



Policy on Inter-Scheme Transfers

Adopted by PGTC – September 2017.

Members of the NCCT Task Group on Inter-Scheme Transfers

A task group was established by the National Co-ordinating Committee for Training (NCCT) to develop a policy on Inter-Scheme Transfers. The task group included:

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Consultation Process

The draft report prepared by the NCCT Task Group was circulated to all stakeholders including Trainees, Trainers, Programme Directors and Steering Committees for feedback. The report was then submitted to

- The National Co-ordinating Committee for Training – September 2016
- The Postgraduate Training Committee – January 2017
- Postgraduate Training Task Group on IST - March 2017

The document was revised by the PGTC Task Group on Inter-Scheme Transfers. Membership of the taskgroup included:

Dr. Darach Brennan (Chair, Programme Director)
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Inter Scheme Transfer – ICGP Policy

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Introduction:

The ICGP acknowledges that training in General Practice requires a considerable commitment to a training scheme and a particular location in order to achieve satisfactory completion of training. Over the period of training, it is recognised that personal circumstances can change for trainees. On occasion, these circumstances can present considerable challenges for individuals striving to pursue a career in General Practice. These circumstances, unforeseen at the commencement of training, can jeopardise the ability of a trainee to pursue their goal of becoming a competent and proficient General Practitioner.

The ICGP is committed to assisting and facilitating all trainees in achieving Satisfactory Completion of Training. The Inter-Scheme Transfer Process is one of several mechanisms by which the ICGP endeavors to help trainees overcome personal challenges during training in order to achieve their goal of becoming a General Practitioner (see also ICGP Policy on Flexible Training).

An Inter-Scheme Transfer (IST) allows GP specialty trainees, **in special circumstances**, to move between Irish GP training schemes during their training programme. In an Inter Scheme transfer, there is no requirement to replace the Trainee in the scheme from which the Trainee is moving and therefore the criteria are strict. An Inter Scheme Exchange has less strict criteria, as the service elements of training are addressed by an Exchange. An ICGP Inter Scheme Exchange policy is currently in development.

Trainees are required to engage with their local programme directing team as a means to explore alternative options such as flexible training, post reassignment or post swaps before embarking on an inter scheme transfer (IST). In the first instance, the ICGP encourages agreeable solutions that protect continuity of the training pathway. As ISTs may have an adverse effect on continuity of training for trainees, an Inter-Scheme Transfer should only be triggered as the option of last resort in order to facilitate completion of training.

The processes in this policy outline three categories under which an application for Inter-Scheme Transfer can be made. These are in order of priority, as trainees in Category 1 are most likely to have an urgent immediate need for transfer. Where capacity to transfer is available, priority will be given to Category 1 and Category 2 applicants over Category 3 applicants.

Inter-Scheme Transfers require close mentorship and educational supervision before, during and after the IST process occurs, including a close, structured handover of training in order to minimise any negative consequences on the trainee journey.

An Inter-Scheme Transfer may be considered where there has been an unforeseen, significant change in personal circumstances. See detailed eligibility criteria

Examples of such changes in circumstances would include:

- Category 1 ; A newly occurring personal disability
- Category 2 ; Newly occurring caring responsibilities **or**
- Category 3 ; Unforeseen change in circumstances relating to a committed relationship

For an inter-scheme transfer to be considered you should:

- Have a **new significant unforeseen change** in personal circumstances since acceptance of the offer of GP Training.
- Have not less than 6 months of training to complete*.
- Have evidence of satisfactory progress through training.

*This requirement is in place as transfers may take up to 6 months to arrange.

Transfers are not an entitlement. The decision on transfer will be made, not only by the strength of the personal case, but also the impact of the transfer on other trainees and trainers in the region.

Even if agreed in principle, a change can only be possible if there is capacity in the receiving training programme and if funding is available.

Trainees should demonstrate that a significant change to personal circumstances has occurred that could not have been foreseen at the time of commencing their current training programme.

It is the trainee's responsibility to submit the correct supporting documents.

An application may be disqualified or transfer withdrawn if an application contains false or misleading information, or where relevant information has been withheld. It may be appropriate to report any such incidents to the Irish Medical Council.

Process:

1. Each trainee needs to understand the process for inter – scheme transfer, through consulting the ICGP website and through confidential discussions with their local programme directing scheme.
2. Alternative options should be considered through discussions with your Programme Director before embarking on an IST
3. The eligibility criteria need to be visited on a case by case basis.
4. Collect the relevant supporting documents and necessary endorsements as required.
5. Complete the application and present the necessary documentation to your Programme Director. The National Director of Training will be advised of your request to transfer scheme.
6. It is essential that you check that you have completed all parts of your application form and included the relevant evidence or you will be considered ineligible.
7. Candidates should **not** make contact with other training schemes in an effort to secure a transfer– all communication must be through the local Programme Director.
8. The IST process, from the point that formal application is made may take up to 6 months to arrange, taking into account the logistical, educational impact (for both the trainee and scheme) and financial arrangements.
9. The National Director will be kept informed of the progress of your application. If eligible applications are not processed within 3 months the National Director will be informed.
10. If eligible applications are not processed within 6 months the Postgraduate Training Committee will be informed.

Please see process overview for further details.

Decision:

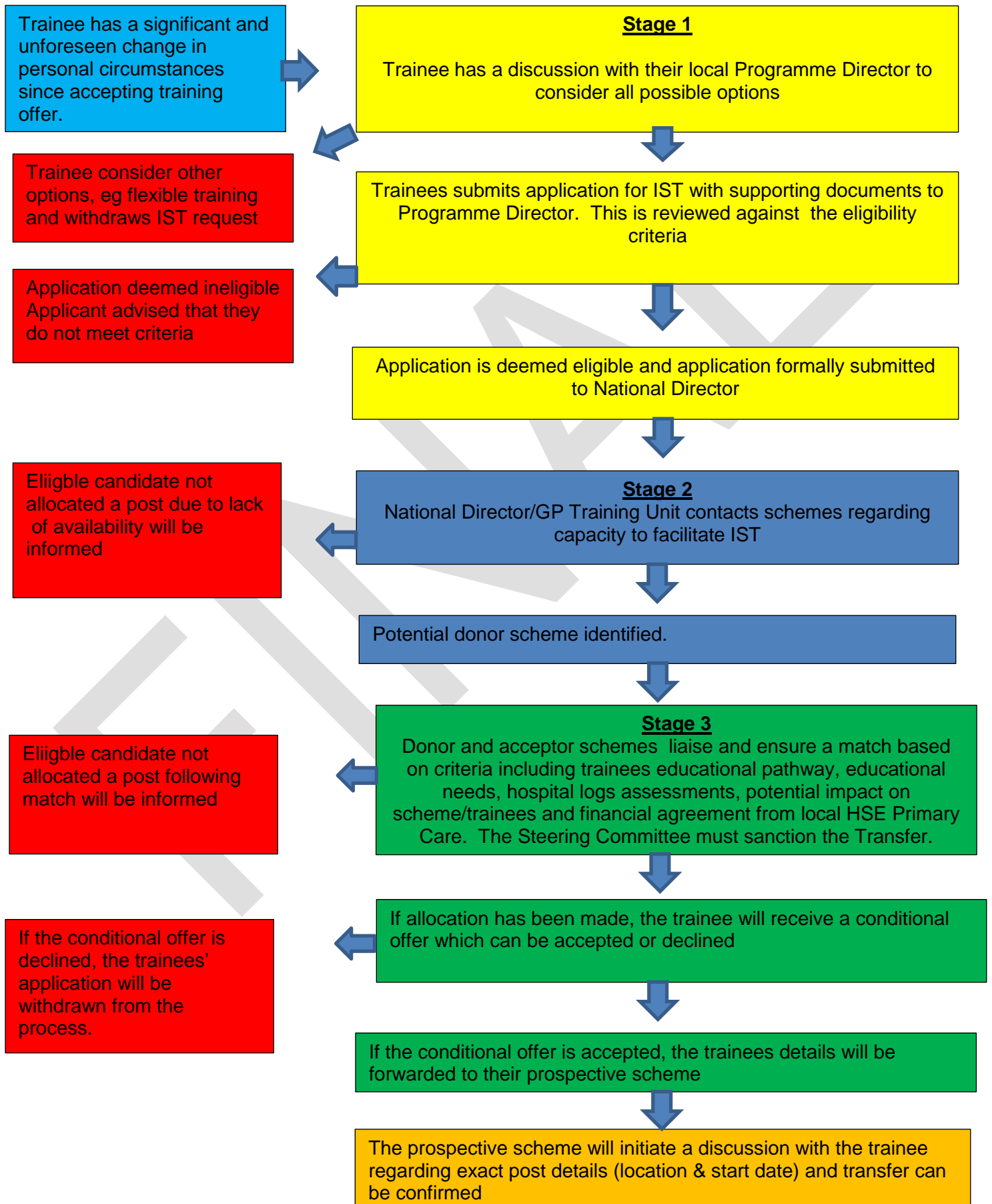
The process is managed by the Programme directing teams of the schemes involved and under the direction of their individual steering committees. The process is overseen by the National Director of specialist training.

Priority is given to applicants with major changes in circumstances. Each application will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

The Programme Director in consultation with the Steering Committee must sanction the transfer.

Ratification of transfer is subject to availability of the proposed change and to due process. **Your main contact for this process is your Programme Director who will keep you informed and, if successful, will outline a timescale for the transfer.**

Inter Scheme Transfer Process Overview



Criteria for a change in personal circumstances

Trainees are only able to apply for a transfer under one of the following criteria.

Criterion 1

The trainee has developed a disability/health issue as defined by the Employment Equality Acts 1998 and 2004 (see below) following the commencement of their current training scheme for which treatment is an absolute requirement and where the treatment, care or social requirements can only be carried out in the geographical area the trainee has applied to relocate to, as confirmed by a report from their Occupational Health Physician, GP or their medical specialist. Also refer to the ICGP Policy 'Trainee with a Disability Document'.

The [Disability Act 2005](#) set out the following definition:

"disability", in relation to a person, means a substantial restriction in the capacity of the person to carry on a profession, business or occupation in the State or to participate in social or cultural life in the State by reason of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or intellectual impairment

The **Equality Acts** (Employment Equality Acts and the Equal Status Acts),

"Disability means:

- (a) the total or partial absence of a person's bodily or mental functions, including the absence of a part of a person's body;
- (b) the presence in the body of organisms causing, or likely to cause, chronic disease or illness;
- (c) the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of a person's body;
- (d) a condition or malfunction which results in a person learning differently from a person without the condition or malfunction; or
- (e) a condition, disease or illness which affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgement or which results in disturbed behaviour."

Criterion 2

The trainee has become the primary carer for someone who is disabled as defined by the Employment Equality Acts 1998 and 2004. This is expected to be a partner, sibling, parent or child, and these responsibilities have changed significantly following the commencement of their training, resulting in the need to move location. Trainees 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.

Criterion 3

The trainee has had a significant change in personal circumstances due to a committed relationship **that could not have been foreseen** at the commencement of their training, resulting in the need to move location.

Please note: a committed relationship refers to the relationship a trainee has with a partner (e.g. boyfriend, girlfriend, husband or wife) and not with other family members or friends.

Supporting documentation

1. Trainees applying for an IST will need to complete an application form which can be downloaded from the ICGP website www.icgp.ie/gptraining, stating clearly the significant and unforeseen change in circumstances that has taken place since they started training.
2. **Trainees will also be required to submit evidence supporting their application** Depending on the criterion under which a trainee is applying, further supporting documents are also required as mandatory pieces of evidence. Please see below for a list of the documents required for each criterion.
3. All trainees are required to submit a breakdown of their education to date on their current training scheme. Trainees who are currently out of programme for any reason should also submit the last outcome form received while still in programme. It is essential that this documentation is supplied with the application form.

Signatories for documents

4. The application form and supporting evidence must be processed through the trainee's current programme director. This person will be the administrative lead for the initial phase of the application process up to National Inter Scheme Transfer consideration of their application.
5. Supporting documents should be signed by the appropriate signatory as outlined on the application. Please ensure you obtain appropriate signatories for documents as it will unfortunately not be possible to accept alternatives.

Time frame for completion of documents

6. The National Director of Training/GP Training Unit must be able to make sure that personal circumstances are current. Therefore, the relevant Supporting Document must be completed and signed by the relevant signatories and submitted within 3 months of the signature.

Evidence to support Criterion 1

Supporting Documents must be submitted along with an IST application made under Criterion One (Own Disability). Acceptable evidence to support criterion 1:

Submission of a statement from a treating physician, signed by that physician, confirming the trainee's disability.

Evidence to support Criterion 2

Acceptable evidence to support an application for IST under Criterion Two (Primary Carer Responsibilities):

A statement from a treating physician, signed by that physician, confirming the trainee's role as primary carer for the person who is in need of care.

Evidence to support Criterion 3

Acceptable evidence to support an application for IST under Criterion Three (Committed Relationship).

A statement from the trainee's current Training Scheme Director, signed by the Programme Director, to confirm, to the best of their knowledge, that they are aware of the change in personal circumstances.

Trainees applying for Criterion 3 must also provide either

- a marriage certificate or civil partnership certificate.
- If not yet married/ in a civil partnership, trainees can provide any 2 of the following:
 - Evidence of shared financial responsibility (Joint bank account statements, utility bills, joint mortgage/tenancy agreement).
 - Letter of intent from mortgage lender/rental company
 - Or other relevant official documentation demonstrating cohabitation

If you are applying because your partner has a job offer in another region you will also have to supply evidence of this in addition to the above.

- If your partner is a healthcare professional, please provide confirmation of training letter, post offer, including start date
- If your partner is not a healthcare professional, please provide official job offer letter or contract, including start date

Matching

Discussion between the donor and acceptor schemes on a potential match should take into account the following:

- Impact on Trainees educational pathway
- Educational needs
- Hospital Logs
- Assessments undertaken/outstanding
- Impact on training schemes
- Logistical issues
- Finance – agreement from Primary Care that donor scheme will continue to fund trainee.
- HR arrangements

Frequently asked questions:

I have an urgent need for IST

In exceptional circumstances or in case of personal emergency please discuss your situation with your GP Programme Director.

Is there an opening or closing date for IST applications?

No there is no application date or closing date. Those wishing to make an application should liaise with their local Programme Director to explore all options before embarking on an IST.

I wanted a post in another region but was unsuccessful, can I apply for IST?

On this basis alone, you will be considered ineligible. You will have to fulfil one of the eligibility criteria listed.

I have found a doctor in another region who is willing to swap with me, can I transfer?

The ICGP plans a separate Inter-Scheme exchange process. The process outlined in this document is not for Inter-Scheme Exchange.

Can I appeal if I am unsuccessful?

If you feel that your application has not been assessed in accordance with published guidelines, you can engage the ICGP Educational Grievance Process.

How long is the process likely to take?

Unfortunately there is no simple answer to this question. There are a number of variables which need to be considered including eligibility, educational plans, potential impact on training for the trainee and for the scheme, logistics, financial arrangements and capacity to facilitate the transfer on another training scheme.

Should I make contact with training Schemes to see if there is a vacancy in another scheme?

Applicants should not make contact with individual schemes. All communication must be made through the Programme Director of their own scheme. The National Director will be advised of your request to transfer. The GP Training Unit will liaise with all training schemes regarding the potential to facilitate a transfer.

Acknowledgements:

NHS Health Education England, Conference of Postgraduate Medical Deans of the United Kingdom

Request for an Inter Scheme Transfer Application Form –Stage 1

Contact Details

Title	
First name	
Last name	
Irish Medical Council Number	
ICGP Ref Number	
Address line 1	
Address line 2	
Address line 3	
Primary Email Address	
Mobile Telephone Number	

Training Programme Details

Name of Scheme	
Year (1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd 4 th)	
Location of Current Post	
Rotations undertaken to-date	Rotation: From: To:
Future scheduled rotations :	
Date of Commencement of Training	
Expected CCST date	

Reason for application

Criterion under which you are making an application

<input type="checkbox"/>	Criterion 1 Disability or Ill Health
<input type="checkbox"/>	Criterion 2: Caring Responsibilities
<input type="checkbox"/>	Criterion 3: Change in committed relationship

Please give details on when and how your personal circumstances changed since appointment	
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Please specify the details of your request	<input type="checkbox"/> ITS to any scheme <input type="checkbox"/> ITS to a specific location. Please indicate below the preferred location and the reason for this
Have you satisfactorily completed all modules of your training to-date	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No (if no please provide details below)
If you answered yes to the above question please provide further details of the assessments completed to date	
Please confirm that you have explored all other possible training options with your Programme Director	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
I confirm that all information provided in this application is accurate and true.	
Applicants Signature	
Date	

For Internal Training Scheme Use:

Date Received: _____ *Date Reviewed:* _____ *Reviewed by:* _____

All alternative possible options discussed with Trainee ☐ Yes ☐ No

Trainee is deemed eligible for IST on the basis of meeting criterion & submission of the correct evidence (please tick below)

☐ **Criterion 1 Disability or Ill Health**
☐ Submission of a statement from a treating physician confirming the trainee's health issue This need not specifically state the health issue but must confirm that geographic relocation is essential to access appropriate treatment.

☐ **Criterion 2: Caring Responsibilities**
☐ Submission of a statement from a treating physician confirming the trainee's role as a primary carer.

☐ **Criterion 3: Change in a committed relationship**
☐ a marriage certificate or civil partnership certificate.
☐ If not yet married/ in a civil partnership, trainees can provide any 2 of the following:
☐ Evidence of shared financial responsibility
(Joint bank account statements, utility bills, joint mortgage/tenancy agreement).
☐ Letter of intent from mortgage lender/rental company
☐ Other relevant official documentation demonstrating cohabitation

Applicant progressed to stage 2 ☐ Yes National Director notified on _____
☐ No Trainee notified on _____

Date: _____ *Signed:* _____

FINAL