

Physician Higher Specialty Training Recruitment 2024

Round 1: applicants' guide

Version	Publication date	Amendments
1.0	1 November 2023	Original copy

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This outlines the recruitment process for higher specialty training in medical specialties in 2024 round 1 that are nationally coordinated by the Physician Specialty Recruitment Office (PSRO). The process covers NTN posts in England, NTNs and LAT posts in Scotland and Wales, with Northern Ireland participating in the specialties of clinical genetics, medical oncology and palliative medicine.

The timetable for round 2 is available on page 13 and more detailed guidance will be published nearer the time.

To find out more about the whole process, visit the Physician Specialty Training website:

www.PHSTrecruitment.org.uk.

You should also refer to the Oriel Applicant User Guide for general guidance on how to navigate Oriel and technical help with the on-line application form:

<https://www.oriel.nhs.uk/Web/ResourceBank>

Please also refer to the 2024 Medical Specialty Recruitment Applicant Handbook for general information about the administration of national recruitment processes:

<https://medical.hee.nhs.uk/medical-training-recruitment/medical-specialty-training/overview-of-specialty-training/applying>

National 'Round 2'

Although this round is the first round of recruitment to physician higher specialty training, it is the second round nationally of the 2024-25 recruitment year; Round 1 predominantly recruiting to CT1/ST1 level programmes. Consequently, you may see the round referred to as 'Round 2' on the Oriel application system, which needs to make the distinction.

We appreciate it is a little confusing but felt it would be more confusing to call it round 2 in the PHST guidance, when it is the first round for physician higher specialties.

Update for 2024 recruitment process

Most elements of the process are largely the same as the 2023 year, below are notable changes:

Multi-station interviews

Interviews remain online for 2024 and all specialties will be using the Virtual Interview Digital Scoring (VIDS) system to deliver interviews across multiple stations. Each specialty's page on the website will confirm their interview format.

Alternative certificate of core capability

The alternative certificates of core capability for both group 1 and group 2 specialties have been updated for 2024 and these are the only versions that will be accepted.

SPECIALTIES PARTICIPATING IN THE PSRO-COORDINATED PROCESS

Higher medicine specialties break down into Group 1 and Group 2, which means in short:

- **Group 1** - these specialties' programmes start at ST4-level, require the full three years training in internal medicine training (IMT) or equivalent and all programmes will dual specialise with general internal medicine.
- **Group 2** - programmes start at ST3-level, can be entered after two years of IMT or equivalent and do not involve training in general internal medicine. Many of these specialties also accept trainees from a non-physician pathway.

The 25 specialties included in the PSRO-coordinated process are below, with 'G1' or 'G2' indicating the group:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| • acute internal medicine (G1) | • geriatric medicine (G1) |
| • allergy (G2) | • haematology (G2) |
| • audiovestibular medicine (G2) | • immunology (G2) |
| • cardiology (G1) | • medical oncology (G2) |
| • clinical genetics (G2) | • medical ophthalmology (G2) |
| • clinical neurophysiology (G2) | • neurology (G1) |
| • clinical pharmacology and therapeutics (G1) | • palliative medicine (G1) |
| • combined infection training† (G1&G2) | • rehabilitation medicine (G2) |
| • dermatology (G2) | • renal medicine (G1) |
| • endocrinology and diabetes mellitus (G1) | • respiratory medicine (G1) |
| • gastroenterology (G1) | • rheumatology (G1) |
| • general internal medicine (G1) | • sport and exercise medicine. (G2) |
| • genitourinary medicine (G1) | |

†Recruitment to combined infection training covers training in the following specialties: infectious diseases, medical microbiology and medical virology. Depending on whether a programme is dual specialising with general internal medicine dictates whether it is in Group 1 or Group 2. For more information please visit the 'Infection specialties' page of the PHST recruitment website at:

www.phstrecruitment.org.uk/specialties/infection-specialties

For a full list of all medical specialties (including those not coordinated by the PSRO) please visit:

www.phstrecruitment.org.uk/specialties/overview

For more information about the physician specialty training structure and the specialties' curricula, please visit the JRCPTB website: <https://www.jrcptb.org.uk/specialties>

SPECIALTY RECRUITMENT MODEL

All specialties recruit via a single vacancy with a lead region responsible for managing applications and hosting interviews online. Applicants can be in contention for all posts nationally, throughout the process.

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TIMELINE

Applications

Open – Thursday 16 November 2023 (10am, UK time)

Close – Thursday 7 December 2023 (4pm, UK time)

Evidence verification

After applications close you will be contacted and asked to upload your documentary evidence to support your application scoring. The timing for this varies by specialty and dates for each can be found on their area of the website:

<https://www.phstrecruitment.org.uk/specialties/overview>

Shortlisting

All applicants will be informed whether and where they will be interviewed no later than 7 days prior to the first interview date

Interviews held

Tuesday 2 January – Wednesday 16 April 2024

Individual specialties' dates can be found on their area of the website:

<https://www.phstrecruitment.org.uk/specialties/overview>

Offers made

All specialties will make their first set of offers between finishing their interviews and Thursday 18 April 2024 (5pm, UK time)

Post start date

Wednesday 7 August 2024 – 31 December 2024

A more detailed timeline, can be found on our website:

www.phstrecruitment.org.uk/recruitment-process/timeline

WHAT SHOULD I CONSIDER BEFORE APPLYING?

Here are some steps to consider before you start.

AM I ELIGIBLE?

The first thing to consider when applying to is whether you meet the eligibility criteria for your preferred specialty; bearing in mind whether it is a Group 1 or Group 2 specialty.

The person specifications for all specialties detail the criteria you must meet to apply, and can be found on the NHS medical specialty training website:

<https://medical.hee.nhs.uk/medical-training-recruitment/medical-specialty-training/person-specifications>

Additionally, a detailed breakdown of the eligibility criteria can be found on our website:

www.phstrecruitment.org.uk/recruitment-process/am-i-eligible

The criteria that most commonly affect candidates are:

QUALIFICATIONS

UK physician higher specialty posts require candidates to have the full MRCP(UK) diploma – or a suitable alternative. It is possible to apply with just Part 1 completed, provided it is possible to complete the remaining parts by the first offers deadline for the round: **18 April 2024 for Round 1 and 22 October 2024 for Round 2.**

The potential ways to meet this entry requirements are:

- gaining the MRCP(UK) diploma
- alternative training pathway examinations (where designated on the person specification)
- eligibility for the GMC specialist register in GIM
- completion of Irish Basic Specialty Training in medicine and full MRCPI

CORE CAPABILITIES

All candidates are required to have attained a specified level of capability to enter higher specialty training. In most cases, evidence will need to be submitted with the application form. This breaks down into three main categories:

- Current trainee in a UK IMT programme, or alternative UK training programme accepted by the specialty - most applicants in this category will not need to submit evidence with their application but exceptions apply so check the website.
- Successful completion of IMT (or alternative UK training programme) - you will be required to submit your ARCP demonstrating successful completion. The website has more details about what constitutes successful completion.
- Alternative evidence of capability – any applicant not meeting one of the categories above will need to submit alternative evidence. Physician applicants will use the standard alternative certificate; there are two certificates: one for Group 1 and one for Group 2; the Group 1 version is acceptable for Group 2 specialties but not vice versa. The requirements for non-physician specialties are detailed on the person specification.

EXPERIENCE

To progress to a HST training post, you must have gained a minimum of either 24 (Group 2) or 36 months' (Group 1) post-foundation level experience, anywhere in the world, by the time the posts commencing from date.

In most cases this needs to be in medical specialties, but for some specialties there are different ways that this criterion can be met, so you will need to familiarise yourself with the requirements for your chosen specialty.

WHAT AND WHERE TO APPLY?

The following information may be useful when planning your application:

- for information on each specialty, data from previous years, interview dates and programme numbers:
www.phstrecruitment.org.uk/specialties/overview

- regions:
www.phstrecruitment.org.uk/regions/overview

The website also contains general information about planning your application, which you may find useful:

www.phstrecruitment.org.uk/recruitment-process/planning-your-application

HOW DO I APPLY?

The first stage is to complete and submit an application form via 'Oriel' – the online system used to manage the recruitment process for all specialty training programmes in the UK: <https://www.oriel.nhs.uk/Web/>

A detailed guide to using Oriel is available within the Oriel resource bank:
<https://www.oriel.nhs.uk/Web/ResourceBank>

REGISTERING AN ACCOUNT

When using the system for the first time, you will need to create an account. You can register an account prior to applications opening. Please use your existing account if you have previously created one.

APPLICATION FORM

Once a vacancy has opened, you can begin your application by navigating to the **Vacancies** tab. This will bring up a list of all specialty vacancies available in the current recruitment period, and this is where you start your application.

The application form has several sections, each examining a different area of your candidature, (e.g. personal details, core competence, clinical references etc). Each one must be completed before your application can be submitted.

It is advisable to start your application early and leave yourself plenty of time to complete the form. Many applicants report needing 10 hours or more to complete their application.

Key information about completing the form is available at:

www.phstrecruitment.org.uk/recruitment-process/applying/completing-the-application-form

'EVIDENCE' PAGE

This page asks for details of your achievements in various areas. Your application is self-scored based on these achievements, following a pre-set scoring system.

It is very important to score yourself as accurately as possible. Whilst interviewers appreciate it is not always clear which option to choose, incidents of candidates blatantly or persistently trying to gain an unfair advantage by over-claiming and/or exaggerating their achievements will be taken very seriously.

Please refer to the application scoring system guidance on the website:

www.phstrecruitment.org.uk/recruitment-process/applying/application-scoring.

COMMITMENT TO SPECIALTY

Some specialties will be including an assessment of this as part of shortlisting; and all will review it during the interview. You can check the status of your preferred specialty on the 'Planning your application' page of the specialty's section of the website:

www.phstrecruitment.org.uk/specialties/overview

SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION

Remember: the majority of your application cannot be edited once it is submitted, so make sure you have checked your application and are satisfied with it before you submit.

Applications cannot be submitted after the deadline and will not be accepted in any circumstances.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I SUBMIT MY APPLICATION?

This section outlines what happens after you submit your application, prior to interview. For more information visit: www.phstrecruitment.org.uk/recruitment-process/applying/after-submission

LOGLISTING

Once you submit your application, the longlisting process will start to ensure you meet the eligibility criteria for your specialty.

If your application doesn't meet all the criteria or more information is required, you may be asked to supply additional documentation or details. If your eligibility cannot be established, it will be rejected at this point and not progress any further.

SUBMITTING SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

At some point after applications close, you will be required to load supporting evidence to justify the self-assessment achievements claimed on the application form.

The dates for specialties will vary and these will be published to the website:
<https://www.phstrecruitment.org.uk/specialties/overview>

You should finalise and plan to have your documents ready to upload in time for this period so this process can be completed quickly. You will be written to with confirmation when the upload window is open and details about where to do this; this will not be on Oriel so there is no need to load these documents to that system.

It is important to ensure you present your evidence in a clear and well-organised way as reviewers need to verify your achievements in a short time. Guidance is published to the website about things to bear in mind when compiling your documents:
<https://www.phstrecruitment.org.uk/recruitment-process/planning-your-application/evidence-documents>

EVIDENCE VERIFICATION

Submitted evidence will be verified against the self-assessment criteria for all applicants. Where the evidence submitted does not match the score awarded, the score will be adjusted accordingly.

On completion of the verification process, all applicants will be sent their verified score, together with the reviewer's feedback explaining any changes to score.

There will be a short window where applicants will have the opportunity to appeal the decision if they disagree with the score awarded. This will be confirmed by the lead region for your application.

SHORTLISTING

After evidence verification has been completed, you will be notified whether your application has been shortlisted for interview, is on a reserve list or cannot be considered for an interview this round.

Where capacity is insufficient, specialties will invite from the ranking list in score order. If a place becomes available due to a higher scoring candidate withdrawing, where possible the next highest scoring candidate will be invited to interview.

Shortlisting will be completed no later than 7 days before the first date of interviews. There are some exceptions which may affect the timing for some specialties; these are detailed on the 'shortlisting' section of the website:
<https://www.phstrecruitment.org.uk/recruitment-process/applying/after-submission>

INVITATION TO INTERVIEW

After shortlisting is complete, you will be invited to book an interview via Oriel. You will receive a notification via email. This will be at least 7 days in advance of interviews. Interview booking will be on a first-come-first-served basis.

You will be given a deadline to book your interview slot; typically at least 72 hours. You can change your slot as many times as you wish up until the booking deadline, subject to other slots being available.

PROGRAMME PREFERENCES

At some point between shortlisting and offers commencing, the region managing your application will confirm you can start choosing your programme preferences.

Information will be added to the Oriel system on the vacancies available within the specialty.

You will then need to divide your options into two groups – **preferences** and **not wanted**. Any programmes you add to the preferences category are ranked in order of preference. **Please note: if you do not do this, you cannot be offered a post!**

The timeframe for selecting preferences will vary and will be confirmed via email.

More information on preferences is available at:

www.phstrecruitment.org.uk/recruitment-process/offers-and-beyond/post-programme-preferences.

HOW DOES THE INTERVIEW WORK?

It is imperative that you are well prepared for the interview and follow the guidance on the website: www.phstrecruitment.org.uk/recruitment-process/interview.

DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED AT INTERVIEW

Unless notified otherwise, the only documentation you need to bring to interview is your personal photographic identification.

Information on the areas covered and timings of each specialty's interview assessment can be viewed in the relevant specialty's section of the PHST recruitment website:

<https://www.phstrecruitment.org.uk/specialties/overview>

INTERVIEW STRUCTURE AND FORMAT

All interviews will be undertaken online. Applicants booking onto interview will be given joining instructions at least 72 hours ahead of their interview date.

All specialties' interviews will be delivered via multiple stations, where you will move between stations with a different pair of interviewers asking and scoring the questions in each station.

SCORING AND ASSESSMENT

Scoring framework

The table shows the framework used by all specialties to award scores, and interpretation of what these scores represent. The same framework is used for specialties

Mark	Rating	Level of performance
1	Poor	Not considered appointable.
2	Area for concern	Performed below the level expected from a core level trainee; possibly unappointable.
3	Satisfactory	Performed at the level expected of a core level trainee; suitable for appointment.
4	Good	Above average ability
5	Excellent	Highly performing trainee

APPOINTABILITY, TOTAL SCORE AND RANKING

Information on:

- how your scores are used to determine whether you can be considered for appointment
- how the total score, used for ranking and offers, is calculated

is available in the relevant specialty's section of the PHST Recruitment website:

www.phstrecruitment.org.uk/specialties/overview.

FEEDBACK

Your interview score breakdown will be available through Oriel when your interview outcome is confirmed.

Interviewers will score and make comments during the interview and all candidates will be sent these by email after offers have commenced.

HOW WILL OFFERS BE MADE?

After the interviews, each specialty will have a pool of appointable candidates ranked in order of the total score. The next stage is to match candidates to positions and make offers, which will be done on the basis of rank and programme preferences.

Detailed guidance is on the website:

www.phstrecruitment.org.uk/recruitment-process/offers-and-beyond.

RESPONDING TO OFFERS

Please note: you **must** respond to an offer within **48 hours** of it being made – *not* when it was received, or when you first became aware of it. This does not include weekends but does include bank holidays.

You can only respond to offers via Oriel. You will be presented with three options: **accept**, **reject** and **hold**. If you opt to accept or hold, you will be given an additional option – whether to be considered for preference **upgrades**.

First offers will be between close of interviews and by **18 April 2024**.

HOLDING OFFERS

Holding an offer allows you to delay making a final decision beyond the standard 48-hour deadline; usually because you are awaiting the outcome of an application to another specialty.

You can only hold one offer at a time, and the deadline for holding is 23 April 2024 (1pm). If you do not accept an offer that is being held by this date it will automatically be withdrawn.

UPGRADING OFFERS

When you accept or hold an offer you will be given the opportunity to be considered for upgrades. This will enable you to remain in contention for a higher-ranked preference if a higher ranking candidate declines one of your preferred programmes; you will also have the opportunity to re-order your programme preferences should your circumstances change and you wish to be considered for an initially lower ranked programme.

The upgrade deadline is **24 April 2024 (1pm)**. After this point, offers will not be upgraded regardless of whether programmes become available.

Upgrading is a complex part of the process, so it is important to be aware of the guidance when considering your options during the offers stage:

<https://www.phstrecruitment.org.uk/recruitment-process/offers-and-beyond/responding-to-offers>

AFTER OFFERS

Once you have accepted an offer, the relevant region will contact you about a contract of employment. References will be requested directly from your referees.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I AM NOT OFFERED A POST IN THE FIRST ROUND?

There will be a second round of recruitment for programmes unfilled in round 1, or which subsequently arise.

Applications

Open Tuesday 23 July 2024

Close Tuesday 13 August 2024

Offers made

First offers will be made by 22 October 2024 and will continue until all offers have been exhausted.

Interviews held

Tuesday 27 August – Friday 18 October 2024

Post start date

Start dates will range from 3 January until 2 April 2025

The timeline section contains a more detailed timeline for the round:

www.phstrecruitment.org.uk/recruitment-process/timeline

Depending on available posts, some specialties may not participate in round 2; this will be confirmed closer to the time.

The **round 2** section of the website has more information:

www.phstrecruitment.org.uk/recruitment-process/planning-your-application/round-2

FINALLY

We aim to make the process of recruitment to physician higher specialty training fair, transparent and streamlined for all parties.

We have consulted widely with: trainees; the four UK Statutory Education Bodies; the Joint Royal Colleges of Physicians Training Board and specialty advisory committees.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Full information on PHST Recruitment is available on our website: www.phstrecruitment.org.uk.

If you have any queries about the recruitment process, see our frequently asked questions: www.phstrecruitment.org.uk/help/overview.

Or contact our recruitment helpdesk with any queries via the applicants support portal: <https://lasepgmdesupport.hee.nhs.uk/support/home>.

Good luck with your application.

Physician Specialty Recruitment Office