

ECF Deferral, Transfer and Withdrawal Policy

Responsibility:	ECF Programme Director	Date doc. Created	March 2023
Print name sign off:	Director Quality & Compliance	Last review date of doc.	March 2026
Signature:	Chris Garcia	Next review date	March 2027

Introduction

This policy sets out the requirements and process for requesting a deferral to the ECF (Early Career Framework) programme. It is for all ECF participants who commenced one of the reformed ECFs (Early Career Framework) from September (Autumn) 2021.

1. Deferral

Deferrals are for participants who have started a programme, have not yet reached completion, and would like to defer the remainder of the programme until a later date.

Participants can request a deferral when they believe that they will be unable to complete their programme within the given timeframe. Deferrals over thirty days must be agreed by the Appropriate Body.

Reasons for deferral will include but are not limited to:

- Long-term sickness
- Birth-related leave
- Bereavement
- Change in personal and/or school circumstances
- Capacity / school workload

Participants who defer their programme will be permitted to re-engage at a date which is agreed in conjunction with the ECF Candidate Support Team.

By requesting a deferral, participants agree to immediately pause their access to course content and events. When re-engaging:

- Completed learning modules will be retained

- Incomplete modules will need to be completed.
- For information about Programme Flexibility or Sequencing please refer to the [Non-Standard ECT \(Early Career Teacher\) Policy](#). Following being contacted regarding re-engagement, participants are permitted to extend their deferral if their circumstances are not yet suited to recommencing learning. **This will also require the approval of the Appropriate Body**

1.1 All Deferrals from April 2025

Deferred participants must rejoin the next available intake.

The final deadline to return is the last viable intake of the current framework (**Cohort 4, Summer 2025 Intake with an expected programme end date of March 2027**).

No deferrals will be permitted in Spring Term 2027 of the framework under any circumstance.

Participants who have not returned from deferral by the framework deadline will be withdrawn. Their position in the programme and any related funding will be transferred to the lead delivery partner they select to complete their ECF programme with.

- If a participant cannot complete the programme with BPN, considering the timeframe we recommend that they withdraw from the programme and transfer to an ECTP lead provider.
- If a participant is already deferred with BPN and wishes to re-engage but the timeframe will not accommodate their programme end date, we would recommend they withdraw from the BPN programme and engage with another lead provider on the ECTP.

1.2 Programme Access During Deferral

By requesting a deferral, participants agree to immediately pause their access to course content and events. When re-engaging participants will join the most appropriate intake.

Completed learning modules will be retained and learning will commence from the subsequent module.

A mentor losing an ECT may, if they choose to continue on the programme. If they choose to remain on the programme, they will lose the ability to return or continue future training when supporting a new ECT.

1.3 Automatic Withdrawal Risk

Critical: If a deferred participant does not re-engage on the date agreed, they are at risk of being automatically withdrawn from the programme. This would result in:

- Need to reply for an ECF programme with another provider and check eligibility at the time of application.
- If a participant has not actively engaged in the programme or the equivalent of 2 terms, then they may be at risk of being withdrawn from the programme.

1.4 Requesting a Deferral

Participants wishing to request a deferral will need to contact Best Practice Network by emailing ECF@bestpracticenet.co.uk.

Deferrals to the ECF programme must be approved by the Appropriate Body.

The participant will then be informed by email if their request has been accepted, or if any further clarification is required. All sensitive and personal data will be treated in accordance with data protection guidelines - <https://www.bestpracticenet.co.uk/privacy-notice>.

1.5 Application Process

- After receiving a deferral request from a participant, an online form will be sent to them. The participant must then complete and submit the form, providing:
- The exceptional circumstances requiring deferral
- Supporting evidence where applicable
- The date when they wish to return

1.6 Assessment and Approval

The participant will then be informed by email if their request has been accepted, or if any further clarification is required.

All sensitive and personal data will be treated in accordance with data protection guidelines- <https://www.bestpracticenet.co.uk/privacy-notice>.

2. Re-engagement

2.1 Return Process

The participant will be contacted prior to the chosen re-engagement date with information about the intake they will be joining.

The participants will be placed in the group that is most appropriate for their progress and will re-engage with the ECF programme at the module that group has reached. However, **please note that the latest intake/group that we are able to offer is Summer 2025.**

2.2 Confirmation Requirement

In preparation for workforce planning related to re-engagement, our team will contact participants prior to the course resuming following a deferral period. To prevent an automatic withdrawal (as set out on 1.3), participants are advised to respond to the correspondence to confirm their return to the programme on the agreed date.

2.3 Face-to-Face/Online Training Events

Participants will attend the next associated module training event according to their programme schedule.

2.4 Record Keeping

Agreed re-engagement dates are based on individual circumstances. We encourage participants to retain a copy of their deferral request form and any correspondence regarding their re-engagement dates, so it is clear when they are expected to return to the programme. **Please note that the latest intake/group that we are able to offer is Summer 2025.**

3. ECTs Transitional Arrangements

Where an ECT changes from a school-led ECF based induction to the BPN led induction, we will, where feasible, work with both the old and new school to help tailor their programme to the ECTs learning requirements.

As part of this process Best Practice Network will consider how long the ECT has left to serve on their induction period and the resources required to meet ECT's needs. We will also consider how best to support the mentor in these circumstances and tailor the package in consultation with the new school.

When an ECT moves and joins a school that is working with another Lead Provider, (or a school decides to change lead provider part-way through) where possible, the ECT should continue on their existing programme. If this is not feasible, BPN will work with the other Lead Provider to make arrangements to accommodate the ECT.

If the participant is due to complete their training after 31st July 2027, they will need to resume their training with another Lead Provider. It is the role of the school to find an alternate Lead Provider. Once the transfer has been completed, we will contact the DfE to report that the participant has withdrawn from our training.

If the ECT moves to a school delivering their own ECF programme, or a school decides to change Lead Provider, they will lose access to the materials linked to the funded induction programme but will still be able to access the free, accredited materials produced by DfE.

4. Withdrawal:

If a participant informs us that they wish to withdraw from the programme all efforts of support will be put into place. If the participant is still wishing then to withdraw the participant will have access to their learning platforms for 30 working days.