

Evidence of Foundation Competence – 2019

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 Professional Capabilities within the 3.5 years prior to the commencement date for the post they are applying for, 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 professional capabilities described by the Foundation Curriculum, without exception, using the prescribed evidence as outlined below.

Why do I need to demonstrate that I have achieved the Foundation Professional Capabilities?

The possession of all Foundation Professional Capabilities 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 professional capabilities – a process which would take several weeks. Instead they must 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 professional capability 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 Professional Capabilities?

The acceptable methods for demonstrating achievement of foundation professional capabilities 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 Professional Capabilities 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. Please note, it is the applicant's responsibility to satisfactorily demonstrate that they possess all the Foundation Professional Capabilities, and the recruiting organisations are not allowed any discretion in this matter.

There are 3 ways you can demonstrate that you possess the Foundation Professional Capabilities, 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 2019, 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 FPCC before August 2019. Those applying for a delayed start date due to illness or maternity should be issued with an FPCC before commencement in post (i.e. by the end of the deferral period). 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 FPCC upon completion, then you must answer No to this question on the application form and you will be required to submit a *Certificate of Readiness to Enter Specialty Training* (previously known as *Alternative Certificate of Foundation Competence*) as detailed below.
- **Already completed a Foundation Programme** – if you have already completed a UK Foundation Programme within the 3½ years prior to the commencement date of the post to which you are applying, we will ask you to confirm that you have been awarded an FPCC (or FACD 5.2 for those who completed Foundation prior to August 2017). You **must** attach a scanned copy of your FPCC to your application. You will be expected to provide the original certificate at a later date
- **Already in Specialty Training** – if you are already in specialty training and have a National Training Number (NTN) or Deanery Reference Number (DRN), you will be deemed to have had your foundation competence assessed at the point of entry to specialty training and therefore will not be required to provide any further evidence
- **Anybody who is not covered above** – if you have not completed a UK Foundation Programme within the 3½ years prior to commencement of the post to which you are applying, and are not already in specialty training, you will be able to submit a Certificate of Readiness to Enter Specialty Training (previously known as an *Alternative Certificate of Foundation Competence*). This must be signed by a consultant who has supervised you for at least 3 continuous months (whole time equivalent) in the 3½ years prior to the commencement date for the post to which you are applying. The certificate attests to your achievement of the required Foundation Professional Capabilities. For the purposes of this documentation, consultant includes General Practitioners, Clinical Directors, Medical Superintendents, Academic Professors and anyone on the specialist register.

Please note you may submit more than one certificate from different posts in order to show evidence of achievement of all professional capabilities but all certificates must relate to posts undertaken for at least 3 continuous months (whole time equivalent) in the 3½ years prior to the commencement date for the post to which you are applying. You **must** upload and attach scanned copies of the certificates to your application form. You will be expected to provide the original document/s at a later date. It may be necessary to provide more than one certificate if one of the post undertaken was not in an acute setting.

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

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 a *Certificate of Readiness to Enter Specialty Training* if possible.

Is the 3 months post during which I demonstrate possession of the Foundation Professional Capabilities 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 or equivalent **and** evidence of achievement of the Foundation Professional Capabilities.

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 *Certificate of Readiness to Enter Specialty Training*, please note that:

- **The signatory** does not necessarily have to personally witness the demonstration of every professional capability. Instead, he or she **must** be able 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 (i.e. the 3 continuous months) by the time of the submission deadline
 - Have been undertaken within the 3½ years before commencement of the post you are applying for
- Clinical attachments/unpaid work **do not** count as experience

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

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 3½ 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 the Foundation Professional Capabilities to a consultant who could then provide you with a *Certificate of Readiness to Enter Specialty Training* 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 a 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 a *Certificate of Readiness to Enter Specialty Training* wherever possible.

Can I use an *Alternative Certificate of Foundation Competence* obtained in a previous recruitment year?

Yes. As long as the post that the *Alternative Certificate* relates to has been wholly undertaken in the 3½ years prior to the commencement date of the post to which you are applying to, forms from previous recruitment years can be used.

How do I attach my certificates?

You will have opportunity to upload and 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 as it will not be considered.

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.* This would normally require you to return to the Foundation Programme to complete the outstanding requirements.

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 FPCC on completion.

Please note: Standalone F2 posts attract an FPCC on completion.

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 FPCC before the training programme commences. If it transpires that you will not be awarded an FPCC by the advertised 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).

How is my documentation assessed?

Recruiting organisations do not assess the evidence – the signatory to your FPCC/FACD 5.2 or *Certificate of Readiness to Enter Specialty Training/Alternative Certificate of Foundation Competence* 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 FPCC, an FACD 5.2 or *Certificate of Readiness to Enter Specialty Training* within 3 days (72 hours) of being notified of the error by the recruiter.

Do I have to demonstrate all the professional capabilities?

Yes. Applicants must be signed off as competent for **each and every professional capability** listed on the certificate. If you cannot demonstrate that you have achieved all of these in one post, you may submit multiple certificates to demonstrate the full set. If you cannot demonstrate each and every professional capability, 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 professional capabilities?

On the certificate the signatory will be asked to sign a declaration that they have observed demonstration of all the professional capabilities **or** that they have received alternative evidence of demonstration where they have not personally observed them. 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 professional capabilities.

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 professional capabilities (e.g. if you are undertaking a PhD 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 a professional capability in the 3½ years prior to the advertised commencement date, they can sign you off, as long as they have evidence that you have maintained the required skill level in these areas.

My signatory is registered overseas. What should I do?

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