



## Absence Policy

### Notification of absence

The contact for all matters to do with absence is in the first instance your Hub Administrator.

Primary Bury Hub: Caroline Abraham: [cabraham@ctsnscitt.org](mailto:cabraham@ctsnscitt.org)

Primary Cambridge Hub: Lucy Murray: [lmurray@ctsnscitt.org](mailto:lmurray@ctsnscitt.org)

Secondary Bury Hub: Beata Gibson: [bgibson@ctsnscitt.org](mailto:bgibson@ctsnscitt.org)

Secondary Cambridge Hub: Catherine Patmore: [bgibson@ctsnscitt.org](mailto:bgibson@ctsnscitt.org)

The Hub Administrator will consult with the Senior Tutor as and when appropriate.

A trainee will, before the course commences, provide the contact details for a named representative who will contact, or can be contacted by, the SCITT, in relation to the trainee's absence from the course.

A trainee will notify CTSN SCITT of any absences from the course, whether the absence relates to school placement or central studies, no later than 7.30am on the first day of any period of absence. If CTSN SCITT has not been informed of an absence, CTSN SCITT will contact the named representative to confirm the safety of the trainee and ascertain why he/she is not in attendance.

If after ten working days CTSN SCITT is unable to contact the trainee or the named representative, CTSN SCITT will invoke a suspension of studies, informing Student Finance England (SFE) through a Change of Circumstances (CoC) submission should one be required. This may have an impact on any maintenance loans and bursaries that have been arranged. If there is no contact in the following ten working days, the trainee will be deemed to have withdrawn from the course and the relevant authorities will be informed.

### Sickness absence

#### Self-certificated absence

For absences of five days or less, a trainee will be required to complete the self-certification of absence form obtainable from CTSN SCITT.

There is a limit for self-certification of six days within the course as a whole.

#### Medically statemented sickness

If a trainee is absent for more than five days, a medical certificate or statement signed by a doctor must be sent to CTSN SCITT as soon as practicable.

If the trainee remains ill when the note expires, further medical evidence will be required.

If the absence continues for a prolonged period (more than 15 working days) or a date for the return to study exceeds 15 working days from the beginning of the absence, CTSN SCITT will notify the trainee in writing that it is suspending the trainee's study from that 15-day point. If the trainee is in

receipt of finance from Student Finance England (SFE) a Change of Circumstances form (COC) will be submitted to SFE by CTSN SCITT suspending studies on medical grounds effective from that date.

If a trainee is subject to an ongoing illness / condition such as depression, arthritis, unstable diabetes or asthma, the trainee should submit a form for mitigation together with a medical certificate which explains the extent of the illness / condition and the likely effect on their progress through the course before the 15 working day deadline (see Appendix B). The situation will be considered by CTSN SCITT to determine whether the trainee should be considered for deferral on medical grounds.

CTSN SCITT uses occupational health (OH) referrals to support the well-being of our trainees. The referral allows us to obtain expert medical opinion or advice about health and/or disability issues that may be having an impact on a trainee's work. Typically, OH referrals will be made where a trainee's health or disability is having an effect on performance; and/or there are issues in relation to attendance levels.

Generally occupational health referrals are made in order to help the trainee return to the course on a sustained basis with appropriate support. The occupational health provider will be able to advise whether a trainee is:

- fit to undertake the course;
- fit to undertake the course with adjustments; or
- not fit to undertake the course.

Some cases or medical conditions may need to be treated differently, eg terminal illnesses, information on which is contained in Appendix E.

### Convalescence

The nature of the course does not easily allow for light duties or other ways of reducing the workload. However, CTSN SCITT will ensure that on return to the course a trainee has a few days' respite to become fully fit before carrying out important assessments.

A trainee returning to work after an extended period of absence may be required to submit to a medical examination by Occupational Health professionals to determine whether and what staged return to work should be implemented.

### Return to work

Senior Tutors are expected to maintain regular contact with trainees who are absent. It is important to the SCITT that trainees who are absent do not feel isolated or out of touch. It is also important that the Senior Tutor / Hub Lead sets aside time to talk to the trainee who is returning from a period of sickness. The return-to-work meeting should take place irrespective of the length of the absence and should include some or all of the following (see Appendix C):

- welcome the employee back;
- provide the opportunity to update the trainee on any changes that may have taken place in their absence;
- ensure that it is appropriate for the trainee to return to school / training;
- consider any advice provided by the GP on the medical certificate;
- help to identify any issues at home or in the school that may be impacting on the trainee's health and well-being, or their attendance on the course;
- agree the work to be carried out and any priorities for the trainee's return.

## Maternity leave

The nature of this one-year course means maternity leave as such is not available but CTSN SCITT will aim to exercise what flexibility is possible within the course structure to enable the trainee to achieve QTS. The length of absence anticipated means that the course will have to be extended into another year providing there is no substantial change in the requirements for QTS anticipated. A trainee who becomes pregnant after being offered a place or during the first half term of the course can apply to have the course deferred for one year only, subject to there being no substantial change to the requirements for QTS during the deferment. Any trainee requesting maternity leave must complete the course within six terms. One of those terms must be the final term of an academic year. There may be some implications for a trainee receiving finance from Student Finance England (SFE).

The preferred plan is for a trainee to return in the second year two weeks before the anniversary of the date of commencement of maternity leave.

The trainee should notify CTSN SCITT as soon as is practicable but not later than 14 weeks (unless there is good cause) before the expected week of childbirth (EWC) that she wishes to be absent for maternity.

Absence on account of illness which is attributable to the pregnancy, including absence on account of miscarriage, and which occurs outside the period of absence for maternity, shall be treated as ordinary sickness absence and shall be subject to the conditions normally governing such leave, provided it is covered by a doctor's statement.

Maternity leave should not normally be taken earlier than 11 weeks before the EWC.

When maternity leave begins, CTSN SCITT will write to the trainee to formally suspend the trainee's studies, informing the SFE through a CoC where required and record the trainee as dormant on the Single Central Record.

The trainee will inform CTSN SCITT of the date of birth of the child.

The trainee may not return to study less than two weeks after the birth of the child. Thereafter, the trainee should discuss with CTSN SCITT when she intends to return to study and a timeframe for the completion of the course be agreed.

Where a trainee does not make contact with CTSN SCITT, it may write to the trainee no earlier than 21 days before the anniversary of the commencement of maternity leave, asking her to confirm the date of birth and her intention to return to work. The trainee or her representative must respond within 14 days of receiving the request. If there is no response, CTSN SCITT will withdraw the trainee from the course.

If requiring student finance, the trainee will need to apply for finance (as a returning student repeating Year 1) for the second academic year. At the beginning of the first term, the trainee will continue to have her studies suspended and SFE informed through a CoC. A further CoC will be completed when the trainee returns to the course.

For a trainee paying fees through an SFE loan, the fee structure means that the trainee must be present in Term 3 of one of the years in question. If that is not the case, CTSN SCITT has the right to request 25% of the total tuition fees direct from the trainee.

## Paternity leave

The nature of this one-year course means paternity leave as such is not available but CTSN SCITT will aim to exercise what flexibility is possible to allow a short period of absence within the course structure to enable the trainee to achieve QTS. If the length of absence anticipated is significant, the course is likely to have to be extended into a second year for which there may be financial implications. See compassionate leave below.

## Medical appointments

A trainee should inform CTSN SCITT of any appointments for which he/she needs to take leave, being prepared to offer further evidence if requested. The difficulty of obtaining GP and hospital appointments is acknowledged and these will be honoured wherever possible though a trainee should attempt to ensure follow up appointments do not impact unnecessarily on attendance on the course.

Other routine medical appointments should not be made during the working day.

## Leave of absence

Leave of absence for other reasons may be granted by the Senior Tutor acting on behalf of CTSN SCITT. The Senior Tutor will inform the Hub Administrator so up-to-date attendance records can be kept.

For absences longer than two consecutive days, or for a cumulative total of more than five days, the request will require the additional approval of the Hub Lead. It is expected that an application will be made for leave of absence, in writing, using the agreed proforma, at least two working days before the absence occurs.

In the case of absence included in private and personal or compassionate categories, a completed proforma should be submitted to CTSN SCITT on the return to study.

The following outlines the rationale for decisions relating to common requests for leave of absence. They should not be seen as an exhaustive list but serve as an indication as to how leave of absence decisions will be expedited.

**Graduation ceremonies:** Absence of one day to attend a graduation ceremony for a first degree will be granted. Any requests for travelling time associated with this would not be expected to exceed half a day in total.

**Interviews:** All reasonable requests will be honoured. Decisions relating to absence for interviews abroad or in places involving extra days for travel will be limited to a cumulative maximum of three working days in the year.

**Visits to schools before application/interview:** Given the open-ended nature of these absences and the significant demands of the course, leave of absence will not be granted for these visits. In refusing the application, CTSN SCITT will, if requested by the trainee, contact the school in question, informing them both of the trainee's expression of interest in attending, and the rationale for the refusal of the application.

**Visits to schools prior to employment:** One day will be granted before the end of the final teaching experience. A further day may be granted after this date and before the course ends. Additional days requested by the school employing the trainee after the course may be granted at the discretion of CTSN SCITT.

## Compassionate leave

In the event of such emergencies as bereavement, serious accident or illness of an immediate family member/dependant, up to three working days will be allowed for the death of a father, mother, son, daughter, brother or sister and up to five working days leave on the death of a husband, wife or partner.

Requests for additional compassionate leave, or in the case of a cumulative total of more than ten working days, must be referred to the Senior Tutor.

## Private and personal

A maximum of two days at any one time will be granted for the purposes of urgent and unforeseen personal business which does not come under the scope of compassionate leave or to fulfil an important and significant personal commitment which cannot be undertaken at any other time.

Statutory Leave of Absence up to a cumulative total of five working days during the course will be allowed. However, given the intense nature of the course, trainees will be advised that membership of bodies requiring such absence should be reviewed.

**Holidays:** The intensive nature of the course means that holidays, including those booked before commencement of the course, should not be undertaken.

If the SCITT allows holiday leave, for example to attend a family wedding, it should be noted that SFE will be informed and an adjustment to any maintenance loans may follow. The aim of this policy is to set out how CTSN SCITT will promote trainee teacher well-being to ensure that the trainees are prepared for the training year and for entry into the profession in recognition of the importance of well-being to recruitment and retention; fulfilling their roles and enjoying their careers in education.

## Equality Act

The SCITT recognises its legal obligations to fulfil the requirements of the Equality Act. In the event that this procedure is applied to a trainee who is disabled under the Equality Act then a full investigation will be undertaken to ensure that the SCITT's legal obligations have been met. Particular attention will be paid to a review of requests for reasonable adjustments, the implementation of those adjustments and the effects of these adjustments.

Absences due to an employee's disability under the Equality Act will not be taken into account when monitoring levels of sickness absence unless there is objective justification, for example where the impact of the absence on teaching and learning cannot be reasonably tolerated. Guidance will be obtained from the SCITT's Senior Tutors before any action is initiated.

## Illness or injury arising from work

Any accident arising out of or in the teaching training course must be reported to the SCITT. The accident will be subject to investigation and report by an employee authorised for the purpose by CTSN SCITT. Where a trainee seeks medical advice about an illness which is suspected or alleged to result from the nature of his or her training, the trainee must report all relevant information to his or her Senior Tutor at the first opportunity. This should then be reported to the SCITT Director. In the case of the first, and any subsequent absence, due to industrial disease or accident a trainee may be required to submit to a medical examination by a registered medical practitioner nominated by the SCITT.

## Reimbursement of cost of doctors' statements

Where the SCITT requires a medical certificate (Fit Note) from a trainee, the SCITT will be reimbursed for any charge made, on production of a receipt.

## Support processes

Full attendance (100%) at all timetabled sessions is a requirement of CTSN SCITT and ensures the trainees have completed the full training necessary for the recommendation for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). It is expected that the trainees attend all scheduled sessions in order to maximise their development. This policy is based on an approach to learning which values the learning that comes from a trainee's active engagement with his / her peers, staff and other external/professional experts.

A trainee's absence matters to us for educational reasons because absence reduces his / her opportunity to learn, may compromise the potential achievement and may in some cases also compromise the opportunities others have to learn (particularly in practical work or presentations, experimental or professional settings).

Attendance is also an indication of professional commitment. It is essential that trainees demonstrate that they will be reliable members of a school's teaching staff, understanding that their absence can affect the teaching and learning of pupils in their care. Furthermore, employers requesting references will request attendance information, so it is vital that it is accurately recorded.

The CTSN SCITT team aim to support trainees in ensuring that they are able to attend well and meet the requirements of the programme. There is a legal requirement that trainees complete a minimum of 120 days in school with training on top of this. In some circumstances top-up days will need to be used.

Failure to complete 120 days in school and unsatisfactory attendance at training sessions could result in QTS not being awarded. Full attendance is expected throughout the year. However, should absence occur, the following support mechanisms will be put in place.

## Punctuality

Punctuality is extremely important as it is an indication of a trainee's professional commitment. In addition, lateness to school has safeguarding implications for the children in their care and therefore CTSN SCITT takes all punctuality seriously.

If a trainee knows that they will be late to either school or training, they should make all reasonable efforts to notify both the school-based mentor and Hub Administrator.

Repeated lateness will be seen as a cause for concern, and trainee will be spoken to by their Senior Tutor who will decide the appropriate course of action, this may include support package 1 being instigated. Unless the trainee has made a prior arrangement with a Senior Tutor, if he/she arrives later than 30 minutes to training or school, it will count as an absence for that session (AM or PM).

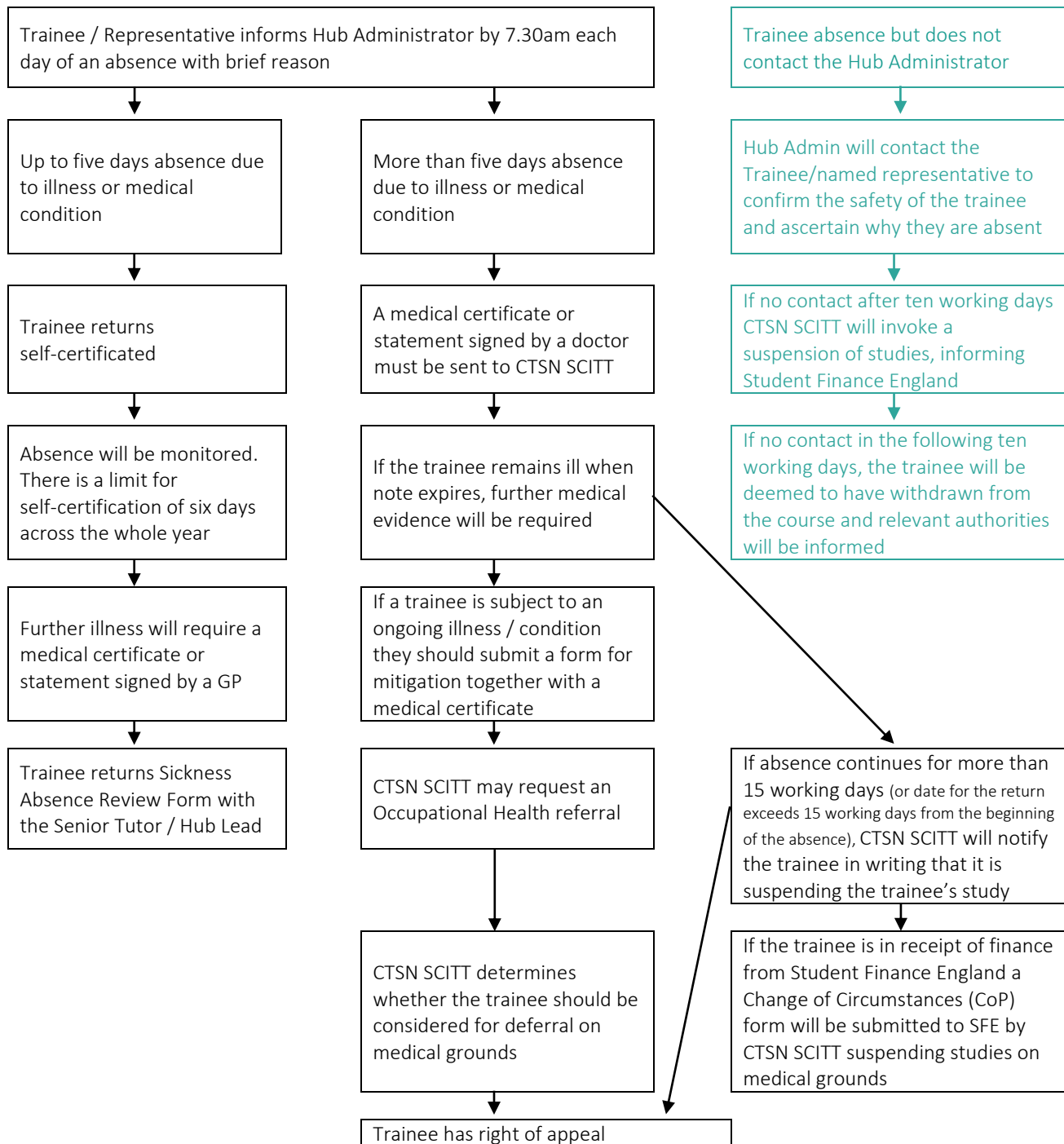
This policy should be read in conjunction with the CTSN SCITT's:

- Attendance Policy
- Discipline Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Reasonable Adjustment Policy
- Well-being Policy

This Absence Policy will be reviewed every two years.

Policy review date: Spring Term 2023 (Currently being reviewed)

## Appendix A - Absence Procedures Flowchart



NB: If a trainee withdraws from the course, they will be liable for fees as follows:

- Non-Salaried trainees: if payment of fees is via a student loan, then this will be in accordance with the requirements of SFE.
- Non-Salaried trainees: if a trainee is paying fees privately, they will have a tuition fee liability as follows:
  - Withdrawal from 1st September to 31st January – 33% Tuition Fee payment
  - Withdrawal from 1st February to 31st March – 66% Tuition Fee payment
  - Withdrawal from 1st April to the end of the course – 100% Tuition Fee payment.



## Appendix B: Planned Absence Request Form

To be completed when you need to take time off from the training programme [either a training session/day or during school placements] in emergency/exceptional circumstances (eg medical appointment, funeral, childcare, interview etc). Time taken for a leave of absence may need to be made up at the end of the training programme.

No leave should be taken prior to your leave of absence request being approved.

- For planned absences, at least five working days' notice is required.
- Emergencies, trainee to complete the form as soon as possible.

|  |   |   |                      |      |
|--|---|---|----------------------|------|
| Trainee Name   |   | Hub   | Name of Senior Tutor | Date |
| Reason for absence   |   |   |                      |      |
| Total number of days requested   |   |   |                      |      |
| From (Date & Time)   |   |   |                      |      |
| To (Date & Time)   |   |   |                      |      |
| Details of supporting documents attached (if applicable)   |   |   |                      |      |
| <i>NB: that for medical appointments or interviews CTSN expects to see proof</i>   |   |   |                      |      |
| Please provide accurate details of your absence history to date for the current training year (if unsure please ask you Hub Administrator as absences are tracked) |   |   |                      |      |
| <i>Please note that incomplete forms will be returned causing delays</i>   |   |   |                      |      |
| Senior Tutor Approval  | <input type="checkbox"/> Approved in line with CTSN SCITT policy<br>If approved, does this time need to be made up at the end of the programme?<br>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> If yes, please give dates _____<br>No <input type="checkbox"/><br><input type="checkbox"/> Refused<br>If refused, give reason |   |                      |      |
| Name   |   |   |                      |      |
| Signature  |   |   |                      |      |
| Date   |   |   |                      |      |
| Please email to the Hub Administrator  |   |   |                      |      |
| Primary Bury Hub:  |   | Caroline Abraham: <a href="mailto:cabraham@camteach.org.uk">cabraham@camteach.org.uk</a>  |                      |      |
| Primary Cambridge Hub:   |   | Lucy Murray: <a href="mailto:lmurray@camteach.org.uk">lmurray@camteach.org.uk</a>         |                      |      |
| Secondary Bury Hub:  |   | Christine Barber: <a href="mailto:cbarber@camteach.org.uk">cbarber@camteach.org.uk</a>    |                      |      |
| Secondary Cambridge Hub:   |   | Catherine Patmore: <a href="mailto:cpatmore@camteach.org.uk">cpatmore@camteach.org.uk</a> |                      |      |

## Appendix C: Absence Review Form

This is the management record of a CTSN SCITT Absence Review meeting. It will be held on the trainee's file. The record may be accessed and referred to by those with authority to manage the Absence Policy. The meeting will be held in private.

### Confidential

|                     |                  |
|---------------------|------------------|
| Trainee's name:     | Date of Meeting: |
| Interviewer's name: |                  |

#### Details of Sickness Absence

|  |                        |    |
|--|------------------------|----|
| Period of Absence:   | Number of Days Absent: |    |
| Reason(s) for Absence:                                     |                        |    |
| Is absence related to a disability under the Equality Act? | Yes                    | No |
| If yes – details of medical evidence must be attached      |                        |    |

#### Details of Meeting

|   |     |    |
|---|-----|----|
| Key points discussed: Welcome and update, if necessary, on SCITT events and changes       |     |    |
| Reasons for absence – any underlying medical condition?                                   |     |    |
| Are you fully recovered and able to resume full duties?                                   | Yes | No |
| If your view is "no" then action plan must consider: Referral to OH/Temporary adjustments |     |    |

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

### Action Plan

The objective is to reach a position where your level of attendance will be 100%. Is there anything the SCITT can do to improve your attendance, eg OH referral, counselling, a review of risk assessment or temporary adjustments?

Is your absence in any way related to the course? If so, how?

Are you doing all you can to improve your attendance? Eg acting on medical advice, lifestyle choices, attention to work life balance or non-medical support such as counselling.

Is a Fit note required for any period of absence during the monitoring period?

Yes

No

### Review

Your attendance will be reviewed on this date

NB: Further absence during this period may mean that the review is held under a formal procedure

You have been given an Absence Policy and the process explained

Yes

No

Tutor's Signature

Date:

Trainee's Signature

Date:

## Appendix D: Mitigating Circumstances Form

If you are facing short-term or long-term exceptional circumstances, you may submit a mitigating circumstance form to your Senior Tutor to request:

- A short break from the programme
- An extension to target / task / evidence bundle submissions deadlines

A break / extension can normally be granted for a period of up to two weeks.

Examples of exceptional circumstances include:

- illness of self or dependents;
- unanticipated changes in personal circumstances.

The following reasons would not normally be accepted as valid reasons:

- holiday arrangements;
- social commitments;
- normal work pressures;
- religious festivals;
- technical software, hardware, network or internet problems.

### CONFIDENTIAL

#### Part I - to be completed by the Trainee

Please complete part I of this form and email it to your Senior Tutor along with any supporting evidence.

You must continue to work on your targets / tasks / evidence bundle submissions whilst waiting for a decision.

|   |  |      |  |
|---|--|------|--|
| Name  |  | Date |  |
| Signature   |  | Hub  |  |
| Request   |  |      |  |
| Reason for the request  |  |      |  |
| Documentary evidence to support the request (if applicable)                 |  |      |  |
| If applicable, the name of the CTSN member who you have discussed this with |  |      |  |

Decisions will be made as quickly as possible, and you will be notified of the decision by your SCITT via email

Part 2 to be completed by the Programme team

|                                       |  |           |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|-----------|--|
| Date form received                    |  |           |  |
| Note discussions with CTSN colleagues |  |           |  |
| Outcome, with reasons                 |  |           |  |
| Plan going forward                    |  |           |  |
| Date decision communicated to trainee |  |           |  |
| Name                                  |  | Date      |  |
| Signature                             |  | CTSN Role |  |

## Appendix E: Terminal Illness

Where the trainee is still able to continue in work, ideally, the Senior Tutor will be able to discuss the issue with him/her and will make best efforts to be sensitive to his/her needs. Following discussion with the trainee, the Senior Tutor should consult the SCITT Director (and the occupational health/registered medical practitioner) to determine:

- the trainee's level of fitness;
- whether the trainee remains fit enough to be at work;
- whether the trainee's continued attendance will be detrimental to his/her health;
- the trainee's ability to undertake all or some of their normal duties.

The SCITT Director should undertake a risk assessment, which should be regularly reviewed and updated.

Any action should take into account the trainee's wishes as far as reasonably practical, but the Director's retains a responsibility to fulfil a duty of care not only to the trainee but also to his/her colleagues and other members of the SCITT community.