.

4.2 Medical students or foundation doctors who believe that they meet one or more of the criteria are strongly advised to discuss their circumstances with their Foundation School Manager before completing the inter-foundation school transfer application form. The purpose of this discussion would be to help potential applicants be realistic and explain the necessary forms and supporting documents to be supplied.

4.3 Applicants should not contact a potential receiving school directly to ask if there are vacancies.

4.4 Applicants should send their application with supporting documentation to their current or allocated foundation school by post for consideration. Foundation schools will only consider applications where all the required forms and supporting documentation have been submitted and are fully and accurately completed. Applications may be submitted at any time, but should be received before the end of May

4.5 The current or allocated foundation school may choose to consider applications for inter-foundation school transfers as and when they are received, or in batches.

4.6 Applications received after the end of May will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. This is at the discretion of the current or allocated foundation school.

4.7 The allocated/current and the receiving foundation schools must each set up a panel to consider applications for inter school transfers. The panel must be chaired by the Foundation School Director (or their representative), and should include the Foundation School Manager (or equivalent).

4.8 Arrangements for inter-foundation school transfers must be agreed by both the panels of the allocated/current and the receiving foundation school

4.9 Inter-foundation school transfers will take place only if both foundation schools agree that the medical student or foundation doctor needs to transfer because of a change in their circumstances, which meets the nationally agreed criteria; and there is a place available in the receiving foundation school.

4.10 Applicants should note that if the receiving foundation school does not have an appropriate foundation programme place available to accommodate the transfer, the applicant will be placed on a waiting list. They remain the responsibility of their current foundation school until a programme in the receiving foundation school has been confirmed.

4.11 As the applicant is applying for an IFST due to changes in their circumstances which make it impossible to manage their training and their caring/health responsibilities in their allocated current location, it is expected that the applicant will take up any programme offered to them by the receiving school. If the applicant decides not to take up the offered programme, the application will be terminated and the applicant will be expected to stay in the host foundation school.

4.12 If either foundation school panel does not approve an application for an inter-foundation school transfer, the applicant will be notified of the reason(s) why the application was not approved. The foundation school panel which did not approve the application will advise the applicant of the appeals process and the date by which an appeal must be submitted.

## **5. Appeals process**

5.1 Appeals will only be considered on the grounds that the process was not applied with appropriate diligence or due care, or that the decision was made in a prejudicial way.

5.2 Appeals can only be considered on the basis of information supplied at the time of the original application.

5.3 The appeals process will be coordinated by the foundation school which turned down the application.

5.4 Medical students or foundation doctors should submit any requests for an appeal to the foundation school which turned down their application within 10 working days of the decision to reject their application for an inter-foundation school transfer being communicated to them. The foundation school will convene an appeals panel within 10 working days of receiving the appeal.

5.5 The appeals panel will normally include an independent Foundation School Director and a lay representative.

5.6 The appeals panel will consider the appeal and inform the applicant, and both foundation schools, of its decision. The decision of the panel is final and no further correspondence will be entered into.

## APPENDIX A: Helping potential applicants to make an informed decision

### Criterion 1

1. Applicants with children will be familiar with combining the demands of parenthood with managing a demanding, full-time job or training. In most cases they will have worked through the majority of issues related to child care that they will face as foundation doctors.
2. Foundation schools should discuss with medical student applicants the differences between being a student and a doctor. These will include less regular hours, irregular shift patterns and working nights.
3. Foundation schools should discuss with applicants the longer-term implications of their care commitments. There are many sources of advice as the majority of doctors balance family and work responsibilities.
4. Foundation schools should discuss with applicants whether less than full-time training would be an appropriate option.
5. Foundation schools must explain that this criterion is related to childcare and that pregnancy will not be considered as a reason for moving schools.

### Criterion 2

1. Many applicants have aging and/or ill relatives to whom they give care, and the demographics of the population nationally suggest that this is likely to increase. For the purposes of this exercise, applicants are advised to indicate clearly how they are the **primary** carer of the person being cared for, and that all appropriate local resources are being utilised.
2. All applicants must indicate the extent/level/type, as well as the frequency, of the caring role they provide. They are required to include a structured care plan to indicate how they intend to balance the requirements of their care commitment with the demands of a busy job, with varying shift patterns.
3. Applicants must demonstrate that they utilise and do not duplicate alternative care services available, whether hospital or community based. For example, many people would wish to accompany a sick relative to an important medical appointment and would expect to take annual leave to do so. Interpreting or translating for a relative is not a reason for requesting an inter-foundation school transfer. Translators or interpreters can routinely be available for GP and hospital appointments.
4. Foundation schools should discuss with applicants the longer-term implications of their care commitments. Applicants should be encouraged to consider whether their level of care commitment is realistic in the longer term.
5. Foundations schools should discuss with applicants whether less than full-time training would be an appropriate option.

### **Criterion 3**

1. Applicants with a medical condition (physical or psychological) or disability will be familiar with combining the requirements of their condition with managing a demanding, full-time job or training. However, there are significant differences between being a student and being an employed doctor. These will include less regular hours, irregular shift patterns and working nights.
2. Early referral to an Occupation Health physician and/or the local deanery may be advisable.
3. Foundation schools should discuss with applicants whether less than full-time training would be an appropriate option.