

Applicant's Guide to Recruitment & Selection into Specialty Training in Northern Ireland 2008

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Introduction

In Northern Ireland there will be recruitment into run-through training in some specialties and into core training in other specialties for August 2008. This has been proposed, based on national guidance from the relevant Royal Colleges.

There will be recruitment into run-through training in the following specialties:

- Obstetrics and Gynaecology
- Ophthalmology
- Histopathology
- Clinical Radiology
- Paediatrics
- General Practice
- Neurosurgery

There will be recruitment into core training in the following specialties:

- Medicine (Core Medical Training)
- Psychiatry (Core Psychiatry Training)
- General Surgery (Core Surgical Training)
- Trauma and Orthopaedic Surgery (Core Surgical Training)
- Urology (Core Surgical Training)
- Cardiothoracic Surgery (Core Surgical Training)
- ENT (Core Surgical Training)
- Paediatric Surgery (Core Surgical Training)
- Plastic Surgery (Core Surgical Training)
- Emergency Medicine (Acute Care Common Stem)
- Acute Medicine (Acute Care Common Stem)
- Anaesthesia / ICM (Acute Care Common Stem)

Core training will consist of two years of specialty core training (3 years for psychiatry and emergency medicine, followed by open competition for ST3 (ST4 for Psychiatry and emergency medicine)).

Application Process

The application process is new and is dependent on you completing your application comprehensively. Getting it right is an important part of maximising your chances in achieving entry to the training programme of your choice. Please spend some time reading this applicants' guide to ensure your application is as comprehensive as possible and to optimise your chances of success. You are reminded that your application is yours and, as such, should be completed by you alone.

Familiarise yourself with the application timetable which can be found at www.nimdtg.gov.uk and www.mmc.nhs.uk. It is also appended to this document. Information on other Deaneries can also be found at www.mmc.nhs.uk. You should be aware that there are strict deadlines for accepting both invitations to attend for interview and offers of a training opportunity. Make sure you are familiar with these important dates and deadlines and plan around them. These dates are not negotiable and there can be no exceptions.

The application process opens on 5 January 2008 and closes on 18 January 2008 at 12 NOON. In Northern Ireland, there will be a second round in April 2008 for those specialties who do not fill their posts during the first round. The online application process will open on 31 March 2008 and close on 7 April 2008 for Round 2 recruitment.

Registering with HPSSjobs.com

All applications will be via www.hpssjobs.com. You will need a reliable active e-mail address and access to the internet in order to complete the application form. Only electronic application forms will be accepted.

You are required to register on hpssjobs.com, detailing the following:

- Title
- First Name
- Surname
- Email address

You should receive a notification email within 10-15 minutes. Please note it is important to enter your email address accurately as you will not receive your registration notification if you enter an incorrect email address.

The notification email you receive after registering will contain your password. You should log in using your email address and this password.

If you do not receive your registration email or if you have forgotten your password, you can have it emailed to you again by clicking on the "I have forgotten my password" link below the log in form.

On the registration form, you must specify which master application form type you would like to use when applying for jobs. You must choose "Specialty Training - NIMDTA".

**DO NOT CHOOSE "MEDICAL AND DENTAL" AS THIS IS NOT USED FOR
SPECIALTY TRAINING FOR AUGUST 2008**

Once you have successfully logged in and selected your master application form type, the "My Profile" page is displayed.

Applicants are encouraged to register as soon as possible.

There is no restriction on the number of applications that an applicant can make in Northern Ireland, other than that relating to entry level (see below).

Choosing your Specialty on HPSSjobs.com

All specialty training posts can be found by selecting "Jobs by organisation" on the homepage. Please choose "NI Medical and Dental Training Agency" for a list of all posts available.

To apply for a job, please click on the "Apply" link displayed below each job.

At the bottom of the "My Profile" page, you will see a list of all the posts you have applied for.

Please note that competition ratios for 2007 are available on the NIMDTA website, although these are not necessarily an indicator of the anticipated applicant numbers for 2008.

Applicant numbers by specialty for 2008 will also be available on www.nimdtta.gov.uk following the closing date for applications. Numbers of those called for interview will be available after shortlisting.

Person Specification

It is important that you study the person specification for each entry level for the specialties to which you are considering applying. The person specifications clearly state the entry requirements for each level and this will help you to decide which is the most appropriate for you. Applying to the most appropriate level will optimise your chances of success. **You cannot apply to more than one entry level within the same specialty.** Your applications may be withdrawn if you attempt to apply to more than one level within the same specialty.

The person specifications for all levels of all specialties will be available on our website, www.nimdtta.gov.uk and www.hpssjobs.com when it opens for applications on 5 January 2008.

References

You will need to provide details, including e-mail addresses, of two referees who have supervised your clinical training within the past two years. You should ensure that the e-mail address used for your referee is one that is accessed regularly. If you are applying to more than one specialty, you may opt to nominate different referees for each specialty. If you have recently had a career break and cannot nominate referees from the past two years, then your referees must include your two most recent supervisors.

You should contact your preferred referees well in advance and ensure they are happy to provide a reference for you and that they will be able to do so in the required period. If you are shortlisted for interview, NIMDTA will communicate with your nominated referees to request they complete a reference for you.

If you are offered and accept a training programme allocation, the employing organisation will not be able to issue a contract of employment if either of your references remains outstanding.

Short-listing (except GP)

Applicants who do not meet all the essential entry criteria for the training programme as stated in the relevant person specification will not be considered for interview. The use of desirable criteria may be used to further short list, particularly if the number of applicants greatly exceeds interview capacity.

GP short-listing

Machine markable assessment paper, assessing a number of competencies as defined in the person specification

Interview dates

The interview period will run from Monday 11 February 2008 to Friday 14 March 2008. An interview schedule for each specialty will be available at www.nimdtg.gov.uk.

Round 2 interviews, where required, will take place between 21 April 2007 to 9 May 2007. Interview schedules will be available when confirmed at www.nimdtg.gov.uk.

You should review the schedule and inform your current employer of potential leave requirements for attending interviews in anticipation of being short-listed, and co-ordinate with colleagues wherever possible. You should identify where you may be called for interview and make appropriate arrangements for these dates.

Documents for interviews

In addition to the documentation required to support any statements made in your application, you will be required to bring a number of documents along to interview / selection centre. These are as follows:

- original proof of identify (passport or driving licence only)
- original GMC Certificate
- original documents for all qualifications listed on your application form (translated if necessary)
- verified evidence of competencies cited on your application form
- evidence of right to work in the UK
- evidence of educationally-approved posts cited on your application form (eg letter from your employing Trust or contract of employment) *

* A letter confirming evidence of training posts within Northern Ireland can be obtained by e-mailing specialty@nimdta.gov.uk providing your name, GMC number and list of posts you have occupied in Northern Ireland. Foundation trainees will not be required to provide a letter.

Additional documents may be required by particular specialties and if this is the case you will be informed of this when invited to attend interview / selection centre.

Entry criteria

GMC registration

You will need to ensure your General Medical Council (GMC) registration status is confirmed before applying for specialty training. To be eligible to apply for specialty training, you will need to hold full registration with the GMC, or be eligible for full registration, subject to an offer of employment. Visit www.gmc-uk.org for more information.

Evidence of competencies

If short-listed, you will be required to bring with you to the selection centre / interview(s) evidence to support statements made on your application form and to prove that you have achieved the required competencies. You should start to think now about what evidence you may want to take with you.

If you are applying straight from the Foundation Programme, then you will already be familiar with the concept of keeping a portfolio (or collection) of evidence of your progression through the programme. You will be able to use this as evidence of having achieved the foundation programme competencies.

Doctors not applying directly from the foundation programme will need to consider other ways to provide evidence of having achieved the foundation and other required competencies. This could include such things as shown below (these are simply examples and should not be taken as an exhaustive list):

- Trainers' reports
- Log book of clinical activity
- Audits
- Written workplace assessments, eg mini-PAT, mini-CEX, CbD, DOPs

Right to work in the UK

An applicant who is not a UK or EEA national and whose immigration status has been granted under the provisions of the Highly Skilled Migrant Programme is not subject to the resident labour market test and so may make an application. Other non-UK or non-EEA nationals with limited leave to remain in the UK whose employment would require a Work Permit, are subject to the resident labour market test and may only apply if there is no suitable UK or EEA national candidate for the post. Please refer to www.nhsemployers.org for further guidance.

English language skills

If your undergraduate training was not taught in English and you do not have a current International English Language Testing System (IELTS) certificate at the appropriate levels, you will be required to cite other evidence of your English language skills (e.g. you have worked in the UK). This evidence must be in writing and must be verified by an appropriate employer or supervisor. You will be

required to bring this evidence with you to any interviews or selection centres you attend.

If you are a foundation trainee, you will require written confirmation from your Foundation Programme Director in addition to a copy of your F1 competencies (Form 5.1).

Career progression

All previous experience in the particular specialty/specialty group must be declared. This includes all experience outside the UK and all experience in the UK, whether within educationally approved posts or not.

Where the person specifications refer to experience in a specialty at ST1 or ST2 level, you should interpret this to mean SHO or equivalent, or indeed higher than SHO level.

Eligibility Criteria

Eligibility will be determined as the closing date of receipt of application for the post being applied for.

Selection Process

Interview Process

Those applicants invited to interview will be assessed by a selection panel of trained selectors against selection criteria stated in the relevant person specification. Finally, the interviewed applicants with the highest scores will receive an allocation for a training opportunity in Northern Ireland in the specialty at the specific entry level depending on the number of opportunities available. This is not a contract of employment - contracts of employment will not be issued until pre-employment checks have been carried out satisfactorily. Contracts of employment will be issued by the employing Trust.

Selection centre/interview (except GP)

- Approximately 30-minutes, face-to-face selection time
- Same competencies assessed for each applicant for a particular specialty and entry level in Northern Ireland
- Independent scores from each panel member
- Aggregate of scores from all panel members = final selection score

GP selection centre

- A number of exercises, typically including a group exercise and a patient simulation exercise

Applying to general practice

Although applying to general practice (GP) is similar to applying to the other specialties, there are some significant differences since recruitment to GP is coordinated nationally. The GP process has been developed over the last five years with the aim of using one standardised assessment (avoiding multiple applications to different deaneries) to appoint the strongest candidates across the country.

All applicants who meet the GP training entry criteria will be invited to attend a national short-listing assessment - this will be an invigilated machine markable test assessing the competencies in the GP person specification, and replaces traditional short-listing methods. The GP short-listing assessment will take place on the same day, Saturday 9 February 2008 in Stranmillis College Belfast. This will also take place at a number of venues across the UK.

This objective assessment will enable all applicants to be ranked nationally, and the highest scoring applicants will be invited to the next stage of selection. This will be a selection centre and they will be invited to their highest preferred location, depending on their rank order and the number of places available at the location.

The selection centre will comprise three workplace based assessments, which will include a patient simulation exercise. Applicants will be ranked following the selection centre and the highest ranked applicants will be offered training places within the Northern Ireland Deanery.

For more information about applying for GP training programmes and about the GP assessment and selection process, visit www.gprecruitment.org.uk

Applying to Histopathology

There is national recruitment into Histopathology. For further information please visit www.histopathsho.34sp.com.

Fixed term specialty training appointments (FTSTAs)

If you are unsuccessful in obtaining a place on a training programme, you may be offered a fixed-term specialty training appointment (FTSTA). A list of vacant training posts will be available at www.nimdtg.gov.uk.

FTSTAs are fixed-term contracts for up to one year. Training will be in accordance with the competencies in the given specialty and will use the appropriate elements of the curriculum to define the content of the training.

Applying for less than full-time training

If you wish to work less than full-time, you will need to confirm your eligibility with your current postgraduate dean. Please refer to the NIMDTA website for more information (www.nimdtg.gov.uk). Please note that doctors must undertake training on at least a half-time basis in order to comply with the requirements of the General and Specialist Medical Practice (Education, Training and Qualifications) Order 2003.

If you already have arrangements for less than full-time training, these will not automatically transfer to your new programme. Appointments to a less than full time training opportunity will not be automatic and you may have to wait for a less than full-time training opportunity to become available.

Requesting a deferred start date

If you are registered for a higher degree (e.g. MD, PhD) but have the entry requirements for specialty training, you may apply for specialty training place now and request a deferred start date if you are offered a place. Deferrals may be for up to 3 years from the time you registered for your degree.

Being registered for a higher degree is normally the only valid reason for requesting a deferred start date.

Disability Discrimination Act

You will be asked to identify on your application form if you consider yourself disabled as set out in the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). You will also be asked to give details of specific arrangements you require to attend interview if invited. This information WILL NOT be available to short-listing or selection panels.

More information on the DDA can be found at:

http://www.direct.gov.uk/DisabledPeople/RightsAndObligations/YourRights/YourRightsArticles/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4001068&chk=eazXEG

Offer of Appointment

Offers will be made as each specialty recruitment exercise is completed. Final offers will be released on 20 March 2008 and candidates will have until 12 noon on 26 March 2008 to confirm.

Once you accept a training post, you will not be offered any subsequent posts which may become available in that round.

Vacancies remaining at the end of Round 1 will be advertised in Round 2. Please check www.nimdt.a.gov.uk and www.hpssjobs.com for information on vacant posts.

You cannot apply to Round 2 if you have accepted a post in round 1 in Northern Ireland. This applies to Core and Run-through training posts only. If an applicant has accepted an FTSTA post they may apply to a Core or Run-through training post in Round 2.

Confirmation of Placement

When you submit an application for specialty training, you are applying for a training place in a particular specialty in and at a particular entry level. You are not applying for a specific programme, rotation or post.

If you are successful at interview, you will be matched to the most appropriate programme based on your selection score and programme availability. Your programme preferences will be taken into consideration wherever possible. You will receive confirmation of your placement and a contract of employment will be issued by the employing organisation, subject to satisfactory pre-employment checks.

Pre-Employment Checks

Police Check

All Specialty training posts are governed by The Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (Northern Ireland) Order 2003. Before appointing anyone to a training post, NIMDTA, on behalf of the employing Trust will request a relevant check to be carried out by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS). This check is to make sure any individuals who might be a risk to children and/or vulnerable adults are not appointed. You will be required to complete a consent form when you attend for interview.

Pre-Employment Health Assessment (PEHA)

NIMDTA co-ordinates pre-employment health assessments on behalf of the employing Trusts. Successful applicants will be unable to commence employment without having completed a satisfactory PEHA and may result in withdrawal of the offer of appointment. Further information on how this will be carried out will be provided prior to interview.

Enquiries

If you have any questions or concerns in relation to the recruitment process, please e-mail specialty@nimdta.gov.uk.

Appendix I

Specialty Recruitment Timeline 2008

Round 1		Round 2 <i>(Where required)</i>	
5 January 2008	Online Application System opens in Northern Ireland for Round 1 applications.	31 March 2008	Online Application System opens in Northern Ireland for Round 2 applications
18 January 2008 At 12 NOON	Deadline for submission of ST Applications in NI	7 April 2008 At 12 NOON	Deadline for submission of ST Applications in NI
21 January 2008	Shortlisting panels meet to score/select those to be invited to interview in Round 1	8 April 2008	Shortlisting panels meet to score/select those to be invited to interview in Round 2
8 February 2008	Shortlisting panels conclude	18 April 2008	Shortlisting panels conclude
9 February 2008	GP Stage 2 takes place in Stranmillis College	21 April 2008	Round 2 Specialty Recruitment Interviews/selection centres commence
11 February 2008	Round 1 Specialty Recruitment Interviews/selection centres commence	9 May 2008	Round 2 Specialty Recruitment Interviews/selection centres conclude
15 February - 20 March 2008	Offers rolled out as specialty panels complete interviews (excluding General Practice)	12 May 2008	All Round 2 offers released
5 & 6 March 2008	GP Assessment Centre - Stage 3 - Wellington Park Hotel	16 May 2008 BY 3.00 PM	All Round 2 offers accepted
14 March 2008	Round 1 Specialty Recruitment Interviews/selection centres conclude		
20 March 2008	Round 1 offers released for General Practice		
26 March 2008 by 12 NOON	All Round 1 offers accepted	6 August 2008	Trainees commence new rotations

Appendix II

Guide to Completion of Application Form

Please read this guidance before completing your application. In addition you will need to familiarise yourself with the person specification(s) relating to each specialty and level to which you are applying. You will need to demonstrate how you meet the criteria contained within the person specification.

You must complete ALL mandatory sections of the application form, including the equal opportunities section, or you will be unable to submit your application.

Please note that the "free text" sections of the application form are character limited. Any relevant information which you are unable to place in these boxes could be added to the Personal Statement section of the form.

You are advised to save your application on an ongoing basis. Once you have completed your form, you may wish to view and print this application before finally submitting.

You are advised to submit your application as soon as you have completed it as applications will not be accepted after 12 midday on Friday 18 January 2008.

Once you have submitted your form, you will receive an email confirming the receipt of application and the post to which you have applied.

1. Equal Opportunities

This is a mandatory section of the application form and must be completed.

2. Personal Information

Please ensure your full name is the same as that registered with the General Medical Council.

Please note that in some specialties it may be necessary to have access to a car, or a form of transport which will enable you to undertake the duties of this post.

3. Qualifications

Please ensure ALL qualifications are detailed. This may include degrees prior to medical school, intercalated degrees and qualifications obtained following medical school.

Membership exams should also be included and if you have sat an exam and are awaiting the outcome, this can be detailed in the additional qualifications section and it may demonstrate commitment to the specialty.

4. GMC Registration

If you do not currently hold registration but are eligible, please quote your GMC reference number.

5. Achievement of Competencies

All specialties require you to have achieved foundation competencies as a minimum. If you are not applying directly from foundation, please indicate what evidence you will provide to demonstrate that you have gained these competencies.

6. Clinical Experience

Please use this section to highlight your clinical experience within the specialty as evidenced in your portfolio. Details of all courses attended since graduation and all audits completed with dates of completion should be provided.

7. Academic Achievements

Please list all research projects, publications and presentations in the relevant sections. You must specifically identify those publications which have appeared in peer reviewed journals.

Prizes and scholarships at both undergraduate and postgraduate level and any research grants awarded should be detailed.

8. Employment History

Please indicate your next appointment if the post you are currently occupying ceases prior to August 2008.

You will be required to provide an explanation of any gaps in your employment history.

9. Personal Statement

Please use this section to provide additional information to support your application. *You should use this as an opportunity to demonstrate your commitment to the specialty of your choice and the reasons why you would like to work in Northern Ireland.*

The person specification should help you in completing this section of the application form.

10. Declarations

Please note that details of all charges, including minor motoring offences should be disclosed.

You must confirm all periods of sickness/absence over the past three years.

If you have a disability, you should indicate this to help facilitate your interview and to assist your employer in making any reasonable adjustments to support your disability.

On the day of interview, you will be required to sign the declaration section of the form.

11. Immigration Information

All applicants must complete the immigration section. If you are not a UK or EEA national you must state whether or not you require a work permit. If you do not require a work permit you must indicate the reason why.

Work permit holders will not be eligible, unless there are no suitable UK or EEA national candidates.

12. Language Skills

If your undergraduate training was not taught in English and you do not have a current International English Language Testing System (IELTS) certificate at the appropriate levels, you will be required to cite other evidence of your English language skills (e.g. you have worked in the UK).

Details of your IELTS scores, in accordance with the person specification, must be provided.

Appendix III

Complaints Process following selection into specialty training in Northern Ireland

Background

1. Operational responsibility for recruitment into specialty training programmes in Northern Ireland rests with the Postgraduate Dean who in turn is accountable to The Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency and the Department of Health, Social Security and Public Safety (DHSSPS).
2. Complaints about the process should be sent to the Postgraduate Dean
3. Responsibility for employment rests with the employing authorities. Whilst employers are involved in the selection process and have agreed to its use for appointing trainees they are not responsible or accountable for the selection process itself.
4. If an applicant is selected and offered a placement on a training programme through the recruitment process, the employing authority ultimately has the right not to offer employment but must be able to offer robust reasons for failing to do so.

Principles of the Complaints Process

5. It is inevitable that some applicants will be disappointed by the outcome of the recruitment process, as it is a competitive one. A complaints process is an essential safeguard against unfairness.
6. However complaints cannot be made because the applicant simply disagrees with the principle of the process or the judgements or outcomes that have been made by the appointment panel. But where processes or procedures have not been followed, or there is evidence of unfairness in how the process has been implemented, and the objectivity of decisions is called into question, applicants may request a review by the Postgraduate Dean (first stage review).
7. If complainants are not satisfied that their complaint has been responded to adequately, they may subsequently pursue a second-stage complaint process in order to have the process considered independently.
8. Complaints will not be accepted against the fact that an application was judged insufficiently strong to merit competitive appointment to a post or programme in the absence of reason to believe that there were failings in the way in which the process was carried out.
9. A complaint may be lodged if the applicant believes the process for implementing the short listing and interview/selection process by the Deanery has negatively affected the candidate's application.

Complaints Procedure

10. Applicants who have submitted an application to the Deanery can complain about the process if they consider that the short listing and/or interview/selection process has

been administered unfairly or in a way which has negatively affected the candidate's application. The complaint must be lodged in writing to the Postgraduate Dean stating in full the reasons why the applicant thinks the process has not been followed properly.

11. The complaint must be received within ten working days of the end of the interview process.
12. The Postgraduate Dean should arrange for the complaint to be investigated by a senior person within NIMDTA (e.g. Associate Dean, Administrative Director). The Postgraduate Dean (or deputy) should not be involved in the initial investigation as he/she may be required to participate in the second-stage process. The complainant should receive a response to the complaint either in writing or by face-to-face discussion within ten working days of the complaint having been received.
13. If the complainant is not satisfied with the account given, the applicant can proceed to the second-stage complaint process.
14. If the complainant wishes to go to a second-stage complaint, a formal written request must be received by NIMDTA within ten working days of the response to the initial complaint being received.
15. The Postgraduate Dean will arrange for a Panel to consider the second-stage complaint. The Panel should be led by a Lay Chair, and should consist of two consultants from outside the specialty but who have been trained and participated in the recruitment process; the Postgraduate Dean (or deputy), a trainee and a Trust HR Director (or deputy). All panel members will have received up to date training in equal opportunity in recruitment and selection. The Panel should meet within twenty working days of the second stage complaint being lodged. No member of the Panel should have been involved in the first-stage process.
16. The Panel will share all documentary evidence with the applicant at least five working days prior to the Panel meeting.
17. The Panel will invite the applicant to attend a face-to face panel hearing. The applicant can be accompanied by a colleague or friend to help support them in the process but this should not normally be a legal representative or family member.
18. The Panel will inform the applicant of the outcome of its deliberations in writing as soon as they are available and normally within ten working days. This will be accompanied by the written record of the meeting. The decision of the Panel is final.
19. If the complaint is upheld by the Panel, the Postgraduate Dean will meet with the applicant to decide the further course of action within fifteen working days of the notification being sent to the complainant.