

Dear Conor

Managing the MMC Transition period for current surgical trainees

Thank you for your letter dated 8th October 2006, the contents of which I have noted.

I note that this is to be discussed at the JCHST

1.) The person specifications are being finalised, during transition acquisition of the MRCS will be an essential requirement for entry into ST3, however entrance to ST3 will also be required to provide evidence that they acquired the competencies of ST1 and ST2 as detailed in the curricula.

2.) Person spec for ST1 requires evidence of acquisition of Foundation skills as an essential requirement and a motivation for the specialty to which they are applying. If they have done less than 12 months in the specialty then they are eligible to apply to ST1.

3.) Application to FTSTAs, I can not comment on the arrangements for FTSTAs in Scotland and I suggest that you contact the Scottish Executive for this type of information. FTSTAs posts in England will exist at ST1 and ST2 levels, however in Paediatrics and Psychiatry because core training lasts for 3 years they will also be available at ST3 level.

4.) Competition from career grade posts to specialty training. Most Deaneries are planning to have some ST3 level post availability in 2008 at least. Individuals are at liberty to apply for ST3 level posts whenever they become available. Clearly individuals in career grade posts and FTSTA posts will need to compete against standardised criteria detailed in person specifications scoring for short listing and for interview process is transparent and selectors have been trained in this methodology at the present time building on the work done by Fiona Patterson's Team with the Colleges of Surgeons over the past couple of years.

5.) JACSTAG proposals for recruitment in subsequent years, I note your support for these proposals but also your concern with regard to an expanded cohort of trainees for whom there may be uncertainty with regard to long term employment opportunities. The availability of consultant posts can not be guaranteed, this issue is national and combines the needs of the service and the financial support for the service.

6.) Legislation regarding age discrimination. We have already had legal opinion on procedures that would be used for selection and we are advised that legal advice takes current legislation into account.

7.) The aim is to have equality in the selection process and Fiona Patterson's Team is working to ensure that this happens. I note your concern that local selection procedures might discriminate against less experienced trainees competing at a more senior level (ST3). I have drawn this to the attention of the Methodology Team for their information.

8.) International medical graduates. The home office has issued guidance on arrangements for international medical graduates, this guidance is likely to be updated in the near future. At the current time, I would suggest accessing the information via their website.

I look forward to the discussions at the JCHST.

With best wishes,

Dr S E Thomas
Postgraduate Dean
South Yorkshire / South Humber