



International Medical Graduates' Handbook

This handbook was created by a group of doctors who have all worked or trained outside of the UK.

We understand some of the unique difficulties that International Medical Graduates face when moving to the UK, and we want to share some of the things that we wish we knew before coming to work in the UK.

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Abbreviations

A&E – Accident and Emergency
ALS – Advanced Life Support
ARCP – Annual Review of Competency Progression
BLS – Basic Life Support
BMA – British Medical Association
BRP – Biometric Residence Permit
COS – Certificate of Sponsorship
CREST – Certificate of Readiness to Enter Specialty Training
CS – Clinical Supervisor
DBS - Disclosure and Barring Service
ES – Education Supervisor
GMC – General Medical Council
GP – General Practice
HEE – Health Education England
HR – Human Resources
ILS – Intermediate Life Support
MDDUS – Medical and Dental Defence Union of Scotland
MDU – Medical Defence Union
MPS – Medical Protection Society
NHS – National Health Service
NI – National Insurance
OH – Occupational Health
Ofsted – Office for Standard in Education, Children’s Services and Skills
PDP – Personal Development Plan
SAS – Specialist and Associate Specialist
TPD – Training Programme Director
WPBA – Workplace Based Assessments

Welcome to Yorkshire and the Humber

Congratulations on your appointment to one of the most diverse and dynamic regions to continue your medical career! As the deanery with the highest proportion of International Medical Graduates, you are truly welcome.

Yorkshire has a huge variety of places to explore: from the beaches of Scarborough and Whitby, to hill walking in the Yorkshire Dales, to the restaurants of Bradford and York, Yorkshire offers a huge range of experiences, and we hope that you will enjoy your work and personal time with [all that the region has to offer](#).

Letter from the Deans

If you are an international doctor looking to train in the UK, we hope that in coming to Yorkshire and the Humber you have come to the right place!

We have a long tradition and track record in training international medical graduates and have more many years been top of the league in terms of numbers of IMG.

This guide is designed to give you practical advice and is designed by doctors for doctors who are new to UK but also the new and to the NHS. We appreciate the diversity of the medical training cultures you will have experienced, but also value what that can bring to the NHS. Although there will be a lot to learn and take in, you will be given advice about what you can expect when you start work and some tips from other international doctors.

However, it is not all about work. This is also about your life in a new country. Yorkshire and the Humber is a diverse place, with a mixture of urban and rural environments. There are well established ethnic minority communities in the region with a wide range of shopping and international cuisine.

Every year doctors from all over the world come to work and train in the NHS. By choosing our region we hope that you will join us as valued colleagues and not just a doctor to fill a shortage profession. Our aim is that you will feel valued, respected and belong to our region

Jon Cooper, Postgraduate Dean
Jon Hossain, Deputy Postgraduate Dean

The International Medical Graduates' Handbook - Introduction

Moving house, starting a new job, moving away from family structures and adapting to a new culture are often considered some of the most stressful life events. As an International Medical Graduate coming to the UK, you may be experiencing several of these life events at the same time! It is a huge undertaking, and it can feel lonely and isolating to navigate these stressors alone. We hope that this handbook will act as a good starting point to help guide you through this difficult transition. It was created by a group of doctors who have all worked or trained outside of the UK. We understand some of the unique difficulties that International Medical Graduates face when moving to the UK, and we want to share some of the things that we wish we knew before coming.

This handbook is not meant to be a comprehensive guide, but we hope that using this handbook will make this challenging transition somewhat easier. We also would like for this to be a useful, living document, shaped by the experiences of the people who come here. If there are any sections that you would like to add or amend please contact the Ethnicity, Diversity and Inclusivity Lead at the Trainee Executive Forum (EDI TEF leads).

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to the team behind HEE Wessex's IMG handbook, which consists of Dr Peter Soliman, Dr Syed Muhibullah Husaini and Dr Midhun Paul for providing inspiration and support for our work. And for our Deputy Deans, Ms. Fiona Bishop and Mr. Jon Hossain for being staunch advocates of International Medical Graduates, and for their work in making Yorkshire and Humber a great place to train.

Meet the IMG Handbook team



Heba Abdelbari, Paediatrics Trainee, South Yorkshire and Leadership Fellow

Hi! I graduated from Cairo University in Egypt and am a South Yorkshire Paediatrics Trainee. I support the IMG forum at the School of Paediatrics and have enjoyed collaborating on the IMG handbook to facilitate integration into living and working practises in the Yorkshire and Humber Region. My top tip would be to take care of yourself and your colleagues. Happy to be contacted at heba.abdelbari@nhs.net

Mahwish Munawar, GPST1 Y&H Pennine Scheme, IMG Rep.

I have spent more than a decade in the UK and closely observed the number of problems IMGs encounter. I decided to take up the role of IMG rep and created an IMGs Dine out and well-being group in my trust to help colleagues to find the solution to the day-to-day problems they face at work and outside. I also work with "PLABABLE" to help IMGs to pass the PLAB exam. I wish you the best of luck with your new job. Stay positive, work heartily and get the best outcomes.



Galine Fattal, ST4 O&G, Leadership Fellow

I come from a mixed Syrian, Dutch, Armenian heritage and grew up in the U.A.E. Although I did my undergraduate degree in England, I had a huge culture shock when I moved here. Working here has been challenging and rewarding, but I am so pleased to be part of the team working on this handbook, so that the transition can be just that little bit easier for people new to the UK.

Sidra Chaudhry ST5 Dual Specialty Trainee in General Adult and Old Age Psychiatry, Equality and Diversity Co-Lead, Yorkshire & Humber Trainee Executive Forum, RCPsych Leadership and Management Fellow

Born and brought up in Saudi Arabia, Pakistani by origin with an American accent that confuses everyone! Introducing myself has not been an easy feat over the years. I take great pride in being an IMG having done my medical school in Pakistan and moved to the UK in 2015 to pursue my postgraduate training. Every year in the UK has been an ongoing journey of challenges, lifelong learning and self-discovery. To me this handbook is a labour of love, something I've always aspired to develop. We hope you find this handbook useful in navigating your way through life and training in the UK. My top tip for IMGs is to be kind to yourself, you've gotten here, not just by luck, but your hard work and perseverance. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise!



Dr Niranjani Gadgil. CT2 Psychiatry, Humber Teaching NHS Foundation Trust

Hello! I graduated from India. I worked in Obstetrics and Gynaecology for about 4 years in the UK before switching my field and securing a training post in Psychiatry. I have seen the ups and downs of working both in trainee and non-trainee posts and also in surgical and non-surgical fields. I am pleased to contribute to this handbook as I am hoping to share my experiences so that IMGs would find them instructive and helpful.

Opeoluwa Adeniran. ST4 Psychiatry, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion lead to the Y&H Trainee Executive Forum

My name is Opeoluwa Adeniran, I'm a Psychiatry registrar in the North, East and West Yorkshire scheme, currently based at Bradford. With Sidra, I am a lead for EDI on the Trainee Executive Forum. I have found Yorkshire to be a beautiful place to live, work and train and I've enjoyed every bit of my stay in the region. I hope you do too.



Dr Rashmi Krishnappa, CT3 Psychiatry, South Yorkshire Trainee, Sheffield Health and Social Care NHS foundation trust.



I was born and brought up in India and did my undergraduate medical training there. I moved to the UK in 2008 and worked in a variety of training and non-training jobs in Medicine and Orthopaedics. I commenced my training program in Psychiatry in 2015 and am currently working LTFT in my training. It has been a pleasant journey for me so far managing family and work in the UK. I am a trained Indian classical dancer and I have continued this interest in UK along with some of my friends. I am a local IMG representative for core psychiatry trainees in Sheffield and conduct monthly informal meetings and portfolio sessions for new IMG trainees. I was delighted to hear about the IMG handbook from Dr Sidra Chaudry as I feel this is a very positive step. I am very grateful to be a part of this project and I look forward to helping international medical graduates with their transition to practice in the UK.

Living in Yorkshire and Humber

Yorkshire is the largest county in the UK with a population of over 5.3 million people. It encompasses a diverse geography, from the North Yorkshire coast, to the Peak District, cosmopolitan cities like Sheffield, Leeds and Bradford, to the picturesque and historic towns like York and Harrogate.

Yorkshire has a long history of welcoming international students, doctors and nurses, whose contributions have allowed the region to thrive. We hope that you will feel at home here, that you establish great friendships, and develop networks.

Let's get settled first!

What can you expect from your Human Resources Department?

Accommodation

Many doctors relocating to the Yorkshire and Humber region may want to stay in hospital accommodation when starting at a new post. Get in touch with Human Resources (HR) early, they can help signpost you to the right contacts.

Trust letters of employment

- Employment contract
- Proof of address if you live at hospital accommodation which can be useful when applying for a bank account

Relocation costs

There may be a relocation allowance to help with the finances of moving, check with HR for more information.

Employment requests

Adjusting to a new practice environment can be challenging, you can ask HR for an opportunity to shadow other colleagues in everyday practice, where you may be added on a supernumerary basis to the rotation at the beginning. This can offer you a chance to transition into practice and not start your first shifts on-call, particularly if you've not had prior experience in the NHS.

Ask to speak to your supervisor early on to set up a plan and share any concerns you have. You may have had a break from medical practice in the build up to this post for reasons like maternity leave, or career breaks. Supported Return to Training (SuppoRTT) is funded by Health Education England (HEE) which aims to support all trainees to safely and confidently return to training after a sustained period of absence.

Mandatory blood tests & Occupational Health

Occupational health (OH) is a specialist branch of medicine focussing on the mental and physical health of staff in the workplace. OH professionals aim to find out what impact work has on staff health and make sure that staff are fit to undertake the role they are employed to do.

You will be contacted by occupational health once you are appointed by the hospital for pre-employment health assessments which would involve some mandatory blood tests to screen you for infectious diseases. Remember they will also require a record of your past history of immunisation.

If you don't have any record of immunisations, OH will offer routine vaccinations routinely and specific vaccinations if any of the screening tests are positive. The vaccinations usually offered are MMR, HBV and booster. However, every trust has its own guidelines

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) helps employers make safer recruitment decisions each year by processing and issuing DBS checks. Employers can then ask to see the certificate to ensure that they are recruiting suitable people into their organisation. Working as a healthcare professional means you will require an [Enhanced DBS certificate](#).

Ask your hospital's HR to apply for your DBS. You will need this for your next job and it's best to get it made in advance as the process can take up to a few weeks. It is also worth signing up for the yearly update.

You may need to obtain a police clearance certificate from your home country

National Insurance Number

Your [National Insurance \(NI\) number](#) is your own personal account number. The number makes sure that the National Insurance contributions and tax you pay are properly recorded on your account. It also acts as a reference number for the whole social security system. You must have your insurance number before you get your first pay. Usually a NI number is issued with your Biometric Residence Permit.

Biometric Residence Permit (BRP)

The [biometric residence permit \(BRP\)](#) is proof of your right to stay, work or study in the UK. It can also be used as a form of identification (for example, to open a bank account in the UK). As soon as you receive your Skilled Worker visa, you will get a letter with it stating the date and place of collection of your BRP. For more details on applying please see follow this [link](#)

Opening a bank account

You should apply for a bank account as soon as you get your BRP as you will need this to receive your salaries, and it will enable you to set up automatic payments (direct debits) for various fees such as your GMC fee. To open a bank account you will require your

- BRP
- Passport
- COS (Certificate of sponsorship)
- Conditional offer letter from hospital
- Evidence of Address (obtained from your employer or Tenancy agreement)

You can open your bank account with your BRP and a letter from your HR stating your annual salary and the duration of your contract. You may have received a job contract which states the same.

Accommodation and renting

Sometimes hospital accommodation may be unavailable. In the short term, you could consider Airbnb. This can give you some time to think about and plan for the next property you rent or share. To rent you generally need:

- ID, proof of immigration and employment status
- A deposit - usually the cost of one to three months' rent
- Admin fees which should be clearly stated by the agency advertising a property

There may be some properties advertised within your hospital. Accommodation staff may be able to inform you about recent house shares or rooms that have become available in the area. RightMove and Zoopla are a few of many websites available to check out advertisements. Be sure to consider:

- Price
- Location and commute to work
- Notice you need to give, if your circumstances change, and you need to change properties
- Length of rental particularly if you will be rotating frequently in the region.

Don't forget to check out the [government guidance on renting in the UK](#) which can answer some common questions.

Groceries

Familiarise yourself with the opening and closing times of grocery stores in the area so you are not caught out after a long shift! The following are but a few names of UK grocery stores, with most offering home delivery services. You may need to search or ask around for shops catering for international specialty, kosher and halal foods in your area.



Takeaway

There are many take away delivery apps for you to try that will deliver to your home like Uber eats, Just eat and Deliveroo, you can also order and arrange pick up if more convenient. Remember as an NHS worker you may be eligible for discounts at many stores and restaurants with the use of a [Blue light](#) or [Ode](#) card. Just remember to ask if they offer the discount!

Amenities

Sim cards

You may want to purchase a UK phone number when you arrive. These can be either pre-paid or mobile contracts. A pre-paid sim is useful in the short term and would allow you time to shop around if you need a contract. Sims can be bought online, at the airport, at the shop or at the supermarket. Most networks offer [good deals for NHS workers](#) so it is worth shopping around once you are settled.

Transportation and Driving

Cars

You may have arranged an International Driving Permit to use in the UK, but you must be aware that it is only valid for one year. It is recommended that you familiarise yourself with the highway code in the UK. Please apply for a provisional driving licence online, which will enable you to take the theory test, driving lessons (if needed) and practical test. Obtaining a valid driving license is the first step in obtaining a car.

It is [the law](#) that children must normally use a car seat until they are 12 years old or 135 centimetres, whichever comes first.

Buses

Buses are a common method of public transport in the UK but be aware that they operate reduced services over weekends and bank holidays. You can buy tickets on the bus or invest in a pass for longer periods.

Tram

The tram is a useful mode of transport in Sheffield, which can be quicker and operates slightly different routes to buses.

Trains

A major mode of transportation around the UK is the railway network. You can find more information about train times on the [Trainline website](#). If you use the train frequently, you may be eligible for a pass that can make travel more affordable. It is also recommended to book tickets in advance to get the best possible prices.

Airports

The Yorkshire and Humber region is serviced by three airports:

- Leeds Bradford International Airport
- Doncaster Sheffield Airport
- Humberside Airport

Manchester and Birmingham airports operate flights to countries that may not be easily serviced by the above 3 airports

Ferry

Ferry services from Hull and Newcastle conveniently link Yorkshire with Holland, Belgium and Germany.

Coach

The most common coach service is National Express which operates all over the country and connects to many airports. Check their [website](#) for their timetable

GP, health care, dental care

GP

Primary care services provide the first point of contact in the healthcare system. Primary care includes general practice, community pharmacy, dental, and optometry (eye health) services. The GP is the first point of contact if you have any health issues, and if needed, they will refer you to specialists. GP surgeries and Health centres have a range of services available, such as vaccinations, weight loss and family planning. You will need to register yourself with a [GP surgery near your residence](#).

Accident and Emergency (A&E) and NHS 111

The Accident and Emergency department (A&E) as you are already aware of, is for emergencies. You can call 111 for urgent advice if you're unsure or can't access your GP or pharmacy. 111 would also be able to arrange an out of hours GP appointment for you if needed.

Walk-In Centre

A walk-in centre can be used if you have a minor illness or if you are worried about your health, but it is not an emergency. You can find your nearest centre [here](#).

Dental Care

You don't need to register with a dentist the same way you register with a GP, as there are no bounds to the catchment area. You will need to find one that is close by and convenient for you. Although NHS dental care is free for some (under 18 years, under 19 and in full time education, pregnant or have had a baby in the past 12 months), dental practices may not always have the capacity to take on new NHS patients. You may have to join a waiting list, look for a different dentist who is taking on new NHS patients or pay to be seen privately. You can search for a dentist [here](#).

Child care and schools

Childcare

Finding childcare can be a big source of worry for parents and it is important that you are aware of the [childcare](#) options available to you:

- Childminders take care of children in their own home. They are registered with Ofsted (the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills), who inspect their home and provide a report that you can review.
- Day nurseries provide care for children from six weeks to five years and are also registered with Ofsted. Many employers will have a trust nursery which can be very convenient for staff. It may be useful to ask about salary sacrifice if available.

All 3-4 year olds in England are entitled to 570 hours of free early education or childcare per year. This is often taken as 15 hours each week for 38 weeks, your childminder or nursery will be able to facilitate the process of claiming those hours.

Schools

Applications for primary and secondary schools usually open in September of each year for the following Academic year i.e apply in September 2022 for intake in September 2023. In year transfers can also be facilitated. More information can be found [here](#).

Before you start

Trust/GMC/regional inductions

Inductions are usually provided at various organisational levels nationally and/or locally to help ease new doctors into the new system.

The General Medical Council (GMC) offers a [‘Welcome to UK Practice’ online module](#) which is readily available and doesn’t require a log-in.

HEE Yorkshire and Humber induction: If you are a trainee in Yorkshire and the Humber you will be sent details of how to access the online clinical induction

Local trusts will usually offer inductions as well as individual departments.

Please ask your local HR for induction details and look out for invitations in your email. You may also be able to ask for a brief period to shadow colleagues in your new work environment.

Mandatory requirements

Complete your mandatory training courses such as ALS/ILS/BLS and several others which may be a mix of online and face to face sessions and can usually be registered for on the trust intranet.

HEE YH offers two mandatory online training packages for junior doctors in training:

- Yorkshire and Humber Induction Passport
- Mental Health Induction Passport.

There are a wide variety of good resources which could be generic or specialty specific such as:

- [GMC Good Medical Practice](#)
- All e-learning for Junior Doctors (including the Doctors in Training Induction) can be accessed through the [e-learning for health \(eLfH\) platform](#)
- Health Education England Yorkshire and the Humber offers a [range of courses](#) for junior doctors and dentists in training as well as SAS doctors, trainers and supervisors.
- Blackboard Learn is a Learning Management System which is currently being used to support teaching and training within the Region. You can download the Blackboard App for your mobile and tablet devices through the [Apple App Store](#) and [Google Play App Store](#)

Regulatory and support organisations

You will have registered with the GMC, when you paid your licence and registration fees. You must also register for medical indemnity. Some common organisations include: the

[Medical Defence Union](#) (MDU), the Medical and Dental Defence Union of Scotland [MDDUS](#), and the [Medical Protection Society](#) (MPS).

The British Medical Association (BMA)

The [British Medical Association](#) (BMA) represents, supports and negotiates on behalf of all UK doctors (of all grades) and medical students. BMA membership is voluntary and comes with a range of benefits ranging from access to online library resources, events, learning and development opportunities to advice and support related to wellbeing, workplace harassment and bullying, junior doctor contract related queries, complaints and concerns etc.

All these organisations provide a broad range of support and charge a fee based on your level of training or experience and scope of work. You may also be required to join your specialty's royal college especially if you are in specialty training.

Setting up a direct debit for your fees will ensure you don't miss payments. You can set up direct debits on your mobile or internet banking, or contact your bank.

Cultural and language differences

The Yorkshire and Humber region is diverse in culture and being attentive to and appreciative of the differences in culture and language will enhance your communication ability at work, your ability to integrate with your team and eventually your productivity as well as patient safety.

Make active efforts to integrate, learn about the community and workplace culture. You are actively encouraged to ask questions about situations in which you are not clear. Making conversation with your colleagues will add to a sense of belonging and help build team relations

Health Education England Yorkshire and Humber offers [communication skills courses](#) which you might find helpful.

During your placement

During your clinical placement, you will be expected to take part in a variety of duties ranging from running clinics, assisting on ward rounds, to working on the out-of-hours on-call rota. These opportunities will fulfil your clinical and non-clinical training competencies, which can be evidenced in your training portfolio as Workplace Based Assessments (WPBA). Please refer to the 'Education' and 'Support and Career Planning' sections of the handbook for further information.

Peer groups

If you're wanting to interact with other junior doctors of similar age, background, interests and specialty as you, the following are some places you can start looking into.

- Junior Doctor Committee/Forum - [Junior doctors' forums \(JDFs\) | Faculty of Medical Leadership and Management \(fmlm.ac.uk\)](#)
- Balint Groups - [A very short introduction to Balint groups « The Balint Society](#)
- Royal College special interest groups – please refer to your Royal College official website
- Trainee Whatsapp Social groups – may differ from locality to locality

Payslips and tax codes

Your payslip is a document from your employer that shows gross pay, tax code and deductions over a period, which is usually a month. It summarises your earnings for that period.

A tax code is used by your employer to determine how much tax you pay. Your tax code may change if you claim tax relief on your professional subscriptions and you may be put on an emergency tax code if you've changed jobs. This means you will pay tax on all your income above the basic personal allowance. An emergency tax code is temporary as Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs office (HMRC which is the payments and tax authority) will usually update your tax code when you or your employer gives them your correct details.

You can find more information on the payslip with a detailed explanation of what it entails [here](#).

Education

CREST form

CREST stands for Certificate of Readiness to Enter Speciality Training. This form enables applicants for Speciality Training to demonstrate that they have foundation level competencies. The link for the 2021 form can be found [here](#)

Many International Medical Graduate doctors complete internships in their home country before coming to the UK. To enter speciality training in the UK, applicants must demonstrate that they have

- Achieved foundation level competencies and have
- Completed accepted clinical experience (usually 24 months in total).

By completing the CREST form an applicant (who has the necessary clinical experience) can demonstrate that they have achieved foundation competences and apply directly to speciality training. There are strict criteria regarding the completion of CREST forms with only certain people eligible to sign the form:

- Consultants
- General Practitioners (GP)
- Clinical Directors
- Medical Superintendents
- Academic Professors
- Locum Consultants with a CCT/ CESR
- They must have worked with you for a minimum continuous period of three months (whole time equivalent) within the last 3.5 years of the advertised post (job) start date for which you are applying.

If the person signing the form is not registered with the GMC then they will need to provide evidence of their registration with their respective medical regulation body – and if it is not in English, a certified translated copy must be provided.

Please ensure that your form complies with the latest guidance to avoid it being rejected.

Portfolio

The e-Portfolio is used by doctors in the UK to collect and collate their evidence of learning and performance. It provides an overview of your current position on the journey to demonstrate progression in your speciality.

Engagement with the e-portfolio is mandatory for doctors in training as it is the basis for your Annual Review of Competence Progression (ARCP)

An e-portfolio can help you to:

- Keep documents together to evidence your progress and learning
- Reflect on your learning and clinical experiences
- Think about your personal development plan (PDP), encouraging you to think about what you need to do next to help you progress in your career
- Prepare for an interview: Some interviews for applying for training have portfolio as a separate 'station'
- Develop your CV

The e-Portfolio is above all a formative educational tool. It is designed to facilitate feedback and encourage the learning of new knowledge as well as reflection on existing knowledge, skills, and professional attitudes.

With the help of your Clinical and Educational Supervisors, you can plan a personalised programme of learning so you can gain the necessary competencies for modern professional medical practice in the United Kingdom.

Each doctor will maintain their own learning log in which they can record notes on such things as: significant clinical encounters, lectures attended, professional conversations, and any reading they have done. Each item is personal to you, the doctor, until such time as you permit it to be shared with your Educational Supervisor.



Developing your portfolio

Workplace based assessments

These are assessments done by a senior clinician, usually a Consultant, who would observe you performing clinical or non-clinical procedures. You would need to send a request to the senior colleague and request them to 'sign off' for a certain competency. The contents of the assessments differ according to your speciality. There is a requirement for a certain number of assessments for the ARCP and the details of these are available on respective Royal College Websites.

Multisource Feedback

This is a method of assessment using questionnaires to evaluate a doctor's professional performance based on feedback from peers and co-workers working at different clinical/non-clinical levels like Consultants, colleagues, nurses, support workers, social workers, admin staff etc.

Quality Improvement

Involvement in any Quality Improvement project is mandatory for doctors in training and is a good learning experience for those in non-training posts. These might take the shape of an [Audit](#), and there are a number of audits that the trust/department need to complete. Alternatively, you may prefer to plan and complete an audit on an area of clinical interest. Any completed audit projects and outcomes should be uploaded on the portfolio to evidence your impact and learning.

Library of evidence

Your portfolio will allow you to record any meetings that you have with your supervisor, and provide a space to store certificates of any courses or teaching sessions you attend, and record feedback received on presentations, publications, and compliments from colleagues or patients. More information about Portfolios can be found [here](#).

Reflections



Reflective practice allows you to analyse your experiences, behaviours, practice, clinical skills and knowledge and your interactions with colleagues and patients. An example of a reflective process is the [Gibbs' Reflective Cycle](#), which was developed to give structure to learning from experiences. Given its cyclical nature it is particularly useful to analyse

repeated experiences, allowing you to learn and plan from experiences that either went well or didn't go well.

Support

Clinical Supervisor

A clinical supervisor is a Consultant (usually one for each placement) who is responsible for ensuring that appropriate supervision of the trainee's day to day clinical performance occurs at all times, with regular assessment and feedback to both trainee and educational supervisor.

Educational Supervisor

A supervisor who is selected and appropriately trained to be responsible for the overall supervision and management of a specified doctor's educational progress during a training placement or series of placements. The Educational Supervisor is responsible for the trainee's Educational Agreement.

Your Royal College

In order to complete specialty training you will need, in some cases, to pass relevant membership exams. Eligible doctors who are not in a training post can also appear for these exams. These are widely regarded as challenging, and some candidates may need to sit exams more than once to be successful. You must also be aware of the demands of combining a full-time job with the level of study required to pass these exams.

Health Education England (HEE)

Health Education England (HEE) is the national leadership organisation for education, training, and workforce development in the health sector.

Training Programme Director (TPD)

Your TPD works to support the professional development of trainees, manage progression and placements as well as encourage autonomy.

IMG support representative

Each Trust usually has a Consultant and/or another doctor who would help and support International Medical graduates. This person is the appropriate contact for raising any queries related to IMGs. Please contact your HR department for the details of your regional contact.

Staff Networks

There are many staff networks that you can access, through your trust or Nationally. These can be a great source of support and can make you feel more at ease in your transition to the UK. We have included a few of the national organisations, but we encourage you to explore those available within your trust.

- [British Association of Physicians of Indian Origin](#)
- [Association of Pakistani Physicians of Northern Europe](#)
- [Sudanese Junior Doctor's Association - UK](#)

Career planning

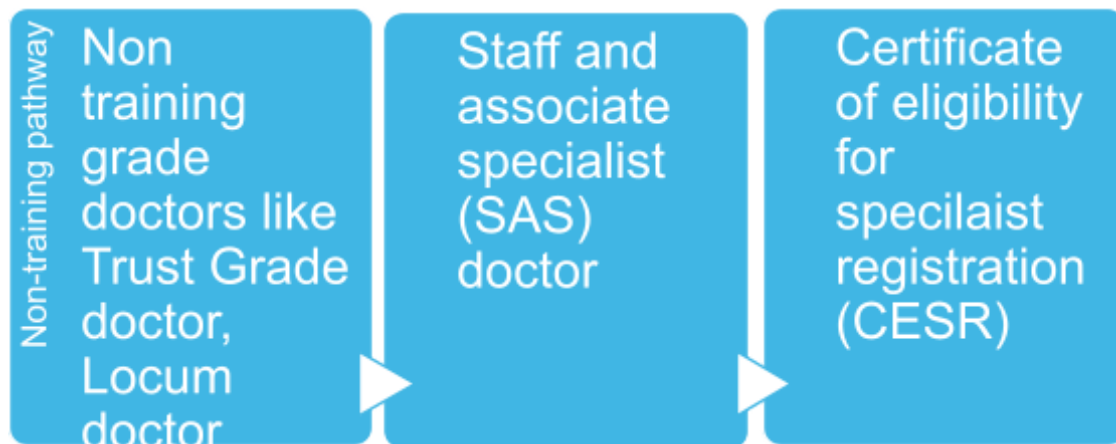
At the beginning of your career in the UK, you have a huge number of things to consider, but it is also worth planning ahead. What are your plans for your career? How will you achieve them? Does it involve consultancy in the UK? It is important to think about and look for resources available to you early. For instance, consider speaking to your colleagues and college tutors if you would like to apply for a specialty training program. Thinking about subspecialty training and applications to get your portfolio and CV in shape early on, as competition is high for these posts. Consider out of program experiences and research if you are in training and discuss with your educational supervisor for advice. Think about what kind of consultant you want to be with which interests? Remember to consider your work life balance and think carefully about less than full time training if available to you.

Applying for training posts/training timeline

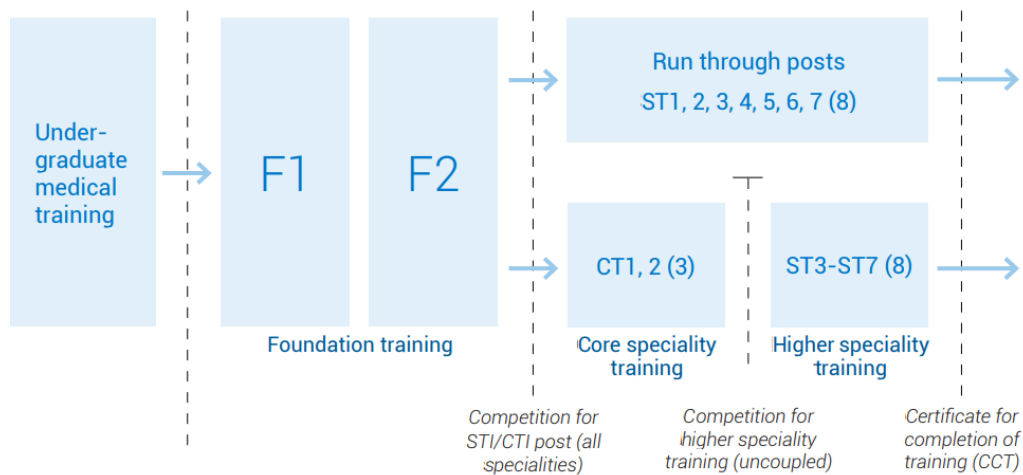
Relaxation of visa eligibility requirements has meant that applying to training posts is much more accessible for International Medical Graduates. Applications for all training posts, irrespective of speciality or level of training, takes place through a central application system called [Oriel](#). You will need to register for account on this portal and prepare your profile so as to apply for a training post. A recruitment timeline is available online and published on the HEE Specialty Training website.

The application window for is usually between the first and last weeks of November, therefore you should aim to keep your application ready by end of October. There may also be opportunities to find posts at other times through re-advertisement, but the bulk of recruitment happens within the first round of recruitment.

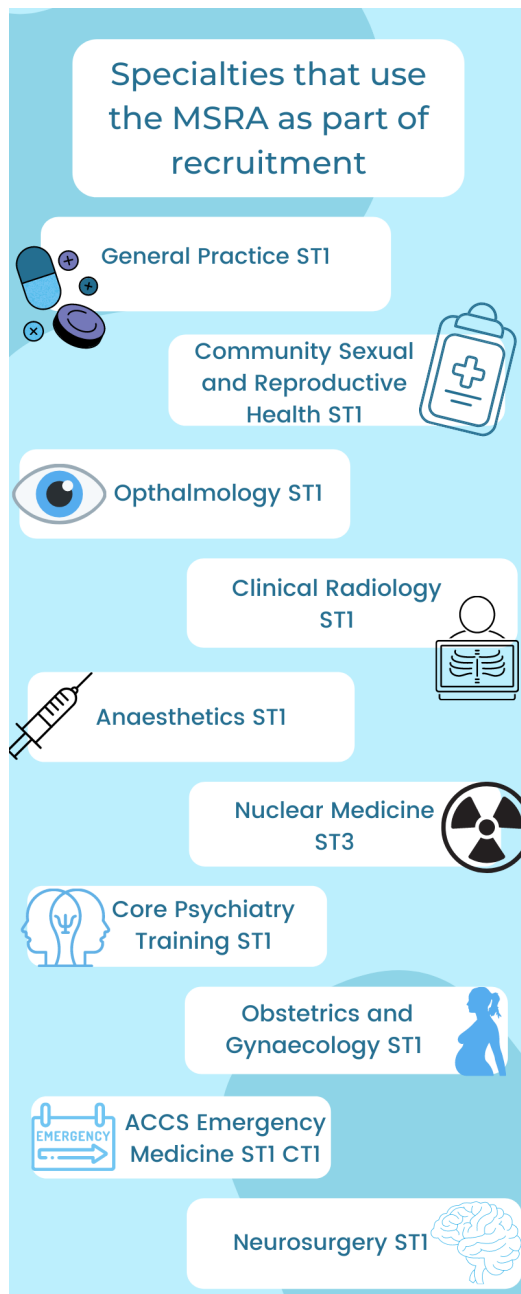
It is important that you refer to the Person Specification guides for each specialty to ensure that you meet the eligibility criteria. These documents can help you build your application and are an excellent point of reference when preparing for interviews.



MEDICAL TRAINING & CAREER STRUCTURE



The Multi-Specialty Recruitment Assessment (MSRA)



Some specialties will require you to take Multi-Specialty Recruitment Assessment (MSRA) entry exam to enter the training program. The MSRA is a computer based assessment, designed to assess some of the essential competences outlined in the person specifications and is based around clinical scenarios.

Each specialty considers the MSRA differently as part of its selection process. It is recommended that you visit specific national recruitment websites to familiarise yourself with the appropriate guidance for that specialty.

Appraisals, ARCP & Revalidation

An appraisal is an annual review of your overall performance, where you can provide supporting evidence to demonstrate that you are meeting the principles and values as set out by GMC's Good Medical Practice. For doctors in training, this process is referred to as ARCP (Annual Review of Competence Progression). Within each yearly review period, you will also be expected to address previously identifies areas of development. The GMC requires doctors to undergo Revalidation at the end of each 5-year cycle of appraisals/ARCPs to maintain their registration and demonstrate fitness to practice.

Here are six types of supporting information that you must collect, reflect on and discuss at your appraisal:

CPD - Continuing professional development (this includes making sure have recorded sufficient clinical evidence and WPBAs to your portfolio, and are up-to-date with the latest guidelines)

Quality improvement activity - Audit, service improvement projects, Poster presentation.

Report and reflect on significant events or near misses

Feedback from patients or to those to whom you provide medical services- not for those in training placement. Mainly at consultant level.

Feedback from colleagues- also called MSF (multi source feedback) and Mini PAT.

Compliments and complaints.

For doctors not in training: Most Trusts will use their own appraisal software or system, which is different from the ePortfolio. Your Trust Revalidation Team will contact you and provide login details for this. You will have to provide evidence of your supporting information and complete all sections of the appraisal checklist. This can be a time-consuming process, so please plan for it in advance. Your appointed appraiser will be able to give you some guidance in completing this before the date of your appraisal.

Looking at leadership opportunities

Leadership skills are absolutely integral to the role of future consultants. There are many ways that you can develop and demonstrate these. Is there a role within your department? Have you identified a need and can you fill that gap? More formal leadership opportunities include involvement on the Junior Doctors' Forum, the Trainee's Education Forum, the [Future Leaders Programme](#) (FLP), or the [Faculty of Medical Leadership and Management](#) (FMLM)

The Future Leaders Programme recruits once a year, sharing job vacancies on their website. Posts have a main project, but your time is divided between your project and personal development. You would have to apply for an Out of Programme Experience (OOPE) and it does not count towards your training progression. The FLP is open to allied health care professionals and doctors or dentists in training posts.

Coaching

Coaching is about offering you time and space to think with an impartial coach who will support you and challenge you if necessary. It is not a remedial measure, nor is it counselling but rather, a tool to help you, as a high-achieving professional. Some things that might lead you to access coaching:

- There is something at stake, e.g. a challenge or development opportunity and you want to make the most of it
- Your work and life are out of balance, and this is having an unwanted impact
- You would like to talk through decisions about your career
- You have yet to identify your key strengths and how best to utilise them

You can read more about coaching, eligibility, and how to access coaching [here](#).

Wellbeing and resilience

Wellbeing encompasses a whole range of things such as one's physical, mental, professional, financial and social health. Moving to a new place and starting training can be a very exciting, yet stressful time. We hope that you will develop a robust network of friends and colleagues who can offer informal support but if at any time you feel that you need some extra support, here are a few avenues to start looking at.

Occupational Health

In addition to their role in the pre-employment checks, Occupational Health (OH) teams work to keep employees safe and well at work both physically and mentally. Occupational Health can help negotiate work adjustments, aid in providing specialist equipment to help do your job, and signpost to support such as counselling and therapy. You can self-refer or ask your clinical/educational supervisors to refer you to Occupational Health if needed.

SuppoRTT

Supported Return To Training ([SuppoRTT](#)) is an initiative to help doctors return to training after a period of spending time out of training for a variety of reasons (maternity leave, sickness, out-of-programme courses etc). Trainees can access personalised advice and support through their local HEE office, which would include formulation of a bespoke "return to training" package with their supervisors and the HEE SuppoRTT team. SuppoRTT resources include webinars, podcasts and trainee-centred events.

SuppoRTT have developed some video-immersive scenarios that can be accessed [here](#). You will need to register on the [NHS Learning Hub](#)

Counselling services

Moving to the UK and starting work in a new system is challenging and stressful. Some people may find that this takes a toll on their mental health. There are [sources of support](#) available. The services that you can access for counselling is dependent on where you are employed. You can self-refer to these, and support is confidential.

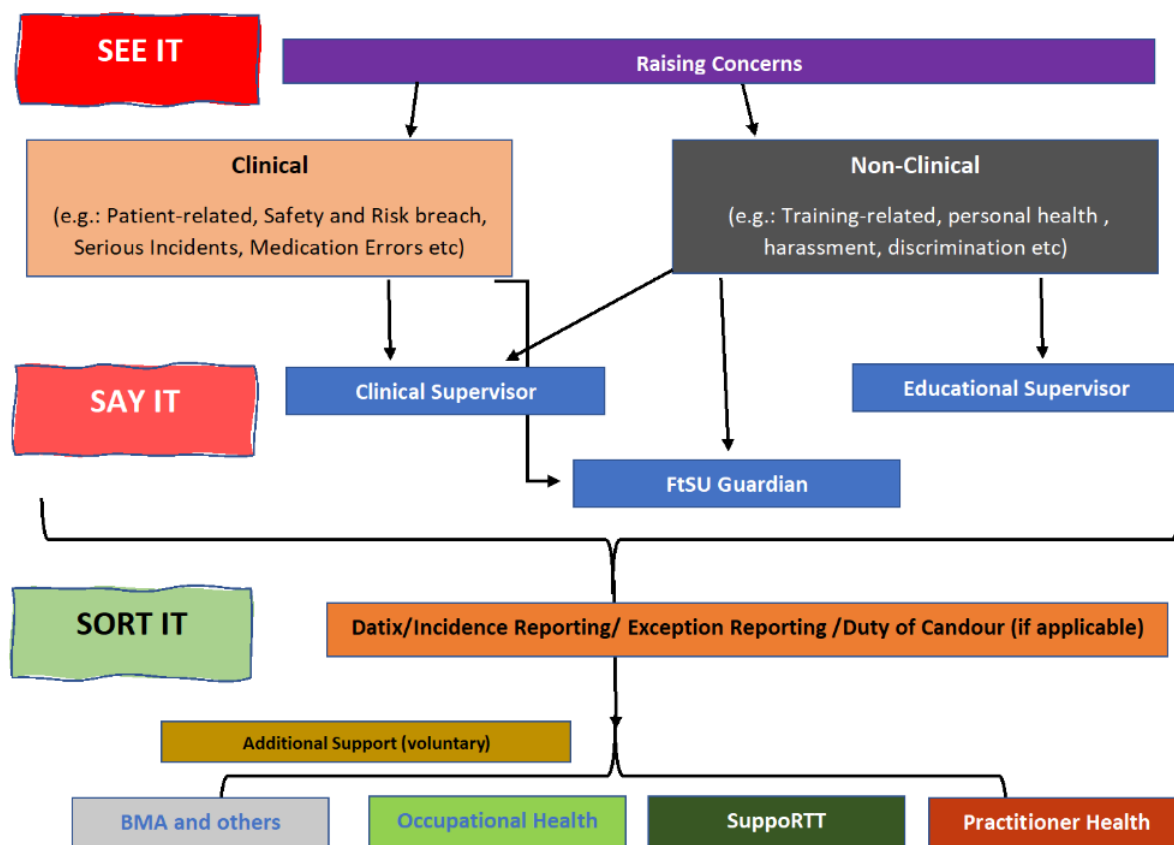
Datix/exception reporting

All healthcare professionals have a duty to report any adverse incidents that have the potential to produce unwanted effects, or any incident which has consequences or learning points. This is done through the Datix reporting system. Examples of incidents include clinical issues (infection issues, pressure sores), environment issues (accidents or violence and aggression), or services. Trusts have their own lists of what things should be reported through Datix and you should be trained in how to access the reporting system at your induction. You can read a bit more about it [here](#).

Exception Reporting

Exception reporting is a contractual mechanism which doctors in training can use to report patient safety, rostering and training concerns. You are encouraged to exception report anytime that you miss training opportunities, miss breaks, or stay over your rostered hours (not including emergencies). It offers a record of where staff are under pressure, and helps with workforce planning. You should be aiming to exception report within 7 days if claiming payment for your excess hours or within 14 days for Time Off In Lieu. You are contractually entitled to exception report and you can read more about it [here](#).

How to raise concerns



This diagram gives some general overview of the avenues through which you can escalate concerns. These concerns may be related to patient safety, education or personal. The escalation pathways may be different in various trusts, but generally, it is recommended that you escalate to your Clinical or Educational Supervisors. If you feel you can not speak with your ES or CS, or feel your concerns are still unaddressed, then you are to escalate to your College Tutor, Director Post Graduate Medical Education, Medical Director, Training Programme Director and Head of School.

Role of the Freedom to Speak Up (FTSU) Guardian

Every trust must have a FTSUP Guardian to give independent support and advice to staff who want to raise concerns.

The FTSU Guardian can offer support and advice for staff who speak up or are supporting a colleague who is raising concerns. They can also give feedback on investigations and conclusions. They can also take immediate action if patient safety is compromised in any way. Please note that the FTSU cannot carry out investigations, solve interpersonal disputes amongst members of staff or deal with concerns raised by patients and visitors.

In order to get the most accurate and up to date information relevant to your locality, please look at your Trust Intranet or contact your clinical supervisor.

Reflections from other International Medical Graduates

Dr Abhijit Chakraborty, Consultant Physician and Geriatrician, FRCP.

I graduated from Calcutta University in India. I started my journey in medicine with the IELTS and PLAB-1 in Kolkata before coming to the UK. It was an intense couple of weeks in a coaching camp before I appeared for PLAB 2.

After being successful in PLAB-2, I started applying for clinical attachment. It was 2006 and there was a pandemonium with MMC. Securing a clinical attachment was extremely difficult during that time. After a lot of struggle I managed to get one in Geriatric medicine in North Wales. Here I gained valuable experiences and subsequently started my career as a FY1.

After a year I moved into Yorkshire for my SHO job and never moved out of Yorkshire ever since. My daughter was also born in the same year, in Halifax. Since then, I have worked at many hospitals in Yorkshire while completing my MRCP. I was fortunate to get a SpR rotation in Sheffield in 2012 and joined as a consultant in Huddersfield Royal Infirmary in August 2017.

Looking back, I feel a sense of accomplishment, realising that I have achieved my career dreams. Currently, I am an examiner of PLAB 2 – my very first test in this country and MRCP too. Recently I have been selected to be the local Foundation training programme director (TPD) for my hospital.

Though working in the NHS is stressful at times (especially in the Covid pandemic) I still enjoy my work. It gives me immense satisfaction in looking after frail elderly people.

Dr. Muhmood Elnaiem, SHO Northern Care Alliance NHS Foundation Trust

It's important to be assured that it's only a matter of time before you completely settle into your first job or new department/hospital you'll be working in. However, it's the duration of the time it takes that depends on how you reflect on your initial performance and make the changes to quickly adjust yourself to keep up to pace with your colleagues. Prioritisation is key within the NHS and I believe that once you fully tailor your work around the hospital with this objective in mind, you are definitely on the right track. You'll be dealing with unwell patients, discharge letters, referrals, investigations that need to be ordered earlier than late, all at once. And when you encounter this scenario, especially for the first time, it can be very overwhelming. But with time, you will gain the exposure and experience to then deal with these pressures using muscle memory.

Make sure that you know your limitations and inform your colleagues and seniors regarding this. Get to know your colleagues and don't shy from asking for their help and advice on how to deal with things around the ward, because remember, they were also in your shoes. Always reflect on your experience and how you will come in tomorrow with a different approach to streamline your management of patients around the ward.

And finally, do not stray away from your academic commitments (i.e QIPs, teaching, CBDs, potential research opportunities), make sure you have a plan in place to have these things

done and discuss them with your supervisor at the first meeting, and make sure there are dates in place to have these things done, especially if you're intending on applying for specialty training very soon.

I wish you all the best

Dr. Mandeep Bhattarai, GPST1. Pennine GP Scheme.

I started GP training in the Pennine GP scheme in August 2021. After graduating from medical school in 2016, I worked as a house officer across various specialities back in my home country, Nepal. Even though I gained invaluable experience and honed my skills as a doctor working in hospital medicine, I couldn't see myself restricted to a specialty in the long run. I was attracted by the diversity, flexibility and work-life balance that general practice offers and that led me to the GP training pathway.

My story is a bit different from most of my colleagues, as I started as a GP registrar without prior NHS experience. Make no mistake, GP training is challenging for everyone but going straight into training with little idea about the system I was going to work in brought its own set of challenges. Settling into a new country while simultaneously adjusting to the healthcare system as well as the workplace culture was exciting and daunting at the same time. I was very fortunate to receive wonderful support and guidance from my deanery, supervisors, and colleagues, which made my transition in NHS much easier than I had anticipated. The most important lesson I have learnt so far is to not shy away from asking for help. There is plenty of professional and pastoral support for trainees, all we need to do is ask.

To all my IMG colleagues considering GP training, I welcome you to GP land and wish you the best of luck.

Further links and resources

[Raising and acting on concerns - GMC \(gmc-uk.org\)](https://www.gmc-uk.org/raising-concerns)

[Enhancing Junior Doctors' Working Lives | Health Education England \(hee.nhs.uk\)](https://www.hee.nhs.uk/enhancing-junior-doctors-working-lives)

[HEE Deans' Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report | Health Education England](https://www.hee.nhs.uk/deans-equality-diversity-inclusion-annual-report)

[Learning materials - GMC \(gmc-uk.org\)](https://www.gmc-uk.org/learning-materials)

[Road to UK - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

[dignity-at-work-policy---dc6612_pdf-58561807.pdf \(gmc-uk.org\)](https://www.gmc-uk.org/dignity-at-work-policy---dc6612_pdf-58561807.pdf)

[Your wellbeing \(bma.org.uk\)](https://www.bma.org.uk/your-wellbeing)

[Practitioner Health](https://www.practitionerhealth.org/)

<https://youokaydoc.org.uk/>

[Home - Doctors in Distress - Support For Healthcare Workers \(doctors-in-distress.org.uk\)](https://www.doctors-in-distress.org.uk/)

[Peer Support and the Doctors' Support Network \(dsn.org.uk\)](https://www.dsn.org.uk/)

<https://students.leeds.ac.uk/essentialitems>

<https://www.bma.org.uk/advice-and-support/international-doctors>

<https://roadtouk.com/plab-2-visit/checklist-for-img-doctor-in-uk/>

<https://www.yorkshire.com/about-yorkshire/getting-around-yorkshire/transport/getting-to-yorkshire-from-overseas>

<https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Information--Advice/Studying--living-in-the-UK/Health-and-healthcare>

<https://wessex.hee.nhs.uk/trainee-information/trainee-journey/international-medical-graduates/>

<https://wessex.hee.nhs.uk/trainee-information/trainee-journey/international-medical-graduates/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/dentists/who-is-entitled-to-free-nhs-dental-treatment-in-england/>

<https://www.gov.uk/browse/childcare-parenting/childcare>

<https://www.gov.uk/tax-codes/emergency-tax-codes>

Areas for development of this handbook:

We recognise that this handbook will be missing information on some key resources, and it is not meant to be a comprehensive guide. How the transition from HEE to NHSE/I impacts the Induction process for International Medical Graduates remains to be seen, and our hope is that this document remains live and is continually improved and developed. We hope that subsequent iterations cover the following points as well as any further developments that are needed to keep this relevant and useful

- Antibullying, harassment and whistleblowing
- IMG support representatives - complete the list
- Hearing from SAS doctors
- Refugee doctors experiences
- Mentorship for IMGs
- Recommended podcasts
- Develop a Checklist - Wessex and SWYT handbooks
- Junior Doctor Committees
- Role of the Dean and Deputy deans

You can feedback your thoughts about any required changes or updates to the handbook by completing this form [here](#)

Ms. Fiona Bishop, in her role as Deputy Dean will work with the Trainee Executive Forum EDI leads to ensure this document is updated on a regular basis.