

The Training Extension

Why was the extension only announced once Scottish dental schools announced that there would be no graduates this year if it is a clinical activity issue on the VDPs part?

Our approach here has been looking at the whole system i.e. the undergraduate/postgraduate continuum. The offer of a contract extension was announced simultaneously with the announcement regarding delayed progression of undergraduate students.

Why are Scotland extending when VTs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are not? Why was it not decided to take a 4-nation approach on this matter?

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on dentistry in all parts of the UK has been severe. Some parts of the UK and some sectors have been more affected than others by the pandemic. Accordingly, the approach taken by individual countries will vary taking into account local circumstances.

Why was it appropriate for the previous VDPs to graduate, if you are saying that we're in a better position than them, and it isn't appropriate for us to get satisfactory completion?

Perhaps something has been misunderstood within the webinar? The current cohort of VDPs are, on average, undertaking between 20% and 25% of the treatment numbers experienced in previous years, and as such have had significantly less opportunity to develop clinical skills.

Will this extra year count towards the repayment of the bursary taken at university?

Yes. The posts are all based in NHS Scotland and therefore will count as a full 12 months towards meeting the terms of repayment of the bursary.

Annual Leave

What will happen with holidays, will these refresh as of August 2020? And how many days will we get?

The extension to the contract will include provision for additional annual leave. For the period 1st August 2021 to 31st July 2022, the entitlement will be 20 days, plus 8 public holidays.

Could you clear up annual leave? Do they reset in August and dependent on the practice we work at could be carried over?

The extension to the contract will include provision for additional annual leave. For the period 1st August 2021 to 31st July 2022, the entitlement will be 20 days, plus 8 public holidays

Do we get extra annual leave and can we bring forward our annual leave from 2020/2021 to 2021/2022?

For the training period 1st August 2021 to 31st July 2022, you will be entitled to annual leave as detailed in the contract. In terms of carry over, this would be a matter between you and your employing practice. It would be important for the practice to recognise reasonable requests from the VDP, while at the same time the VDP should be respectful of the business needs of the practice.

Are we able to carry any unused annual leave days forward onto the new training year, or would this be at the discretion of our practice?

This would be a matter between you and your employing practice. It would be important for the practice to recognise reasonable requests from the VDP, while at the same time the VDP should be respectful of the business needs of the practice.

Study Days and Assessments

What will be happening with study days? Will we be expected to be in practice if there are not study days?

Additional study days will be arranged by the scheme adviser, although it is unlikely that there would be as many in the current year. Your contracted hours will remain 35 per week, so on those days when you would normally have a study day, you will either work in the practice, or undertake additional training activities.

What about the PAQs, will this happen in the extension year?

Yes, that's the intention. We hope to arrange PAQs for Autumn 2021, at which time restrictions applied to practice should be eased considerably. At the same time, this would allow ample opportunity for a second round of PAQs, should a VDP require this.

Why do we need at least 36 more LEPs? If we already exceed the minimum number of LEPs and pass them all satisfactorily?

LEPs are an assessment tool which assess clinical and other skills longitudinally and will be important in determining NRP outcomes. Where a VDP is performing well at one point in training, it's important to ensure that such a level of performance is maintained for the whole of the training period.

Usually we get less study days in summer and are able to take time off on holiday days including study days, however as we have not had as many study days during winter will we be required to catch up this summer? Will study days continue next year?

Additional study days will be arranged by your adviser. It is likely that there will be fewer in the period August 2021 to July 2022, and additional activities will be provided to occupy the remaining days on which a study day would normally have taken place.

Will the deadlines for Aplan milestone cases be pushed forward for year 1 and are we required to do separate cases for year 2?

NES has arranged an extension of current licences so that milestone deadlines can be extended and can retain access until September. There would not be additional cases required beyond milestone 3.

Will the LEP blocks be the same for year 2?

It's important to maintain evaluation of performance throughout training, and we plan 3 further blocks of 12 LEPs in the training period. Dates will be circulated when finalised.

Would there be additional Aplan cases in the next year?

NES has arranged an extension of current licences so that milestone deadlines can be extended and can retain access until September. There would not be additional cases required beyond milestone 3.

Will we be continuing to have study days? The sessions that were carried out online for practical sessions were inappropriate and should be repeated in person.

Additional study days will be arranged by your adviser. It is likely that there will be fewer in the period August 2021 to July 2022, and additional activities will be provided to occupy the remaining days on which a study day would normally have taken place.

Can we source out our own education for study days, for example, spend a day in a Paeds clinic etc?

Your adviser will arrange study days, and these are provided for the whole scheme, rather than individually. It may be possible to arrange educational events on an individual basis through your trainer, perhaps using protected tutorial time.

Progression beyond VT

Will we be able to get a completion certificate of 12 months experience in order to sit for MFDS 2 before September?

To be eligible to enter the MFDS Part 2 examination, candidates must provide evidence of completion of 12 months' experience in clinical dentistry obtained before the closing date for entry. The closing date for application for the November 2021 diet of MFDS Part 2 is 12 September 2021. On the basis that you commenced your training post on 1 September 2020 you will satisfy the eligibility criteria provided you remain in post until at least 31 August 2021. The Postgraduate Dental Dean will be happy to make arrangements for appropriate countersigning of the application form.

Can we take days as study leave when they don't fall on a study day? E.g. for MFDS exam

There is no automatic entitlement to study leave within VT. However, in the past when VDPs have sought time off for study, most trainers have been supportive. This would be a matter for discussion between the VDP and training practice.

For those who carried out MFDS part 1 last year, are we now eligible to sit part 2 in February 2022?

To be eligible to enter the MFDS Part 2 examination, candidates must provide evidence of completion of 12 months' experience in clinical dentistry obtained before the closing date for entry. The closing date for application for the November 2021 diet of MFDS Part 2 is 12 September 2021. On the basis that you commenced your training post on 1 September 2020 you will satisfy the eligibility criteria provided you remain in post until at least 31 August 2021. The Postgraduate Dental Dean will be happy to make arrangements for appropriate countersigning of the application form.

Clinical activity

Can we take up private dental work to supplement our income?

No. Your contract clearly stipulates the maximum level of private work which should be undertaken within your contracted hours, and also states that you should not undertake any work normally undertaken by a dentist out with your contracted hours. Your hours have been deliberately restricted to 35 per week so that you have sufficient time to assimilate new knowledge and experiences.

Not during VT hours. Private work, separately.

This question isn't entirely clear, but perhaps it relates to the provision of private work out with VT hours. Your contract clearly stipulates the maximum level of private work which should be undertaken within your contracted hours, and also states that you should not undertake any work normally undertaken by a dentist out with your contracted hours. Your hours have been deliberately restricted to 35 per week so that you have sufficient time to assimilate new knowledge and experiences.

Can we undertake course out with working hours e.g. Botox, fillers courses?

It is permissible for VDPs to attend additional educational events, out with contracted hours and at their own expense. In terms of the specific topics listed, Vocational Training is intended to prepare you for safe, independent delivery of NHS dental care, and I would suggest that your training time will be fully required to develop those skills. The practice of Botox or dermal fillers within your training would not be permitted, and I would suggest that these courses be delayed until after the end of your training, when you may have opportunities to practice the skills learned.

Are we still only be allowed to 10% of private work?

Yes. This is stipulated in your contract (Appendix 1A)

Portfolio

Would we have to continue reflections on Turas?

Yes. Reflections are crucial to your progress through training and an important skill for your professional life. Rather than see reflection as an obligation imposed on you, I would suggest that you try to view reflection as an integral part of being a dentist.

How many reflections should we be doing? Everyone in my area has been told different numbers; weekly, fortnightly, monthly and even 2 per week.

Each scheme adviser will determine this for their scheme and will guide you on the numbers expected. I would stress that reflection should not be viewed as an obligation imposed by VT, but a habit to be developed and maintained for the whole of your professional career.

Delivery of training

Will tutorials continue into next year?

Yes. There may be opportunities to vary the nature and type of tutorials delivered, as across the training period we will have double the number, but protected time between you and your trainer to discuss issues and receive bespoke guidance will remain. During the webinar, as one example, we discussed the possibility of such activities as a visit to a local specialist practice or clinic being used as an alternative to the traditional tutorial topics.

Satisfactory Completion of training

Is there going to be a review of the extension in December 2021?

The National Review Panel will be arranged at intervals throughout the year, as required.

Circumstance pending, why are all VTs categorised into one rule for all, some are obtaining more clinical experience than others?

Levels of clinical experience vary depending on regional restrictions and practice circumstances in relation to managing patient care. Where a VDP is gaining less clinical experience, they should be

developing other skills. The feedback received from advisers up to this point would suggest that none of the current VDPs will be ready for completion in July 2021.

What will be included in the periodic review for early completion of VT?

The requirements of National Review Panel will be the same regardless of the timing of review. These would have been outlined at induction, but details can be obtained if required from your adviser.

Can we achieve Satisfactory Completion and finish VT earlier than 31 July 2022 if we have completed all the necessary assessment?

Yes, this would be possible. It is important to stress, though, that satisfactory completion is not simply about assessments, and the single most important consideration is acquiring sufficient clinical experience in a supervised environment to provide safe patient care independently. The feedback received from advisers up to this point would suggest that none of the current VDPs will be ready for completion in July 2021.

What if VT trainers feel their trainees are on path to satisfactory completion by July?

The feedback received from advisers up to this point would suggest that none of the current VDPs will be ready for completion in July 2021. It is important to stress that satisfactory completion is not simply about assessments, and the single most important consideration is acquiring sufficient clinical experience in a supervised environment to provide safe patient care independently.

What happens when satisfactory completion has been completed prior to 24 months (July 2022), will there be a time when VT are allowed to finish earlier than proposed?

Yes, this would be possible. It is important to stress, though, that satisfactory completion is not simply about assessments, and the single most important consideration is acquiring sufficient clinical experience in a supervised environment to provide safe patient care independently. The feedback received from advisers up to this point would suggest that none of the current VDPs will be ready for completion in July 2021. It is also important to recognise that the job market at the moment is particularly challenging, and the offer of contract extension provides a period of job security, as well as a protected environment in which to develop clinical skills.

Is there a timeframe on when you can apply for satisfactory completion, if your trainer thinks you are competent?

If a trainer and adviser feel that a VDP has attained the standards for Satisfactory Completion prior to the Summer of 2022, then DAU will be alerted, and an NRP convened. I would stress that this would be at the instigation of trainer and adviser, and that a VDP would not independently apply for Satisfactory Completion. I would also stress that I have received feedback within the last week from the majority of advisers, indicating that NONE of the VDPs in their schemes will be ready to complete in July 2021.

VDPs in difficulty

How do you plan on combating the mental stress toll this will have on those affected? This can lead to depression for some .

There is a range of resources available and we can provide appropriate sign posting.

What if the practice you are currently working in is a poor experience for you?

This should be flagged to your adviser, in the first instance, who would work with you to address concerns, and take appropriate action or seek further advice as required.

What are the options if people cannot complete another year due to personal circumstances?

If a trainee feels that they are unable to complete another year as a result of personal circumstances they should discuss the situation with their VT adviser in the first instance.

General

When will Lothian VTs be able to administer COVID vaccine?

Delivery of the vaccination programme is decided at individual territorial health board level and is out with the remit of NHS Education for Scotland. If you are interested in participating in delivery of the vaccination programme you should contact the relevant territorial health board.