

2 March 2023

To Deans and Heads of UK Medical and Health Schools/Faculties

cc: HR Directors

Dear colleagues,

Clinical academic training in medicine, dentistry and allied health professionals

I am writing regarding the [Principles and Obligations](#), which set out what funders expect from those supporting clinical training to ensure clinical academic researchers are appropriately supported at critical stages in their careers and through the most difficult career transitions. The Principles and Obligations were first published in January 2017 and subsequently updated in 2018. In March 2021 the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) and partners published an additional set of [Principles and Obligations](#) specifically related to clinical academic training for nurses, midwives and other health professionals allied to medicine.

The implementation of the Principles and Obligations by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) was discussed at UCEA's clinical academic stakeholder forum in January this year. The forum is attended by a range of stakeholders including members of UCEA's Clinical Academic Staff Advisory Group (CASAG), the BMA, BDA, UCU and NHS Employers.

One of the topics at this year's forum was gender, ethnicity and intersectional pay gaps in medical schools, the factors contributing to those gaps and actions HEIs could take to reduce them. The latest research by UCEA for example shows that the gender pay gap (GPG) in HEIs with medical schools is 13.4%, compared with 11% in HEIs without medical schools. Forum members agreed that it was important for HEIs to address the structural issues that contribute to pay gaps and make it difficult for women and ethnic minority staff to be promoted to more senior roles and access clinical excellence/impact awards.

The trade unions highlighted the importance of continuity of service for accessing benefits such as contractual maternity pay and leave and the potential negative impact on the number of women in higher grade academic roles and hence on pay gaps if previous NHS service is not recognised when trainees move to HE employment. In particular the trade unions stated their concerns that HEIs are not adhering to the expectation set out in the Principles and Obligations that previous NHS service of academic trainees would be considered when assessing eligibility to maternity leave and pay.

In light of these concerns, the forum agreed that it would be helpful for UCEA to write to HEIs to highlight the expectations in the Principles and Obligations. In this context I would request that you ensure the Principles and Obligations are adhered to at your HEI for clinical

academic trainees. In particular I would draw your attention to the section on occupational benefits which states that: *'Where individuals, on nationally competitive training awards, are required to change employers to pursue their clinical academic career pathway their ability to receive certain occupational benefits, which have minimum service requirements, must be protected. This includes any changes in employer from a NHS trust/board to an academic institution or vice versa. These include as a minimum all family and care-related leave and care-related pay (not limited to gender or sexual orientation) and sick leave and sick pay (irrespective of disability status or health history)'*.

Information about the Principles and Obligations is available on the [UCEA website](#) including a set of FAQs and template documents to support HEIs to implement the initiative. Please do not hesitate to contact Nicola Carter, Head of Employment Policy and Advice, (n.carter@ucea.ac.uk) or Alison McGrand, Senior Employment Policy Adviser, (a.mcgrand@ucea.ac.uk) if you have any questions or would like to discuss the Principles and Obligations.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Roshan', written over a horizontal line.

Roshan Israni
Deputy Chief Executive