Evidence of Foundation Competence – Applicants Guide

Introduction
The National Person Specification for entry to all ST1 specialty training programmes (including FTSTA, LATS and LAS posts) requires applicants to provide evidence of achievement of Foundation Competence within the last 3 years 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 applicants to specialty training at ST1 level must demonstrate all the competences described by the Foundation Curriculum, without exception, using the prescribed evidence as outlined below.

Why do I need to demonstrate that I have Foundation Competence?
The possession of all the Foundation Competences is an essential criterion in ST1 Person Specifications because they are needed to help successful applicants cope with, and progress through the clinical experience that forms part of their specialty training. They are key attributes that ensure patient safety - in particular those relating to the recognition and management of the acutely ill patient, resuscitation and end of life care.

CT1 and ST1 posts are not configured to assess whether each new entrant possess these competences – a process which would take several weeks. Instead they have to assume their new starters possess them. This is true even of posts not directly involving acute medical care: often the only person on such units with recent experience of resuscitating a patient is the ST1 trainee. It is also crucial that the submitted evidence is current. It is not sufficient to have achieved each competence once. Competences must be achieved, maintained and demonstrated if our patients are going to be safe in our hands.

What evidence can be used to demonstrate that I have Foundation Competence?
The acceptable methods for demonstrating foundation competences are listed below. No other evidence will be accepted, as previous experience has shown it to be unreliable. For example, specialist qualifications do not demonstrate the breadth of the Foundation Competences and, however experienced a candidate is in one specialty, they are often not able to cope with the first year of core or specialty training without having recently practiced the broader skills. N.b. it is the candidate’s responsibility to satisfactorily demonstrate that they possess all the Foundation Competences, and the recruiting organisations are not allowed any discretion in this matter.
There are 3 ways you can demonstrate that you possess Foundation Competence, and the application form will ask you a series of questions to help you determine the most appropriate form of evidence for you to submit.

1. **Currently on a Foundation Programme**
   If you are undertaking a recognised foundation programme in the UK\(^1\) which is due to finish in August 2014, we will ask you to confirm the name of your Foundation School. You do not need to do anything else. You do not need to submit any evidence. Any offer of a programme will be conditional upon you successfully completing the Foundation Programme and being awarded an FACD 5.2 before August 2014. This includes those applying for a delayed start date due to illness or maternity. If you are undertaking a “stand alone” FY2 post that is NOT part of a recognised foundation programme attached to a UK Foundation School and you do not expect to be awarded with an FACD 5.2 upon satisfactory completion, then you must answer NO to this question on the application form and you will be required to submit an Alternative Certificate as detailed below.

2. **Already completed a Foundation Programme**
   If you have already completed a UK Foundation Programme within the last 3 years (since 1st August 2011), we will ask you to confirm that you have been awarded an FACD 5.2. You MUST attach a scanned copy of your FACD 5.2 to your application. You will be expected to provide the original certificate at a later date.

3. **Anybody who is not in 1 or 2 above**
   If you have not undertaken a UK foundation programme within the last 3 years, you will be able to submit an Alternative Certificate signed by a consultant who has supervised you for at least 3 months since 1st August 2011. This certificate attests to your achievement of Foundation Competence. For the purposes of this documentation, “consultant” includes General Practitioners, Clinical Directors, Medical Superintendents, Academic Professors and anyone on the specialty register. You may submit more than one Alternative Certificate from different posts in order to show evidence of achievement of all competences but all certificates must relate to posts undertaken for at least 3 months (whole time equivalent) since August 2011. You MUST attach scanned copies of the certificates to your application form. You will be expected to provide the original document(s) at a later date.

*The only exception to this is if you are a refugee.* Refugees (as defined on the UKBA website: [http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/asylum/](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/asylum/)) are advised to contact the recruiting organisation for further guidance - but should submit an Alternative Certificate if it all possible

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\(^1\) UK Affiliated Foundation Programmes include those in Malta. The Maltese Foundation School awards FACD 5.2 to the same standards as other UK Foundation Schools and as such is considered equivalent.
Is the three months post during which I demonstrate my Foundation Competence all I have to do post registration?

NO. The ST1 Person Specifications state that you need to have had 12 months experience **after** full GMC registration **and** evidence of achievement of Foundation competences.

We therefore expect ALL doctors applying to a specialty training programme to have had at least 24 months experience in appropriate posts, either in the UK or overseas, since gaining their primary medical qualification and before commencing a specialty training programme.

I have been working abroad, where there is no Foundation Programme. What are likely to be deemed appropriate posts?

12 months satisfactory completion of either a pre-registration, internship\(^2\) or FY1 post

**AND** 12 months full time satisfactory completion in posts approved for the purposes of medical education by the relevant authority.

**OR**

12 months satisfactory completion of either a pre-registration, internship or FY1 post

**AND** 12 months full time experience at a publicly funded hospital in at least two specialties with acute medical responsibilities

**OR**

12 months satisfactory completion of either a pre-registration, internship or FY1 post

**AND** a 12 month full time FY2 post.

You will not be required to submit evidence of your previous experience at the application stage but the deanery may request you to provide it later during the recruitment process.

**With regard to the Alternative Certificates, please note that:**

- **The signatory** does not necessarily have to personally witness the demonstration of every competence. Instead, he or she **must** be in a position to judge whether the evidence they have seen or had presented to them demonstrates competence, and they **must** have worked with you for 3 months. The recruiting organisations have no discretion in this regard.

- **The post** the certificate refers to **must:**
  - Be of at least 3 months duration (whole time equivalent)
  - Have been completed by the time of the submission deadline

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\(^2\) An internship is a period of pre-graduate or post-graduate clinical experience that provides an accepted foundation for future practice as a fully registered and licensed medical practitioner. Internships must be either a 12 month programme that includes a minimum of 3 months in surgery and 3 months in medicine **OR** a programme of at least 10 months duration that includes a minimum of 3 months in surgery and 3 months in medicine with an additional study period of up to 2 months **OR** the equivalent of 12 months full time post-qualification at a publicly funded hospital in at least two branches of medicine.
Have been undertaken within the 3 years before commencement of the post you are applying for.

- Clinical attachments do NOT count as experience.

**What do I do if I cannot provide any of the above?**

If you are unable to provide any of the above because, for example, you have not worked within the last 3 years, then you are advised to secure a second year UK foundation programme post before applying for a specialty training programme.

Alternatively, you could secure a post that will enable you to demonstrate Foundation Competence to a consultant who could then provide you with an Alternative Certificate, eg. A locum or Trust post.

We understand that refugee doctors may have less access to standardised documentation and in rare 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 the recruiting organisation for advice before submitting your application form. Refugee doctors will be required to provide an Alternative Certificate wherever possible.

**Can I use last year's Alternative Certificate?**

NO. There is a new Alternative Certificate for applications for August 2014 that reflects the new **2012 Foundation Curriculum**, and only this form can be used. Earlier documentation will NOT be accepted. In future years, forms from 2014 onwards will be accepted provided that they are not earlier than this version and that the post referred to on the form lies within the 3 years prior to the anticipated start date of the ST1 post.

**How do I attach my certificates?**

You will have opportunity to attach the document to your application as a scanned file. If you have problems attaching the file, please read the guidance provided by the recruiting office or contact them for advice. You should aim to do this well in advance of the closing date to ensure you can submit your application in time.

Do NOT send your evidence to any other email address or send it by post to any recruiting organisation.

**I started but did not complete a full Foundation Programme. Can I still apply?**

Not unless you can provide evidence of addressing your outstanding educational needs. Time simply served in other posts does not count. All ST1 Person Specifications have as one of their eligibility criteria: Not ever relinquished or been released or removed from a UK Foundation Programme or a stand-alone Foundation year 2 post or its equivalent without subsequent evidence of completion / remediation.

**Can I count locum posts as part of my Foundation Programme?**

No. Foundation posts that are not part of a full, designated Foundation Programme associated with a UK or UK Affiliated Foundation School are NOT accepted as they will not lead to the award of an FACD 5.2 on completion. You should make sure that
you satisfy the above question and then submit an Alternative Certificate. Locum F2
attract an FACD5.2

What happens if I accept an offer and then do not complete my Foundation
Programme?
Any offer made to a doctor currently on a UK Foundation Programme is made
subject to them being awarded an FACD 5.2 before the training programme
commences. If it transpires that you will not be awarded an FACD 5.2 by the start of
the programme, the recruiting organisation must withdraw the offer. This includes
those who do not complete the Foundation Programme because of maternity or sick
leave. Offers for a delayed start date can only be made to candidates who cannot
start on the intended date for statutory reasons (illness or maternity leave) if they
have obtained their FACD 5.2 by the intended start date.
You cannot defer your start date in order to complete your Foundation training,
whatever the reason for the delay.

Do I need an Advanced Life Support (ALS) Certificate when I apply?
NO. All ST1 Person Specifications have as one of their eligibility criteria the
possession of an ALS certificate – this is checked pre-employment, and any offer of
a training programme will be conditional upon you presenting it to your first
employer.

How is my documentation assessed?
Recruiting organisations do not assess the evidence – the signatory to your
FACD5.2 or Alternative Certificate has the responsibility for doing that. Instead they
verify the evidence provided by you. Submitted evidence is considered as
applications are considered by the long-listing admin team.

What happens if I submit the wrong or incomplete evidence?
Applicants who submit no evidence, incorrect documentation or unsatisfactory
evidence will be asked to re-submit either an FACD 5.2 or an Alternative Certificate
within 5 working days of being notified of the error by the recruiter.

Do I have to demonstrate every Competence?
YES. Applicants must be rated “Demonstrated to F2 level” for each and every
competence listed on this certificate. If you cannot demonstrate that you have
achieved all the competences in one post, you may submit additional Alternative
Certificates to demonstrate the full set of competences. If they cannot demonstrate
each and every competence, you will not be eligible for Specialty Training at ST1
level. There are NO exceptions to this rule.

What do I do if my consultant has not witnessed me demonstrating all those
Competences?
The signatory signs that: “I can confirm that I have observed the doctor named
above demonstrate all of the listed competences OR where I have not personally
observed them, I have received alternative evidence that I know to be reliable from a
colleague working satisfactorily as a senior trainee (i.e.at ST5 or above)..” For the
acute care competencies they are then asked to name that colleague.
This means that, although the signatory has to have worked with you for three months, the evidence on which they are relying does not have to have come from a post of that length; and the signatory does not have to have witnessed you demonstrate all of the competences.

**My consultant is not a clinician. Does that matter?**

NO. The signatory is tasked with knowing you and your work; and evaluating the evidence provided to them by a clinician. They are also asked to name whose evidence they are relying on. The rationale here is that the signatory is in a much better position to assess the worth of the evidence provided to them by someone locally than a distant recruiter. The recruiter has the duty to verify that evidence, so may contact the individuals named.

**What happens if I get it signed without such evidence?**

If at any stage investigation shows that the certificate has been fraudulently signed (by you or by the signatory), then instant dismissal and referral of you, the applicant and / or the signatory to the relevant Responsible Officer or GMC (or equivalent) will be considered.

**I have limited opportunities to demonstrate competence. What should I do?**

If you have limited opportunities to demonstrate some of the competences (e.g. if you are undertaking PhDs or are on active service in non-acute specialties) you should arrange to undertake keeping in touch days, locums, etc (but not pure clinical attachments where you only have observer status). This will provide evidence for the signatory (someone who has worked with you for 3 months within the last three years) to evaluate.

**My signatory is registered overseas. What should I do?**

It is your responsibility to ensure you supply adequate evidence of the signatories standing with a regulatory authority, and if there is any doubt, enquires will be made with that authority. The default position is that where signatories’ status cannot be verified, the candidate does NOT progress.