

CONCORDAT BETWEEN THE ACADEMY OF MEDICAL ROYAL COLLEGES AND NHS EMPLOYERS ON THE APPOINTMENT OF SPECIALIST MEDICAL STAFF

This concordat signifies the commitment of the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges (AoMRC), the British Medical Association (BMA) and NHS Employers to work together on the appointment of staff to ensure that the highest standards of professional medical practice in NHS employing organisations are maintained in the interests of patients and the quality of care provided by those organisations.

The AoMRC, BMA and NHS Employers agree that independent professional medical advice has an important role to play in the ability of NHS employing organisations to make the best possible appointments to the newly formed Specialist grade. As such, Royal Colleges will perform an important function in the appointments process, to advise employers if candidates meet the required capabilities.

The BMA and NHS Employers recognise the important contribution that the Royal Colleges can make in relevant stages of the appointment process. Input from the Royal Colleges is beneficial for all parties and should be included early in the recruitment process to secure the appropriate input and time commitment.

The Royal Colleges recognise that they will be acting in an advisory capacity within the appointment process, to assess if candidates meet the required capabilities. It is the responsibility of the employer to initiate the creation of a post and would not require the input of College representatives.

The AoMRC, BMA and NHS Employers have developed the guidelines set out in the annex for their respective members, which clarifies the responsibilities of employers and what the Royal Colleges/Faculties are able to offer at each stage during the recruitment process. This agreement will be periodically reviewed by the parties.



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ANNEX

Royal College/Faculty Services to NHS employing organisations: Involvement in the Appointment of Specialist Posts

Developing Specialist person specifications and the recruitment of assessors of clinical capabilities

- Employers should use the generic capabilities framework and template person specification, which they will develop based on the requirements of the service.
- Where the clinical lead judges that further input is required, the employer should look to work with the College or Faculty's Regional Adviser in developing person specifications and reviewing the curricula to clarify any specialty-specific capabilities that may be required and the evidence to help meet these. Where there is an accepted national standard or statutory requirement for a specialty-specific competence illustrative examples will be recognised by the relevant Royal College or Faculty curriculum. The accompanying notes on the person specification template will also help provide guidance.
- It will be for employers to determine locally what specific entry criteria they are looking for in the person specification which will be relevant to the individual post.
- The employer will inform the relevant Royal College or Faculty of their intention to proceed with recruitment once the person specification for the post has been approved by the employer. The approved person specification will be shared with the relevant Royal College or Faculty.
- An independent external College supported specialty assessor with the necessary time commitment to support the process will then be confirmed.
- It is recommended that a notice period of 8 weeks prior to interview would provide the necessary timeframe to secure an assessor.
- Employers will be able to assist this process by releasing doctors to act as assessors.

Involvement of Royal College/Faculty assessor in the recruitment process

- Royal Colleges will be available to offer support to employers to inform the development of the person specification.
- The employer will initiate the recruitment of a College assessor once an approved person specification is in place.
- Once confirmed, the assessor will join the recruitment panel convened by the employing organisation.
- The assessor will not be involved in the shortlisting stage, this will be the responsibility of the employer representatives on the recruitment panel.
- At the interview stage of the recruitment process the Royal College assessors will assess whether candidates and the evidence they provide meet the criteria set out in the generic capabilities framework and person specification.
- The assessor will make recommendations regarding appointable candidates to the employer representatives on the panel. The decision as to who is appointed to the post will rest with the employer.
- All parties recognise the importance of equality and diversity considerations in the recruitment process.

Supporting employers to make the right appointments

The Royal Colleges/Faculties aim to help employers make suitable appointments and are able to provide an appropriately trained assessor to contribute to recruitment exercises that support the delivery of high-quality services.

The Royal Colleges wish to make the recruitment process as fast and efficient as possible and are committed to providing the best possible advisory service to NHS employing organisations and this is ensured by continuous audit. All clinical leads will liaise with Colleges through the most appropriate route e.g. Regional Advisers to take sub-specialty advice when considering person specifications. Since the Royal College/Faculty role is to provide advice, their views may sometimes differ from those of the employing organisation but discussion should enable a mutually satisfactory agreement, facilitating the employer to make a good appointment. These discussions should be documented by the recruitment panel.

Royal College/Faculty advice at the person specification and interview stage provides:

- Impartial medical comment on both the person specification and the suitability of the candidates shortlisted for interview, thus helping to safeguard the employer when making appointments.
- Advice on specific additional training that may be required of candidates to ensure patient safety. Independent support from a Royal College assessor will be helpful in advising on the details of training as posts are often very specialised in nature.
- Assurance to medical colleagues working with the new appointee that they will have been subjected to external peer assessor.

Nomination of Royal College assessors

The Royal Colleges/Faculties should maintain lists of approved assessors of clinical capabilities to perform an independent external advisory role during recruitment exercises. Pools of eligible doctors, who are prepared to commit (within reasonable circumstances) to making themselves available to undertake this work, have been created. They form a trained cadre, which is kept up to date on issues relating to the appointment process. These assessors are, by definition, active clinicians and require a minimum of 8 weeks' notice for a fixed interview date. Their employer should be made aware of their commitment and make time available.