

STEP ON STEP OFF TRAINING (SST); DEFERRED ENTRY GPST; WIDENING OUT OF PROGRAMME (OOP).

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

Q1. When is it best for me to apply for GP if I am taking a year out of my training?

A1. The range of options for step on step off training including deferment now make it easier for trainees to take time out of the training programme.

Trainees should apply for GP training at the usual stage when they are eligible. If appointed through the GP selection process they can take time out of programme before they start the GP training programme (*see guidance under SST Option 1- deferred start*) by requesting a deferment. The deferment option has to be declared within two weeks of acceptance of the GP specialty training programme offer.

GPST training may be deferred for a maximum of one year only to facilitate early options for Step on Step off Training (SST) in General Practice, subject to approval by the Postgraduate Dean. Applications for deferment must be made within two weeks of acceptance of the GPST programme offer.

If a trainee wants to take time out once the training programme has started they can apply for a range of out of programme options *under SST options 2.1 – 2.2*. Time out under SST can be taken any after completing six months in ST1 and is subject to making satisfactory progress in the programme.

Time out for SST would not normally be given in ST3 as it may have a negative impact on educational progress in the final year of training. That does not prevent time out for SST being taken between the end of ST2 and before the start of ST3 (*SST option 2.2*).

Q2. Do I need a reference from my year out for my GP application?

A2. No because the time out is taken as part of the GP training programme once you have been successful in your application.

Q3. Can I take more than a year out?

A3. No, the maximum amount of time out of programme for SST is limited to a maximum of one calendar year and would normally be for a minimum of three months.

Q4. Can I take only 6 months out?

A4. Yes – the minimum time would normally be three months up to a maximum of twelve months. See above

Q5. Do I have to do something medical?

A5. Not necessarily, but none medical placements are classified as out of programme career breaks OOP(C)

Q6. Does it matter where I work as a doctor in my year out?

A6.No, but applicants are advised that if the experience is to contribute to training and a CCT in general practice then prior approval is required from the GMC and RCGP. Please refer to the guidance on SST options.

Q7. Can use the SST option more than once in my GP training?

A7. No, the options are only available once in the GP specialty training programme. For example if you choose to defer the start of your GP specialty training programme by six months only, you would not normally be permitted to take a second SST option for a further six months out of programme (OOP) break later in your training programme.

Q8. Will my programme be changed if I defer the start of my training under SST?

A8. Not necessarily, applicants who defer will return to the specific preferred programme they accepted subject to capacity. Programmes will be managed locally and would map to the original programme as far as practically possible. However, the programme posts may need to be adjusted to ensure that the programme meets the balanced curriculum requirement set by the GMC. The programme is extended by the duration of the time out of programme and the return to programme date should be aligned to start and end dates of posts.

Q9. If I elect to use any of the SST options do I need to complete an out of programme application (OOP)?

A9. Yes, an OOP application will need to be completed and submitted to the local office. If it is part of an agreed SST option the OOP application should be supported by the training programme director.

Q10. What are the different out of programme options?

A10. These are currently defined in the Gold Guide (version 5) section 6.75.

Glossary:

Out of Programme	OOP
OOP for training	OOPT
OOP for research	OOPR
OOP for experience	OOPE
OOP for career break	OOPC

Streams for Step on Step off/OOP must meet criteria 2.1 or 2.2 to include:

- Clinical Fellowships and standalone academic opportunities – OOPE/OOPT /OOPR (OOPT, and also OOPR if it is to count towards training, require prospective approval from GMC & RCGP)

- Clinical experience in other specialties - OOPE
- *Clinical experience in other specialties (as above) might be used to widen the scope of practice and enhance post CCT career opportunities.*
- Clinical SST options related to GPST could be OOPT * requires prospective approval from GMC & RCGP for OOPT
- Non-clinical SST options – OOPC (as currently detailed in the Gold Guide 6.75)

Q. 11 Can I apply for a transfer (Inter Deanery/LETB transfer – IDT) if I use any of the SST options?

A11. The criteria for IDT are set out in the Gold Guide and transfers are not normally allowed until trainees have completed 12 months of the specialty training programme and made satisfactory progress (so have an outcome 1 ARCP at the point of transfer). Therefore, IDT applications that meet the criteria after 12 months in programme can be considered. So an OOP option under SST taken between ST1 and ST2 or part way through ST2 should not exclude applicants for IDTs provided the criteria for transfer are met.

Trainees who elect to defer the start of the training programme do not meet the criteria for an IDT as they have not completed the minimum requirement of twelve months in programme.

Q. 12 Can I ask for my deferral to extended from 6 -12 months after the initial request for 6 months has been approved?

A12. If after approval of your request for a 6 month deferral your circumstances change, you should contact the relevant region to explain your situation and request an extension. Approval for this will depend on capacity within the region and you cannot be guaranteed to get the programme initially offered.

Any request to extend deferral period should be submitted 3 months before the start date. Requests submitted less than 3 months before the due start date will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

Q.13 If I have had a deferral for 12 months approved and wish to change to 6 months am I able to do this?

A13. If after approval of your request for a 12 month deferral your circumstances change, you should contact the relevant region to explain your situation and request a reduction in deferral period. Approval for this will depend on capacity within the region and you cannot be guaranteed to get the programme initially offered.