



Career Specialist

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Career Specialist Article

Introduction

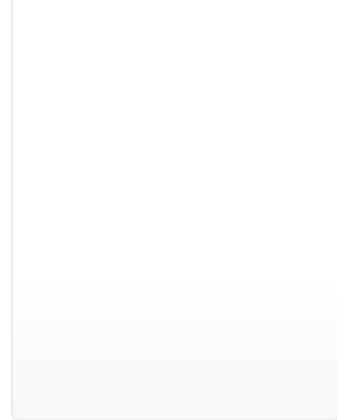
The NHS medical careers website is a new resource which is designed to be a comprehensive guide to all aspects of careers in medicine. The website contains detailed information about all medical specialities including information about what to expect in the working life of each specialty, the postgraduate training pathway and workforce statistics.

One of the aims of this website is to take medical students and postgraduate doctors through the following four stage career planning model:

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Overview

For the self-assessment stage we have developed some interactive tools. In order to access these tools and so that the results can be saved the user must register on the site. This area of site is accessible to all users after following a simple registration process. There are no restrictions and careers specialists are encouraged to register, so that they can view the tools.

The NHS medical careers website is aimed at

- those considering medicine
- medical students
- foundation trainees
- specialty trainees
- specialty doctors and associate specialists (SAS doctors)
- doctors and trainees working less than full time (LTFT)

as well as the following people who are involved with supervising and helping the above group through their careers:

- educational supervisors
- programme leads
- careers leads in NHS Trusts
- careers specialists, including connexions advisers

Medical students and postgraduate doctors

The decision faced by a trainee in choosing a medical career is a complex one. On the specialty pages of this website you will see that we have listed over 60 different specialities. The nature of the work and key skills/competences required for each of the specialty varies widely, for instance working as a GP is very different to working as a cardiologist. The competitiveness of each specialty is something else to take into consideration (we provide information on this in the workforce statistics section on the specialty pages).

We believe that it will be useful for medical students to have some awareness of career management, and we would advise them to begin to work through the first two stages of our career planning model. Often in the past medical students were not given much, if any, careers advice at medical school. On this website we have developed some ideas whereby medical students with just a little thought and preparation can use their time to reflect on the different medical specialities that they

are exposed to at medical school.

We have also put together resources and material for postgraduate doctors and for trainers. This material is accessible from the home page, through the 'discover more' links.

Medical careers – background information

Modernising Medical Careers (MMC) was launched in 2003 and it was set up as an initiative so that career pathways for doctors would meet a national standard. The MMC website states that the doctors training in the old system (then known as Senior House Officers or SHOs) 'had no clear educational or career pathways, no defined educational goals, no limit to time spent in the grade and a lack of distinction between service and training'. MMC is a radical programme and it was introduced so that these issues could be resolved.

The foundation programme

The foundation programme for doctors was first introduced in 2005. The foundation programme is a generic medical training programme and it encompasses the first two years of training for doctors, after the trainees have successfully completed medical school. During these two years the foundation doctors complete rotations in various specialties, usually three different specialties per year. During the second year of foundation the trainees have to make the decision about which specialty they would like to apply to train in.

Before the changes in MMC doctors did not have to make this choice until a much later stage. Previously trainee doctors were able to road-test many different specialties before coming to a decision on which to select. Therefore providing medical students and postgraduate doctors with careers information, advice and guidance has come to the forefront in recent years.

Specialty training

With the introduction of MMC a curriculum for each speciality was devised so that training could be more focussed and the idea is that the trainee will reach consultant-level earlier than previously, after a minimum of seven years training (but this varies from speciality to speciality). For GPs the minimum training pathway is three years. Specialty training can consist of run-through training or uncoupled training.

Run-through training

Some trainee pathways are such that once the trainee starts a pathway, provided they meet the Annual Review of Competence Programme (ARCP), they will continue on that pathway until they reach the end of their training. If they have reached this stage, and they have passed their membership exams they will be awarded a Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT) and will be put on the specialist register of the appropriate Royal College. This will mean that they can apply for consultant posts, or GP posts if that is the training pathway they have taken.

Uncoupled training

Not all specialties have run-through training; more now consist of uncoupled training. Uncoupled training is where the postgraduate doctors have a training programme called 'core training' for 2 or 3 years depending on the speciality. After this they will have to apply to higher speciality training. Depending on which higher speciality pathway they choose competition for places can be high. The specialty trainees will then train in higher speciality training for another 4 to 5 years (again depending on the speciality). The procedure for gaining CCT is the same as that described above.

Other information

The Medical Careers Advisory Network (MCAN)

This network can be accessed from the following page on the [AGCAS website](#).

Doctors Subject to GMC Conditions

We have information if you are [advising a doctor who has been referred to the General Medical Council](#).

Research papers

See our page on relevant [research papers](#).

Work experience in the NHS - a toolkit for teachers and work placement organisers

See the downloadable document on the [NHS Careers website](#)

Widening participation

Read our page on [widening participation](#).

Moodle resource for trainers

Join our [moodle group](#) which was set up in March 2012.

Feedback on this website



We would be very grateful for any feedback on the content of this website, especially so we can meet the needs of careers specialists. Please use the 'contact us' link at the footer of the website.

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