Applicant Guide for trainees wishing to apply for Core Medical Training (CMT) Programmes in England in 2009

The Royal College of Physicians (London) has developed a co-ordinated approach to recruitment to CMT for 2009 which we hope will enable applicants to maximise their chances of being appointed to training posts in a clear and efficient system. Details about the process, from application through to appointment, are available on this page. All applicants should ensure that they also register with MMC (https://www.mmc.nhs.uk/eupdate.aspx) in order to receive updates about generic aspects of the application process.

The Royal College (RCP) is committed to providing timely and accurate advice to trainees. Please note that the content of the FAQs will be updated regularly prior to and throughout the application, short listing and interview process.

The Application Process
How do I find out more about training in CMT/Medical Specialities?
Making a good application
Further information on applications
Regulations, Person specifications
Evidence of Foundation competence
Contacts and Links
Frequently Asked Questions

1. How will applications work in 2009?

The MMC Programme Board has established some overriding principles relating to the arrangements for appointments to training posts during 2009 (http://www.mmc.nhs.uk/default.aspx?page=292)

MMC has indicated that trainees will be able to apply to as many specialties as they wish during a specified timeframe. CMT applications can be made from 5th – 18th January 2009, for programmes commencing from August 2009 onwards. MMC has also agreed that certain specialties, including CMT and Psychiatry can pilot a nationally coordinated process in 2009, using a standardised application form, short-listing criteria and interview methodology. The Royal College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, and the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health successfully ran similar national pilots in 2008.

Although the Royal College of Physicians of London are coordinating CMT recruitment, within the national framework, the individual application will be processed directly by the first choice Deanery.

2. Who is eligible to apply?

Applicants need to refer to the CMT/CT1 person specification to determine whether they fulfil the entry criteria. You will need to apply at the level relevant to your experience.

Right to work in the UK – Doctors who are not UK or EEA nationals and whose immigration status entitles them to work without restriction in the UK should be considered on an equal basis with UK and EEA nationals. This includes doctors with Highly Skilled Migrant Programme (HSMP) status (and their dependents) at the point of short listing.
Other non-UK/non-EEA nationals with limited leave to remain in the UK whose employment will require a work permit (such as those on student or working holiday visas) are subject to the resident labour market test and may only be considered for appointment if there is no other suitable candidate as described above.

Evidence of immigration status should normally consist of a date stamped passport and accompanying letter from the Home Office. However, individual deaneries will decide what evidence you will need to present to confirm your immigration status. Applicants and assessors should visit http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/ for more information.

The most up to date information about eligibility in terms of immigration status can be found at the www.mmc.nhs.uk.

3. How does the RCP London co-ordinated CMT recruitment process work?

REGISTRATION AND APPLICATIONS


- Applications will be accepted from 5th January 2009.

- There will be the same application form, scoring system and short-listing guidance for all English Deaneries.

- Applicants will need to register with the RCP London web-based application service (www.CMTrecruitment.org.uk) in order make their application. Each applicant will be given a unique applicant number that will need to be quoted in all correspondence.

- To register on the web-based application service, applicants will need their e-mail address, mobile telephone number and GMC number (if they have one).

- When first registering on the RCP London recruitment website, you will receive a confirmation e-mail. During previous recruitment processes, some applicants reported encountering problems when using web-based e-mail accounts (e.g. Hotmail). It may be the case that your e-mail provider will send the confirmation e-mail to your ‘spam’ folder, or that you may not receive it at all. If this is the case, we would advise using a different e-mail account. In addition some NHS Trust e-mail filters may block responses from the recruitment website, and again you should test this and make secure arrangements to access your email.

- Once you have registered on the recruitment website, you will be able to access the application form (from January 5th 2009). You are advised to complete your application early, and you can save it and edit it as you go before the final submission. You may want to discuss your application with senior colleagues but remember that it must be completely honest and your own words. Please avoid submitting the form at the last moment.
Applicants will submit one application to their first choice Deanery via the web-based service. When you have submitted your application you will be sent a confirmation email.

Following submission of your application you will be able to change details of your contact email address and referees if necessary, but you will not be able to change anything else.

Eligible applicants will be considered by their first and second choice “Units of Application” (UoAs, equivalent to Deanery or sub-Deanery), which will carry out short-listing.

Applicants will be asked at the time of application to rank their first four choices of UoA. All UoAs have a finite number of posts and in the unusual circumstance that applicants are interviewed and are appointable but unsuccessful in their top four preferences, they will be re-contacted during the same application round, and asked to re-preference from any remaining UoAs which have vacancies.

You will be invited to log onto the recruitment website to book your appointment to take the knowledge test on 21st February 2009 (see below – KNOWLEDGE TEST).

The website will also give you information about the application tracking facility which will enable you to know exactly the point your application has reached in the process. You will be able to access all the messages that have been sent to you by clicking on ‘my messages’, your personal page on the application website.

Applicants will need to inform the RCP London (via their application form) of their ranked preferences of the UoAs they wish to be considered for.

Applicants who submit more than 1 application for a CMT post in England via the web-based system will be automatically excluded from the process.

Applicants who attempt to submit multiple applications from different e-mail accounts will be excluded from the process and reported to the GMC for professional misconduct.

Applicants can only apply for jobs through this national system at one level (i.e. CT1).

KNOWLEDGE TEST

Following advice from the MMC Programme Board, the RCP London CMT National Recruitment Process includes piloting a test of applied medical knowledge appropriate to Foundation FY2 Level. The test in 2009 will be identical to that used for GP recruitment, and will take place on February 21\textsuperscript{st} 2009.

Applicants who are applying to CMT and not General Practice will be invited (by the CMT recruitment system) to book an appointment to take the knowledge test when their application has been received and eligibility for CMT level CT1 has been confirmed. They will be invited on line to book the appointment to take the test.
• Although the knowledge test in 2009 will be a pilot, and will not count towards the overall recruitment score, it is still an essential part of the recruitment process. Applicants who do not have a score from the Knowledge Test will not be eligible for interview.

• In the event of extraordinary circumstances preventing an applicant attending the Knowledge test the applicant must contact the CMT Recruitment Office (CMTRO) in advance to discuss alternative arrangements. Rota duties do not constitute extraordinary circumstances.

• When GP interviews are complete, CMT applicants will be notified of their decile score and ranking in the Knowledge Test.

SHORTLISTING
• All deaneries will use the same specialty-specific application form and unified short-listing scoring process for CMT1 applications.

• The application form will be seen IN FULL by short-listers, except for personal details and the ‘Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form’ which will not be available to either short-listing or interviewing panels.

• Applicants whose short-listing score is above the cut-off for interviewing will be considered for interview in the respective Deanery.

INTERVIEWS
• Interviews will be conducted using a unified structure and common scoring process across all deaneries.

• Interviews will be held between March 2nd and 27th 2009

• Applicants who are selected for interview by their first and/or second choice UoA will be notified of this by email. [We want to include a text alert but cannot promise this at present]

• Applicants will be invited to log on to the recruitment website to book their own interview appointment. If they are fortunate in having two interview offers they should be able to avoid a clash of interview times.

• Applicants will be required to bring to the interview evidence to support statements made on their application e.g. evidence of additional degrees, prizes, publications.

• Applicants will be asked to bring evidence from their portfolios. Details about what is required will be made available to you at the time of application. You will not be required to bring a printout of your complete portfolio.

• Interviews will be conducted using an identical format in all UoAs. There will be three interview stations, one of which is a portfolio/CV station. Each station will have two interviewers who will mark independently. Each station will be for ten minutes.
• There will be a common scoring process and question bank across all UoAs and conformity of scoring will be monitored.

• Interview scores and information about the appointability of candidates will be uploaded to the recruitment website by the interviewing Deanery.

OFFERS
• Offers will be sent out by Deaneries (UoAs).

• Individual Deaneries will start to issue offers within a few days of completion of their interviews.

• Appointable trainees who score highly within their top ranked Deanery will be offered a training post within that Deanery.

• Offers will be made and accepted via the web-based service. Successful applicants will receive offers by email. Applicants will be asked to respond within 48 hours.

• You can respond in one of three ways to an offer: hold if you are hoping for another CMT offer, or a GP or Psychiatry offer, up until the coordinated offers closing date (April 28th 2009). You cannot hold an offer if you are expecting an offer in any other specialty (i.e. the hold option applies only if expected offers come from CMT England, GP & Psychiatry, it does not apply to any other specialty, or CMT in Scotland, Wales & Northern Ireland). You can reject an offer if you have accepted an alternative offer, or you can accept if it is your preferred choice. Applicants will respond to offers via the web-based service.

• Declining a post is acceptable and you will not be removed from the system. However, in declining a post, the trainee must be aware that there can be no guarantee that further offers will be made. This depends on the trainee’s score, choice of UoAs and post availability in subsequent cycles. Candidates are warned that competition for posts will be high and many candidates may only receive one offer so very careful thought is needed before an offer is declined. The sensible course of action would be to hold an offer if a further CMT offer, or Psychiatry or GP offer is anticipated until there was certainty about the desired course of action.

• Trainees will be given a set timeframe in which to reply to offers (48 hours excluding weekends and Bank Holidays). If you do not respond within 48 hours, this will be considered to be rejection of the offer.

• You may not hold two CMT offers beyond the 48 hour offer period.

• Acceptance of an offer is binding, and in line with the MMC Applicant Guide.

• If you are unsuccessful following interview in your first and/or second choice UoA, but your score is above the appointability threshold, your highest interview score will be handed on to your next preference UoA, and so on.
• Deaneries will be dealing with acceptance and rejection of offers, and re-offering posts so that offers will still be made beyond the coordinated offers closing date.

• The process of offering will recycle until all training opportunities have been accepted or declined, or there are no more appointable applicants. Trainees who have indicated that they would consider working within any other Deanery and who are deemed appointable but who do not score highly enough within their top two deaneries will be included in the clearing process which will be run directly by the CMT Recruitment Office. We will aim to align un-appointed candidates with remaining available posts. Post allocation will be made using a combination of ranking based on interview score and preference for deaneries.

• Applicants who are not appointed but considered appointable will be able to see this on the application tracking facility, so that they can anticipate the possibility of an offer as the process continues.

4. Why is the RCP London advocating this process?

By adopting a co-ordinated approach, we believe that it is possible for trainees to submit applications to a smaller number of deaneries (where they would prefer to work) but still to be considered by all deaneries if they wish. Trainees would not be expected to indicate that they would be prepared to work anywhere, unless they wished to.

The Royal College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology used a similar harmonised national system in 2008, which resulted in 96% of appointable applicants achieving a place in their first or second choice UoA. We have received confirmation that all English Deaneries will participate in the 2009 process.

5. Is there an alternative?

The alternative is for each Deanery to process applications independently, with their own application form, scoring system and short-listing cut-off. A trainee could make an application to each Deanery they wished to be considered for. We believe that this method would mean more uncertainty for trainees and more work for both applicants and Deaneries. Each trainee would have to make multiple applications in different formats without knowing how the information in each form was going to be judged. Each Deanery could potentially receive applications from every single applicant, with the best applicants likely to be short-listed in every Deanery and offered posts in multiple Deaneries, whilst many applicants would receive no offers at all. Making subsequent job offers would be disjointed, prolonged and confusing, with the risk that overall, a greater number of good trainees would end up not being appointed and that posts would not be allocated in good time for August 2009.
6. How do I find out more about Core Medical Training?

Core Medical Training is a 2 year Core programme. The programmes contain a variety of medical specialty posts, in either 4 or 6 month blocks. At least one of the 2 years is involved with acute medical specialties, and most programmes involve a year in a DGH and a year in a TH. During this time 2 curricula are followed (the Acute (General) & Generic Curricula) with the aim of achieving Level 1 competencies by the end of the programme. Achievement of the relevant competencies allows trainees to apply for ST3 posts in any medical subspecialty. As its name suggests, this training scheme provides a strong base, and the starting point for over 25 medical subspecialties. It also gives a very good medical grounding for trainees wishing to train in other specialties, such as Radiology, Anaesthetics and Emergency Medicine. Although all these specialties have their own training schemes which can be accessed from Foundation, some trainees are still uncertain about their career choices. Core Medical Training offers outlets to many different options, both within Hospital Medicine and for other specialties.

See www.jrcptb.org for more information, and also individual Deanery websites for detail on the programmes available. You should also speak to current Core Medical Trainees, Specialist Registrars in Medical Specialties, Consultant Physicians and any others involved with Core Medical Training.

7. Making a good application

You should read as much as you can about the specialty, the training system and the requirements for entry before completing your form. Applicants to CMT need to demonstrate that they are committed to the specialty. Show your application form to others before you submit it – it is a good idea to show it to more than one person so that you can get balanced feedback. If possible, you should show your form to your Educational Supervisor and local College Tutor.

8. Further information on applications

Will all Deaneries be using the RCP London system?

No.

Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales will be recruiting separately. All Deaneries in England are recruiting for CMT through the national system. The Deaneries involved in the process are listed below in alphabetical order (each will count as a separate ‘UoA’ for 2009 recruitment):

East Midlands - North
East Midlands - South
East of England
Kent, Surrey, Sussex
London
Mersey
North Western
Northern
Oxford
Severn
South West Peninsula
Wessex
West Midlands
Yorkshire and The Humber
How many posts will be available?
The RCP London website will indicate the most up-to-date information about availability and location of posts. The MMC website only shows indicative numbers, and so should not be used for application planning.

How will I know how many CMT1 posts there are in each Deanery?
We will make this information available to you when the advert appears. Once the applications commence the numbers of posts will not reduce in number. However more posts may become available after applications open, during the process, and if so these will be allocated during clearing.

Why can I only be interviewed by a maximum of 2 Deaneries?
You will send your application to your first choice UoA, and this UoA will check that you are eligible to apply. If so, your second choice UoA will also consider you for short-listing. If you are interviewed and considered appointable, but there are not enough posts available in that Deanery for them to offer you a post, you will be eligible for clearing through the CMT National system. This centralised process will lead overall to more posts being filled and more applicants having jobs than a ‘free for all’ system that allows you to apply to all Deaneries.

Do I have to accept a job offered in clearing?
No.
Declining a post during clearing is acceptable and you will not be removed from the system. However, in declining a post, you must be aware that there can be no guarantee that further offers will be made. This depends on the trainee’s score, choice of Deaneries and post availability in subsequent cycles.

Could I get a job offer from both of my top 2 choices?
Yes.
If you are interviewed in both your top 2 Deaneries you could get a job offer from both. This is most likely to occur early in the offers process, but could occur in later as offers are accepted and refused and re-offered. If you have two interviews, you may wish to hold an offer, to see if a 2nd offer is made before deciding to accept a post. It is not possible to change your mind once an offer has been accepted. We are encouraging Deaneries to make offers as early as possible.

What if I only want to apply to one Deanery?
That is possible. But remember - if you do not get a job offer from that Deanery, you cannot rejoin clearing at a later date.

How many application forms will I need to fill out?
You will need to fill out a single application form. This will be clear from the application system.

How will the form be scored?
There will be certain essential criteria which will have to be attained in order for an application to be put forward for short-listing. There will be separate sections for you to complete, each with their own score. There will be a minimum overall score required for an application to be short-listed and considered for interview.

How will I know that my submitted application has been received?
Once your application has been submitted we will send you an e-mail to confirm this. It will also be registered in your personal summary (‘My Messages’) page, which you can access via the web-based application tracking service.
How will I know if I have a job offer?
During the defined time period we will contact you by e-mail to let you know if an offer has been made. Again, it will also be registered in your personal summary (‘My Messages’) page, which you can access via the web-based service.

Can I apply to other specialties as well?
Yes.
This system is purely for CMT, but you are able to apply for other specialties as well, if you wish. You can also apply for CMT posts in Northern Ireland, Scotland, or Wales separately, as they are not involved in the RCP London CMT process.

Will my short-listing score be used for my interview?
Your application form score is used for short-listing and will also contribute to the total selection score. At interview, there is a standard scoring system which will be used to produce an interview score, and then added to the short-listing score, to decide who is appointable, in rank order. All participating Deaneries will use the same scoring system and minimum cut-off score for both applications and interviews.

What will the interviews involve?
The interviews will last 30 minutes and be divided into three sections which will be undertaken in any order. During the interview there will be questions that test your clinical skills, communications skills, professionalism, decision making skills and generic knowledge of governance in the NHS. There will also be discussion of your application form, skills, experience and portfolio. You will not need to bring your portfolio, but you will need to bring any documents that back up any claims you have made on your application form – for example evidence of your qualifications, audit, publications, prizes etc.

Will I be expected to show specialist medical knowledge for the interview?
Previous experience in the specialty is not required for application to CT1, and so questions will reflect generic competences that you would be expected to have (see Foundation Competencies below).

How will I be ranked for clearing?
Your highest interview score (if you had two interviews) will count in clearing. Applicants will not be offered a clearing post at a Deanery where they have previously been rejected, either by not being short-listed or being unsuccessful at interview.

If I am offered a post in a Deanery, how will I know which programme I have been allocated?
The allocation of programmes within each Deanery is a matter for the Deaneries to decide. Allocations will be made by the CMT Programme Directors or appropriate Deanery staff. Individual Deaneries will advise how this is done, and it is important to refer to Deanery websites. Many Deaneries offer programmes based on overall ranking of the final assessment score. Most Deaneries ask successful applicants to state their preferences for either a particular sub-region within the Deanery, or a particular CMT specialty. Unless you are a very strong candidate, it is often not possible to have exactly the specialty you want in the hospital you want. It is not usually possible to advise trainees of their ranked position before offers have to be accepted – obviously the ranking cannot be worked out until it is known who has accepted. Most Programme Directors wait until the majority of accepting candidates are known before allocating posts but this is not universal. Therefore, you may find that you have to accept an offer of a CMT post in a UoA without knowing exactly which programme you will be allocated.
If I am not successful, how can I obtain feedback?
It is not usually possible to offer feedback to individual applicants until the recruitment round has closed. However, individual Deanery staff, at their discretion, may be able to provide feedback at an earlier point, but you will appreciate they will be very busy during the recruitment period. It will be possible to provide information about your Knowledge Test result and the overall assessment score. More detailed feedback is at the discretion of each Deanery & their CMT recruitment staff. You might also consider discussing your application with your Supervisor and/or Foundation Programme Director.

What if something goes wrong or if I feel I have been treated unfairly?
Help and advice will be available from a variety of sources. Your first approach should be to the 1st and 2nd choice Deanery to which you have applied. The Deanery website will have contact details for Recruitment. If the CMT recruitment office within the Deanery is unable to help with your query or complaint, this will be passed to senior medical recruitment staff within the Deanery. If your query or complaint can’t be answered to your satisfaction, it will be escalated to senior recruitment staff in the RCP CMT Recruitment Office. There will be a National Appeals process which will be fair and open, and follow clear HR Recruitment Practices. All staff will have had the relevant training in Fair Selection processes and Equality and Diversity. The starting point will always be that the ‘customer’ (Trainee) is in the right and we would hope very much to resolve problems to the satisfaction of the Trainee and other relevant parties.

9. Regulations, Person specifications and Levels of Application

What level should I be applying at?
Detailed person specifications have been published to help you to be sure you are applying at the right level. Make sure that you apply at the right level, as this will improve your chances of success both during the application process and also when you take up specialty training.

10. Evidence of Foundation Competency

The person specification for Specialty Training for Core Medical Training includes:
"Evidence of achievement of Foundation competences between 2nd August 2006 and 5th August 2009 in line with GMC standards/Good Medical Practice including:

- Good clinical care
- Maintaining good medical practice
- Good relationships and communication with patients
- Good working relationships with colleagues
- Good teaching and training
- Professional behaviour and probity
- Delivery of good acute clinical care

All must be demonstrated without exception using the prescribed evidence as outlined on the CMT national recruitment web site.
Possession of Foundation Competence is essential for successful applicants to cope with and proceed successfully through CMT. It is crucial that there is evidence of current competence rather than historical evidence, as any competency must be sustained to be useful, and to act as a firm foundation for CMT. It is not sufficient to have achieved each competency once. Competencies must be achieved, maintained and demonstrated.

The acceptable methods for demonstrating Foundation Competency are based upon our experience of previous recruitment episodes, in which we found that the evidence submitted by candidates was sometimes insufficient. For example, qualifications in specific other specialties do not demonstrate the breadth of Foundation Competences and such candidates are not typically ready cope with CMT. Some candidates have achieved competency across the spectrum in the past, but have then focussed their career in a small area. The breadth of the competences must be confirmed to show that the doctor is capable to enter CMT.

It is the candidate’s responsibility to demonstrate that this criterion has been fulfilled.

**Demonstrating Achievement of Foundation Competency**

There are a number of ways you can demonstrate your achievement of foundation competency. While completing the application form you will be asked a series of questions to help you determine the most appropriate form of evidence to demonstrate this. Your answers to these questions will also allow us to assess your eligibility to apply for a CMT programme and you will be expected to provide standardised documentation to verify your answers.

This guidance is provided to help you begin to prepare your 2009 CMT application.

- If you are currently undertaking a foundation programme in the UK, we will ask you to confirm the name of your Foundation School. Any offer of a programme will be conditional upon the successful completion of this programme and the award of an FACD 5.2 before August 2009.

- If you have undertaken a UK foundation programme within the last 3 years – ie. since 2nd August 2006, we will ask you to confirm that you have been awarded an FACD 5.2. You will be asked to send a copy to your first choice Deanery. You will be expected to provide the original certificate when you attend for interview.

- If you have not undertaken a UK foundation programme within the last 3 years – ie. since 2nd August 2006, then evidence of satisfactory completion of 12 months SHO, ST, or FTSTA posts since August 2006 will also be accepted provided it relates to a post with acute medical responsibilities (see below). In this case you will be expected to provide RITA C certificates, VTR2 forms, or a satisfactory ARCP. You will be asked to post a copy to your first choice Deanery. Originals MUST be provided when you attend for interview. If you are unable to provide the required documentation because you have only recently started an ST or FTSTA post, then you should submit an ‘Alternative Certificate’ which is available for download below.

- If none of the above applies, or if you are unable to provide the evidence required for any of the above, you will be able to submit alternative evidence by asking someone who has supervised you for at least 3 months since 2nd August 2006 to attest to your achievement of foundation competency. There are two ‘Alternative Certificates’ available for download; one for specialties with acute medical responsibilities and one for specialties without acute medical responsibilities. You will need to submit the appropriate certificate to the CMTRO for assessment once you have submitted your application. Alternative certificates must be submitted no later than 26th January 2009.
• If you are unable to provide any of the above because, for example, you have not worked since 2\textsuperscript{nd} August 2006 then you are advised to secure a second year UK foundation programme post before applying for a CMT programme. Alternatively, you could secure a post that will enable you to demonstrate foundation competency to someone who could then provide you with an ‘Alternative Certificate’, e.g. A locum or Trust post or FTSTA post.

• We understand that Refugee doctors may have less access to standardised documentation and in some cases may not be able to obtain an ‘Alternative Certificate’. If you are unable to provide any of the above because of your Refugee status, you should contact your first choice postgraduate Deanery for advice before submitting your application. Refugee doctors should provide an Alternative Certificate wherever possible.

[Alternative Certificate link to download]

11. Contacts and Links

I have further queries which have not been answered by these FAQs – who do I contact?
We have tried to think of all possible questions which trainees may be asking at this moment in time. However, if you do have further queries please contact CMTrecruitment@replondon.ac.uk. The online enquiry service will be manned from 8am until 4pm every weekday.

Please note, however, that the College will be closed from 22\textsuperscript{nd} December 2008 until 1\textsuperscript{st} January 2009 inclusive, and the e-mail address will not work during this period.

You may also find it useful to look at the following sites:
RCP London Careers Page
MMC
Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency
MMC Scotland
PMETB
CoPMED
GMC
NHS Jobs