

# Training and teaching resources - medical students/doctors

This section of the website provides comprehensive information and tools, designed to help medical students and junior doctors with their career planning.

It is based on the four-stage model of career planning that is widely used in higher education:

- self-assessment [1]
- exploring career options [2]
- decision making [3]
- applications and interviews [4]



Medical students and junior doctors can use this website on their own, or the activities can be incorporated into individual and group career planning sessions.

Medical students should have some awareness about managing their careers early on

There's advice for educational supervisors, mentors, careers advisers and others involved in advising medical students and doctors in training on how they can help them get the most from the website and support them in making good decisions about their future. We would also encourage you to register on the site and try out the self-assessment tools for yourself.

It's a good idea for students and trainees to register on the website to set up a personal profile. The results of the self-assessment exercises from the above four stages will be saved to it. The personal profile is confidential and only the students/trainees themselves have access to their online results.

## Medical students and postgraduate doctors

The decision faced by a trainee choosing a medical career is a complex one. The Explore roles section [5] of this website (see Doctors) lists more than 60 different specialties. The nature of the work and key skills/competences required for each of them varies widely, for instance working as a GP is obviously very different to working as a cardiologist, and some specialties are more competitive than others to get into.

We believe that medical students should have some awareness about managing their careers early on, and advise them to begin to work through the first two stages of our career planning model - self assessment [1] and exploring career options [2] - as soon as possible. This website sets out some ideas for how medical students can use their time to reflect on the different medical specialties they are exposed to at medical school.

## Medical career pathway

The medical career pathway has two key stages:

- the foundation programme
- specialty training

See the boxes below for more information.

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### The foundation programme

The foundation programme for doctors is a generic medical training programme that takes place in the first two years after medical school. During these two years, foundation doctors complete rotations in various specialties, usually three a year. During the second year of the foundation programme, the trainees have to make the decision about which specialty they would like to apply to train in.

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## Specialty training

There is a curriculum for each specialty so that training is focused and the trainee can reach consultant level after a minimum of seven years, although the timeframe varies from specialty to specialty.

For GPs, the minimum training pathway is three years.

It's important to note that specialty training can also consist of 'run-through' or 'uncoupled' training.

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### Run-through training

Some trainee pathways are such that, once the trainee starts a pathway, provided they meet the Annual Review of Competence Programme (ARCP), they will continue on that pathway until they reach the end of their training. If they have reached this stage, and have passed their membership exams, they will be awarded a Certificate of Completion of Training [6] (CCT [7]) and will be put on the specialist register of the appropriate royal college. This will mean that they can apply for consultant posts, or GP posts if that is the training pathway they have taken.

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### Uncoupled training

Not all specialties have run-through training; more now consist of 'uncoupled' training which is where the postgraduate doctors - depending on the specialty - have a training programme called 'core training' for two or three years. After this they have to apply to higher specialty training, competition for which can be high, depending on which pathway they choose. The specialty trainees will then train in higher specialty training for another four to five years, again depending on the specialty.

The procedure for gaining CCT [7] is the same.

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**Links**

- [1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/career-planning/planning-your-career/self-assessment>
- [2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/career-planning/planning-your-career/exploring-your-options>
- [3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/career-planning/planning-your-career/decision-making>
- [4] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/career-planning/planning-your-career/applications-and-interviews>
- [5] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles>
- [6] [https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Certificate\\_of\\_completion\\_of\\_training](https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Certificate_of_completion_of_training)
- [7] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#CCT>