

The Medical Training Initiative of the RCPE: first class training opportunities for international trainee physicians

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ABSTRACT The RCPE Medical Training Initiative is a postgraduate, clinical training opportunity for international trainee physicians. It offers higher specialty training opportunities for trainees from around the world, with a particular focus on supporting healthcare in developing countries. The professional ties between physicians practising in the UK and our international colleagues are strengthened through this initiative.

KEYWORDS clinical training, international medical graduates, Medical Training Initiative (MTI)

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS No conflict of interests declared

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THE UK MTI AND THE RCPE

The Medical Training Initiative (MTI) at the RCPE forms part of the UK MTI, which was established by the Department of Health in February 2009.¹ The MTI programme was launched to provide higher specialty training to overseas doctors and strengthen professional ties with other nations in the sector of health and medical educational developments.¹ The MTI offers a realistic solution to filling vacancies with qualified international medical graduates across the NHS, particularly in expanding, undersubscribed areas such as the general internal medicine (GIM)/acute medical service.¹ It provides mutual benefits to both the international trainee and the employer.¹ Trainees are integrated into training programmes and are not filling service posts. It is important to note that the MTI does not lead to trainees gaining CCT.

The Academy of Medical Royal Colleges (AoMRC) is the sponsor and responsible body for the UK MTI.¹ As a member of the AoMRC, the RCPE fully supports the UK MTI, together with its sister Colleges, RCP London and RCPS Glasgow.^{1,2}

THE RCPE MTI SCHEME

As the professional hub for over 12,000 Fellows and Members from 91 countries, the RCPE manages the MTI programme to provide higher specialty training opportunities to international medical graduates and colleagues from around the world.² Opportunities for MTI posts are available GIM/acute medicine and a broad range of medical specialties including geriatric,



FIGURE 1 The Medical Training Initiative

stroke, renal and respiratory medicine, cardiology, diabetes and endocrinology, and neurology. This is certainly not an exhaustive list and the RCPE works to match suitable training posts with appropriate candidates.

The choice of specialty depends on the vacancy in the employing Trust/Board and the background experience and commitment of the prospective candidate.² The specific learning objectives and professional development of the trainee are assessed and closely supported throughout the training period.² The training period varies from 6–24 months, by mutual agreement between the employer and the MTI trainee. Interested parties should contact the RCPE direct to discuss their requirements, noting that our scheme differs from others in that we only place quality trainees into quality training posts.

THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE MTI

The International Development Group of the RCPE plays an important role in delivering this initiative. At time of going to press (March 2016) there are eight international physicians from Australia, Egypt, Malaysia, Myanmar, Malawi and Nepal undertaking higher specialty training in various medical specialties in the UK via the RCPE's MTI. Another nine trainees from Trinidad, Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sierra Leone, Pakistan, India, Jordan and the USA are due to start in the coming months.³

There are vacancies in the following specialties at ST3 level and above: acute/GIM, acute/GIM with diabetes and endocrinology, geriatric, geriatrics with stroke, renal, respiratory and cardiology.³

ELIGIBILITY FOR MTI

To be eligible, a trainee should have:

- MRCP (UK). The RCPE has some discretion on this for particular Fellowships.
- A valid IELTS English language certificate with an overall score of at least 7.5 and a minimum score of 7 in each component, achieved in the last two years.
- At least three years' work in a clinical practice setting during the last five years, including the previous 12 months.

Candidates who fulfil these essential criteria are encouraged to send their current CV to the contact address on the RCPE website.²

Interested NHS Trusts/Boards should contact the RCPE to discuss their post. The RCPE will ensure the job description is suitable for MTI and that it contains a sufficient supervised training element. Pure service posts are not accepted under the RCPE's MTI scheme. The RCPE will work closely with the NHS to offer support and guidance throughout the process; from identifying suitable trainees, arranging interviews, facilitating GMC registration, obtaining a Tier 5 visa, and providing pastoral support throughout the training.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT MTI

The most frequently asked questions about the MTI are summarised below:

What is the duration of the training?

MTI posts are for a minimum of six months and a maximum of 24 months.

At what level is an MTI trainee expected to work in the UK?

MTI opportunities are offered at a variety of levels. Opportunities are usually available for those at equivalent level to a UK Specialty Registrar (ST3 and above). Some opportunities do exist for trainees in Core Medical Training posts and the RCPE will consider trainee CVs on an individual basis.

All MTI doctors will train alongside UK trainees and have a structured individual training programme, which will be developed in agreement with the trainee and the RCPE.

If a candidate applies for a specialty training position, how much GIM experience are they expected to hold to be eligible?

An ideal candidate would have broad experience in GIM. In many posts, the trainee is expected to be involved in the Medicine on-call rota including out of hours cover. Some MTI training posts do not include any Medicine on-call.

What level of experience and competency does a candidate obtain in the specialty they are training in?

When they start their training post, trainees will agree objectives and competencies to work towards with their supervising consultant. They will have regular meetings to look at progress towards these objectives and discuss future outcomes. MTI training seeks to meet the candidate's training requirements and objectives are set based on what the trainee hopes to achieve and takes into account the needs of the employer/NHS. In addition, specific areas of training needs, for example, transplant medicine in nephrology, can be accommodated where possible.

Is there any induction or observership period for a MTI trainee when they start in post?

A MTI trainee undergoes both the Trust/Board and local departmental inductions when they start working in the UK. The RCPE recommends a period of induction that the trainee observes until they and the supervising consultant are happy that they are ready to be involved in all areas and to participate in on-call duties (up to 3 months is recommended). In many cases, this induction period will be monitored with assessment from case-based discussions. Where a MTI post includes an on-call element, the trainee should be attached as an additional Specialist Registrar in the on-call medical team. Ideally this should occur in the first six weeks that the trainee starts working in the hospital – or until the supervisor and trainee are happy with their competence. The on-call element of some MTI training posts attracts additional payment for trainees, in the same way as for UK trainees.

What are the expected outcomes after completion of training?

MTI trainees are expected to have gained specific procedural skills and exposure in the specialty they wish to develop and specialise in throughout their career. Many MTI posts will allow the trainee to obtain UK GIM/acute medicine experience and exposure.

What educational supervision and support do trainees get during their training?

Trainees will be provided with educational supervision and support. This includes having a designated educational supervisor (a consultant physician in the hospital where the trainee works), a mentor (a consultant member of the RCPE who provides additional support if required), free collegiate membership of the RCPE and free access to an electronic portfolio for appraisal and work-based assessments.

Are trainees granted any certification after completing the training?

Trainees are granted a certificate of completion from the RCPE and an official letter, summarising the specific competencies achieved.

Do candidates need to pay any fees to the RCPE?

The RCPE does not charge administrative fees to trainees from low and lower-middle income economies (as classified by the World Bank). Trainees from middle and high income economies will be charged an administration fee. Please see the website for full details.

All trainees are offered the appropriate level of membership of the RCPE and this is free for MTI trainees for the duration of their post.

Are MTI posts paid jobs?

Most MTI trainees are looking for salaried positions and we match trainees to the most suitable post for them. The salary is dependent upon the training post itself and the experience of the trainee. Salaries often include additional payment (banding) for on-call commitments.

Some trainees have funding from their home service and do not require salaries. It is important to note that trainees cannot fund themselves to undertake an MTI post; any funding must come from the home service. Trainees are entitled to annual leave and study leave in line with the current NHS employment policies and individual job descriptions will give details of the level of protected and training time.

How is the MTI interview conducted?

MTI interviews are held via WebEx or Skype and last approximately 30–50 minutes. The recruiting consultant or MTI lead from the employer Trust/Board, a consultant representative from the College's International Development Group and the MTI Project Manager(s) of the RCPE are involved in the interview process. Occasionally the Trust/Board may wish a member of medical staffing to be present.

How does the trainee organise GMC registration and the visa?

The RCPE is an approved sponsor for GMC registration and the MTI team will also facilitate the Tier 5 (UK Government Exchange scheme) visa. The GMC application process and the visa application process both begin with the trainee initiating an application online and thereafter the RCPE will support the application.

LEARNING TOGETHER AND DELIVERING PATIENT CARE THROUGH THE MTI

The RCPE is a prestigious, innovative and diverse internal medicine society, prioritising the continuity of learning for physicians and improvements of care for patients in the 21st century. The RCPE MTI programme forms part of this aspiration and is well established as a recognised training opportunity for international trainee physicians. This training initiative can also be regarded as a post-membership clinical training opportunity for dedicated physicians and physician trainees around the world, especially those from developing countries.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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