

## Evidence of Foundation Competence – 2021 - Applicant Guide

### Introduction

The national person specification for entry to all United Kingdom first year specialty training programmes requires applicants to provide evidence of achievement of Foundation Professional Capabilities within the 3<sup>1/2</sup> years prior to the commencement date for the post they are applying for, in line with GMC standards/Good Medical Practice, including:

- Good clinical care
- Maintaining good medical practice
- Good relationships and communication with patients
- Good working relationships with colleagues
- Good teaching and training
- Professional behaviour and probity
- Delivery of good acute clinical care

All applicants to specialty training at CT1/ST1 level must demonstrate all the professional capabilities described by the Foundation Curriculum, without exception, using the prescribed evidence as outlined below.

### **Why do I need to demonstrate that I have achieved the Foundation Professional Capabilities?**

The possession of all Foundation Professional Capabilities is an essential criterion on all CT1/ST1 person specifications because they are needed to help successful applicants cope with, and progress through the clinical experience that forms part of their specialty training. They are key attributes that ensure patient safety – particularly those relating to the recognition and management of the acutely ill patient, resuscitation and end of life care.

CT1/ST1 posts are not configured to assess whether each new entrant possesses these professional capabilities – a process which would take several weeks. Instead they must assume their new starters possess them. This is true even of posts not directly involving acute medical care: often the only person on such units with recent experience of resuscitating a patient is the CT1/ST1 trainee. It is also crucial that the submitted evidence is current. It is not sufficient to have achieved each professional capability once. Competences must be achieved, maintained and demonstrated if our patients are going to be safe in our hands.

### **What evidence can be used to demonstrate that I have Foundation Professional Capabilities?**

The acceptable methods for demonstrating achievement of foundation professional capabilities are listed below. No other evidence will be accepted, as previous experience has shown it to be unreliable. For example, specialist qualifications do not demonstrate the breadth of the Foundation Professional Capabilities and, however experienced a candidate is in one specialty, they are often not able to cope with the first year of core or specialty training without having recently practiced the broader skills. Please note, it is the applicant's

responsibility to satisfactorily demonstrate that they possess all the Foundation Professional Capabilities, and the recruiting organisations are not allowed any discretion in this matter.

There are 5 ways you can demonstrate that you possess the Foundation Professional Capabilities, and the application form will ask you a series of questions to help you determine the most appropriate form of evidence for you to submit:

- 1. Currently on a Foundation Programme** – if you are undertaking a recognised foundation programme in the UK<sup>1</sup> which is due to finish in August 2021, we will ask you to confirm the name of your Foundation School. You do not need to do anything else. You do not need to submit any evidence. Any offer of a programme will be conditional upon you successfully completing the Foundation Programme and being awarded an FPCC before August 2021. Those applying for a delayed start date due to illness or maternity should be issued with an FPCC before commencement in post (i.e. by the end of the deferral period).
- 2. Already completed a Foundation Programme** – if you have already completed a UK Foundation Programme within the 3½ years prior to the commencement date of the post to which you are applying, we will ask you to confirm that you have been awarded an FPCC. You **must** attach a scanned copy of your FPCC to your application. You will be expected to provide the original certificate at a later date.
- 3. Already in Specialty Training** – if you are already in specialty training and have a National Training Number (NTN) or Deanery Reference Number (DRN), you will be deemed to have had your foundation competence assessed at the point of entry to specialty training and therefore will not be required to provide any further evidence.
- 4. Reapplying to a specialty they had voluntarily resigned from previously** – if you are applying for a specialty where you have previously held a National Training Number (NTN) or Deanery Reference Number (DRN), but voluntarily resigned before completion, you can upload evidence of satisfactory progress with training, prior to resignation, in the form of ARCP documentation. This can only occur with the specialty being applied to is the same as the specialty that you were previously training in.
- 5. Anybody who is not covered by the above** – if you have not completed a UK Foundation Programme within the 3½ years prior to commencement of the post to which you are applying, and are not already in specialty training, you will be able to submit a Certificate of Readiness to Enter Specialty Training (previously known as an *Alternative Certificate of Foundation Competence*). This must be signed by a consultant who has supervised you for at least 3 continuous months (whole time equivalent) in the 3½ years prior to the commencement date for the post to which you are applying. The certificate attests to your achievement of the required Foundation Professional Capabilities. For the purposes of this documentation, consultant includes General Practitioners, Clinical Directors, Medical Superintendents, Academic Professors and anyone on the specialist register. It can be completed by a locum

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<sup>1</sup> UK Affiliated Foundation Programmes include those in Malta. The Maltese Foundation School awards FPCC to the same standards as other UK Foundation Schools and as such is considered equivalent

consultant provided they have achieved their CCT/CESR or equivalent and are on the GMC specialist register, however it is your responsibility to confirm this. The *Certificate of Readiness to Enter Specialty Training* **must** be completed by someone independent to you. It **must not** be completed by your spouse, partner or family member.

It cannot be used if you have ever started but not satisfactorily completed a UKFPO-appointed 2-year Foundation programme or FY2 standalone post or have only completed an F1 standalone post. See next question for further advice.

Please note you **must** submit one certificate only. Whilst evidence of achievement of all professional capabilities may be obtained from multiple posts, evidence should be submitted to a single signatory who can confirm where they have personally witnessed the competences **and** where they have relied on the evidence provided by others. You **must** upload and attach a scanned copy of the certificate to your application form, as a **single document**. You will be expected to provide the original document/s at a later date.

**Please note**, use of a training certificate alone is insufficient to evidence completion of a competency. Your signatory must have personally witnessed the competency or rely on evidence provided by others that they have witnessed the competency as described above.

The *only* exceptions to the above process are:

- i) If you are currently in a **Widening Access to Specialty Training (WAST)** post. In this case, you will need to obtain a fully completed and signed *Certificate of Readiness to Enter Specialty Training* by the start date of the post which you are applying for. You do not need to provide any further information now.
- ii) **Refugees** are advised to contact the recruiting organisation for further guidance but should submit a *Certificate of Readiness to Enter Specialty Training* if possible.

### **What should I do if I have been removed, have relinquished or been given an Unsatisfactory Completion of a UK Foundation Programme?**

If you have previously been employed in a UK Foundation Programme, which you did not complete and therefore did not receive an FPCC, you are not eligible to apply for specialty training using a Certificate of Readiness to Enter Specialty Training. This includes applicants who have undertaken a standalone F2 post recruited through the UK Foundation Programme Office.

Applicants in this category are expected to return to the Foundation Programme to complete their training. In exceptional circumstances, where trainees were unable to continue their training in the Foundation Programme at that time, for example due to personal illness or

family caring responsibility, applicants can provide a letter written and signed by the Postgraduate Dean where previous training took place. This letter **must use the form of the standard proforma available in the resource bank on the website and** be uploaded to the application form and **must** include the following information:

- The dates of the previous training
- Confirmation of the reasons why the applicant previously resigned, was removed from or relinquished their post in the training programme
- Confirmation that the applicant has met the requirements and/or demonstrated the competencies of foundation training
- Confirmation that the applicant has completed a period of remediation (if applicable)

**Is the 3 month post during which I demonstrate possession of the Foundation Professional Capabilities all I have to do post registration?**

No. The CT1/ST1 person specifications state that applicants need to have had 12 months experience after full GMC registration or equivalent **and** evidence of achievement of the Foundation Professional Capabilities.

**I have been working abroad where there is no Foundation Programme. What are likely to be deemed appropriate posts?**

- 12 months satisfactory completion of either a pre-registration internship<sup>2</sup> or Foundation Year 1 post **and** 12 months full time satisfactory completion in posts approved for the purposes of medical education by the relevant authority; **or**
- 12 months satisfactory completion of either a pre-registration internship or Foundation Year 1 post **and** 12 months full time experience at a publicly funded hospital in at least two specialties with acute medical responsibilities; **or**
- 12 months satisfactory completion of either a pre-registration internship or Foundation Year 1 post **and** a 12 month full time Foundation Year 2 post

You will not be required to submit evidence of your previous experience at the application stage but the recruiting organisation may request you to provide it later during the recruitment process.

**With regards to the *Certificate of Readiness to Enter Specialty Training*, please note that:**

- **The signatory** does not necessarily have to personally witness the demonstration of every professional capability. Instead, he or she **must** be able to judge whether the evidence they have seen or had presented to them demonstrates competence, and

<sup>2</sup> An internship is a period of pre-graduate or postgraduate clinical experience that provides an accepted foundation for future practice as a fully registered and licensed medical practitioner. Internships must be either a 12 month programme that includes a minimum of 3 months in surgery and 3 months in medicine **or** a programme of at least 10 months duration that includes a minimum of 3 months in surgery and 3 months in medicine with an additional study period of up to 2 months **or** the equivalent of 12 months full time post-qualification at a publicly funded hospital in at least two branches of medicine

they **must** have worked for you for 3 continuous months. The recruiting organisations have no discretion in this regard.

- If your **signatory** is registered with any medical regulatory authority other than the GMC, then you should also make sure they submit **current** evidence of their registration with that authority. A certified translation should be included if this is not in English. Historic registration with the GMC will not be accepted. *Failure to provide this will result in you, the applicant, being rejected.*
- **The post** the certificate refers to **must**:
  - Be of at least 3 continuous months in duration (whole time equivalent) in a broad clinical experiential environment
  - Have been completed (i.e. the 3 continuous months) by the time of the submission deadline
  - Have been undertaken within the 3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> years before commencement of the post you are applying for
  - Clinical attachments/observerships/unpaid work **do not** count as experience.
  - Paid honorary posts involving broad clinical practice would be recognised.

#### **What do I do if I cannot provide any of the above?**

If you are unable to provide any of the above because, for example, you have not worked within the last 3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> years, then you are advised to secure a second year UK foundation programme post before applying for a specialty training programme.

Alternatively, you could secure a post that will enable you to demonstrate the Foundation Professional Capabilities to a consultant who could then provide you with a *Certificate of Readiness to Enter Specialty Training* e.g. a locum or trust post.

We understand that refugee doctors may have less access to standardised documentation and in rare cases may not be able to obtain a certificate. If you are unable to provide any of the above because of your refugee status, you should contact the recruiting organisation for advice before submitting your application form. Refugee doctors will be required to provide a *Certificate of Readiness to Enter Specialty Training* wherever possible.

#### **Can I use a *Certificate of Readiness to Enter Specialty Training* obtained in a previous recruitment year?**

No. Only the 2021 version of the *Certificate of Readiness to Enter Specialty Training* will be permissible. All other versions will be deemed ineligible and will be rejected by recruitment teams.

#### **How do I attach my certificates?**

You will have opportunity to upload and attach the document to your application as a single scanned file. If you have problems attaching the file, please read the guidance provided by



the recruiting office or contact them for advice. You should aim to do this well in advance of the closing date to ensure you can submit your application in time. **Do not** send your evidence to any other email address or send it by post to any recruiting organisation as it will not be considered.

### **I started but did not complete a full Foundation Programme. Can I still apply?**

**No**; not unless you had exceptional circumstances that prevented you from undertaking training at the time, causing you to withdraw from Foundation Training. Examples of exceptional circumstances are personal illness or caring responsibilities that made continuing in training impossible.

In this situation you provide a letter written and signed by the Postgraduate Dean where previous training took place. This letter **must use the form of the standard proforma available in the resource bank on the website** and be uploaded to the application form and **must** include the following information:

- The dates of the previous training
- Confirmation of the reasons why the applicant previously resigned, was removed from or relinquished their post in the training programme
- Confirmation that the applicant has met the requirements and/or demonstrated the competencies of foundation training
- Confirmation that the applicant has completed a period of remediation (if applicable)

If you do not have such exceptional circumstances, you will be required to apply to return to the Foundation Programme to complete your training.

### **Can I count locum posts as part of my Foundation Programme?**

No. Foundation posts that are not part of a full, designated Foundation Programme associated with a UK or UK Affiliated Foundation School are **not** accepted as they will not lead to the award of an FPCC on completion.

**Please note:** Standalone F2 posts appointed through UKFPO-processes attract an FPCC on completion.

### **What happens if I accept an offer and then do not complete my Foundation Programme?**

Any offer made to a doctor currently on a UK Foundation Programme is made subject to them being awarded an FPCC before the training programme commences. If it transpires that you will not be awarded an FPCC by the advertised start of the programme, the recruiting organisation **must** withdraw the offer. This does not include those who do not complete the Foundation Programme because of maternity or sick leave. Offers for a delayed start can only

be made to candidates who cannot start on the intended date for statutory reasons (e.g. illness or maternity leave).

### **How is my documentation assessed?**

Recruiting organisations do not assess the evidence – the signatory to your FPCC or *Certificate of Readiness to Enter Specialty Training* has the responsibility for doing that. Instead they verify the evidence provided by you. Submitted evidence is considered as applications are considered by the longlisting admin team.

### **What happens if I submit the wrong or incomplete evidence?**

Applicants who submit no evidence, incorrect documentation or unsatisfactory evidence will be asked to resubmit either an FPCC or *Certificate of Readiness to Enter Specialty Training* within 3 days (72 hours) of being notified of the error by the recruiter. Please note that *any* re-submitted CREST certificate must have any and every alteration signed and dated by the original signatory.

### **Do I have to demonstrate all the professional capabilities?**

Yes. Applicants must be signed off as competent for **each and every professional capability** listed on the certificate. If you cannot demonstrate that you have achieved all of these in one post, you may submit other evidence to your signatory to verify. If you cannot demonstrate each and every professional capability, you will not be eligible for specialty training at CT1/ST1 level. **There are no exceptions to this rule.**

**Please note:** should your signatory select 'unable to confirm' for any of the competencies on the CREST form, you will not meet the eligibility requirements for Specialty Training.

### **What do I do if my consultant has not witnessed me demonstrating all the professional capabilities?**

On the certificate the signatory will be asked to sign a declaration that they have observed demonstration of all the professional capabilities **or** that they have received alternative evidence of demonstration where they have not personally observed them. The source of the alternative evidence should be listed on the certificate. **Please note** that evidence of attendance at a training course is, by itself, insufficient to demonstrate competence.

This means that although the signatory has to have worked with you for 3 continuous months, the evidence on which they are relying does not have to come from a post of that length, and the signatory does not have to have personally witnessed you demonstrating all of the professional capabilities. The evidence provided, does however have to come from a post undertaken within 3.5 years of the commencement of the post you are applying for.

If your signatory has not personally witnessed all capabilities on your form and has selected 'evidence received' for any capability, they should complete the final section of the form with the details of clinicians (working at ST5 or above) from whom they have received evidence.

For each witness, they should list the section/s of the certificate where the individual has observed outcomes, the details of the witness and the dates the witness supervised you.

### **What happens if I get it signed without such evidence?**

If at any stage investigation shows that the certificate has been fraudulently signed (by you or by the signatory), then instant dismissal and referral of yourself and/or the signatory to the relevant Responsible Officer or the GMC (or equivalent) will be considered.

### **I have limited opportunities to demonstrate competence. What should I do?**

If you have limited opportunities to demonstrate some of the professional capabilities (e.g. if you are undertaking a PhD or are on active service in non-acute specialties) you should arrange to undertake keeping in touch days, locums etc. (but not pure clinical attachments where you only have observer status). This will provide evidence for the signatory to evaluate.

Alternatively, where the signatory has not observed demonstration of a professional capability in the 3½ years prior to the advertised commencement date, they can sign you off, as long as they have evidence that you have maintained the required skill level in these areas.

### **Who can sign off a CREST form?**

Your signatory **must** be a consultant who has worked with you for a minimum of three continuous months within the preceding 3.5 years. You must be able to demonstrate that they are currently on the specialist register.

The following people can provide evidence to your signatory to demonstrate your competence, however they are unable to act as your signatory themselves:

- A locum consultant who is not on the specialist register
- A pharmacist
- A consultant who was a trainee at the time of working with you/witnessing your competencies
- A retired consultant ie someone who was on the specialist register at the time of working with you but who has since retired from clinical practice.
- Someone who qualified as a consultant before 1997 and is therefore not on the specialist register.

If you have worked in the UK in the last 3.5 years for 3 or more months in an acute post, you should use a signatory from that post rather than an overseas signatory to complete your CREST form.

### **My signatory is registered overseas. What should I do?**

It is **your** responsibility to ensure you supply adequate evidence of the signatory's standing with a regulatory authority.



When scanning your *Certificate of Readiness to Enter Specialty Training*, you should attach evidence of your signatory's current (GMC equivalent) medical regulatory body registration status; where this is not in English, an official English translation should also be provided. In cases where they have historic but not current GMC registration, it is their *current* registration that is required. Where this is not provided, the *Certificate of Readiness to Enter Specialty Training* will be rejected and your specialty training application will not progress.

Contact details of your signatory also need to be provided within the form. Please note this should be from an institutional email address rather than a personal email address ie not Gmail, Hotmail etc.

The hospital stamp used on the form needs to include the details of the hospital, not just the name and job title of the signatory.

### **What other information or evidence do I need to provide?**

It is **your** responsibility to ensure you supply adequate evidence of the signatory's standing with a regulatory authority.

If your signatory is on the GMC specialist register, you **must** provide a screenshot of their GMC registration along with your CREST form.

If your signatory is not registered with the GMC, you **must** attach evidence of your signatory's current (GMC equivalent) medical regulatory body registration status; where this is not in English, an official English translation should also be provided.