

18 January 2021

Dear Colleague

2021 Specialty Recruitment Update

Release of candidates and doctors in postgraduate training for recruitment and assessments

The four UK National Statutory Education Bodies are very aware of the significant clinical pressures that healthcare providers are under due to the combined winter pressures and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This, in addition to the levels of staff absence due to COVID, is putting the clinical workforce under immense pressure, and we understand that, in order to mitigate this, some employers have placed short term restrictions on study and professional (special) leave.

All UK Administrations recognise the need for those doctors in training in clinical-facing roles to be able to progress successfully. Consequently, travel is permitted as long as solely for the purpose of accessing, providing or receiving education or training in order to progress careers. Subject to the exigencies of health care services, we would also ask that employers support leave for recruitment and professional examinations where inability to attend would adversely impact on career progression.

Specialty Recruitment

The recruitment processes for Summer 2021 starters at all grades are underway, with candidates being contacted to arrange appointments for both virtual interviews and for assessment centres in the near future. Their availability to be able to attend these is vital to our ability to recruit medical staff for this summer, and upon which our health care providers rely on to help sustain services. We appreciate that the timelines for notification of dates for these processes to individual candidates are often short.

We are working with Royal Colleges and representative organisations to minimise the amount of clinical (both panel and applicant) time required for these processes on a specialty-by-specialty basis. However some aspects of recruitment will continue to need attendance, whether in person or online.

Collegiate and professional examinations

While we are aware that some professional examinations are being delayed by the current lockdown arrangements, a significant number are taking place either in assessment centres or online and remain key for the ability of doctors to progress in their programme, apply for a training programme, or indeed to complete training and achieve CCT.

It is our hope therefore, that all employers will collaborate in releasing medical staff for these key appointments, and work as flexibly as possible to support staff in this nationally important effort. Doctors in training find recruitment processes challenging and stressful and, at a time when their wellbeing is significantly challenged by the clinical service pressures, we would greatly appreciate your continued co-operation in supporting this key group as they progress their careers.



Professor Helen Stokes-Lampard PhD FRCGP
Chair
Academy of Medical Royal Colleges (AoMRC)



Professor Simon Gregory
Deputy Medical Director
Health Education England



Professor Rowan Parks
Acting Medical Director
NHS Education for Scotland



Professor Pushpinder Mangat
Medical Director
Health Education & Improvement Wales



Dr Ian Steele
Postgraduate Medical Dean
Northern Ireland Medical & Dental Training Agency