

Physician Recruitment – Indicative Guidance Regarding Changes from 2021

1 Introduction

The introduction of the new internal medicine curriculum means that early (previously “core”, now stage 1) stage training for medicine is changing from two to three years in duration. As a consequence, there will be no significant output of core trainees in 2021 to apply for higher specialty recruitment. The requirement to increase stage 1 to three years means that a large number of ST3-level posts will be used for the third year of Internal Medicine Training (IMY3).

This change has created uncertainty for trainees who need to understand their options for applying to programmes in 2021, especially those who have undertaken core medical training (CMT) or ACCS acute medicine (ACCS-AM) and wish to return to training at internal medicine year 3 (IMY3) to continue their physicianly training.

The guidance in this document provides an indicative position describing what trainees can expect over the next few years of physician training recruitment. This document is subject to ratification by the Medical and Dental Recruitment and Selection Programme Board, which is responsible for the recruitment of postgraduate trainees on behalf of the four UK nations, and therefore subject to change. It should therefore be regarded as a guide to the likely provision of training posts, to help trainees plan their careers.

This guidance has been produced on behalf of the four UK training agencies and in consultation with trainee representatives and the Joint Royal Colleges of Physicians Training Board:

- Health Education England
- Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency
- NHS Education for Scotland
- Health Education and Improvement Wales
- BMA Junior Doctors Committee
- Trainee Committees of the three physician royal colleges
- Joint Royal College of Physicians Training Board.

2 Guidance areas

The areas covered by this guidance includes:

- **2020 ST3 recruitment** – the position for recruitment into vacancies starting from August 2020.
- **IMY3 stand-alone posts** – the provision available for trainees who wish to return to complete a third year of stage 1 training (IMY3) to meet the requirements of the new internal medicine curriculum.
- **Higher specialty training:**
 - the extent to which there will be recruitment to ST3 specialties in 2021 for both ‘Group 1’ and ‘Group 2’ specialties¹
 - entry requirements for ‘Group 2’ specialties from 2021
 - entry requirements for ‘Group 1’ specialties from 2022.
- **Question areas** – these sections provide answers to specific questions that have been received from trainees.

¹ The JRCPTB website has information about each group and the specialties this includes: <https://www.jrcptb.org.uk/imt>

3 2020 ST3 specialty recruitment

Recruitment for 2020 will be run in line with previous years and the entry requirements are identical to those for 2019; i.e. anyone who has successfully completed CMT, or is on track to do so by the time the post commences, will be eligible for consideration. Applications open on 29 January and close on 19 February 2020. Detailed guidance about the process, including eligibility criteria, can be found on the [Physician ST3 Recruitment](#) website.

There will be a [second round](#) as normal, opening in late-July 2020, for specialties with vacancies who choose to participate.

3.1 Curriculum change

Trainees are advised that the curricula for all physician specialties are changing and all new trainees in Group 1 specialties will dual train with internal medicine for the duration of their training programme from 2022. Under current [GMC rules](#), all existing trainees should transfer to the most recent curriculum and assessment system unless they are in the final year of training; currently up to a two-year transition period is allowed.

Discussions are ongoing with the GMC to determine exceptions to these regulations and transition plans will need to be defined for each specialty curriculum. However, applicants are advised that the majority of trainees joining training in 2020 will be required to transfer curricula by 2024. Trainees are strongly advised to stay up to date regarding curricular changes and the JRCPTB will provide updates via their [news](#) page as available.

4 IMY3 stand-alone posts

The four UK nations are aware that many trainees take time out between core and higher training for a variety of reasons. There is a commitment across the four nations to provide opportunities for former CMT/ACCS-AM trainees to return to core training to undertake IMY3. Whilst it cannot be guaranteed, every effort will be made to ensure that those previously completing CMT who wish to return to core training can be placed in the region in which they undertook CMT.

Regions are currently reviewing their post availability across their school of medicine in order to provide trainees with more information about their geography. The uncertainty relates to confirmation of how many former core trainees wish to take up an IMY3 post and how many current internal medicine trainees will be progressing into IMY3, which may vary by region.

Any trainee who is considering taking up an IMY3 post in the future is encouraged to submit an expression of interest via the following link: <https://healtheducationyh.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/imy3-expressions-of-interest>

This information is essential for programmes to aid their planning and will act as a mailing list to keep trainees who register up to date with the latest information about the IMY3 process. Therefore, it is strongly advised that trainees who have a future return date beyond 2021 (e.g. those in research posts) also submit an expression of interest to support this planning process.

4.1 IMY3 process

The process for how doctors who have previously completed CMT will have the opportunity to be appointed to IMY3 posts is expected to vary slightly between UK nations:

England, Scotland and Wales

There will be a process to register interest and subsequently apply via the Oriel system to allow offers to be made. Priority within each deanery or region will be given to trainees who have completed CMT/ACCS-AM in that area. There will be a process to consider trainees who have specific circumstances that limit their ability to return to the deanery where CMT was completed. It is the intention where possible to identify posts for all trainees who express an interest in returning, thereby avoiding a competitive entry process. Potential options are being reviewed for the event that insufficient posts are available; importantly no face-to-face interview will be required.

The feasibility of providing an opportunity to defer IMY3 to a future year with pre-arranged placements is being explored.

Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland is planning to offer those completing CMT in August 2020 (or later) an IMY3 post should they request this; NIMDTA will be in touch with affected trainees directly. IMY3 LAT posts will be advertised, for those doctors who have completed CMT before August 2020, each year for posts starting from August 2021. Applications will be open to anyone who has successfully completed CMT and there will be a competitive entry process.

4.2 IMY3 process question areas

The table below has further details about the process for being appointed to an IMY3 post. Unless specified, the information refers to the process for England, Scotland and Wales.

Question	Indicative position
Who will be eligible to apply for a stand-alone IMT year 3 post?	These posts will only be available to CMT/ACCS-AM trainees who have had all of their competences signed off. This would normally be those with an ARCP outcome 6 but can potentially include those with an outcome 3 or 4, subject to review.
When will recruitment take place?	<p>The timing has not yet been confirmed but for England, Scotland and Wales, it can be confirmed that recruitment will start no earlier than June 2020 for posts that start in August 2021. Applications will be open for at least six weeks to give adequate time for qualifying doctors to be aware of the process.</p> <p>The LAT recruitment process for Northern Ireland is likely to commence in the January of the year of the post start date; i.e. January 2021 for August 2021 start dates.</p> <p>Those who register an interest will be able to sign up for updates, which will include advance notice of the date on which applications open.</p>
What if I want to change my training region?	<p>Priority will be given within each region to those who undertook CMT there. Consideration will also be given to doctors who meet the Medical and Dental Recruitment and Selection (MDRS) 'Special Circumstances' policy.</p> <p>If there are posts remaining, those meeting the criteria for National Inter Deanery Transfers will be considered next. Other trainees who wish to change region can be considered for any leftover posts but it is expected that this will amount to only very few posts nationally.</p>

Question	Indicative position
How will I register interest/apply?	<p>Doctors can register an expression of interest to help programmes with their planning and receive updates regarding the IMY3 process. Registering an interest will not be sufficient to be considered for a post, you must submit an application via the Oriel system.</p> <p>Everyone that registers an interest will be emailed to let them know when applications will open. It will not be possible to be considered without applying to the designated vacancy.</p>
Can I apply to IMY3 and ST3?	<p>Yes; however, it will only be possible to accept one offer - acceptance will automatically prevent progress in the other application. It will be possible to hold an IMY3 offer while awaiting the outcome of an ST3 application.</p>
When will information on IMY3 programmes available?	<p>Post numbers will not be available at time of application as deaneries will be seeking where possible to match the number of posts to the applications received.</p> <p>Unfortunately, it will not be possible to provide details, e.g. hospital/rotations, of any offers made at the time of application. Deaneries will work with those accepting offers to match them to suitable programmes after their offer has been made. The process will take into account both geography and training needs based on their previous CMT rotations and subsequent experience and will focus on delivering IMY3 capability.</p> <p>Confirmation of location and posts within IMY3 rotations will be provided at least 12 weeks prior to the commencement date.</p> <p>Applicants should note that IMY3 posts must enable the trainee to work at the level of a medical registrar and there will be a strong emphasis on general internal medicine in this year.</p>
How many years will IMY3 stand-alone posts be available?	<p>The process as outlined will run for a three-year period, starting with recruitment into August 2021 posts. Whilst formal recruitment is not anticipated to last longer than this, the possibility of obtaining an IMY3 stand-alone post subsequent to this will be considered in the future but cannot be guaranteed at this time.</p>
Is an IMY3 stand-alone post my only route into training in a Group 1 specialty?	<p>No, it is possible to demonstrate IMY3-level competence via alternative experience. The section on Entry requirements for Group 1 specialties from 2022 contains more information on this route.</p>
I am/was an ACCS-AM trainee, are there any differences to CMT?	<p>Trainees who undertook ACCS-AM will be given equal consideration for IMY3 vacancies. It is expected any ACCS-AM trainees due to complete the three-year programme in August 2021 or later, will be offered a fourth year as an extension to their programme.</p>

5 Higher specialty training

5.1 Recruitment in 2021

The availability of ST3 programmes in higher medical specialties will be affected by the changes to IMT, with many specialties having substantially reduced availability; previous post numbers for most specialties can be found via the 'Data' section for each specialty on the relevant page of the [ST3 Recruitment website](#). The effect varies based on the specialty, as summarised below:

5.1.1 Group 2 specialties

These specialties will be unaffected by the changes, with recruitment continuing as normal in 2021 and beyond. It is anticipated that post numbers will be similar to previous years.

5.1.2 Genitourinary medicine, neurology and palliative medicine

These specialties are anticipated to recruit to a similar level as in previous years. Please note that, whilst trainees will be recruited to the current curriculum, it is likely that they will be required to change to the new curriculum during the programme and dual train in internal medicine.

Currently, palliative medicine accepts trainees from other training pathways (e.g. general practice). This will be reviewed ahead of 2021 recruitment and a decision will be made whether this pathway will remain open. Regardless of the decision, it can be confirmed that only core medicine competencies/internal medicine stage 1 completion and the MRCP(UK) will be accepted from 2022.

5.1.3 Cardiology

The specialty is expected to see an overall small reduction in vacancy numbers compared to previous years. However, there is expected to be variability between regions and it is not possible to predict for individual areas at this stage.

5.1.4 Other Group 1 specialties

The anticipated position for these specialties varies for each nation:

England

At this stage it is not expected that there will be any recruitment to Group 1 specialties, other than cardiology, genitourinary medicine, neurology and palliative medicine. Posts for other specialties are being utilised for IMY3 rotations.

Northern Ireland

The options for recruitment to ST3 posts in Northern Ireland commencing in August 2021 will be kept under review as the implementation of IMT Stage 1 progresses. It is hoped there will be recruitment to some of the Group 1 specialties but this will depend on there being capacity after meeting the IMY3 requirements for trainees.

Scotland

Scotland is proposing to recruit to a limited and reduced number of ST3 posts in some of the Group 1 specialty programmes, but the numbers of these posts will be many fewer than usual. Details will be published on their website: <http://www.scotmt.scot.nhs.uk/>

Wales

ST3 recruitment will take place in 2021 for the majority of higher medical specialities in Wales; this will include the majority of group 1 specialities. We expect the eligibility criteria and application process to be similar to that for 2020 and therefore an IM3 year will not be required for entry for those who have completed CMT or have the 'Alternative Certificate of Core Competence'.

Please note that, whilst trainees will be recruited to the current curriculum, they are likely to be required to change to the new curriculum during the programme. Trainees are therefore advised to monitor further guidance from the JRCPTB, HEIW and the GMC in relation to curriculum requirements.

5.2 Entry requirements for Group 2 specialties from 2021

Entry requirements will continue to be similar to entry to ST3-level now. This includes:

- Successful completion of year 2 of IMT, with an appropriate ARCP outcome, and full completion of the MRCP(UK).
- Successful completion of CMT: an ARCP outcome 6 or an outcome 3 or 4 indicating just the full MRCP(UK) required, and subsequent full completion of the MRCP(UK).
- Specialties which currently accept trainees from non-medicine pathways will continue allowing this.
- Trainees not undertaking a relevant UK core training programme will continue to be able to demonstrate competence via the *Alternative Certificate of Core Competence*, which will be updated for the new internal medicine stage 1 curriculum.

5.3 Entry requirements for Group 1 specialties from 2022

This will require successful completion of IMY3 or equivalent, which includes full MRCP(UK) diploma; this can be demonstrated via:

- Successful completion of IMY3 with an ARCP outcome 6, or an outcome 3 or 4 indicating just the full MRCP(UK) required, and subsequent full completion of the MRCP(UK).
- Completion of an *Alternative Certificate of Core Competence* demonstrating IMY3-level competence. The form will be updated for the new internal medicine stage 1 curriculum.

The alternative certificate pathway is available to those who completed CMT and wish to use alternative experience to demonstrate IMY3-level competence, rather than complete a stand-alone IMY3 post. However, anyone considering this should note the [GMC rules](#) on using experience from outside an approved programme to count towards their training.

The North West region have produced some [helpful guidance](#) on specialist register routes of entry.

5.4 Additional questions

Below is a list of additional question areas which have been received from trainees.

Question	Indicative position
Can a current IMY2 apply to ST3 in 2021?	A person in the second year of their IMT programme in 2021 will be able to apply to Group 2 specialties but not Group 1 which will be recruiting to ST3-level for the final year.
Can existing higher specialty trainees in Group 1 specialties who are not dual training with GIM, choose to change to dual specialise with IM?	Depending on the expected GMC decision, this change may become compulsory. If it is not compulsory, local office/School of Medicine decisions will be made as to whether such training can be accommodated.
What happens if someone is offered a post in 2021 in GUM/neurology/ /palliative without GIM and needs to defer their entry to 2022?	Deferment of entry can only be considered on statutory grounds (e.g. ill health or maternity). If anyone is in this position, they will need to monitor the GMC decision on transitional arrangements so that they are aware of the confirmed rules when they are published.
What if someone leaves after IMY2 and subsequently decides they want to train in a group 1 specialty?	They could apply via the IMY3 recruitment process whilst this is in operation, otherwise they will need to gain non-training experience to get their IMY3 capability signed off via the standard 'Alternative Certificate of Core Competence' and thereafter would continue on a CESR CP certification route.
How long will CMT completion (as opposed to IMT) be a valid entry pathway for group 2 specialties without the need for additional core training?	There is no limit as to how long this will be accepted. The current process of using return to practice guidelines and procedures to help trainees transition back to training safely remains the responsibility of the region into which the trainee re-enters training. Those re-entering these training pathways following CMT will have their application scrutinised to review how they have been maintaining their competence, which will be assessed as part of the competitive recruitment process.
How will combined infection training (CIT) work?	In 2021 there will be recruitment for CIT but only for group 2 entry. CIT will then become a joint recruitment process for group 1 and group 2 entry from 2022 and remain so thereafter. On the application form, applicants will indicate whether they are applying with IMY2 or IMY3 competence and the form will direct them to supply the appropriate documentation. Those applying with IMY2 competence will be restricted to group 2 specialties whereas those with IMY3 competence can be considered for all programmes. The interview is expected to remain a single process for all CIT specialties.
What options are open to someone who wishes to combine intensive care medicine (ICM) with a group 1 specialty/IM who have only completed IMY2 or CMT?	This training pathway will not be available after 2020 recruitment. If this is a pathway you wish to consider it is recommended that you apply in the 2020 recruitment year or seek an IMY3 post before commencing higher training.