



European Academy of Teachers in General Practice/Family Medicine (EURACT)

**EURACT Statement on Hospital Posts used for
Training in General Practice / Family Medicine**

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This statement was drawn up by the Specialist Training Committee of EURACT and approved by the EURACT Council. The following members of the Specialist Training Committee were involved in the preparation of the document: Katarina Stavric (Macedonia) - chair, Alma Eir Svavarsdottir (Iceland), Eva De Fine Licht (Sweden), Jan Degryse (Belgium), Dolores Fores (Spain), Inguna Locmele (Latvia), Roar Maagaard (Denmark), Brendan O'Shea (Ireland), Roger Price (United Kingdom), Llukan Rrumbullaku (Albania), Mario R Sammut (Malta), Darach O'Ciardha (Ireland), Peter Prydz (Norway).

This statement is intended to provide guidance that is applicable throughout Europe with regard to the training that trainees in General Practice / Family Medicine (GP/FM) receive in the hospital setting and from hospital-based specialists. It is not intended to be a detailed description of the content of training as this will be, of necessity, context specific and will depend very much on the tasks that GP/FM doctors are expected to undertake in different countries. There are however some key principles of such training, and its organisation, which are applicable universally. EURACT is the network organisation for education of WONCA Europe, the European Society of General Practice/Family Medicine. This document has been produced by a working party of EURACT Council.

Introduction

Training for GP/FM should primarily take place in the GP/FM setting, where the trainee encounters patients who are representative of GP/FM practice populations.

However, GP/FM trainees also need to acquire specific competencies that in most countries are most easily obtained in the hospital setting. These competencies are typically grouped in two categories:

- management of patients and conditions that are less frequently seen in GP/FM, but where it is essential that the GP/FM trainee is competent with regard to diagnosis, prognosis and appropriate treatment and investigation;
- development of skills and attitudes necessary to cooperate as future GP/FM practitioners with hospital specialists in the diagnosis and treatment of patients requiring combined care.

Based on the European relativities it is necessary to set down principles that ensure that training in the hospital setting is of the required quality and relevance for future general practitioners.

Key Principles

In selecting hospital posts for GP/FM training, national authorities should pay particular regard to the following:

General context

- The GP/FM trainee is a qualified licensed doctor who can operate autonomously under appropriate supervision and provide a significant resource for the service.
- All trainees should be exposed to continuous and coordinated care of patients involving multiple disciplines.
- Training programmes for GP/FM trainees in hospital should be regarded as of equal importance to those for specialty trainees within hospital-based specialties. GP/FM trainees should be afforded parity of esteem with other specialty trainees. GP/FM trainees are expected to contribute effectively and adhere to dynamics within their service.

Educational context

- All posts should have written educational aims, and a teaching programme based on those produced by Colleges or other representative GP/FM authorities where available.
- All trainees should be assigned to a hospital specialist teacher as the clinical supervisor responsible for each hospital training post.
- All hospital specialist teachers should be adequately prepared for their task, and should be accredited as teachers by appropriate education and evaluation.
- All trainees should have a named educational supervisor, responsible for their educational programme. Whenever possible this supervisor should be a GP/FM teacher.
- All posts should have protected teaching time, with contact with GP/FM maintained by a GP/FM release programme or with sessions in GP/FM.
- All posts should have an appropriate clinical content for GP/FM training with the correct balance between service and education needs. Particular attention should be paid to ambulatory patient experience. There should be the necessary clinical support services available.
- All hospitals providing GP/FM training should have access to adequate postgraduate library and education facilities - including relevant booklets, journals and other information sources.
- All trainees should have regular formative assessment of their educational needs leading to the development of an educational plan which is subject to periodic and regular review.
- At the end of each period of specialty based training there should be an educational appraisal of continuing learning needs which should be passed to the trainee.

Selection and reselection of hospital posts

- Supervising authorities should focus on the achievement of educational aims as markers of quality when selecting and reselecting posts and hospitals for GP/FM training.
- Selection and regular reselection should be informed by periodic inspection visits by independent assessors.
- Educational audit should play a role in the (re)selection of hospital posts

Conclusion

Hospital-based training of GP/FM trainees has been an invaluable resource to date. To ensure that hospital posts remain relevant to GP/FM training in this changing environment, hospital teachers, programme directors and relevant stake-holders are urged to engage pro-actively with the principles as outlined above.