

**CONCORDAT BETWEEN THE MEDICAL ROYAL COLLEGES
AND THE FOUNDATION TRUST NETWORK ON THE APPOINTMENT OF CONSULTANT
MEDICAL STAFF**

This concordat, which renews the original agreement made in 2005, signifies the continuing commitment of the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges and the Foundation Trust Network to work together on the appointment of consultant medical staff to ensure that the highest standards of professional medical practice in Foundation Trusts are maintained in the interests of patients and the quality of care provided by the Trusts.

The Foundation Trusts and the medical Royal Colleges agree that independent professional medical advice has an important role to play in the ability of Foundation Trusts to make the best possible consultant appointments.

The Foundation Trusts are self-governing, sovereign organisations that recognise the important contribution that the medical Royal Colleges can make in relevant stages of the appointment process.

The medical Royal Colleges recognise that they will be acting in an advisory capacity within the appointment process.

The Foundation Trust Network and the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges have developed and issued the attached guidelines for their respective members which:

- Clarify what the medical Royal Colleges are able to offer at each stage during the whole recruitment process from which Foundation Trusts will be able to choose the relevant degree of involvement that fits an individual Foundation Trust's appointment needs
- Clarify the Foundation Trusts requirements from and proposals to the medical Royal Colleges at the start of any recruitment process so that both parties understand the nature of the medical Royal College involvement in the process.

Professor Sir Neil Douglas
Chairman, Academy of Medical Royal Colleges

Sue Slipman,
Director, Foundation Trust Network

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**College/Faculty Services to Foundation Trusts:
Involvement in the Appointment of Consultant and SAS Posts**

Colleges/Faculties involved in the appointment process are able to offer the following services:

1 Advice on Consultant Job Descriptions

- External advice to ensure that national standards are met
- Consistency of process, standards and interpretation, whilst keeping a local perspective from Regional Advisers
- Overall national review of job description trends
- Early awareness of posts and nomination of College/Faculty assessor
- Endorsement of or comment, normally within 3 weeks.

2 Involvement of College/Faculty Advisers

- Access to a trained group of AAC assessors whose credentials are assured
- More effective and reliable provision of AAC advisers, especially with the new Guidance that Trusts release consultants to act as assessors
- Earlier identification of AAC assessors
- Reduces the workload on Trusts and provides an impartial source of advice on the suitability of candidates, thus helping to safeguard the Trust.

3 The Service

a) The Colleges/Faculties aim to help make the right appointment and are able to provide an appropriately trained and experienced assessor to contribute to the delivery of a high-quality service. Colleges/Faculties invest their own resources in supporting and improving this function and intend to do so in future. They believe that their contribution is valued by the NHS Confederation.

b) Colleges/Faculties are committed to providing the best possible advisory service to Trusts and this is ensured by continuous audit. The pressures faced by Trusts in the recruitment process, with increasing demand consequent on consultant expansion, are understood and can lead to difficulty in filling posts. Colleges/Faculties wish to make the process as fast and efficient as possible. All Regional Advisers take sub-specialty advice in considering Job Descriptions. They and the AAC assessors are active, or recently retired, clinicians. Those who are retired will receive annual training to ensure they are aware of service developments. Since the College/Faculty role is to provide advice, their views may sometimes differ from those of the Trust but we find that discussion enables a mutually satisfactory agreement, facilitating a good appointment.

c) Consultations have taken place involving the DH, NHS and the Colleges/Faculties to revise the current national regulations. The feedback about College/Faculty involvement is nearly always positive. College/Faculty advice at the job description, short-listing and interview stage provides:

- Impartial medical comment on both the job itself and the suitability of the candidates. Possession of a CCST, CCT, or being on the Specialist Register does not guarantee the appropriateness of a candidate for an appointment. The Colleges/Faculties can provide advice, for example, on specific additional training to ensure patient safety. The reasons why an independent College/Faculty assessor is helpful in advising on the details of training include:
 - Posts are becoming increasingly specialised; a CCST in a parent specialty does not indicate adequate training in a subspecialty e.g. hepatology
 - It is becoming increasingly common for candidates to be on the Specialist Register through a specialist qualification in a European Union country. Training in such countries often differs very significantly in knowledge and expectation from the British equivalent.
- Assessment of the post against national norms. This is an important form of national setting of standards, including job description templates to share with Trusts and thus to streamline the endorsement of their job descriptions
- Assurance to medical colleagues working with the new appointee that they will have been subjected to external peer assessment.

4 Nomination of College AAC Assessors

The NHS Confederation report recommended that all Colleges/Faculties should maintain lists of approved assessors to perform an independent external advisory role on appointment panels. Pools of eligible consultants, 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.

Foundation Trust Network

Foundation Trust Network Guidance to Foundation Trusts on the involvement of Royal Colleges in Consultant Appointments

Royal Medical College nominees may be asked to take part in a range of processes related to the recruitment of consultants. These could include:

- Clinical service assessment
- Drawing up of job description and person specification
- Long and short-listing
- Determination of recruitment strategies to be used
- Structuring of selection processes including any feedback processes to the interview panel that may be employed
- Interview
- Recruitment review
- Feedback and evaluation ¹
- Candidate induction and orientation.

The Foundation Trust Network (FTN) will encourage its members who chose to use RMC services in the recruitment of consultants to be clear about what stage of the process they require RMC involvement and the time-commitment required.

In particular FTN will encourage:

- Foundation Trusts to give as much notice as possible to the Royal Medical College to enable the release of appropriate medical consultants
- Foundation Trusts to set the time-table for the whole appointment process at the start, including, where possible the date for the interview and to send a time-table of the relevant part of the recruitment process and appropriate documentation in advance to ensure the RMC nominee is properly briefed
- Foundation Trusts to offer any further verbal and written briefing that the nominee requires properly to fulfil their role in the process. This will be particularly important where a Foundation Trust wishes to take an innovative approach to consultant appointment that involves more stages and processes than a single interview
- Foundation Trusts to ensure that all administrative arrangements are made to give easy access to the site and entrance for the RMC nominee, including proper directions, security clearance and where feasible and public transport is not an option, hospital car parking
- Foundation Trusts to agree reasonable expenses in advance with the RMC nominee
- Foundation Trusts (including any that may change the six week rule for release of consultant staff in the interests of managing their work flows) to consider making an exception to enable their consultants to play the role in the recruitment process that has been requested by another trust.

¹ Where Foundation Trusts use innovative methods such as initial assessment this will involve feedback to the whole appointment panel including the Royal College nominee. In other circumstances it will cover any involvement the nominee may have in giving feedback to candidates.