

# How to succeed in foundation training

This page gives you advice on how to get the most out of your foundation programme.

Foundation is a time to get to grips with clinical procedures, how hospitals work and to develop your professional skills. In addition, you should begin planning your career route after foundation and consider how you can make the most of your time to boost your applications to specialty training.

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## Ten tips to get the most out of [Foundation Training](#) [4]

### 1. E-portfolio and recording assessments or supervised learning events (SLEs)

Take responsibility for your learning. Keep your e-portfolio up to date and ensure you complete all your assessments and SLEs. Your portfolio will be invaluable for preparing for future job applications and interviews. Some interviews for specialty training will want to see part of your completed portfolio. You can use the Personal and Professional Development Plan (PDP) section of your portfolio to plan F2. The [e-portfolio page](#) [5] on the Foundation Programme website is useful reading.

It is your responsibility to ensure you complete and record the following assessments/SLEs:

- team assessment of behaviour (TAB), which is feedback from colleagues on performance and abilities
- ?direct observation of doctor-patient encounters – there are two types:
  - direct observation of procedural skills (DOPS)
  - mini clinical evaluation exercise (Mini CEX)

As well as clinical procedures you are being assessed/supervised on the doctor–patient relationship. You should get feedback from a range of health care professionals.

Finally, ensure you balance work, extra activities and time for rest!

Developing the clinical teacher assessment and SLE is a review of your experiences of teaching or making a presentation.

## 2. Audit

An audit involves reviewing how something is done and comparing this to guidelines for good practice. You may have already completed an audit during medical school. You are required to do at least one audit per year to complete your Foundation programme. At interviews for specialty training you are very likely to be asked questions about audits you have undertaken. If you can ‘complete the loop’ on the audit, that’s highly valued.

Find out more about audits. [6]

## 3. Presentations and publications

Developing your confidence in giving presentations to both colleagues and peers is an area on which you will be able to improve. Furthermore, presenting findings from an audit, a case report or a clinical review all show a proactive interest in a potential specialty area and are ways of getting yourself noticed. You could present at a weekly department meetings, or take part in regional, or even national level meetings and conferences. In addition you could consider trying to get your research published.

The Royal Society of Medicine [7] offers awards and prizes for papers, research summaries, oral presentations and informational posters on specific topics.

## 4. Teaching

It is important to get some experience of teaching to include in your e-portfolio, as this is an area which will be assessed during the foundation years. Ask your educational supervisor if there are any opportunities to teach medical students, other foundation doctors or a multi-disciplinary team. Teaching can be ward-based, a journal club activity, a lecture or a tutorial.

You may wish to consider a course to gain teaching skills. The following organisations offer short courses suitable for foundation doctors:

- Royal Society of Medicine [8]
- Royal College of Physicians [9]
- Oxford Medical [10]
- some NHS Trusts offer courses on teaching and leadership skills

## 5. Courses

You may wish to attend courses as part of your study leave. You could choose personal development courses, such as leadership skills or study relating to a specialty or interest, such as a surgical skills course.

## 6. Journal Clubs

These are groups of people who meet regularly to critically evaluate articles in scientific literature. You could see if there is one in your NHS Trust or perhaps set up one yourself. Being part of a journal club has many benefits including:

- keeping up to date with latest developments in healthcare
- learning more about evidence-based medicine
- developing critical evaluation skills
- networking
- gaining experience of teaching or presenting

## 7. Tasters

It may not be possible to do rotations in all the specialty areas that you have an interest in. A taster gives you a chance to experience a wider variety of specialties or further pursue an area of interest.

## 8. Networking

- ensure you form good working relationships with all members of your health team, including nurses and allied health professionals, to get a full picture of hospital procedures and to develop your team working skills
- speak to specialty trainees or consultants to help you make decisions about which specialty to pursue
- take advantage of the numerous events to network, including careers fairs and Royal College events.

## 9. Support

Use your support network. [Find out more on the Foundation Programme Support page](#) [11]

## 10. Work-life balance

Finally, ensure you balance work, extra activities and time for rest!

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**Source URL:** <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/foundation-training/how-succeed-foundation-training>

### Links

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