

Neurosurgery ST1 & ST2 National Recruitment

2021 Applicant Handbook



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Introduction

The National Recruitment Office for Neurosurgery is Heath Education England - Yorkshire and the Humber. We are recruiting to ST1 & ST2 posts across the United Kingdom.

This handbook aims to provide applicants with information regarding all aspects of the 2021 Neurosurgery recruitment process.

General information about applying to specialty training posts is available on the [Specialty Training website](#) and in the [Medical Specialty Recruitment Applicant Handbook](#). We recommend that all applicants read this document in full.

Timeline and Key Dates

- Recruitment to ST1 & ST2 Neurosurgery in 2021 will follow the timeline below:

Activity	Date(s)
Applications open	At 10:00 on Thursday 5 November 2020
Application deadline	At 16:00 on Tuesday 1 December 2020
Interviews	18 th & 19 th March 2021*
Initial offers released	By 17:00 on Monday 19 th April 2021
Holding deadline	At 13:00 on Friday 28 th April 2021
Upgrade Deadline	At 16:00 on Friday 30 th April 2021

**Please note: all dates are subject to change at any time*

Adjustments for Covid-19

Following the 2020 recruitment process which resulted in some face to face in person interviews being cancelled, the plans for 2021 have been reviewed for all medical and surgical specialties by senior clinical representatives from across the four nations, and junior doctor representatives from the BMA JDC and AoMRC trainees' committee, supported by the Medical and Dental Recruitment and Selection (MDRS) team. A number of general principles have been agreed to support the appointment of doctors to Medical training programmes. More details can be found within the Medical Specialty Applicant Handbook 2021.

We can confirm that Face to face interviews have been approved and that they will be conducted online rather than in person.

Each specialty has two selection plans, known as Plan A and Plan B, the main content of the document describes the Plan A, there is then a separate section detailing the Plan B along with details of when and how this would be implemented.

Contact details

We have a recruitment helpdesk to assist applicants through the recruitment process. You can contact the recruitment helpdesk in the following ways:

By email: Neurosurgeryrec.yh@hee.nhs.uk We aim to respond to all emails within 48 working hours. However, please be aware that this may not always be possible.

By telephone (for urgent enquiries only): For urgent enquiries we have a telephone helpdesk, which is available between 10.00am and 4.00pm Monday to Friday. The Neurosurgery recruitment helpdesk number is 0113 887 1716*.

* Please refer to the person specification and the information available on our website to determine your own eligibility as we are unable to offer individual eligibility advice to applicants.

Vacancies

Health Education England (HEE) is responsible for educating and training doctors, dentists, nurses and all healthcare professionals in England. Medical and Dental training programmes are managed locally by HEE's Local Offices. Training programmes in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales continue to be managed by Deaneries. Links to the individual Local Offices and Deaneries are provided in [Appendix 2](#).

Vacancy numbers will be published on the [national Neurosurgery recruitment webpage](#) once confirmed.

LAT Vacancies

Recruitment to Locum Appointment for Training (LAT) posts in England ceased on 1st January 2016 for all specialties. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland may continue to recruit to LAT posts.

All vacancy numbers are indicative and are subject to change at any time.

Application

Applications will only be accepted through the [Oriel recruitment system](#). For further guidance on creating an account, registering and submitting your application using the system please refer to the Oriel Applicant User Guide which can be downloaded from the Oriel [Resource Bank](#).

Completing your application

The application form for Neurosurgery will open at 10:00 on 5 November 2020. Use the Vacancy Search tool to navigate to the national Neurosurgery vacancy and click "Apply".

There are a number of sections within the application form:

- Personal Details
- Eligibility to Apply
- Fitness to Practise
- References
- Competences and Experience
- Employment History
- Evidence of Selection Criteria
- Supporting Information
- Equality and Diversity
- Declarations

Please complete all sections in full before submitting your application. Once you have submitted your application, the only sections you will be able to change are your personal details and your referee details.

Application Deadline

The deadline for submitting applications is **16:00 on Tuesday 1st December 2020**. After this time no applications will be accepted. **There will be no exceptions to this deadline**. You are advised to complete and submit your application at least 24 hours ahead of the deadline to allow for any unforeseen problems.

When you submit your application, you should receive an automatic confirmation email. If you do not receive this email within two hours you should check to ensure that you have successfully submitted your application.

Academic Benchmarking

Applicants that have applied for local Neurosurgery Academic Clinical Fellowship (ACF) vacancies at ST1 & ST2 or above and require clinical benchmarking must complete a National ST1 & ST2 Neurosurgery application and be deemed appointable at interview.

For more information about clinical benchmarking and the ACF process please see the [Specialty Recruitment Applicant Handbook](#).

Eligibility and Longlisting

The eligibility criteria for ST1 & ST2 Neurosurgery are listed in the [2021 Person Specification](#). It is an applicant's responsibility to demonstrate that they meet the eligibility criteria. Applications will be assessed against the eligibility criteria both during longlisting and after offers where necessary. Any applications which do not meet the eligibility criteria will be longlisted out of the process and will not progress to the next stage.

By allowing applicants to progress to the interview stage, Health Education England DOES NOT accept or confirm that applicants meet all eligibility requirements. This includes immigration status, evidence of achievement of core competencies or equivalent, and requisite length of time in training as per the national [Person Specification](#). This list is not exhaustive and is applicable to all eligibility criteria.

Applicants may still be withdrawn from the application process at any stage, including after the interviews have taken place, if the evidence pertaining to an eligibility criterion is found to be unsatisfactory.

GMC Registration and Licence to Practice

Applicants will need to hold full General Medical Council registration status and a current licence to practice by the time of appointment¹ (in most cases this will be Wednesday 4 August 2021). You will be asked to confirm that you will meet this requirement on page 2 of your application form. Any offers made will be subject to you meeting this requirement by the time of appointment.

Assessment of Competency

Applicants must have achieved Foundation or CT1 competences by the time of appointment. Evidence of these competencies must be provided at the time of application and interview. If you are currently achieving these competencies, then any offer will be made on the basis you achieve the relevant competence by the start date of the post

ST1

24 months' or less clinical experience, of which no more than 12 months (maximum) experience in any combination of the following specialties; Neurosurgery, Neurology, Neuro-radiology and Neuro-intensive care (All experience above is by time of intended start date and excluding foundation modules)

ST2

Have completed the relevant ST1 competencies in Neurosurgery as described in the Neurosurgery specialty curriculum by start of post.

The ST2 Alternative Certificate of competencies can be found on the [national neurosurgery recruitment webpage](#)

Scanned copies of each piece of evidence must be uploaded to your application as a single document.

Immigration/Right to Work

You must have the right to work as a doctor in training in the UK. Your application will be assessed based on your immigration status at the time of application.

Applicants requiring Tier 2 sponsorship in order to take up a post are eligible to apply.

All medical practitioners are now on the Shortage Occupation List and therefore the Resident Labour Market Test (RLMT) no longer needs to be met.

Career Progression and Experience

You must provide a complete employment history going back to completion of your primary medical degree on your application form. If you are in a rotational training programme, please also list posts that you are *due* to rotate to up until the end of July 2021 or until completion of your Core Training Programme if this is later. You must provide an explanation for employment gaps of more than four weeks.

Trainees released or removed from a training post or programme

Specialty training posts and programmes are not normally available to anyone who has previously relinquished or been released/removed from a training post/programme in that same specialty. When applying for a post you will be asked if you have previously relinquished or been released or removed from a training programme in the specialty to which you are applying.

If you answer yes to this question, you will need to upload a completed "Support for Reapplication to a Specialty Training Programme - Exclusion Policy Support Form" to your application no later than the application deadline. This form can be downloaded from the Oriel [Resource Bank](#).

Trainees applying to continue training in a different region

Applicants who are currently undertaking a specialty training programme (and who have a National Training Number), who are reapplying to continue their training in a different region must declare this on their application form.

If you are reapplying to continue your training in a different region, you must also upload a completed "Support for Reapplication of Specialty Training in a Different Region - Support Form" to your application no later than the application deadline. This form can be downloaded from the Oriel [Resource Bank](#).

Applicants on the Specialist Register

You are not eligible to apply if you already hold, or are eligible to hold a Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT) in Neurosurgery. You are not eligible to apply if you are currently on the specialist register in any EU member state.

Criminal Records and Fitness to Practice

The application form contains a Criminal Records and Fitness to Practice Declaration. **If you answer 'Yes' to any of the questions on this page you must fully complete and submit a separate 'Fitness to Practise Declaration Form'. This must be received no later than 4pm Tuesday 1 December 2020.**

This form is available from the Oriel [Resource Bank](#) and must be submitted to ftpdec.yh@hee.nhs.uk. Please mark your email 'CONFIDENTIAL – Neurosurgery'.

Both declarations and any information provided in relation to them, will be kept securely and in confidence, and access to it will be restricted to designated persons within the Recruitment Office and other persons who need to see it as part of the selection process and who are authorised to do so.

If you are successfully appointed to a training post, this information will be passed to designated persons in the HEE local office / Deanery which will be responsible for your training and subsequently to your employing organisation and any organisations through which you rotate as part of the training programme.

No information relating to your declaration form will be made available to any members of the selection panel at any time during the recruitment process.

Applying for a Deferred Start Date

Applicants can request deferred entry to specialty training programmes on statutory grounds (e.g. maternity leave, ill health etc.) only. Deferred entry to training programmes is not permitted for any other reason. Refer to the [Gold Guide](#) for more information about deferring start dates.

If you wish to request a deferred start date you should indicate this on your application form and contact the HEE local office / Deanery which you are appointed to and follow the local process for requesting a deferred start date.

The final decision regarding any deferment will be made by the HEE local office / Deanery which will be responsible for your training according to their local policies.

Applying for Less Than Full Time Training

Trainees may train on a Less Than Full Time (LTFT) basis for a variety of well-founded reasons. Refer to the [Gold Guide](#) for more information about Less Than Full Time Training.

All posts offered through this recruitment process will be offered as full time posts. If you wish to request Less Than Full Time Training you can indicate this in the relevant section on the application form. If you are appointed to a training post, this information will be passed to the HEE local office / Deanery which will be responsible for your training; we recommend that you also contact them directly to discuss your needs. You will only be able to apply for Less Than Full Time Training once you have accepted a full time post.

The final decision regarding Less Than Full Time Training will be made by the HEE local office / Deanery which will be responsible for your training according to their local LTFT policies.

Shortlisting

All applications that have been successful at the longlisting stage will proceed to shortlisting, Each application will be marked by 2 trained assessors.

MSRA

All applicants will be required to sit the MSRA.

The Multi-Specialty Recruitment Assessment (MSRA) is a computer-based assessment, delivered in partnership with Work Psychology Group and Pearson VUE, has been designed to assess some of the essential competences outlined in the CT/ST1 Person Specifications and is based around clinical scenarios.

The purpose of the MSRA in the neurosurgery shortlisting process is to give applicants the opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge and skills that they have acquired during foundation training and medical school. It also tests professional capabilities and decision making which are key components of neurosurgical practice and complements the selection centre. It will account for 40% of the total shortlisting score. Further

details about the MSRA is to be found in the MSRA Applicant Guide and MSRA Test Blueprint Information that is available on the Neurosurgery page of our website.

All neurosurgery applicants are required to sit the MSRA in the first recruitment round of any given recruitment year. There are no exceptions or exemptions to this requirement.

The MSRA is delivered on a number of consecutive days throughout the whole of the UK in a large number of Pearson VUE Computer Testing Centres.

All applicants who reside in or, are in employment in the UK (including the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man) during the assessment window are expected to attend a UK test centre.

Interviews

Booking an Interview Slot

Applicants who are invited to attend and interview will need to book an interview slot using their Oriel account. Interview slots are offered on a first come first served basis. You must book your interview slot by the deadline stated in the invite email. Please refer to the [Oriel Applicant User Guide](#) for instructions on booking your interview slot.

You should receive an automatic confirmation email once you have booked your interview slot. If you do not receive this email within two hours of booking, please check your Oriel account to ensure that you did successfully book a slot.

If you experience problems booking your interview slot please contact Neurosurgeryrec.yh@hee.nhs.uk for assistance.

Interview Dates and Venue

The interviews for Neurosurgery will take place via the platform Microsoft Teams on the 18th & 19th March 2021 (these dates may be subject to change)

Candidates will be sent a link and joining instructions after they have booked their interview and in advance of the interview date.

Candidates are advised to check they have access to MS Teams before the interview day to ensure they don't encounter any avoidable technical issues.

Applicants with Disabilities

If you have a disability which may require specific arrangements or adjustments to enable you to attend an interview please indicate this on page 1 of your application form and contact Neurosurgeryrec.yh@hee.nhs.uk to discuss your requirements.

Documents Required at Interview

Candidates will be required to evidence proof of ID at the start of the interview which will require their Passport or Driving License. Candidates will be notified of all requirements on the invite to interview sent via Oriel.

Technical requirement for the Online Interview

During the application process applicants will be asked to complete an interview declaration, we also expect applicants to review this a few days before their interview and follow any direction highlighted within it. A copy of the declaration can be found on the [Specialty Training Resource Bank](#), titled "2021 Recruitment Applicant Declaration.pdf".

Candidates must ensure that they are in a location with stable and reliable internet connection. Candidates must also ensure that the device they use is suitable for a call on Microsoft Teams and that they have a compatible camera for video interview. The administration staff from HEE will be unable to assist you with any technical issues.

Where technical difficulties are experienced during the interview process, we will firstly attempt to resume the interview. However if we are unable to resume the interview, we will, where possible, aim to rearrange the remainder of the interview for a at a later date/time. Where the interview has been partially completed, only the questions that were disrupted will be rerun; scores from interview questions completed without disruption will stand.

Technical issues that happen outside of the interview itself, need to be reported to the Recruitment Team, with details of the issues experienced, with screenshots, where possible, within one hour of the allocated interview time. Technical issues reported outside of this timeframe will not be considered.

HEE confirm that they will not be recording your interview and candidates are required not to record the interview either. If a candidate has been found to have recorded an interview a probity panel will be convened to look into this breach and further action could be taken.

Interview Format

The interview will consist of one interview panel designed to assess the selection criteria detailed on the [2021 Person Specification](#).

Please note that the assessors will be using a device to record your scores into a secure online system.

The interview will be split into 2 sections:

- **Clinical Scenario**
You will be interviewed and scored by 2 trained panel members
- **Management**
You will be interviewed and scored by 2 trained panel members

Lay Representatives

A Lay Representative may be present on your interview to observe the process. The Lay Representative will not score or assess your performance in the station; they are there to ensure the process is fair and consistent.

Digital Scoring

Interview panel members will submit their scores and feedback notes electronically using tablet computers. Panel members are permitted to use electronic devices for this purpose during an interview station.

Confidentiality

You should ensure that the content of the interview assessments remains confidential and must not be discussed with other applicants or published where they can be accessed by other applicants. This includes on websites, online forums or discussion groups and all other forms of social media.

Remember, this is a competitive process and you may reduce your own chances of appointment by giving an unfair advantage to other applicants.

Reporting Issues During Your Interview

The vast majority of interviews are conducted without issue. However, if there are any issues during your interview which may affect your assessment, it is vital that you report them to a member of the HEE Recruitment Administration Team at Neurosurgeryrec.yh@hee.nhs.uk

Any issues must be reported as soon as possible and ideally **within 2 hours of the completion of your interview**. This will give us the best possible chance to investigate and, if necessary, take action to remedy the issue. It is not usually possible to investigate issues or take remedial action after you leave the venue.

Scoring and Ranking

Your performance in each domain will be scored using a structured scoring system. The scores from each interview station will be combined to produce your overall interview score.

Appointability

- Applicants at ST1 who achieve 65% of the marks available will be considered appointable.
- Applicants at ST2 who achieve 74% of the marks available will be considered appointable.

All appointable applicants will be ranked in order of their overall weighted interview score.

Applicants who do not achieve the scores described above will not be ranked. This will show as a rank of 0 on the Oriel system.

Tied Scores

In the event of tied overall interview scores, individual station scores will be used to differentiate between candidates:

References

References will only be requested through the Oriel system once an offer of training has been accepted. Referees will be contacted by email with details of their referee accounts, so it is important that the contact details provided are correct. We strongly advise that you inform your chosen referees that you have listed them for this so that they expect this email coming through from the Oriel system. We also recommend that you double check the email address provided so as to avoid any issues or delay in your references being completed.

Candidates are reminded that it is their responsibility to chase up any incomplete references and HEE take no responsibility in chasing these up on your behalf.

Offers

All recruitment offices will be using the Oriel system to make offers to training posts in all specialties. Oriel can be accessed at <https://new.oriel.nhs.uk/Web>. You can download a copy of the Oriel Applicant Guide from the Oriel [Resource Bank](#).

Selecting Your Preferences

You will be asked to rank your preferences using the Oriel Recruitment System. You will receive an email when Preferencing opens. Please note that this may not take place until after the online interviews have taken place.

Once preferencing is open, it will remain open constantly so that candidates can change their preferences at any point in the process, including during and after the offers process.

For guidance on submitting your preferences please refer to the [Medical Specialty Recruitment Applicant Handbook](#) and the [Oriel Applicant User Guide](#).

Receiving and Responding to Offers

If you are offered a post you will have 48 hours from the time of your offer (excluding weekends but not holidays) to decide whether to accept, reject or hold it. You must respond to the offer through the Oriel system. No other form of response will be accepted.

For guidance on responding to offers, please refer to the [Medical Specialty Recruitment Applicant Handbook](#) and the [Oriel Applicant User Guide](#).

Any offer made through this recruitment process is an offer of an allocation to a training programme; it is not an offer of employment. Offers of employment can only be by an employing organisation following completion of satisfactory pre-employment checks.

Withdrawing from the Recruitment Process

An applicant may withdraw completely from the process up until offers are released and should do so via their Oriel account.

Once an offer has been accepted, applicants wishing to withdraw will need to contact the recruitment office directly.

Applicants are reminded of the GMC's Good Medical Practice guidance which states: "*Patient safety may be affected if there is not enough medical cover. So you must take up any post you have formally accepted, and work your contractual notice period before leaving a job, unless the employer has reasonable time to make other arrangements.*"

Feedback

Feedback will be provided at three stages of the recruitment process:

Longlisting

If you are not longlisted you will be provided with the reasons for this. If you are longlisted you will receive an email inviting you to book an interview.

Interview Ranking

You will be able to view your total interview score and rank online through their Oriel account once offers are released. Please note that a thorough Quality Assurance and validation process is carried out on all applicants' scores following the interviews. No scores will be released until this process is complete.

Interview Scores

Following the conclusion of the offers process, all applicants will be able to view a breakdown of their interview scores including the scores they achieved in each interview station online through their Oriel account.

Evaluation of the Selection Process

Following the conclusion of the 2021 recruitment process, an evaluation of the recruitment process will be carried out. This will include an analysis of anonymised interview scores, appointment data and feedback from a number of groups involved in the process.

Feedback surveys

Feedback about the recruitment process will be collected from the following groups:

- Applicants
- Interviewers
- Lay Representatives

This feedback will be analysed and will help to inform changes and improvements to the recruitment process for 2022.

Privacy Notice

In order to manage and quality assure your training, Health Education England needs to collect, store and process information about you. This is done in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018, and in accordance with the data protection principles set out in the Act. Among other matters, these require that your data must be processed fairly and lawfully.

We will process data about you in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and will do so for three main purposes:

1. Processing your data during the recruitment process.
2. Processing of successful applicants' data by Health Education England's local offices, Deaneries and Royal Colleges.
3. Use of recruitment data for evaluation, research and testing purposes

For more information about how we safeguard and process your data please see our [Privacy Notice](#).

Complaints and Confidential Concerns

Complaints

However hard we try to respond to the wishes and aspirations of the healthcare professionals accessing our recruitment services, we do recognise that, on occasion, our service may fall short of expectations.

The [Complaints Procedure](#) explains how you can make a complaint and how it will be handled.

Confidential Concerns

Where applicants have a concern that falls outside of the national complaints policy e.g. fraudulent submissions by other applicants. Applicants can confidentially email the Central HEE Recruitment Team on mdrs.confidential@hee.nhs.uk. This address can not to be used as a way of raising a complaint and bypassing the process detailed in the complaints policy.

Plan B

In the event of an escalation of the Covid-19 outbreak, the delivery of the recruitment process detailed above (Plan A) may become impossible to implement. We have therefore developed a Plan B that will ensure the appointment of Trainees whilst ensuring we utilise the minimum clinical time possible.

The move to Plan B will require a high-level sign off process before its implementation, involving the Medical and Dental Recruitment and Selection (MDRS) team, the lead dean, the speciality lead recruiter, clinical lead and a representative of the BMA Junior Doctors' Committee.

Where there is agreement to move to Plan B, all affected applicants will receive direct communication regarding the change. All applicants will be assessed using Plan B processes only, even where an interview has taken place and the interview score needs to be disregarded.

The Plan B process for Neurosurgery will consist of all applicants being appointed using the final shortlisting/MSRA combined score only.

Appendix 1: Probity Panel Procedure

An applicant may be referred to a Probity Panel for a variety of reasons including when the veracity of the information contained in an applicant's application form or documentation provided at interview is brought into question.

In the event of such an occurrence the applicant will be asked to explain in writing and provide copies of any supporting documentation upon which they will seek to rely. When a response is received, or in the absence of a response within the deadline, a Probity Panel will be convened. The panel will be made up of at least three people including a Postgraduate Dean or their representative and a medical workforce/HR professional.

The Probity Panel will decide whether or not the applicant should remain in the recruitment process. The panel will also recommend whether any further action should be taken which may include referral to the GMC.

Appendix 2: Useful Links

Online Recruitment Systems

System	Link
Oriel recruitment portal	https://new.oriel.nhs.uk/Web

HEE Local Offices and Deanery Websites

HEE Local Office / Deanery	Link
Health Education England - East Midlands	http://www.hee.nhs.uk/hee-your-area/east-midlands
	https://www.eastmidlandsdeanery.nhs.uk/
Health Education England - East of England	http://www.hee.nhs.uk/hee-your-area/east-england
	https://heeoee.hee.nhs.uk/
Health Education England - Kent, Surrey and Sussex	http://www.hee.nhs.uk/hee-your-area/kent-surrey-sussex
	https://www.kssdeanery.ac.uk/
Health Education England - North Central and East London	http://www.hee.nhs.uk/hee-your-area/north-central-east-london
	http://www.lpmde.ac.uk/
Health Education England - North East	http://www.hee.nhs.uk/hee-your-area/north-east
	http://www.northerndeandery.nhs.uk/
Health Education England - North West	http://www.hee.nhs.uk/hee-your-area/north-west
	http://www.nwpgmd.nhs.uk/
Health Education England – North West London	http://www.hee.nhs.uk/hee-your-area/north-west-london
	http://www.lpmde.ac.uk/
Northern Ireland Medical & Dental Training Agency	http://www.nimmdta.gov.uk/
Scottish Medical Training	http://www.scotmt.scot.nhs.uk/
Health Education England - South London	http://www.hee.nhs.uk/hee-your-area/south-london
	http://www.lpmde.ac.uk/
Health Education England - South West	http://www.hee.nhs.uk/hee-your-area/south-west
	http://www.severndeandery.nhs.uk/
	http://www.peninsuladeandery.nhs.uk/
Health Education England - Thames Valley	http://www.hee.nhs.uk/hee-your-area/thames-valley
	http://www.oxforddeandery.nhs.uk/
Wales Deanery	http://www.walesdeandery.org/
Health Education England - Wessex	http://www.hee.nhs.uk/hee-your-area/wessex
	http://www.wessexdeandery.nhs.uk/
Health Education England - West Midlands	http://www.hee.nhs.uk/hee-your-area/west-midlands
	http://www.westmidlandsdeandery.nhs.uk/
Health Education England - Yorkshire and the Humber	http://www.hee.nhs.uk/hee-your-area/yorkshire-humber
	http://www.yorksandhumberdeandery.nhs.uk/

Other Useful Organisations

Organisation	Link
General Medical Council	http://www.gmc-uk.org/
Health Education England	http://specialtytraining.hee.nhs.uk
The Intercollegiate Surgical Curriculum Programme	https://www.iscp.ac.uk/
NHS Employers	http://www.nhsemployers.org/
Royal College of Surgeons of England	http://www.rcseng.ac.uk/
Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh	http://www.rcsed.ac.uk/
Scottish Medical Training	http://www.scotmt.scot.nhs.uk/
UK Visas and Immigration	https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration