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# Interviews and medical specialty training selection centres

On this page you will find details of the different types of interview and assessment exercises you can expect to find at a specialty selection centre. There are also tips on how to prepare for these and be successful at interview.

## Key tips

- Research the role you are applying for and be clear about the person specifications [1] for this role.
- Keep up to date with current affairs in medicine and have an understanding of topics such as audit, research, clinical governance.
- Check the documents you are required to bring to interview, such as GMC certificate, qualifications and proof of identity. Check if originals or copies are required.

You can expect to be assessed on:

- clinical skills
- interaction with patients
- soft skills such as empathy
- presentation skills
- the completion of your portfolio

There are a number of different types of interview or assessment exercises you can expect at a selection day.

You may be interviewed at a number of different stations – rooms set aside for different types of assessment:

- portfolio interview
- presentation
- structured interview
- clinical scenario
- mock patient consultation or communication station

## Portfolio interview

You are asked to talk through your portfolio, to show how you have developed both clinical and professional skills. Interviewers have access to your portfolio prior to interview. Your portfolio should include your CV and have a contents page. NB: GP recruitment doesn't require that you go through a portfolio interview.

Check with the lead Royal College or local HEE [2]/deanery websites for the specialty to which you are applying, to see if any specific evidence should be included.

## **Tips**

- ensure you structure and present your portfolio well. It should have a contents page, so it is easy to find the information.
- know your portfolio. The interviewers will form an impression of your organisational skills by how easily you can find your way around the portfolio and identify relevant examples.
- highlight your commitment to the specialty you have chosen. Be able to show examples of where you have demonstrated the skills required in person specifications for the specialty you are applying for. You could consider a dedicated page at the front of your portfolio with examples of your commitment to this specialty.
- your portfolio should also show your awareness of GMC Good Medical Practice guidelines [3]
- ensure your portfolio demonstrates you have completed all your assessments
- think about two or three strengths relating to the specialty to which you are applying that you want to get across to the interviewer. Consider any weak-points in your portfolio and how you would answer questions on these.

## **Presentation**

The interviewer will want to know how well you prepare at short notice, think on your feet and get your point across. You will usually be given a choice of topics, and then around 15 minutes to prepare a five minute talk. The interviewers may then ask you questions afterwards, including why you chose this topic.

## **Tips**

- read the brief carefully – it is important that you deliver what has been asked of you
- plan a rough structure for the talk
- stick to the time limit
- use diagrams or pictures to make it more interesting

## **Structured interview**

This is an interview with a time limit. All candidates are asked the same questions. Questions will be about you, the specialty you have chosen and healthcare in general.

## **Tips**

- Find out how long the interview is going to be and how many questions will be asked. (Some HEE local offices/deaneries don't provide this information).
- You can predict questions that will come up using the person specifications [1] for the specialty you are applying to and the GMC Good Medical Practice guidelines [3]

## **Clinical scenario**

You are presented with a clinical case, given some time to think about it and then asked questions. The aim is to assess:

- patient care skills
- diagnostic and treatment planning skills
- ability to prioritise key facts (some of the information given may be irrelevant)
- ability to make confident recommendations, or equally decide you don't have enough information to take a definite course of action

## Mock patient consultation or communication station

You are given some patient notes and a short time to prepare and then have a mock consultation with an actor. Interviewers are particularly looking for:

- good communication skills
- listening skills
- empathy
- ability to explain jargon

This may be used in GP and in some other specialties eg paediatrics.

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### Resources

- Health Education England/Wales Deanery and AGCAS DVD Selection Centres for Specialty Training [4](2013)
- BMJ Careers [5]
- General Medical Council [6]
- Joint Royal Colleges of Physicians Training Board CT1 Recruitment [7]
- Scoring criteria for core surgery recruitment [8]
- Recruitment information can also be found on Royal College and HEE local office/deanery websites and Twitter pages.

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### Links

[1] <http://specialtytraining.hee.nhs.uk/specialty-recruitment/person-specifications-2013/2017-person-specifications/> [2] <https://hee.nhs.uk/hee-your-area> [3] [http://www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/good\\_medical\\_practice.asp](http://www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/good_medical_practice.asp) [4] [http://www.agcas.org.uk/agcas\\_resources/37-Selection-Centres-for-Specialty-Training-second-edition-DVD-and-streaming-licence-](http://www.agcas.org.uk/agcas_resources/37-Selection-Centres-for-Specialty-Training-second-edition-DVD-and-streaming-licence-) [5] <http://careers.bmj.com/careers/hospital-medical-healthcare-doctors-jobs.html> [6] <http://www.gmc-uk.org/> [7] <http://www.ct1recruitment.org.uk/> [8] <http://www.lpmde.ac.uk/laserecruitment/specialties/files/2017-cst-portfolio-guidance-for-applicants>