

31 August 2006

Dear Colleague,

STATEMENT ON RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION TO SPECIALIST TRAINING PROGRAMMES IN 2007

Following discussion in the UK Strategy Group, the four UK Health Departments have agreed a joint statement setting out the principles of recruitment to the specialty registrar programme. These principles refer to the selection into specialist and general practice training programmes and into Fixed Term Specialist Training Appointments(FTSTAs). They do not refer to selection into foundation programmes or locum posts.

The principle of run-through specialist training to follow the Postgraduate Medical Education and Training Board approved curricula has already been agreed.

It has also been agreed that the Medical Training Application Service (MTAS) will be used by all four UK countries for recruitment into specialist training programmes and FTSTAs. MTAS will have significant benefits to both doctors and recruiters – doctors will only need to submit one application, which will mean that recruiters will no longer have to deal with multiple applications.

I am now writing formally to provide you with a copy of the agreed statement, which can be found on the MMC website – www.mmc.nhs.uk. You will appreciate that there will be further detailed work to be done on this as time proceeds.

I should be grateful if you would share the statement as appropriate with deanery colleagues, your wider educational networks, NHS employers and trainees. I am sending a copy of this letter and the statement to the NHS Employers organisation and to the BMA. Colleagues in the devolved administrations are also circulating this information to employers and professional colleagues.

Yours sincerely,



Paul Loveland
Head of Education, Training and Development

MMC – STATEMENT ON RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION TO SPECIALTY TRAINING PROGRAMMES IN 2007

Introduction

1. This statement sets out the principles of recruitment to Specialty Registrar programmes, as agreed by the four UK Health Departments. A timeline is attached at Annex A.
2. The principle of run-through specialist training to follow the PMETB approved curricula has already been agreed.
3. It has also been agreed that the Medical Training Application Service (MTAS) will be used by all four UK countries for recruitment into specialist training programmes and Fixed Term Specialist Training Appointments (FTSTAs). MTAS will have significant benefits to both doctors and recruiters – doctors will only need to submit one application, which will mean that recruiters will no longer have to deal with multiple applications.
4. These principles refer to the selection into specialist and general practice training programmes and into FTSTAs. They do not refer to selection into foundation programmes or locum posts.

National documentation

5. There will be nationally agreed person specifications for each specialty or specialty group (where there are core years), and for each entry level to each specialty (for example ST1, ST2, ST3, etc)
6. There will be a nationally agreed generic application form, together with nationally agreed specialty-specific sections.
7. There will be nationally agreed structured reference forms for each specialty or specialty group.

Recruitment & selection rounds

8. For each level of recruitment (for example ST1, ST2, ST3, etc) there will be an agreed number of national recruitment rounds, each having two stages. The two stages will maximise the chance of a doctor securing a post.
9. Doctors will be able to apply to training programmes and FTSTAs as part of the same process.
10. There will be nationally agreed dates (see attached timeline) for:
 - advertising vacancies
 - accepting applications
 - starting and completing stage 1 recruitment
 - communicating stage 1 short-listing and selection results
 - starting and completing stage 2 recruitment
 - communicating stage 2 short-listing and selection results.

Advertising vacancies

11. All vacancies will be advertised on the MTAS website, with more detailed information available on Deanery websites.

Applications

12. All applications will be submitted electronically via MTAS.
13. Applicants will be invited to apply to two specialties or specialty groups, and two units of application (UoA) for each specialty or group. If one of the specialties selected is general practice, they need only apply to one UoA, but will be considered for posts in other UoAs if they remain unplaced after the first stage of selection.
14. Applicants will be asked to submit an application for vacancies at only the most appropriate level of training for them within a specialty (for instance, ST1 or ST2 or ST3) as defined by the person specifications.

References

15. Applicants will be required to submit the names of two referees, both of whom must have supervised the applicant in the past 2 years.
16. Structured references will be requested for short-listed candidates only.

Short-listing

17. Short-listing will be undertaken locally by selection panels which include trained assessors in the specialty against national, specialty specific criteria.
18. Short-listing results will be communicated to applicants via MTAS
19. Applicants will have a minimum specified period to confirm attendance at any selection events they are invited to attend.

Selection

20. As an absolute minimum, selection will consist of a structured interview.
21. Selection will be undertaken locally by a selection panel which includes trained assessors in the specialty, against national, specialty specific criteria.
22. Selection results will be communicated to applicants via MTAS in accordance with the agreed national timetable.
23. Candidates will have a minimum specified period to confirm acceptance or rejection of any offers made to them.

Employment

24. Pre-employment checks such as criminal record or enhanced disclosure checks will be carried out by the employing organisation or lead NHS employer after selection but before the offer of any posts.

25. Contracts of employment will remain the responsibility of the employing organisation or lead NHS employer as is now the case for Specialist Registrars.

ANNEX A

Selection into Specialty Registrar Training Programmes commencing August 2007

November 2006	Articles explaining the new process published in medical press and on relevant websites
December 2006	Details of specialty registrar training programmes, posts and job descriptions available on deanery websites
22 January 2007 - 4 February 2007	Applications to specialty training programmes submitted
February 2007	Outcome of short-listing communicated to applicants
March-April 2007	Local selection activities take place (for example structured interviews)
End April 2007	Offers made to successful applicants
End April 2007	Unfilled vacancies identified and re-advertised
May 2007	Stage 2 recruitment commences
End May 2007	

Outcome of stage 2 short-listing communicated to applicants

June 2007	Local, stage 2 selection activities take place (For example structured interviews)
End June 2007	Offers made to successful applicants
August 2007	Specialty training and FTSTA posts commence

Please note this timeline will be updated with precise dates as soon as they become available.