



International Sponsorship Scheme

ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS OF GLASGOW

International Sponsorship Scheme

Guidance

Background

The International Sponsorship Scheme (ISS) is a UK scheme designed to allow International Medical Graduates (IMGs) to benefit from training and development in the NHS for a maximum of 24 months before returning to their home countries.

The Scheme allows the College to sponsor suitably qualified and eligible international medical graduates' application to the GMC for a license to practise. The College uses its role as a GMC sponsor to support three programmes: The Medical Training Initiative (MTI), a UK wide initiative, The International Medical Training Fellowship (IMTF), a Scotland only Initiative and The Livingstone Fellowship, our College initiative, with the Scottish Academy, for physicians and surgeons in training from Malawi and Zambia.

Our College's principle role is to enable registration for a license to practice with the General Medical Council (GMC) and sponsorship for a Tier 5 or Tier 2 Visa for the UK.

Eligibility

Candidates must meet **all** the following criteria for acceptance onto the International Sponsorship Scheme:

- hold a primary medical qualification accepted by the GMC and [verified](#) by the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG)
- Have a postgraduate qualification (e.g. Royal College Membership Exam, or other higher degree in medicine or a medical subspecialty)
- Three years minimum postgraduate experience (including 1 year's internship and at least 1 year in the specialty in which you intend to train whilst in the UK)
- Demonstrable proficiency in English through a score of at least 7.0 in each component of the academic module of the International English Language Testing Service (IELTS) test with no less than 7.5 overall **or** a grade of B in each component of the medical version of the Occupational English Test (or OET)
- 12 months of continuous practice prior to application as well as 3 years of practice of the last 5 years (please see page 3 for further guidance on continuous practice)
- Resident and employed outside the UK in a priority country at time and for duration of the International Sponsorship Scheme application. Please click [here](#) for a list of the priority countries
- Not pursued GMC registration through the Professional and Linguistic Assessments Board (PLAB) route and failed



- Willing to return to your home country at the end of the International Sponsorship Scheme placement

Requirement for English language proficiency

This is a requirement of the GMC for registration to practice and there is no flexibility in this aspect of your application. Successful candidates will be required to meet this requirement. There are two ways you can meet this requirement. You can choose one of these two ways:

IELTS

Achieve a minimum overall score of 7.5 in the academic version of the International English Language Testing Service (IELTS), with minimum scores of 7.0 in all four components.

We encourage you to prepare for the IELTS examination and you may want to consider doing an online course as part of your preparation. Please click [here](#) to find out more about a free course.

Please click [here](#) to refer to the IELTS website for further information on how to book a test.

We strongly recommend applying for IELTS as early as possible to avoid long waiting lists at some centres. The British Council, and other providers, have a wide range of IELTS preparation and study resources.

IELTS results are valid for two years and if your IELTS results are no longer valid (or will soon expire) then you will have to retake IELTS. You must be in receipt of a valid IELTS test report form showing the minimum required scores at the time of your International Sponsorship Scheme application.

OET

Achieve a grade of at least 'B' in each testing area (speaking, listening, reading and writing) in the medicine version of the test of the Occupational English Test (OET). You must get those grades in the same test and must have obtained the grades in your most recent sitting of the test. Please click [here](#) for further details on the OET as well as preparation materials available online [here](#).

Please be aware that there are costs associated with both IELTS and OET and you should make yourself aware of these costs before proceeding with your application.



Continuity of Practice

This is a requirement of the GMC for registration to practice and there is no flexibility in this aspect of your application.

- A doctor applying for registration with an offer of sponsorship must have been engaged in medical practice for three out of the last five years including the most recent 12 months. Please note the 12 month rule starts *at the point the application for registration is made*. We recommend you continue in practice throughout this process.
- Clinical attachments and observerships are not counted as medical practice and should not be taken as such
- Clinical volunteer work may be acceptable if it can be supported by documentary evidence that the doctor was registered in the jurisdiction it was undertaken
- The GMC allow a maximum gap of five weeks in a 12 month period for annual leave. Leave taken when a doctor is not contractually employed is not considered annual leave.
- The GMC allow up to 12 months contractual maternity leave per maternity/child. If the doctor is not contractually employed during the maternity leave, this would be considered as a gap in medical practice.

Applicants will be required to provide details of their work and experience history from the last five years without any gaps including details of medical work, non-medical work, study leave, clinical attachments or observerships, career breaks, maternity or parental leave, unemployment and career breaks. See example below:

Application received by GMC 31/12/2017			
Start	Finish	Employer/non-employment activity details	Medical practice?
21/11/2017	31/12/2017	Mumbai Hospital, India	Yes
01/11/2012	20/11/2017	Vacation	No
03/08/2017	31/10/2017	Queens Hospital, Australia	Yes
01/04/2012	03/07/2017	Mumbai Hospital, India	Yes
01/02/2012	31/03/2012	Red Cross - Volunteer	N/A
01/01/2012	31/01/2012	Clinical attachment	Yes

Applicants should state on their application form if they were contractually employed during periods of leave.

Note gap between 04/07/2017 and 02/08/2017. Applicants should confirm if they were engaged in medical practice throughout any gaps in CV

The doctor has incorrectly described the clinical attachment as medical practice. Clinical attachments and observerships are not counted as medical practice

The GMC may require evidence of any volunteering work undertaken. Applicants should state if volunteering work was medically related. If so, were you required to have a medical degree and hold registration with the relevant regulatory authority?



Primary source verification for international medical graduates

International medical graduates applying for provisional or full registration with a licence to practise need to have their primary medical qualification independently verified before we grant registration. From 11 June 2018, all applicants seeking registration with a licence to practise will be required to have their primary medical qualification independently verified before being granted registration, if they:

This applies if you are qualified at a medical school outside of the UK, European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland OR are a national of a country outside the UK, EEA or Switzerland who graduated from medical schools outside the UK and do not already hold provisional registration.

Verification is carried out by the [Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates](#) (ECFMG) through their online system – known as the [Electronic Portfolio of International Credentials](#) (EPIC) service. ECFMG will verify the qualification is genuine by checking this directly with your awarding institution.

Applicants to the International Sponsorship Scheme will need to set up an online EPIC account and have their qualification verified before we are able to provide GMC sponsorship.

There are fees associated with this process. The fees are charged in USD and you'll need to pay ECFMG directly. Based on exchange rates as at January 2018, it can cost anywhere from £155 - £260, depending on how many qualifications you need to submit for verification.

These fees are set by ECFMG and you should contact your bank or check currency conversion sites for the most up to date foreign exchange rates. Please click [here](#) to be directed to the fees section of ECFMG's website.

If you have already had your qualification verified by the ECFMG you will not need to have it verified again but you will require an EPIC account in order for the GMC to review this.

You can find further information about this on the GMC's website [here](#).

Evidence of Good Standing

You must be able to provide a Certificate of Good Standing (CoGS) from the regulatory body in the countries where you have practised in the last 5 years. The CoGS must confirm all of the following:

- You are authorised to practise medicine in the relevant country.
- You have not at any stage been disqualified, suspended or prohibited from practising medicine.
- The regulatory authority is not aware of any matters that raise doubts about your good standing.

Each certificate is only valid for three months from the date it's signed. It must be valid throughout the process of your application.



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In receipt of a suitable job offer

In most instances, applicants identify UK training positions for themselves and following confirmation of appointment they then approach our College to secure sponsorship through International Sponsorship Scheme. The job offer you receive should be graded at ST3-ST7.

If you have not successfully obtained a job offer to train in the UK, you can search for job vacancies from the links below:

- <https://jobs.scot.nhs.uk/>
- <https://www.jobs.nhs.uk/>

The grade of the job should be the UK NHS Level ST3 or above (normally ST3 – ST7).

If you are unable to find a job, please let us know and where possible, our College will try to help doctors identify training opportunities. **We cannot guarantee that positions will be found for all applicants.**

Please note that we are *unable* to assess your application *without* a suitable job offer in place. If you are not currently in receipt of a job offer, your application will be progressed when you send us information about a post you have been offered.