

# Training breaks viewed positively by educators as well as doctors, new research shows

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The growing trend for trainee doctors to take a break after completing their foundation training is viewed positively by educators as well as by the doctors themselves, according to a study published by the General Medical Council (GMC).

The regulator commissioned the University of Nottingham to [research](#) the impact of post foundation training breaks (PFTBs), often known as 'F3'.

They found that most doctors choosing not to immediately take the next step of beginning specialty training reported positive effects on their career progression and on their well-being. Ninety-six percent of foundation doctors who took a PFTB used the time to broaden their [clinical experience](#) as a doctor before deciding on a specialty.

Personal fulfillment, improved health and well-being and taking a break from training were the main motivations for taking a PFTB and 95% would recommend taking one to others.

Key findings included:

- 60% of trainees believed a break helped their career progression, despite recruiters maintaining that it confers no advantage in applications for core and specialty training.
- Of those questioned 96% of those who took a break in training returned to work as a doctor.
- Doctors were more likely to have a break if they were male, white and privately educated. Non-white doctors were 32% less likely to take a PFTB.
- Some specialties are more heavily populated by doctors who have taken a PFTB, such as [emergency medicine](#), anesthetics and public health.

Professor Colin Melville, the GMC's Medical Director and Director of Education and Standards said, "Since 2017 more than half of foundation doctors have chosen not to progress directly to [specialty training](#). It is an increasingly popular choice, and so the insights from this research are valuable and have implications for the GMC, for educators and recruiters alike."

"The findings show that supporting doctors who take a post-foundation training [break](#) could be part of a pragmatic approach to help retain a

more fulfilled workforce in the long term. This research will also feed into our ongoing work to support more flexible training for doctors."

Dr. Helen Church, School of Medicine at the University of Nottingham, added: "The PTFB phenomenon is increasingly popular, and our research has enabled us to understand how PFTBs can be more formally supported in training pathways. PFTBs can be an opportunity for all [junior doctors](#) in which they can explore different career options, both clinical and non-clinical, develop their knowledge and skills, and personalize their own training experience."

**More information:** [www.gmc-uk.org/about/what-we-d ... ks-research-08062023](http://www.gmc-uk.org/about/what-we-d...ks-research-08062023)

Provided by University of Nottingham

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