



## ICGP Policy on Inter Scheme Exchange.

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**Adopted by PGTC – May 2018**

**Review date: May 2019**

## Inter Scheme Exchange – 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.

The ICGP is committed to assisting and facilitating trainees in achieving Satisfactory Completion of Training. The Inter-Scheme Exchange 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 Exchange (ISE) allows GP specialty trainees, where this is appropriate, to swap their location of training between Irish GP training schemes during their training programme. In an InterScheme Exchange (ISE), there is a requirement to replace the Trainee in the scheme from which the Trainee is moving and both parties must be entering into this arrangement of their own free will and to their mutual benefit.

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 Exchange (ISE). In the first instance, the ICGP encourages agreeable solutions that protect continuity of the training pathway. It is recognised that ISEs may have an adverse effect on continuity of training for trainees and on the stability of the training scheme.

The processes in this policy outline the steps to be undertaken in order to complete an Inter Scheme Exchange. As will be seen from the described processes and examples Inter Scheme Exchange is not without cost to both the educational progress and emotional state of the trainee. The cost-benefit ratio to those involved must always be considered.

**An Exchange is not an entitlement.** The decision on Exchange will be made on the basis of the exchange being mutually beneficial to both parties, that the educational achievement of both parties to date is equivalent and that both parties are in good standing in their progression of training to date. Also taken into account is the disruption to the scheme, and the impact of the transfer on other trainees and trainers in the region.

## Principles of Inter Scheme Exchange

### Principles

1. Each trainee needs to understand the process for Inter Scheme Exchange, 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 ISE.
3. Collect the relevant supporting documents and necessary endorsements as required.
4. Complete the application and present the necessary documentation. The National Director of Training will be advised of your request to an exchange.
5. It is essential that you check that you have completed all parts of your application form and included the relevant evidence of your training achievements to date or you will be considered ineligible.
6. The process must be a national standard process to ensure equality of access with clear criteria on who is likely to be successful in achieving an InterScheme Exchange.
7. The Steering Committee of each of the training schemes agree to the Exchange.

### Inter Scheme Exchange Process.

1. At any point between the completion of the first six months of training and the end of the third year of training a GP Trainee can express an interest to exchange training location. They are termed the initiating trainee. However to avoid an excess administration burden on Scheme staff each trainee is only allowed one formal application to Exchange in their GP training path. GP training resources cannot support multiple applications to exchange location from one trainee. Once the trainee is in their final year of training the educational impact of an exchange outweighs any benefit to the trainee and they must complete their training in their assigned location.
2. The windows through which an application can be lodged are January to June and then July to December. This must be a formal written application to the Programme Director, with the deadline for all submissions being towards the end of the period on a date set by the scheme.
3. The initiating trainee contacts their Programme Director to express an interest in exchanging and indicates which scheme/location to which they would like to move. The initiating trainee can, in advance, approach trainees in other schemes to see if there is likely to be a response, but must not put another trainee under any duress. Discovery of undue pressure by a trainee to a colleague in another scheme invalidates any application to exchange. The report from a trainee to the Scheme/ICGP that they are being pressurised to exchange will be considered to be a disciplinary matter.
4. The Programme Director of the initiating trainee contacts the Programme Director(s) of the desired Scheme/location to request expressions of interest in exchange from responding trainees. Only trainees who have an equivalent achievement of training at the time of the request can be eligible to be responding trainees. RPL trainees can be either initiating trainees or responding trainees so long as their educational achievements can be matched. The window of opportunity to exchange for an RPL trainee is 18 months rather than 30 months due to their credit of training.
5. The exchanging trainees complete and submit their applications. Copies of these applications are sent to the National Director of training.

6. Both Programme Directors will liaise to assess the applications. This assessment must establish
  - a. That both trainees are in good standing for their point of progress in training.
  - b. That the exchanging trainees have similar educational achievements to date.
  - c. That the scheme into which each trainee is exchanging has the resources to accommodate the educational needs of the new trainee.
  - d. If there is an excess of initiating or responding trainees the criteria for IST will determine which trainee gets precedence.
7. The Scheme, in consultation with their steering committees, agree to the exchange. The scheme into which a trainee is exchanging is the scheme with the responsibility for notification of CSCT for that trainee.
8. The ISE 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. If eligible applications are not processed within 6 months the Postgraduate Training Committee will be informed.

#### Decision on ISE:

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.

The InterScheme Exchange is wholly dependent on there being a suitable respondent trainee, who of their own volition is willing to exchange places with an initiating trainee.

Where there is an excess of initiating trainees or responding trainees for a proposed exchange priority is given to applicants criteria which match in description and ranking order the criteria for InterScheme Transfer. These criteria, in order of ranking are:

1. The successful exchanging trainee has a personal health issue which strengthens their case of benefitting by the exchange. In contrast to InterScheme Transfer, for InterScheme Exchange, these responsibilities can be pre-existing conditions which were present at the commencement of training.
2. The successfully exchanging trainee is a career for a person with an illness or a disability which strengthens the case of benefitting by the exchange. This is expected to be a partner, sibling, parent or child. In contrast to InterScheme Transfer, for InterScheme Exchange, these responsibilities can be pre-existing conditions which were present at the commencement of training.
3. The successfully exchanging trainee has a significant committed relationship or family responsibilities which strengthens their case of benefitting by the exchange. In contrast to InterScheme Transfer, for InterScheme Exchange, this can be pre-existing conditions which were present at the commencement of training.

### InterScheme negotiation on exchange.

Discussion between the scheme of the initiating trainee and the scheme of the responding trainee 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:

### **Is there an opening or closing date for ISE applications?**

There is a 30 month window between the middle of the first year and the end of the third year in which any 4 year trainee can make no more than one application for an InterScheme Exchange. This is an 18 month window for trainees who have been credited with RPL. Those wishing to make an application should liaise with their local Programme Director to explore all options before embarking on an ISE.

### **I wanted a post in another region but was unsuccessful, can I apply for ISE?**

You can apply once you have been in training for a minimum of six months in your designated post. However, success in the application is wholly dependant on there being a willing respondent who wishes to exchange into your training scheme and that you are the exchanging trainee with the strongest case. Once you have a year or less expected to complete in GP training, the disruptive effects of a transfer outweigh the benefits and the opportunity to exchange is no longer present.

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

So long as there is no undue pressure placed on a colleague in another scheme to transfer, you can then approach your Programme Director and apply for an ISE. Any report from a trainee that they are being put under duress to exchange invalidates that exchange and is considered a disciplinary matter.

### **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?**

The process for ISE depends on a number of variables which need to be considered including eligibility, educational achievements, and 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?**

All communication must be made through the Programme Director of their own scheme.

**Appendix 1: Request for an Inter Scheme Exchange 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	
<b>Training Programme Details</b>	
Name of Scheme	
Year (1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> 4 <sup>th</sup> )	
Location of Current Post	
Rotations undertaken to-date	Rotation: From: To:
Future scheduled rotations :	
Date of Commencement of Training	
Expected CCST date	



Please specify the details of your request	<input type="checkbox"/> ISE to a specific location. Please indicate below.
<p>Please note that whether there are multiple applications preference will be given to applicants that meet following criteria below</p> <p>Criterion 1 Disability or Ill Health</p> <p>Criterion 2: Caring Responsibilities</p> <p>Criterion 3: Change in committed relationship</p>	<p>Please indicate if your application meets one of the criteria</p> <p>Yes <span style="margin-left: 100px;">No</span></p> <p>If Yes please indicate the criterion under your application meets:</p>
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.	
<b>Applicants Signature</b>	
Date	
<b>For Internal Training Scheme Use:</b>	
<p><i>Date Received:</i> <span style="margin-left: 150px;"><i>Date Reviewed:</i></span> <span style="margin-left: 100px;"><i>Reviewed by:</i></span></p> <p><i>All alternative possible options discussed with Trainee</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	
<p><i>Applicant progressed to stage 2</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes National Director notified on _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No Trainee notified on _____</p> <p><i>Date:</i> <span style="margin-left: 150px;"><i>Signed:</i></span></p>	
<p><b>Application for IST - Stage 2 Process – to be completed by GP Training Unit</b></p> <p><i>Application process within 6 months</i></p> <p><i>If No, PGTC notified on</i></p>	<p>ICGP Reference No.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>

### **Stage 3 – Discussion between schemes**

**Acceptor Scheme has one suitable responding trainee, continue as follows.**

**If there is more than one suitable responding trainee, please use the ISE multiple application form.** Discussion between donor and acceptor schemes on potential match taking into account the following:

Impact on Trainees educational pathway

Educational Needs

Impact on training schemes (trainees/trainers)

Logistical issues

Assessments undertaken/outstanding

Finance – agreement from Primary Care that donor scheme will continue to fund trainee.

HR arrangements

#### **Outcome**

#### **Steering Committee sanction exchange**

Trainee offered post in acceptor scheme

Trainee outcome

☐ Yes ☐ No

☐ Yes ☐ No

Accepted post ☐ rejected post ☐

## Document History

Document developed in November 2017

Feedback and document reviewed by NCCT – April 2018

Adopted by PGTC – May 2018

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