

Medical Training in the United Kingdom

a Guide for International Graduates

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Introduction

This guide is primarily aimed at doctors and dentists from countries outside the UK/European Economic Area who are considering pursuing their post qualification medical or dental training in the United Kingdom, although many of the issues addressed are as relevant to doctors from within the EEA. It also provides brief advice to students contemplating studying for a medical or dental degree (primary medical/dental qualification) in the UK.

The United Kingdom welcomes doctors and dentists from overseas who wish to pursue postgraduate training in medicine or dentistry and who may choose to seek employment here. The tradition of training in the UK is long established and has made a major contribution to the health services of both developed and developing countries.

Each year several thousand doctors and dentists come to the UK to pursue their training. Their objectives will differ – some will wish to complete part of their training, others most or all of it. A smaller number will wish to come to the UK for employment. The vast majority will wish to leave the UK on completion of their training, whilst others may decide to seek to settle permanently in the UK.

The opportunities exist to pursue all of these. Although the arrangements can seem complex, there are many individuals and organisations which are ready to help. If you encounter difficulties seek help or advice. Do not give up.

This guide provides only a brief overview of the most important issues to be taken into account when considering training in the UK. For fuller details visit the Department of Health [website www.doh.gov.uk/medicaltrainingintheuk](http://www.doh.gov.uk/medicaltrainingintheuk) or contact any of the bodies mentioned in this guide.

SECTION ONE

The National Health Service

The NHS was established in 1948 and is the means by which healthcare is delivered to the UK population free of charge at the point of delivery. It is funded through general taxation.

The NHS is also the single biggest employer in Europe employing or obtaining services from almost one million people including most doctors and nurses as well as many other healthcare professional such as therapists and scientific and laboratory staff.

The provision of healthcare is divided into two main sections – primary and secondary care.

Primary care is provided by general practitioners (GPs) in the community. GPs work either singly or in group practices and all UK residents should be registered with a GP. It is not possible to receive secondary care without initial reference from a GP except for emergency treatment. GP practices combine into groups to provide the healthcare services needed by their patients, these are known as **Primary Care Groups (PCGs)**. PCGs provide the means by which GPs working with other healthcare staff secure high quality healthcare for local people. All GPs and their patients must be represented within a PCG and there are 481 in operation.

From April 2000 the first 17 **Primary Care Trusts** became operational. These are formed by one or more PCGs taking on additional responsibilities. They have their own budget and may employ staff and develop new ways of providing integrated services. They will undertake many of the functions currently provided by Health Authorities.

Neither PCGs nor PCTs alter in any way the arrangements which exist between GPs and their patients.

Other primary care services are being developed – such as walk-in centres – and these services will continue to develop over the years ahead.

Secondary care is provided in a hospital setting. All referrals are made by a general practitioner and each patient is allocated to a particular consultant (specialist) who will retain overall responsibility for the care provided to that patient, whether as an inpatient or outpatient, until such time as the patient is discharged.

Within hospitals, doctors work in multi-disciplinary teams which will include medical staff, such as Consultants, Specialist Registrar(s) (SpR), Senior House Officer(s) (SHO) and Pre-Registration House Officers (PRHO), nurses, therapists, healthcare workers and a range of scientific and technical staff.

SECTION TWO

Choosing to pursue training or a career in the United Kingdom

Deciding to leave your country to gain experience, training and qualifications or to seek a career in the United Kingdom will be one of the single biggest decisions of your life, and should not be taken without a great deal of thought and planning. Medical training is a highly competitive field and there will always be more doctors seeking to undertake training than there are places available. It is important therefore that you are very clear about what it is you wish to do and to plan accordingly. The following paragraphs are meant to provide helpful advice, but cannot provide all the information you need which you should seek from any of the bodies mentioned in Sections 7 and 8.

Plan your trip well, as far in advance as is reasonably practical, and if possible seek advice from someone who has worked or lived in the UK. Obtain entry clearance (immigration) before leaving home and ensure you carry all relevant travel documents with you at all times until your passport has been stamped at immigration control. It is generally accepted that this planning should commence at least one year before you intend to start training in the UK (more information relating to Immigration can be found in Sections 3 and 9).

Important things to think about before you leave your country are:-

Bringing your family – you should think very carefully about whether you will wish to bring your family with you, and if so at what stage this should be done.

Accommodation – where will you live? Some hospitals can provide accommodation (either single or for families) but this must be agreed in advance and there will usually be a charge for this unless you are required to ‘live in’.

Schooling – the vast majority of children attend schools provided by the Local Education Authority. These are funded through general taxation and you will not be required to pay. Schooling is compulsory until the age of 16, and voluntary thereafter until age 18. Private education is available, but is generally expensive.

Banking and credit facilities – you will need to open a bank account as soon as possible. You may be able to do this through your bank in your own country, or you may wish to make these arrangements once you are in the UK. Visa and Mastercard credit cards are widely accepted in the UK. It will only take a few days to open a bank account, but you should ensure that you have sufficient cash to last through the first few days.

National Insurance/Taxation – everybody working in the UK must have a National Insurance Number (NINO) which can be obtained from the local Social Security office. Payment of income tax is compulsory and is usually deducted from your salary. Your employer will be able to give you help and advice on these matters.

Patients – patients in the UK are generally well informed about their rights and will insist on them being observed. Patients must be kept informed about their condition and their consent obtained for any treatment. They are also entitled to absolute confidentiality. More detailed instruction on these topics will be given during induction.

Working practices – the NHS is made up of many different professions – nurses, therapists, scientific staff as well as doctors. You should use their help and seek advice when necessary. It does not undermine your position as a doctor to do so. The emphasis in the NHS is for teamwork – using the skills and experience of each member of staff in the best way to provide patients with the right service.

Cultural differences – you may notice many different customs in the UK ranging from the clothes people wear to the way men and women are treated. In general the UK is tolerant of different cultures and religions and will recognise an individual's desire to maintain his/her cultural identity. However, you should be aware that men and women are treated equally in the UK.

Climate – the UK does not generally suffer from extremes of temperature, although Scotland tends to be colder than England/Wales and rainfall is quite high and can occur at any time. Winter (November to February) can be cold, but sustained below zero temperatures are uncommon (except in Scotland), Spring (March – May), Summer (June – August) and Autumn (September/October) are generally mild or warm. Doctors from tropical countries do find the short daylight and lack of sun in the winter trying but compensation comes with long summer daylight.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The National Health Service is an equal opportunities employer and both the Department of Health and the NHS promote and implement equal opportunities policies. There is no place for discrimination on grounds of age, sex, marital status, race, religion, creed, sexual orientation, colour or disability.

SECTION THREE

Training in the United Kingdom

Reasons for seeking training in the UK

It is vital that anyone intending training in the UK has a clear idea of what they wish to achieve from that training. Unclear or poorly focussed training goals can lead to a disappointing and frustrating training experience. Doctors intending training in the UK are advised to seek appropriate careers advice from senior colleagues. It may also be helpful, if possible, to discuss this with a doctor who has himself or herself spent a period in training in the UK. Further information on the training opportunities available in the UK is contained in Section 4.

You may also wish to consider seeking a clinical attachment. A clinical attachment will provide you with an insight into the workings of the NHS and can be a valuable contribution to preparation for the PLAB test. Clinical attachments are unpaid, and do not provide direct patient access, but can be undertaken without GMC registration and with visitor status from the Immigration Authorities. You should contact one of the postgraduate deans (see Section 8) for advice and information.

What you should do before leaving for the UK

Medical and Dental Registration

Medical Registration

All doctors wishing to work in any capacity in the NHS must be registered with the General Medical Council (GMC).

In medicine there are two, main, types of registration – Limited (LR) and Full (FR). Most doctors who have obtained their Primary Medical Qualification (medical degree) from a country other than the UK or other Member State of the European Economic Area (EEA) (see section 6, page 20 for list) will be eligible only for Limited registration. There are exceptions for doctors who qualify from certain Universities in Australia, New Zealand, Malaya, Singapore, Hong Kong, South Africa and the West Indies. These graduates will be eligible for Full Registration and advice should be sought from the GMC.

In order to be granted LR, doctors must demonstrate their linguistic and clinical abilities. This is done by taking two tests - a test of linguistic ability such as the International English Language Testing Service (IELTS) test, and a clinical test known as the Professional and Linguistic Assessment Board (PLAB) Test. Doctors with overseas qualifications recognised for Full Registration are required to take the IELTS or similar recognised test, but do not need to undertake the PLAB test.

Some doctors may qualify for certain categories of exemption from the PLAB test and should make enquiries from the GMC.

Doctors who are nationals of other EEA Member States but whose medical qualification was obtained outside the EEA should seek advice from the GMC.

The IELTS test can be taken at any of the British Council's offices in many countries or in the UK, and doctors cannot take the PLAB test without first passing the IELTS or a similar recognised test. Further information may be obtained from any British Council office, from the British Council's Advice Centre by telephone +44-161 957 7474 or by visiting their web-site at www.britishcouncil.org/health

Most doctors who are required to take the PLAB test will need to come to the UK to do so, although there are test centres in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Egypt and Sri Lanka where the first part of the test is held. You would be admitted to the UK as a visitor to do the PLAB, which means you would not be able to work.

Although the length of time it can take to meet all the requirements for medical registration varies between individuals, doctors from outside the EEA should allow 6-9 months. You should therefore make your plans accordingly and be aware that this process can be expensive, particularly if more than one attempt at the IELTS and PLAB is needed, and you will need to ensure that you have sufficient money to keep yourself during this period.

YOU SHOULD NOTE THAT PASSING THE PLAB TEST AND GAINING REGISTRATION DOES NOT GUARANTEE EMPLOYMENT IN A TRAINING GRADE POST. IT MAY BE SOME MONTHS BEFORE YOU ARE ABLE TO OBTAIN A SUITABLE TRAINING GRADE APPOINTMENT.

Dental Registration

In dentistry there are two forms of Registration, Temporary and Full.

Temporary Registration is granted in a similar way to Limited Registration in medicine and will be the form of Registration granted to most overseas-qualified dentists. This form of Registration will allow a dentist to practice in the UK for a limited period in specified posts without the need to take further examinations.

Applying for Medical or Dental Registration

Further details on how to apply for registration and the costs involved can be obtained from the General Medical Council by telephone +44-20 7915 3481 or by visiting their web-site at www.gmc-uk.org or from the General Dental Council by telephone +44-20 7887 3800) or by visiting their web-site at www.gdc-uk.org

You are advised to resolve at an early stage any issues relating to Registration.

Immigration

There are specific rules governing postgraduate medical training in the NHS. Whereas individuals without indefinite rights of residence in the UK would, for most professions, require a work permit, medical and dental trainees are admitted under arrangements known as 'permit-free', which means no work permit is required.

Your exact immigration status will be determined by the reason you are seeking to enter the UK.

Visitor Status

If you are seeking to come to the UK to seek employment in a training post, to attend an interview or to take an examination such as PLAB or a Royal College examination, or to take a clinical attachment, then it is likely that you would be admitted as a visitor. This will normally be for a maximum of 6 months and there may be restrictions on your ability to take any form of employment – paid or not. You should seek advice from the Immigration Authorities at an early stage to find out what would be required of you.

Permit-free status

If you have been appointed to a training post and are either seeking to enter the UK or to remain in the UK to take up this post then you should seek advice from the Immigration Authorities.

The amount of time you may be admitted to the UK to train in medicine is directly linked to the type of training you are following. Training falls into three basic types, Pre-Registration, basic, and higher specialist training. Each of these types of training is provided for in the Immigration Rules. Doctors undertaking Pre-Registration training will be admitted for a maximum of 12 months, doctors entering basic specialist training (in the SHO grade) will be admitted for a maximum of 4 years (granted in periods of from 6 months to 3 years) and doctors in higher specialist training (in the SpR grade) will be admitted for an unspecified amount of time dependant on the length of their specialist training programme. Extensions of permission to remain in the UK within the above limits require the support of the Postgraduate Dean who must be satisfied that you are making satisfactory progress in training.

If you are coming to the UK to take a training post, you should always have a copy of your letter of appointment with you when you arrive as this, together with your visa if required, will provide the Immigration Officer with information on which to decide your right to enter the UK.

If you are coming to the UK to take a non-training position, then you will require a work permit which the hospital or other person wishing to employ you must apply for. This permit should be sent to you and presented to the Immigration Officer on your arrival in the UK.

Changing your immigration status

Depending on the reason you entered the UK, you may need to change your immigration status – this is sometimes referred to as ‘switching’. For example, you may wish to take a postgraduate training post under permit-free arrangements after entering the UK as a visitor or student. Decisions relating to changes in status whilst remaining in the UK will be made by the Immigration and Nationality Directorate

You are advised to resolve at an early stage issues relating to your ability to enter the UK, including seeking advice on whether or not you require a visa to do so. Advice may be sought from the local British Embassy (or Consulate) or British Council offices.

Further information can be obtained by reading the document *A Guide to the Immigration and Employment of Overseas Medical and Dental Students, Doctors and Dentists in the UK* which can be viewed at the Department of Health’s website www.doh.gov.uk/medicaltrainingintheuk

SECTION FOUR

Medical and Dental training in the UK

Medical Training

Postgraduate Deans

Postgraduate Deans and Directors of Postgraduate General Practice Education play a central role in managing the education and training of hospital doctors and general practitioners.

Deans and Directors of GP Education provide a co-ordinating management role for training programmes, ensure the integrity of appointments process, administer part-time training schemes and organise special holding arrangements for trainees if there are temporary shortages of consultant vacancies. Through service level agreements with trusts, the deans are one of the key players, with medical Royal Colleges and the Specialist Training Authority, in ensuring that training is delivered.

Medical training in the UK consists of four stages:-

- Undergraduate (or pre-registration);
- General Clinical Training (pre-registration year);
- Basic Specialist Training (including Vocational Training for General Practice)
- Higher Specialist Training

Undergraduate

This takes place in University medical schools (funded *mainly from* general taxation *through UK government grants and contributions to student tuition fees*) and consists of a 5 or 6 year *undergraduate degree* programme leading to the award of *Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery* degrees (Primary Medical Qualification).

There are 24 undergraduate medical schools in the United Kingdom, including 17 in England and 5 in Scotland, one of which is pre-clinical only. In the year 2000 the total number of first year student places throughout the UK will be about 5,500. About 375 (7 per cent) of these will be available for overseas students. The total number of new students admitted each year by each medical school ranges from about 115 to 360. Of these, about 10 to 25 will be overseas students.

All students, including overseas students, are required to apply through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service for the UK. Information about courses and how to apply can be found on the UCAS web-site at: <http://wwwucas.ac.uk/ucc/index.html>. Information can also be obtained at the British Council office in most countries.

Information about the undergraduate courses at each medical school, including course structures, curricula and admissions requirements, is available from the medical schools. Links to the medical schools' web-sites can be found at

<http://www.chms.ac.uk/fschlweb.html>. More details about course curricula can be found at the web-site for the Association for the Study of Medical Education:

<http://www.asme.org.uk/curriculum/courses.htm>. The curriculum at all UK medical schools conforms to the recommendations on basic medical education laid down by the General Medical Council in "Tomorrow's Doctors", 1993:

http://www.gmc-uk.org/n_hance/med_ed/tomdoc.htm.

Students outside the United Kingdom, but within the European Union, contribute to tuition fees at the UK rate. For overseas students resident outside the European Union the cost of medical education in the United Kingdom is about £16,500 a year. Living costs are additional to the tuition fees. After graduation overseas students may remain in the UK for sufficient time to complete their postgraduate general clinical and basic specialist training.

General Clinical Training or the pre-registration or intern year

Also known as the Pre-Registration House Officer (PRHO) year, this follows graduation from medical school. This period is the responsibility of the University, but takes place in approved hospital placements and is supervised by the postgraduate medical deans. PRHO training usually consists of two 6-month posts, one in surgery and one in medicine although new patterns of training, including periods in general practice, are being developed.

As the pre-registration training programme (internship) in most countries is designed to complement and build on their undergraduate training, overseas qualified doctors are advised to complete this phase of training in their own country.

As with all phases of training, appropriate registration with the General Medical Council is required in order to be eligible for appointment as a PRHO. Doctors with non-EEA qualifications should seek advice from the GMC on their eligibility for Registration to undertake PRHO posts.

Basic and Higher Specialist Training

Responsibility for the management and delivery of medical education at basic and higher specialist training levels rests with the Postgraduate Deans. There is a total of 21 Deaneries in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, each responsible for a particular geographical area. Doctors are, however, employed by NHS Trusts.

Basic Specialist Training

This is the period which follows the PRHO year in which doctors spend time in the Senior House Officer Grade during which time they acquire increased but supervised responsibility for patient care and develop a wide range of general and basic specialist skills. Most overseas-qualified doctors will enter training in the UK in this grade. Basic specialist training does not lead to the award of a formal certificate, although some Royal Colleges have introduced a Certificate of Completion of Basic Specialist Training which has no legal status but is an important step towards higher specialist training (see below) which may

ultimately lead to a Certificate of Completion of Specialist Training (CCST). A period spent in BST may also allow a doctor to sit an examination of one of the medical Royal Colleges).

Higher Specialist Training

Doctors entering higher specialist training in the Specialist Registrar (SpR) grade do so by competing for appointment to a specialist training programme(s) of their choice. Such programmes provide structured training with placements planned as part of that. Successful completion of such a course entitles a doctor to be awarded a Certificate of Completion of Specialist Training (CCST). Possession of this certificate entitles a doctor to be entered onto the Specialist Register and to be eligible for employment as a Consultant (specialist) in the NHS. **However, possession of a CCST does not guarantee employment as a Consultant or in any other hospital grade. All career grade appointments are subject to competitive procedures.**

There are strict entry requirements for appointment to the SpR grade, although these vary depending on the specialty involved. Further advice may be obtained by contacting the relevant medical Royal College or their web-site or by accessing the Guide to Specialist Registrar Training on the Department's web-site at www.doh.gov.uk/medicaltrainingintheuk

In addition to the full training programmes mentioned above, special arrangements exist to allow doctors without indefinite rights of residence in the UK to benefit from higher specialist training through fixed term training appointments (FTTAs). These are typically of between 6 months and 2 years in length and designed to meet specific training requirements. These courses do not lead to the award of the CCST but may allow the individual to sit a College examination such as the Intercollegiate Specialty Fellowships in Surgery.

DOCTORS SHOULD BE AWARE THAT THERE IS COMPETITION FOR APPOINTMENT TO HIGHER SPECIALIST TRAINING - even to those positions which are reserved for overseas doctors

Vocational Training for General Practice

BEFORE READING THE FOLLOWING PARAGRAPHS, YOU SHOULD NOTE THAT AT PRESENT THERE ARE RESTRICTIONS ON THE AVAILABILITY OF FUNDING FOR DOCTORS WHO DO NOT HAVE RIGHTS OF RESIDENCE OR INDEFINITE LEAVE TO REMAIN IN THE UK AND WHO WISH TO UNDERTAKE TRAINING IN GENERAL PRACTICE - THESE RESTRICTIONS DO NOT APPLY TO NATIONALS OF OTHER MEMBER STATES OF THE EEA

Training for general practice in the UK consists of a minimum of three years. At least 12 months must be undertaken in general practice and 12 months in approved hospital posts (see section above on Basic Specialist Training). The remaining year may be spent either in approved hospital posts or general practice, or a combination of both. This is known as vocational training and doctors wishing to undertake training for general practice are strongly encouraged to join a three year vocational training scheme in which the entire

period of training is planned. General practice training is managed by Directors of Postgraduate GP Education in the same way as hospital training is managed by Postgraduate Deans.

Doctors who have already undertaken training outside the UK, in either hospital or general practice positions, may be able to have some of this taken into account in determining what further training is required. This will be determined by the Joint Committee on Postgraduate Training for General Practice (JCPTGP).

Doctors who successfully complete general practice training will be eligible to apply to the JCPTGP for a Certificate of *Prescribed* or *Equivalent* Experience. Which certificate is issued will be determined by the exact training programme undertaken, but each has equal standing in terms of future employment. It is not possible to work in general practice other than as a Registrar (trainee) without such a certificate or an equivalent certificate issued by another Member State of the European Economic Area (EEA).

Registration

Full Registration with the General Medical Council is required before a doctor may undertake the 12 month general practice element of training. The hospital element may be undertaken with Limited Registration, but conversion to Full Registration would be required in order to complete training.

Funding

There are at present restrictions on the funding of the general practice element of training for doctors who do not have indefinite leave to remain in the UK. Doctors who are uncertain as to their eligibility are strongly advised to make early enquiries or to view the document *The GP Registrar Scheme* on the Department's web-site at www.doh.gov.uk/medicaltrainingintheuk

Self-funding

It is possible for doctors who have access to sufficient funds to undertake training on a self-funding basis. Individuals considering this option should be aware that it is expensive and the Immigration Authorities would need to be certain that the individual had sufficient funds available to support themselves and any dependants throughout the training period in question. A form of work-permit known as a Training and Work Experience Scheme (TWES) certificate would be required to allow the training to be undertaken. Individuals are advised to seek further advice if considering this option.

Employment as a General Practitioner

See Section Five.

Obtaining employment in a training grade

Application Procedures

Training in the Hospital and Community Health Services

Unless you are coming to the UK under direct placement arrangements you should expect to need to attend an interview in the UK. Doctors/dentists should not apply for training posts until they have confirmed with the General Medical Council that their primary medical qualification has been accepted for the purposes of either Full or Limited Registration.

Most jobs are advertised in the Classified Advertisement Section of the British Medical Journal (BMJ) or in the Lancet. It is also well worth looking in specialist journals, depending on where your interests lie, and in national broadsheet newspapers, where research and academic posts may be advertised, as well as posts outside medicine but for which a medical background might be useful. All members of the British Medical Association (BMA) receive the BMJ as a benefit of membership. If you join while you are living abroad, however, the Classified Advertisement Section will not be sent to you, but you can arrange with BMJ staff to have details of certain posts sent to you. If you have access to the Internet, you should also be able to find details on the BMJ website www.bmj.com.

The NHS Executive is also taking forward plans to introduce electronic recruitment within the National Health Service. The aim is to have this service available by Autumn 2000 and further details will be available on the Department of Health web-site.

Advertisements for training posts should state whether the post has both *educational approval* and *approval by the relevant postgraduate dean* (this is known as dual approval). If it does not have dual approval, it cannot be designated a training placement and this will affect the immigration status of any successful applicants from outside the European Union. In the BMJ Classified Advertisement section, dual approval is indicated by the following statement in bold:

“The Postgraduate Dean confirms that this placement and/or programme has the required educational and dean's approval”.

If the advertisement does not carry these words, doctors are advised to contact the employer to establish whether the post has dual approval.

Further information relating to recruitment procedures may be obtained by reading the document *The Recruitment of Doctors and Dentists in Training* which can be viewed on the Department of Health's web-site at www.doh.gov.uk/medicaltrainingintheuk

Entry to general practice training

Directors of Postgraduate GP Education, based in the Deaneries, manage the advertising and recruitment system for GP training. Advertisements usually appear twice a year (once in Northern Ireland). Doctors may apply through this process for the full three-year vocational training scheme (including hospital and general practice training), or for the general practice element of training alone. There may be demand for places and early application is advisable. Deaneries will be able to advise doctors about the recruitment process in the local area.

Dental training in the UK

Arrangements for training in dentistry are broadly similar to those in place for medicine. The grades are similar (House Officer, Senior House Officer and Specialist Registrar) and the mechanisms for approving training posts are the same. The Postgraduate Dental Dean provides a similar service to that of Postgraduate Dean in medicine. Appointments are most likely to be advertised in The British Dental Journal, details can also be found on the Internet at www.bdj.co.uk

CVs and references

A curriculum vitae should start with basic information such as your full name, age, address, telephone number and nationality, followed by separate headed sections on education (including qualifications) and work experience. Include details of prizes, awards, fellowships, and publications. It is important that you explain (in brackets) anything which might not be immediately obvious to a UK reader - a specialist qualification for example. Always give the place of qualification in brackets together with the name of the degree you received.

It is often helpful to have a section on general interests. If you have a specific interest or hobby, this will help the person reading your application to remember you and might make your application stand out from the others.

Keep the CV short and concise, however, and try to limit it to two sides of A4 paper. Print it out on good quality paper and make sure that it is attractively laid out and free of spelling mistakes and grammatical errors. It is worth asking a native English speaker to check the accuracy of the language.

At the end of your CV, you should add the names of two referees whom the employer can consult for a work and character reference. These should ideally be consultants (senior doctors) with whom you have worked or trained and one should be from your most recent supervisor. If you cannot provide these references, academic referees (university professors, for example) would also be acceptable. It is advisable and courteous to ask the referees concerned before you put their names on your CV.

Enclose with your CV a short covering letter briefly setting out your background, why you are interested in the job and why you think you are a good candidate. The tone should be confident and self-assured but not arrogant. The covering letter is extremely important. Employers will often read it before they read your CV, and so it is essential that you spend time on the wording of the letter.

Induction training

Appropriate induction training is an important aspect of a new doctor's early experience of working in the National Health Service in the UK. Arrangements are currently being designed to ensure that all doctors from outside the UK who have been appointed to a post receive appropriate induction before commencing work. Further details on this will be supplied at the appropriate time.

Sponsorship and non-competitive entry to training

Although the normal route into training is through competition for advertised posts, arrangements do exist which allow doctors to be appointed directly to training without having to compete for individual posts. These arrangements are presently under review, and further information may be obtained from the Department of Health web-site or by contacting the relevant medical Royal College. In general however these arrangements are intended to support short periods of training in specific areas for doctors intending to return home. There is no provision to place a doctor through non-competitive entry to a programme leading directly to the certificate of specialist training in either hospital or general practice – i.e. the CCST for medicine or the Certificates of Prescribed or Equivalent Experience for General Practice.

SECTION FIVE

Seeking employment in a career (non-training) grade

In addition to employment in the training grades as described above, doctors may wish to seek employment in a career grade. The three main grades of employment are *Consultant*, *Associate Specialist* and *Staff Grade (the latter two also known as Non-Consultant Career Grades)*, although there are other titles applied to doctors by the NHS Trust in which they are employed. Some examples of these are *Trust Specialist*, *Trust Doctor*, *Trust Fellow*, and collectively these are known as non-standard grades and doctors should be aware that such posts may bring no or little training benefit.

Requirements for employment as a consultant

The Specialist Register

In addition to the requirement to be registered with the General Medical Council (see Section 3) you must also be on the Council's Specialist Register if you wish to work as a consultant in the National Health Service (NHS). The General Medical Council cannot include you in the Specialist Register until you have been accepted on the main Medical Register, but you can apply for both at the same time.

If you are a national of a Member State of the EEA and hold a specialist qualification from another EEA country which is listed in the relevant European legislation (directive 93/16/EC), you can apply to the Specialist Training Authority, which will recommend to the General Medical Council (GMC) that you be included in the specialist register. This process should be straightforward.

If you are not a national of a Member State of the EEA and hold a specialist qualification from either within or outside the EEA, you must apply directly to the Specialist Training Authority. It will consult the relevant Royal College to determine whether or not this qualification is equivalent to a UK Certificate of Completion of Specialist Training (CCST) in the specialty in question. Doctors can also apply for entry to the Specialist Register if they have a specialist qualification awarded outside the UK or have knowledge of or experience in any medical specialty derived from academic or research work and the Specialist Training Authority is satisfied that these give the individual a level of knowledge and skill consistent with practice as a consultant in that specialty in the NHS.

There is an appeals procedure for applicants whom the Specialist Training Authority refuses.

You do not need to be included in the Specialist Register to be employed in a Non-Consultant Career Grade or non-standard grade, but must still have appropriate registration with the GMC.

Requirements for employment as a General Practitioner

Doctors wishing to work as a General Practitioner must possess a Certificate of *Prescribed* or *Equivalent* experience, or an equivalent EEA certificate. **It is not possible to work in any capacity without this.**

Most general practitioners are self employed contractors (known as GP Principals) working either individually or as part of a group practice who provide services in return for payment which is based on a system of fees and allowances. Doctors without rights of residence in the UK wishing to become GP Principals are therefore required to meet the requirements of the Immigration Rules for persons intending to establish themselves in business. Advice on these requirements should be obtained from the appropriate immigration authorities.

However, there are an increasing number of salaried general practitioner positions available for which a work-permit would be required.

Obtaining employment

The procedures involved in obtaining employment in a career grade position are broadly similar to those set out in Section 4.

Most jobs are advertised in the Classified Advertisement Section of the British Medical Journal (BMJ) or in the Lancet. It is also well worth looking in specialist journals, depending on where your interests lie, and in certain national newspapers (e.g. The Times, Guardian, Independent, Telegraph in England, The Herald or The Scotsman in Scotland and, in Northern Ireland, The Belfast Telegraph), where research and academic posts may be advertised, as well as posts outside medicine but for which a medical background might be useful.

Immigration (see also Section Nine)

If you are coming to the UK to take a non-training position and do not have indefinite rights of residence in the UK, then you will require a work permit which the hospital (or other person wishing to employ you) must apply for. This permit should be sent to you and presented to the Immigration Officer on your arrival in the UK. In order to obtain a work-permit for you the hospital (or other employer) will need to show that they could not have appointed a doctor from the resident labour force, which includes workers from the European Economic Area (EEA).

If you are taking a career grade post after a period as a trainee or visitor then in addition to a work-permit you will need permission to alter your immigration status – also known as 'switching'.

You are advised to resolve at an early stage issues relating to your ability to enter or remain in the UK, including seeking advice on whether or not you require a visa to do so. Advice may be sought from the local British Embassy (or Consulate) or British Council offices or from the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (see Section 8 for details).

Further information can be obtained by reading the document A Guide to the Immigration and Employment of Overseas Medical and Dental Students, Doctors and Dentists in the UK which can be viewed at the Department of Health's website at www.doh.gov.uk/medicaltrainingintheuk

SECTION SIX

Doctors and Dentists from other Member States of the European Economic Area*

Doctors/dentists from the other Member States of the EEA benefit from freedom of movement and employment within the UK. Access to postgraduate medical or dental training is therefore available to such individuals on the same basis as UK graduates. European Directives 1993/16/EEC (doctors) and 1978 686/687/EEC (dentists) sets out the minimum training requirements for specialist training which are common to all Member States. Individual Member States may choose to have a higher standard for their own nationals but cannot require these higher standards of nationals of other Member States whose training meets the minimum standards set out in the Directives.

Registration

Doctors/dentists who are nationals of other Member States and who obtain their primary medical/dental qualifications from one of those countries are entitled to Full Registration with the General Medical/Dental Councils.

Language testing

Although the GMC cannot require EEA nationals with EEA qualifications to take a test of linguistic competence for the purposes of Registration, prospective employers may, as a condition of employment, require EEA doctors to provide evidence of a satisfactory standard of English. Some employers do this by requiring doctors to take the 'Use of English' component of the PLAB test or other approved English language proficiency test.

Basic Specialist Training

Appointment is through the competitive procedures described in Section 4. Doctors who benefit from freedom of movement will not have any limits placed on the amount of time they may spend in basic specialist training.

Higher specialist training

Doctors may choose to undertake part or all of their higher specialist training in the UK. Doctors who elect to undergo a full programme of higher specialist training will be required to compete for appointment. Doctors who are undertaking a programme of training in their own country leading to the nationally recognised qualification may choose to undertake part of this training in the UK. Doctors who do so will be eligible to apply for a Fixed Term Training Programme (also known as Type II training) and candidates must be nominated by the relevant authority or institution in the country where they are undertaking the majority of their training programme. Appointment to such programmes need not be through competitive procedures although a formal interview will be required. Further details may be found by viewing A Guide to Specialist Registrar Training on the Department of Health's web-site www.doh.gov.uk/medicaltrainingintheuk or by contacting the Specialist Training Authority or relevant medical Royal College for advice.

Training for General Practice

Doctors wishing to enter general practice training must have full registration with the General Medical Council. It is possible to undertake the hospital component of the training with limited registration, but it is not possible to undertake the GP component unless full registration has been achieved.

The minimum educational requirement for entry to GP vocational training is the potential to be trained to the standard required for independent general practice within the normal period provided for GP vocational training. This will be established by the interview and selection process carried out under the management of the Directors of Postgraduate GP Education. Doctors who have received specific training in general practice in another Member State or who are otherwise qualified to work as a General Practitioner under freedom of movement arrangements will be eligible to apply for further training in the UK.

Employment as a Consultant or General Practitioner

Doctors/dentists who have successfully completed their training in another Member State and have been awarded the qualification listed in 1993/16/EEC or 1978/686/687/EEC will be eligible to apply for appointment to career grade posts in medicine/dentistry and/or general practice. Doctors wishing to be appointed as Consultants in the NHS must have their name entered in the Specialist Register maintained by the GMC. Doctors are advised to check their position with the Specialist Training Authority – see Section Eight for details.

DOCTORS FROM OTHER MEMBER STATES OF THE EEA* WHO ARE CONTEMPLATING TRAINING IN THE UK ARE RECOMMENDED TO SEEK CAREERS ADVICE AND GUIDANCE FROM

* At the time of printing these countries are: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and the UK

SECTION SEVEN

The Role of the Specialist Training Authority and the medical Royal Colleges

The Specialist Training Authority (STA) is responsible for defining and maintaining the standards necessary for practice and advancement in medical and surgical specialties in the UK. In practice this is carried out on behalf of the STA by the medical Royal Colleges.

The primary function of the STA centres around the training and career progression of junior doctors. The membership examinations conducted by the Royal Colleges represent the level of clinical ability which doctors must attain in order to eventually progress to become consultants in the UK. Each Royal College conducts examinations which are specific to the particular specialty/specialties it presides over. Many courses are run by the Royal Colleges and various texts are also recommended with the aim of preparing junior doctors for success in the membership examinations.

A range of information relating to the Royal Colleges, including details of examinations, may be found on the Royal College websites.

Royal College of Anaesthetists	http://www.rcoa.ac.uk
Royal College of General Practitioners	http://www.rcgp.org.uk
Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists	http://www.rcog.org.uk
Royal College of Ophthalmologists	http://www.rcophth.ac.uk
Royal College of Pathologists	http://www.rcpath.org
Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health	http://www.rcpch.ac.uk
Royal College of Physicians	http://www.rcplondon.ac.uk
Royal College of Psychiatrists	http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk
Royal College of Radiologists	http://www.rcr.ac.uk
Royal College of Surgeons of England	http://www.rcseng.ac.uk
Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow	http://www.gla.ac.uk
Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh	http://www.rcpe.ac.uk
Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh	http://www.old.rcsed.ac.uk
Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland	http://www.rcsi.ie

SECTION EIGHT

Useful addresses and web-sites

The National Advice Centre for Postgraduate Medical Education (NACPME)

This centre, based at the British Council in Manchester, is funded by the Department of Health and provides information to overseas doctors intending to train in the UK. NACPME supplies a range of information sheets which are available on the British Council website at www.britishcouncil.org/health. These sheets are also available at British Council offices overseas to which doctors overseas should direct their initial enquiries. NACPME also provides advice in response to mail, E-mail and telephone requests. Overseas doctors in the UK who are having problems with gaining access to training are able to make an appointment to see an adviser in London (Tel 44-207 389 4383).

National Advice Centre for Postgraduate Medical Education
The British Council, 58 Whitworth Street, Manchester M1 6BB
Tel 44-161 957 7218 Fax 44-161 957 7029
E-mail nacpme@britishcouncil.org

The National Advice Centre for Postgraduate Dental Education (NACPDE)

This centre, based in the Faculty of Dental Surgery at the Royal College of Surgeons of England, provides a similar service to overseas dentists.

National Advice Centre for Postgraduate Dental Education
Faculty of Dental Surgery, Royal College of Surgeons of England,
35 – 43 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London WC2A 3PN
Tel 44-171 973 2181 Fax 44-171 973 2183
E-mail soverda@rcseng.ac.uk
Web-site www.rcseng.ac.uk/public/fds/advice

The General Medical Council

Deals with all issues relating to medical Registration, and can provide advice relating to PLAB and IELTS.

The General Medical Council
178 Great Portland Street, London W1N 6JE
Tel 44-171 580 7642 Fax 44-171 915 3641
Web-site www.gmc-uk.org

The General Dental Council

Deals with all issues relating to dental registration

The General Dental Council
37 Wimpole Street, London W1M 8QD
Tel 44-171 486 2171 Fax 44-171
Web-site www.gdc-uk.org

The Specialist Training Authority

Deals with specialist training, assessment of equivalence of overseas qualifications and the award of Certificates of Completion of Specialist Medical Training and is responsible for the supervision of specialist training.

The Specialist Training Authority
70 Wimpole Street, London W1M 7DE
Tel 44-171 935 8586 Fax 44-171 935 9031
Web-site www.sta-mrc.org.uk

The Joint Committee on Postgraduate Training for General Practice

Deals with general practice training issues, assessment of equivalence of overseas training and the award of Certificates of Prescribed and Equivalent Experience and is responsible for the supervision of general practice training.

The Joint Committee on Postgraduate Training for General Practice
14 Princes Gate, Hyde Park, London SW7 1PU
Tel 44-171 581 3232 Fax 44-171 589 5047
Web-site www.rcgp.org.uk/jcpt

The British Medical Association

This is the main professional association and trade union for doctors in the UK. Doctors can join once registered or eligible for registration. The BMA offers advice to members on matters including contracts and employment issues and has a wide range of committees including those dealing with consultants, non-consultant career grades, junior doctors (i.e. doctors in training), general practitioners and international affairs.

The British Medical Association
BMA House, Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9JP
Tel 44-171 4499
Web-site www.bma.org.uk

The British Dental Association

This body represents the interests of dentists working in the UK and provides services to members.

The British Dental Association
64 Wimpole Street, London W1M 8AL
Tel 44-171 935 0875 Fax 44-171 487 5232
E-mail Enquiries@bda-dentistry.org.uk
Web-site www.bda-dentistry.org.uk

Scottish Council for Postgraduate Medical and Dental Education

This body has overall responsibility for the management of postgraduate medical and dental training in Scotland.

The Scottish Council for Postgraduate Medical and Dental Education
4th Floor, Hobart House
80 Hanover Street
Edinburgh EH2 1EL
Tel 44-131 225 4365 Fax 44-131 225 5891

The Overseas Doctors Association

Based in Stockport, Cheshire, the ODA represents the interests of overseas-qualified doctors working in the UK and the interests of ethnic minority healthcare.

The Overseas Doctors Association
ODA House, 316a Buxton Road, Great Moor, Stockport SK2 7DD
Tel 44-161 456 7828 Fax 44-161 482 4535

Immigration and Nationality Directorate

Deals with all aspects of immigration. Individuals are however advised to resolve immigration issues in their own country wherever possible.

Immigration and Nationality Directorate
Apollo House, 36 Wellesley Road, Croyden CR9 3RR
Web-site www.homeoffice.gov.uk/ind

Postgraduate Dean and Director
Regional Postgraduate Institute
for Medicine and Dentistry
10-12 Framlington Place
NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE NE2 4AE

0191 222 6762/7041
0191 222 1049 Fax

Dean Director of PGMDE
North Thames PGME
33 Millman Street
LONDON WC1N 3EJ

0171 831 4566
0171 831 3752 Fax

Dean of Postgraduate Medical Education
Postgraduate Office
Faculty of Medicine
University of Liverpool
PO Box 147
LIVERPOOL L69 3BX

0151 709 3114
0151 709 2618 Fax

Postgraduate Dean
PGMDE
East Anglian Deanery
Block 3, Ida Darwin Site
Fulbourn
CAMBRIDGE CB1 5EE

01223 884 848
01223 884 849 Fax

Postgraduate Dean
University Hospital Medical School
Queens Medical School
NOTTINGHAM NG7 2UH

0115 970 9400
0115 970 9922 Fax

Postgraduate Dean
University of Leicester
Clinical Sciences Building
Leicester Royal Infirmary
PO Box 65
LEICESTER LE2 7LX
0116 252 3121
0116 252 3123 Fax

Postgraduate Dean
Wessex Region
NHE Executive South and West
Highcroft
Romsey Road
Winchester SO22 5DH
01962 863 511 x 568
01962 877 663 Fax
Postgraduate Dean
SW Thames PGME
33 Millman Street
LONDON WC1N 3EJ

0171 831 6222
0171 831 1925 Fax

Director of Postgraduate
Medical Education & Training
Medical School Offices
John Radcliffe Hospital
Headington
OXFORD OX3 9DU

01865 221 517
01865 750 750 Fax

Dean of Postgraduate Medical Studies
The University of Manchester Medical
School
Gateway House
Piccadilly South
MANCHESTER M60 7LP

0161 237 2091
0161 237 2108 Fax

Regional Postgraduate Dean
University of Sheffield Medical School
Beech Hill Road
SHEFFIELD S10 2RX

0114 272 1747

Dean Director of PGMDE
South Thames PGME
33 Millman Street
LONDON WC1N 3EJ

0171 831 6222
0171 831 1925 Fax

Dean of Postgraduate Medical &
Dental Education
The Medical School
University of Birmingham
BIRMINGHAM B15 2TT

0121 414 6958
0121 414 3155 Fax

Dean of Postgraduate Medical
Education & Training
Department of Postgraduate Medical
Education
(University of Bristol)
The Academic Centre
Frenchay Hospital
Frenchay Park Road
Bristol BS16 1LE

Tel: 0117 975 7050
Fax: 0117 975 7060

Dean of Postgraduate Medical Education
Department for NHS PGMDE
Willow Terrace Road
University of Leeds
Leeds LS2 9JT

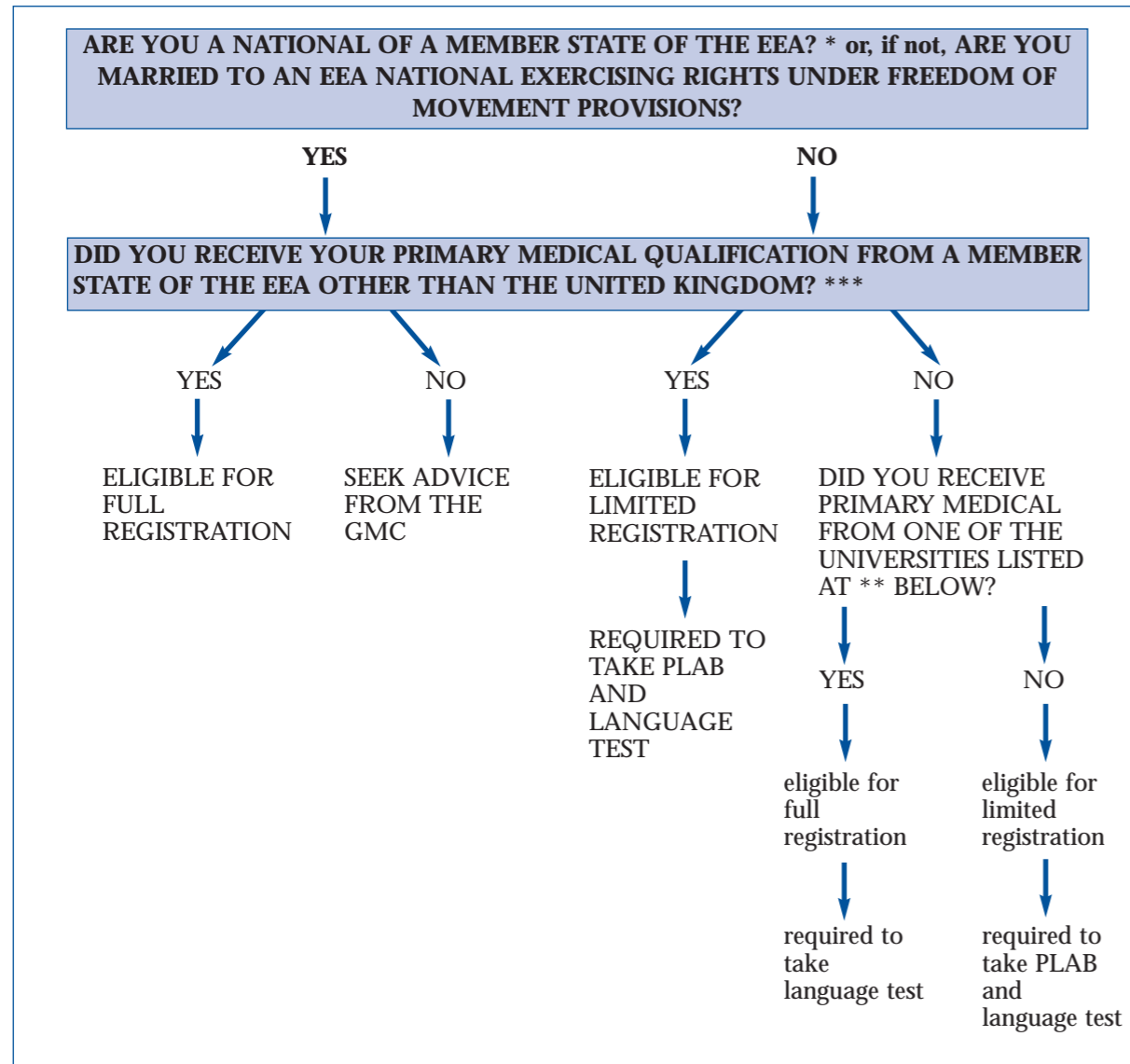
0113 233 1550
0113 233 1530 Fax

SECTION NINE

OVERSEAS STUDENTS, DOCTORS AND DENTISTS REQUIRING LEAVE TO ENTER OR REMAIN IN THE UK – A CHECKLIST TO DETERMINE YOUR ELIGIBILITY

PURPOSE FOR ENTERING UK	CONDITIONS WHICH WILL APPLY	IMMIGRATION STATUS
TO TAKE PLAB, SEEK WORK, TAKE A CLINICAL ATTACHMENT	Leave to enter may be granted for a period not exceeding 6 months. Extensions may be granted for up to a further 6 months	VISITOR
STUDENT	Leave to enter may be granted for an appropriate period depending on the length of the course of study.	STUDENT
PRE-REGISTRATION HOUSE OFFICER	Leave to enter may be granted for a period not exceeding 12 months	PERMIT-FREE TRAINEE
SENIOR HOUSE OFFICER	Leave to enter may be granted to undertake postgraduate basic specialist training in a hospital for a period not exceeding 3 years. Extensions may be granted provided no more than 4 years in total is spent in SHO posts	PERMIT-FREE TRAINEE
GP REGISTRAR (SELF FUNDING)	Leave to enter may be granted for a period not exceeding 12 months. A Training and Work Experience Certificate is required.	TWES HOLDER
SPECIALIST REGISTRAR	Leave to enter (or permission to remain) may be granted to undertake postgraduate higher specialist training in a hospital for a period not exceeding 3 years. Extensions may be granted dependant on the length of and progress in the training programme.	PERMIT-FREE TRAINEE
EMPLOYMENT IN A CAREER GRADE (E.G. Consultant, Associate Specialist, Staff Grade)	Leave to enter or remain may be granted to undertake employment for a period not exceeding 4 years	WORK-PERMIT HOLDER

REGISTRATION – A CHECKLIST FOR ASSESSING ELIGIBILITY

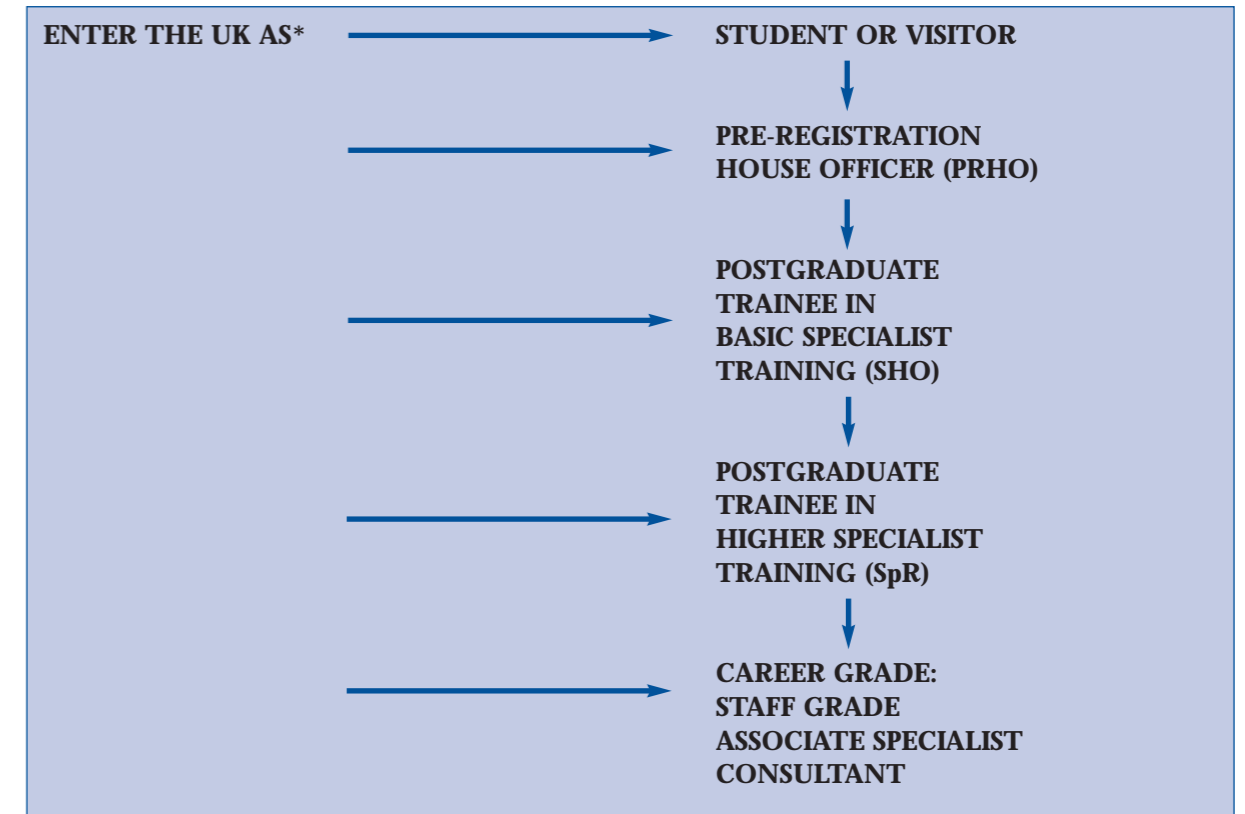


* At the time of printing these countries are: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and the UK

** At the time of printing, the overseas PMQs recognised for the purposes of Full or Provisional Registration are: **Australia**; MB BS Universities of Adelaide, Melbourne, Monash (Victoria), New South Wales, Queensland, Sydney, Tasmania, Western Australia, BM BS University of Flinders (South Australia) and B MED University of Newcastle (NSW); **Hong Kong**; MB ChB Chinese University of Hong Kong, MB BS University of Hong Kong; **Malaysia**; MB BS University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur (granted before 31/12 1989); **New Zealand**; MB ChB Universities of Auckland and Otago, MB ChB University of New Zealand; **Singapore**; MB BS National University of Singapore, MB BS University of Singapore; **South Africa**; MB ChB Universities of Cape Town, Natal, Orange Free State, Pretoria and Stellenbosch, MB BCh University of the Witwatersrand; **West Indies**; MB BS University of the West Indies.

*** Overseas doctors who gained their PMQ in the UK will normally qualify for Full Registration but should seek advice from the General Medical Council

PATHWAYS INTO TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT



* It is possible to enter the UK at any point in the education/training cycle, and to progress from that point to the next stage as appropriate.

Certain conditions will apply at each stage.

Doctors/dentists will also need appropriate immigration status and, where required, a work permit.

See text in main document for further details.