

Evidence of Foundation Competence

Applicant Guide

Introduction

The national person specification for entry to all United Kingdom first year specialty training programmes requires applicants to provide evidence of achievement of Foundation Competence within the last 3 years in line with GMC standards/Good Medical Practice, including:

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

All applicants to specialty training at CT1/ST1 level must demonstrate all the outcomes described by the Foundation Curriculum, without exception, using the prescribed evidence as outlined below.

Why do I need to demonstrate that I have Foundation Competence?

The possession of all Foundation Competences is an essential criterion on all CT1/ST1 person specifications because they are needed to help successful applicants cope with, and progress through the clinical experience that forms part of their specialty training. They are key attributes that ensure patient safety – in particular those relating to the recognition and management of the acutely ill patient, resuscitation and end of life care.

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

What evidence can be used to demonstrate that I have Foundation Competence?

The acceptable methods for demonstrating foundation competence are listed below. No other evidence will be accepted, as previous experience has shown it to be unreliable. For example, specialist qualifications do not demonstrate the breadth of the Foundation Competences and, however experienced a candidate is in one specialty, they are often not able to cope with the first year of core or specialty training without having recently practiced the broader skills. NB it is the

applicant's responsibility to satisfactorily demonstrate that they possess all the Foundation Competences, and the recruiting organisations are not allowed any discretion in this matter.

There are 3 ways you can demonstrate that you possess Foundation Competence, and the application form will ask you a series of questions to help you determine the most appropriate form of evidence for you to submit:

- **Currently on a Foundation Programme** – if you are undertaking a recognised foundation programme in the UK¹ which is due to finish in August 2016, we will ask you to confirm the name of your Foundation School. You do not need to do anything else. You do not need to submit any evidence. Any offer of a programme will be conditional upon you successfully completing the Foundation Programme and being awarded an FACD 5.2 before August 2016. If you are undertaking a stand alone FY2 post that is not part of a recognised foundation programme attached to a UK Foundation School and you do not expect to be awarded with an FACD 5.2 upon completion, then you must answer No to this question on the application form and you will be required to submit an Alternative Certificate as detailed below.
- **Already completed a Foundation Programme** – if you have already completed a UK Foundation Programme no earlier than 1 January 2013, we will ask you to confirm that you have been awarded an FACD 5.2. You **must** attach a scanned copy of your FACD 5.2 to your application. You will be expected to provide the original certificate at a later date
- **Anybody who is not covered in 1 or 2 above** – if you have not undertaken and completed a UK Foundation Programme no earlier than 1 January 2013, you will be able to submit an Alternative Certificate signed by a consultant who has supervised you for at least 3 continuous months since 1 August 2013. The certificate attests to your achievement of Foundation Competence. For the purposes of this documentation, consultant includes General Practitioners, Clinical Directors, Medical Superintendents, Academic Professors and anyone on the specialist register. You may submit more than one Alternative Certificate for different posts in order to show evidence of achievement of all outcomes but all certificates must relate to posts undertaken for at least 3 continuous months (whole time equivalent) since August 2013. You **must** attach scanned copies of the certificates to your application form. You will be expected to provide the original document/s at a later date

The only exception to this is if you are a refugee. Refugees are advised to contact the recruiting organisation for further guidance, but should submit an Alternative Certificate if at all possible.

Is the 3 months post during which I demonstrate Foundation Competence all I have to do post registration?

No. The CT1/ST1 person specifications state that applicants need to have had 12 months experience after full GMC registration **and** evidence of achievement of Foundation Competence.

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

¹ UK Affiliated Foundation Programmes include those in Malta. The Maltese Foundation School awards FACD 5.2 to the same standards as other UK Foundation Schools and as such is considered equivalent

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

- 12 months satisfactory completion of either a pre-registration internship² or Foundation Year 1 post **and** 12 months full time satisfactory completion in posts approved for the purposes of medical education by the relevant authority; **or**
- 12 months satisfactory completion of either a pre-registration internship or Foundation Year 1 post **and** 12 months full time experience at a publicly funded hospital in at least two specialties with acute medical responsibilities; **or**
- 12 months satisfactory completion of either a pre-registration internship or Foundation Year 1 post **and** a 12 month full time Foundation Year 2 post

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

With regards to the Alternative Certificates, please note that:

- **The signatory** does not necessarily have to personally witness the demonstration of every competence. Instead, he or she **must** be in a position to judge whether the evidence they have seen or had presented to them demonstrates competence, and they **must** have worked for you for 3 continuous months. The recruiting organisations have no discretion in this regard
- **The post** the certificate refers to **must**:
 - Be of at least 3 continuous months in duration (whole time equivalent)
 - Have been completed by the time of the submission deadline
 - Have been undertaken within the 3 years before commencement of the post you are applying for
- Clinical attachments/unpaid work **do not** count as experience

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

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

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

We understand that refugee doctors may have less access to standardised documentation and in rare cases may not be able to obtain an Alternative Certificate. If you are unable to provide any of the above because of your refugee status, you should contact the recruiting organisation for advice before submitting your application form. Refugee doctors will be required to provide an Alternative Certificate wherever possible.

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

Can I use last year's Alternative Certificate?

No. There is a new Alternative Certificate for applications for August 2016 that reflects the current version of the Foundation Curriculum, and **only** this form can be used. Earlier documentation **will not** be accepted.

How do I attach my certificates?

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

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

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

Not unless you can provide evidence of addressing your outstanding educational needs. Time simply served in other posts does not count. All CT1/ST1 person specifications have as one of their eligibility criteria: *Not ever relinquished or been released or removed from a UK Foundation Programme or a stand-alone Foundation Year 2 post or its equivalent without subsequent evidence of completion/remediation.*

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

No. Foundation posts that are not part of a full, designated Foundation Programme associated with a UK or UK Affiliated Foundation School are **not** accepted as they will not lead to the award of an FACD 5.2 on completion. You should make sure that you satisfy the above question and then submit an Alternative Certificate. Locum F2s attract an FACD 5.2.

What happens if I accept an offer and then do not complete my Foundation Programme?

Any offer made to a doctor currently on a UK Foundation Programme is made subject to them being awarded an FACD 5.2 before the training programme commences. If it transpires that you will not be awarded an FACD 5.2 by the start of the programme, the recruiting organisation **must** withdraw the offer. This does not include those who do not complete the Foundation Programme because of maternity or sick leave. Offers for a delayed start can only be made to candidates who cannot start on the intended date for statutory reasons (illness or maternity leave).

Do I need an Advanced Life Support (ALS) Certificate when I apply?

No. All CT1/ST1 person specifications have possession of an ALS certificate as one of their eligibility criteria – this is checked pre-employment and any offer of a training programme will be conditional upon you presenting it to your first employer.

How is my documentation assessed?

Recruiting organisations do not assess the evidence – the signatory to your FACD 5.2 or Alternative Certificate has the responsibility for doing that. Instead they verify the evidence provided by you. Submitted evidence is considered as applications are considered by the longlisting admin team.

What happens if I submit the wrong or incomplete evidence?

Applicants who submit no evidence, incorrect documentation or unsatisfactory evidence will be asked to resubmit either an FACD 5.2 or an Alternative Certificate within 72 hours of being notified of the error by the recruiter.

Do I have to demonstrate all the outcomes?

Yes. Applicants must be rated as *Demonstrated to F2 level* for **each and every outcome** listed on the certificate. If you cannot demonstrate that you have achieved all the competences in one post, you may submit additional Alternative Certificates to demonstrate the full set of competences. If you cannot demonstrate each and every outcome, you will not be eligible for specialty training at CT1/ST1 level. **There are no exceptions to this rule.**

What do I do if my consultant has not witnessed me demonstrating all the outcomes?

On the certificate the signatory will be asked to sign a declaration that they have observed demonstration of all the outcomes **or** that they have received alternative evidence of demonstration where they have not directly observed the demonstration. The source of the alternative evidence should be listed on the certificate.

This means that although the signatory has to have worked with you for 3 continuous months, the evidence on which they are relying does not have to come from a post of that length, and the signatory does not have to have personally witnessed you demonstrating all of the outcomes.

My consultant is not a clinician. Does that matter?

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

What happens if I get it signed without such evidence?

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

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

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

Alternatively, where the signatory has not observed demonstration of an outcome in the last 3 years, they can sign you off, as long as they have evidence that you have maintained the required skill level in these competences.

My signatory is registered overseas. What should I do?

It is **your** responsibility to ensure you supply adequate evidence of the signatory's standing with a regulatory authority, and if there is any doubt, enquiries will be made with that authority. The default position is that where signatories' status cannot be verified, the applicant does not progress.