

Scientist Training Programme (STP)

Applicant Recruitment Process Guidance for 2019

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It is recommended that you read these in conjunction with the National School of Healthcare Science Frequently Asked Questions available on the National School of Healthcare Science website (<http://www.nshcs.hee.nhs.uk/join-programme/nhs-scientist-training-programme/frequently-asked-questions>).

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1 Introduction

Recruitment to the Scientist Training Programme (STP) is coordinated by the National School of Healthcare Science (NSHCS) for England.

Recruitment to Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales is managed through their own recruitment processes.

This guidance document is intended to provide information to applicants on all stages of the recruitment process

1.1 Purpose and scope

This document outlines the national recruitment, selection and employment processes for both direct entry and in service applicants to the STP.

The guidance outlines the:

- Introduction and context
- National advertising process
- The recruitment and selection process
- Allocation of trainees to host training placements

1.2 Definitions

Direct entry (external)

Applicants entering the training programme via the national recruitment/appointment process from outside the NHS, who do not hold a substantive employment contract in the NHS (NHS employees wishing to access this route must resign from any existing post to do so at the time of any unconditional offer). Applicants follow the whole programme full-time (except for any exemptions) and all the 'External (direct entry)' processes through to award, whilst occupying fixed-term three year training contract of employment with the host organisation.

In-service (programme)

Applicants entering the programme via local training commissioning processes and application to the national recruitment process, who hold a substantive contract of employment in the specialism for which they are applying prior to the training programme. Trainees will be employed and salaried by the employer throughout the programme. Applicants follow the whole programme (except for any exemptions) and all the 'in service (programme)' processes through to award. In Service (programme) applicants could choose to follow the programme part-time over an extended timescale

(as either the HEI or work based constricts may allow), but must complete within a maximum of five years.

1.3 Consistent standards and high quality

Trainee healthcare scientists are employed and join a three year, integrated training programme of work based and academic learning and undertake a part time university accredited master's degree. To ensure consistency in standards, workplace and academic curricula have been reviewed and accredited for NHS purposes by Health Education England (HEE) and the Academy for Healthcare Science.

STP programmes are based around the following themes:

- CCVRS: Cardiac, Vascular, Critical Care Science, Respiratory & Sleep Sciences
- Neurosensory Sciences
- Infection Sciences
- Blood Sciences
- Cellular Sciences
- Genomics Sciences
- Medical Physics
- Clinical Pharmaceutical Science
- Clinical Engineering including Reconstructive Science
- Clinical Bioinformatics

Applicants for the STP apply for training posts in one of these themes. After an introductory academic block, they spend approximately a year in clinical rotations from within the theme before spending the remainder of the training period in one specialism within the pathway. A key element of the master's programme is the inclusion of a generic curriculum including core elements such as professionalism, patient and carer perspectives, ethics, communication skills and a research project. Research is also an essential component of training and trainees are encouraged to engage with their local research departments/colleagues early on in the STP training process to ensure that there is mutual understanding of what is expected from all parties.

The accompanying academic master's degree is theme based with specialist modules. For example an MSc in Blood Science with a specialism in Clinical Biochemistry.

The aim of the STP is to attract, select and retain the very best people to clinical scientist posts. High quality academic and work based clinically orientated training, with consistent assessment of nationally agreed learning outcomes, is matched by high quality recruitment methods used to secure the best trainees.

The NSHCS coordinates the national recruitment process and supports delivery of the work based learning elements, in close cooperation with HEE's Local Teams and other

commissioning organisations. Details of its full functions and role can be found on the website. Applicants are encouraged to ensure they have read and understood the information available and may find the trainee handbook and annual report on the website particularly useful. These documents can be found using the following links:

<http://www.nshcs.hee.nhs.uk/programmes>

<https://www.nshcs.hee.nhs.uk/publications-and-reports>

Please note that any academic qualifications declared during application will need to be completed prior to the start date of the programme, including any Master's programmes currently being undertaken. It is a requirement of the Higher Education Institutions that applicants must not be enrolled on two academic programmes.

2 Applications

Advertisements will appear in the New Scientist magazine and online web pages of the NSHCS website and on NHS jobs.

Before starting an application, applicants should ensure that they:

- **Read all supporting documentation** – Applicants should ensure that they read all available documentation before commencing an application to understand what is required of them e.g. applicant guidance, frequently asked question, criteria contained within the person specification etc. and are encouraged to visit the NSHCS website on a regular basis for updates/changes to information.
- **Plan time** – Work out how long it will realistically take to complete the application form, including getting feedback from colleagues.
- The application form will take some time to complete so applicants should ensure they allow enough time to complete the form and submit it ahead of the published deadline. Typically, during each recruitment round, approximately 60% of applications are submitted in the last 48 hours of the application window. Due to the volume of applicants completing and submitting applications in the final hours, users can experience the Oriel system running slowly. **Under no circumstances will late applications be considered.**
- **Referees** – Referees should be contacted at the earliest opportunity to confirm that they are happy to support the application and provide a reference. Please note prospective employers will not contact referees until a conditional offer of training has been awarded to an applicant.

2.1 How to register on the online application portal Oriel

All applicants for entry onto STP **must** apply using the online application portal, Oriel, which can be accessed through the NSHCS website at: <http://www.nshcs.hee.nhs.uk/join-programme/nhs-scientist-training-programme>

Once you have accessed Oriel please click on “Account Registration” in order to register. This will create a user account from which you can make your application. You can register on the portal as early as you wish but you will not be able to apply until the application window for the vacancy opens.

Once initial registration has been completed, applicants are advised to click on “Proceed to Applicant Registration”. This will allow you to complete further registration details which will then be used to populate certain parts of the application form against any vacancy you are applying for. Please note that if you start to apply for a vacancy before you complete the full registration process, the information will not pre-populate into the application form.

Contact regarding applications will be via direct messaging through Oriel. Applicants are therefore advised to log into their Oriel accounts regularly throughout the recruitment process.

The NSHCS recruitment office will also send applicants an email to a stated email address, however, these emails should not be relied upon and delivery cannot be guaranteed as they are being sent external to Oriel.

2.2 How to apply to STP

To apply search on "Scientist Training Programme" from the vacancies menu and select the appropriate vacancy and click on “To Apply”. Please note that there will be two vacancies for STP displayed, one for direct entry and one for in service. Applicants should be careful to select the appropriate vacancy that reflects the route through which they are applying to the programme. Direct entry applicants can only apply for one vacancy. In service applicants are eligible to apply for both the In Service and Direct Entry vacancies.

Please note: In service applicants will be sent a code from their employers and will need this code in order to complete the in-service application form.

When completing the employment history section of the application, please note that for current employment a date must be entered (the system will not allow you to enter

'current'). Please enter the date of the day before the start of the programme i.e. 1st September 2019.

2.3 STP application window

All STP applicants complete a series of questions and aptitude tests that ascertain their suitability for the programme to ensure they fulfil the minimum criteria for the training programme.

All application and aptitude test deadlines will be listed on the [NSHCS website](#) once confirmed. Please make sure you check these dates when you start your application.

The application form will contain a number of initial screening questions. Applicants will be required to meet the minimum eligibility criteria in order to progress with the completion of their application form. Applicants will then be asked to provide personal, academic, work experience, general employment and equality and diversity data (some of this data you may have already provided when completing the full registration process).

Applicants will also be required to complete a series of short answer questions that offer the opportunity to demonstrate their suitability, understanding and motivation for the programme. Should any of the short answer questions refer to your chosen specialism(s) and you have chosen two specialisms, we would suggest you give equal space to each in your answer.

Applicants are advised to add any work experience – voluntary and/or non-voluntary to the supporting information section of the application information.

Any false declarations will invalidate the opportunity for an interview and any subsequent offer of employment.

Once the application form is complete and has been submitted, applicants will then be directed to a link with instructions to complete the online aptitude tests.

2.4 Online aptitude tests

Applicants will complete a numerical and logical reasoning test online once their application has been submitted.

There is a minimum pass mark for each online test. If you do not meet this benchmark, your application will not proceed further. Meeting this minimum pass mark does not guarantee that you will be shortlisted for the interview stage.

Applicants do not need to begin these tests immediately after submission of their application unless they choose to do so, however, please note there is a completion deadline.

Only one opportunity will be available to applicants to complete the real tests therefore, we strongly recommend that applicants visit the practice site (www.trytalentq.com) to learn more about the tests, try out some practice questions and learn how to prepare. Applicants will have the opportunity to complete practice tests as many times as they wish but must have completed the real tests before the deadline, which can be confirmed via the [NSHCS website](#).

Please note that, once an applicant begins a real test, it will need to be completed in one sitting. When applicants are ready to complete the real tests, there will be an initial practice question, which is untimed. However, once you leave this practice section, there will be time limits for each question and it is not possible to go back to the beginning.

Applicants access the online tests from the application summary screen. This can be reached through My Applications in the Dashboard on Oriel.

Please note:

- Once an applicant begins a test it will need to be completed in one sitting.
- It is recommended that you use a desktop PC or laptop to complete the online tests.
- It is important that you have a stable internet connection before you start the real test.
- Make sure that other browser tabs, windows and applications are closed before you begin.
- Make sure that you start and complete the tests within the application window.
- Make sure that you are somewhere quiet and free from interruption.
- *Do not click on 'back' or refresh the page, as this will cause no marks to be awarded for the question.*

Please find below a list of minimum browser requirements needed to access Oriel;

Browser product	Version
BlackBerry	>=6
Apple Safari	>=7
Google Chrome	>=30
Microsoft Internet Explorer	9, 10*
	11
Microsoft Internet Explorer Mobile	11
Microsoft Edge	all
Mozilla Firefox	24-26*
	>=27

On completion of these tests please ensure that against each test it states “completed”. Applicants can then choose to log out of the system.

If applicants score within the required threshold for the programme their application will be put forward to shortlisting. Those who do not will be sent a notification advising them that their application will not be progressed any further.

All applicants are advised to complete the tests as early as they can during the application window so as to ensure they do not miss the closing date. Failure to complete the tests within the required timescales will result in the application being rejected.

Any applicant who requires extra time to complete the online tests will need to send evidence to hcsapplicants@hee.nhs.uk at least 3 working days before the aptitude tests completion deadline. The recruitment team will review your evidence and facilitate the extra time required if it is granted. If you fail to notify the team before the deadline date, you may not be granted the extra time you need. **Please do not start the online tests** until the NSHCS have reviewed your evidence and if applicable notified you of the extra time.

Should technical issues be experienced **during** the online tests, applicants must notify the NSHCS by emailing hcsapplicants@hee.nhs.uk with evidence of the technical issue experienced. Acceptable evidence would need to be as a minimum, a screenshot of the

technical issue experienced. Applicants are advised to email as soon as a technical issue is encountered. Should the NSHCS determine that the evidence is acceptable, it will, at its discretion, offer applicants the opportunity to resist the online test (once only). Please note that the NSHCS will not be able to offer the online test resit in the event of an applicant having already completed the online test(s). **Please do not leave completion of the online tests to the last weekend of the completion deadline as the NSHCS cannot guarantee queries will be responded to by the respective closing date. Any queries must be submitted to hcsapplicants@hee.nhs.uk by no later than 3 working days before the test completion date.**

2.5 STP posts and preferences

Direct entry applicants are able to view the training post locations and specialisms (or theme, in the case of Medical Physics and Clinical Engineering) that are available via the [NSHCS website](#). Locations are displayed at regional level. Note that availability of posts may be subject to change during the recruitment process and the NSHCS website is updated on a regular basis to reflect any changes to posts so applicants should ensure that they regularly check this throughout the recruitment process.

Direct entry applicants have a maximum of two choices of specialisms / themes and can preference as many choices of location/employers as there are available in those specialisms at the relevant stage of the process. Applicants will be asked to give their preference for their choices of specialism during the completion of the application form during the application window. Only direct entry applicants who are eligible to be invited to the interview stage of the process will then be asked to identify their preferred choice of location/employer.

In service applicants do not have any choice of post location or specialism. They are eligible only to apply for the training place for which they are being sponsored by their current employer. They will need to provide evidence that permission has been obtained from their employer to apply for the training programme and will need to email copies of their degree certificates to hcsapplicants@hee.nhs.uk by the application closing date.

2.6 Competition ratios

When deciding which specialisms to apply for, applicants are advised to consider carefully the likely levels of competition involved and be prepared to be flexible about their specialism choices; not all applicants will be successful in getting a place in their first choice specialism and/or region.

The NSHCS recruitment webpages of its website provides a direct link to the competition ratios for the recruitment years of 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018. These figures do not show what will happen in 2019, but offer a broad indication of the most and least subscribed specialisms and areas in the previous recruitment rounds.

2.7 Further information and contacts

Applicants will be allowed one application per vacancy only. Those found to be attempting to submit more than one application will be removed from the recruitment process entirely.

Applicants will have one attempt at completing the real online aptitude tests and must complete them within the required timescales. Applicants can practice completing the tests as many times as they wish provided they complete the real tests within the timescales stipulated.

All users of the online application portal will be supported via the NSHCS at hcsapplicants@hee.nhs.uk between Monday to Friday 09:00.to 17:00 hours. The NSHCS is not open during bank holidays and weekends.

The NSHCS will endeavour to respond to all applicant queries promptly however applicants should not leave any application form/process/online test queries to the last days of the application window as there will be no guarantee of a response/resolution to the issues raised in time. This may mean that the application is not submitted and the applicant will not be considered any further in the process. **Applicants completing an application late in the application window do so at their own risk.**

To ensure we are able to respond in a timely manner to all application stage related queries we will post a query deadline on the [NSHCS website](#). Please ensure you are aware of this date as queries received outside of these timescales are highly unlikely to receive a response before the application window closes, it is therefore very important that applicants observe the deadlines outlined and complete their applications in a timely manner in order to avoid disappointment. The NSHCS will not be responsible for failure to answer any queries after the query deadline.

Applicants are able to save and return to complete their application as many times as they choose until they either submit and/or the closing date passes.

Please note, deferrals to the following recruitment year (should it be available) are considered on statutory grounds such as serious ill health or maternity and both will need to be supported by medical evidence. This would be subject further to the necessary approvals and on the basis that recruitment to the Scientist Training Programme is offered in the following year on the same basis as this current year.

Should an applicant answer “yes” to the following question on the application form,

“Have you previously relinquished or been released or removed from a training programme?”

The applicant will then need to provide further information to hcsapplicants@hee.nhs.uk at least 5 days prior to the respective application closing dates, which will be reviewed and may then be subject to further scrutiny.

2.8 Special circumstances

A process is being implemented, across the STP national recruitment processes, to ensure that applicants with special circumstances and a requirement to train in a particular location are treated in a fair and consistent way.

Any applicant who falls into one of the following eligibility criteria will be pre allocated into the post, subject to it meeting the requirements of their training programme:

- **Criterion 1** – the applicant is the primary carer for someone who is disabled, as defined by the Equality Act 2010.
- **Criterion 2** – the applicant has a medical condition or disability for which ongoing follow up for the condition in the specified location is an absolute requirement.

Applying for special circumstances

Applicants wishing to be considered for special circumstances pre allocation should ensure that they state this on their application form and submit supporting evidence by email. Requests for consideration of special circumstances received in any other way will not be accepted.

Supporting evidence

Applicants wishing to be considered for special circumstances should complete the special circumstances application form (available from [NSHCS website](#) and forward this, together with the following supporting evidence by email to hcsapplicants@hee.nhs.uk, as soon as the application has been submitted electronically.

Criterion 1

- Written statement from a general practitioner or social services professional who you will have normally known for at least 6 months, confirming your role as primary carer for this person; and
- Care plan; and
- Proof of current address e.g. driving licence, utility bill dated within the last 3 months.

Criterion 2

- A report by the current medical specialist treating your condition or Occupational Health physician, in which they will be required to: Describe the current medical condition or disability Describe the nature of the ongoing treatment and frequency Explain why the follow up must be delivered in a specific location rather than by other treatment centres in the UK; and
- Proof of address.

Special circumstances applications will be reviewed by a national eligibility panel and a decision on whether the application has been successful will be communicated to the applicant.

Where the applicant is unhappy with the decision of the national eligibility panel, they are permitted to submit an appeal to the national review panel. The decision of the national review panel will be final.

Allocation

Applicants who have been approved as having a special circumstance will be pre-allocated into the region of their choice, subject to the following criteria being met:

- Applicant is deemed appointable at interview/selection centre.
- Applicant is ranked highly enough to receive an offer e.g. if there are 10 posts available, applicant will need to rank in the top 10.
- The region the applicant wishes to be allocated to can fulfil all requirements of the curriculum for the specialism for which they have applied.

If all of these conditions are met, the applicant will be pre allocated into the preferred region, before the main offers algorithm is run. Applicants are not guaranteed their preferred programme within the preferred region. Special circumstances applicants will be offered the highest ranked post within that region that they would have been offered, had the normal offers process run. Where applicants with special circumstances would not have been offered a post in the preferred region, they will be pre allocated one of their ranked programmes within that region.

Where applicants with special circumstances do not rank highly enough to be offered a post in the first round of offers they will be placed on a reserve list, pending more posts becoming available or offers being declined. There is no guarantee of matching special circumstances applicants to preferred locations after the first round of offers has been completed. An applicant without special circumstances who has accepted a post in the preferred location of an applicant with special circumstances **will not** be displaced to allow allocation of the applicant with special circumstances.

When ranking sub-preferences (employers/locations), applicants with approved special circumstances must ensure that they only rank programmes/posts that they are willing to accept and undertake. Applicants will be allocated based on these sub-preferences.

When choosing posts, applicants must ensure that they meet the eligibility for those posts. This includes applicants who are currently on, or will require a Tier 2 visa. Where the choice of post requires the applicant to meet the Resident Labour Market Test, the offer cannot be pre allocated. **Applicants with a Tier 4 visa with any restrictions for example 'no employment as doctor or dentist in training' MUST stipulate this on the application form.**

3 Entry requirements

Please refer to the [NSHCS website](#) for the job description and person specification. Applicants are encouraged to ensure that they meet the eligibility criteria of the person specification before considering applying.

4 Fitness to practise

Applicants who answer **yes** to any of the Fitness to Practise questions on the application form will be required to provide further information by no later than the closing date for applications to the NSHCS at hcsapplicants@hee.nhs.uk. Failure to do so will result in your application being rejected. Please mark your email as 'confidential'.

Once interviews are completed* and you have answered yes to any fitness to practice question, your application will then go before a judging panel to determine if you would be suitable for the programme.

When applicants submit their application, they are confirming that the detail contained within it is true and accurate. If it later transpires that applicants answered **yes** to any of these questions in error, and their application is rejected as a result of this, their application will not be reinstated.

(*Applicants who are interview unsuccessful would not go through to the judging panel.)

5 Application process for international graduates

Please refer to national guidance from Health Education England and the UK Visa and Immigrations to confirm whether or not an applicant is eligible to apply, through accessing the following links:

<http://hee.nhs.uk/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration>

Applicants are advised to ensure they have a right to work in the UK for the full duration of the STP as this will be a requirement of their contract of employment.

6 Shortlisting and candidate allocation to interview process

In service applicants apply via the same national online process as direct entry applicants (including any online testing used), but will not be entered into the shortlisting process, since they are not competing for their substantive post. Following the successful completion of the online aptitude tests, in service applicants will move directly to the interview process. All in service applicants must attend the national interviews.

For direct entry applicants, shortlisting is undertaken on a national basis. All shortlisted applicants must attend national interviews.

The dates of the shortlisting window can be found on the [NSHCS website](#).

The NSHCS will collate and review the results of the shortlisting to ensure consistency across specialisms and to ensure applicant numbers put forward for interview are proportionate to the number of posts available.

Applicants will be ranked in order of scores received from the panels.

In the event of tied shortlisting scores a predetermined agreed ranking algorithm will be followed in order to establish any unique ranking and this may include considering the scores of the online tests.

The numbers of interview places available are typically identified based on a 3:1 ratio of posts available plus any applicants registered to the disability Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS). A reserve list equal to the number of posts available will also be collated should any of the shortlisted applicants withdraw before the interview stage. This ensures that the number of reserves is proportionate to the number of posts for each specialism.

Please note the 3:1 interview ratio can be decreased or increased dependent on interview capacity and workforce demand and purely at the discretion of the NSHCS.

The STP recruitment process will be running the disability GIS. This means that those applicants with a disability as defined by the Equality Act (2010) and are deemed to meet the minimum criteria in the person specification at short listing will be offered an interview.

The following gives guidance on how the GIS is applied:

Minimum criteria - these are the requirements that have been agreed for the post which include qualifications, experience and skills. For shortlisting scoring purposes, the NSHCS uses the following ratings:

0 – Criteria not met / demonstrated

1 – Criteria partially met

2 – Criteria fully met

3 – Exceeds criteria

To be successful at shortlisting stage, applicants should achieve a minimum score of 2 marks across each criterion for the role as set out in the person specification. Applicants scoring 0 or 1 in any of the essential criteria will not be invited to interview on the GIS scheme.

If, on your application form, you have indicated that you have a disability and require any specific arrangements/adjustments to enable you to attend an interview, assessment or other selection process and/or you have indicated you would like to be considered under the GIS, please ensure you contact hcsapplicants@hee.nhs.uk with further information and supporting evidence no later than the end of the shortlisting window.

Once the shortlisting is processed, your status on the online application portal will change to either shortlisted, shortlist unsuccessful or shortlisted reserve

A status of “shortlisted” will mean that you will be invited to interview.

A status of “shortlist unsuccessful” will mean that you have not been successful at shortlisting and hence your application will not progress any further.

A status of “shortlisted reserve” gives a shortlisting score that was not ranked high enough to be offered an interview place at this stage in the process; however should any of those offered interviews withdraw, you could be offered an interview place later on in the process and at short notice.

Shortlisters will not have access to the equal opportunities and Fitness to Practise sections of the application form or personal data.

7 Selecting sub-preferences (choosing employers/locations)

In the period between interview invites being submitted and just prior to offers being made, applicants will be asked to specify their regional/geographical preferences (sub-preferences) against the specialism(s) they have applied for. Sub-preference choices are ranked in Oriel. The sub-preferences made by applicants will be used, along with final selection rank to determine which offer, if any, they receive. Only those applicants eligible for interview will be invited to choose their sub-preferences. The applicant guidance on the offers process can be found through accessing the NSHCS recruitment webpages of its website.

8 Interview processes

Direct entry and in service applicants will have five working days from the date of the request for interview to confirm their interview booking online. Both direct entry and in service applicants are interviewed. However in some instances the five days may be reduced, for example in the event of interview reserves. The in service applicants do not interview in competition for their substantive (or any other) post, but against minimum quality standards (entry criteria).

The interview process provides a method by which the suitability, skills and experience of an applicant can be objectively measured through a series of relatively short, focused interviews at a series of stations - each of which assess a different aspect of the person specification. In addition each interviewer will also score the applicant on their communication skills. Each interview station assesses the applicant against the same scoring criteria and a set of standard questions appropriate to that station. At the end of the process the scores from each of the interview stations together with the communication scores are aggregated to give a quantitative measurement of an applicant's overall performance.

The process enables large numbers of applicants to be interviewed simultaneously and should ensure that all applicants are consistently measured against the same set of criteria for that specialism or theme.

The methodology has been successfully applied to the recruitment of doctors and dentists, the NHS Graduate Management Training Scheme, as well as healthcare scientists.

The interview timetable will be updated on the NSHCS website.

Applicants can view a video outlining how the interview process works on the NSHCS website at:

<http://www.nshcs.hee.nhs.uk/join-programme/nhs-scientist-training-programme>.

8.1 What documents to bring to interview?

Please bring the original and one copy of each of the following items to your interview:

- Passport
- Two forms of photographic identification such as driving licence or passport.
- Visa/Home Office documents if non UK/EEA
- International English Language Testing System (IELTS) examination certificate or alternative evidence of English language proficiency if applicable (please contact us if you require further information regarding this)

Should applicants not be able to present a passport as evidence of proof of right to work in the UK, they are encouraged to visit the link to the following document which outlines what alternative documents would be acceptable for proving the right to work in the UK: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration>.

8.2 Interview outcome and allocation process

All applicants who attend an interview will be informed in writing of the outcome of their application via the online application portal. Applicants are encouraged to regularly check their emails/Oriel throughout the entire recruitment process.

For in service applicants, scores are identified as being either above or below the minimum benchmark for quality standards and are not subject to further ranking. In service trainees and their managers will be notified of the outcome of their interview via email by the NSHCS. Applicants who are unsuccessful will be notified of this.

For direct entry applicants, subsequent to the interviews taking place for each specialism/theme, all scores will be quality checked for accuracy. This may take up to two weeks depending on the number of applicants seen.

As far as possible, successful direct entry applicants will be matched to posts based on the choices of specialisms they identified when they completed their application form and the choices of locations/employers chosen later in the application process.

Once all interviews have taken place and just prior to offers being released, an applicant's Oriel status initially will change to 'interview complete'. Initially this will be for all applicants.

Following this and at the time of offers, an applicant's status will change to one of the following:

Offer made – an applicant has been made an offer.

Interview unsuccessful – an applicant has not been successful at interview.

Interview complete – an applicant's Oriel status will remain as 'interview complete' if the applicant is appointable but not ranked high enough to be made an offer at this stage. The applicant will be placed on an appointable reserve list. Applicants are encouraged to continue to check their Oriel accounts and emails periodically in case this status is changed to 'offer made'.

The NSHCS will contact all direct entry applicants through the online application portal informing them of the outcome of their interview. Regret notifications will be sent to unsuccessful applicants. Applicants who are appointable but were not ranked high enough to be offered a position will be notified to confirm they are on the interview reserve list.

Please note that sub preferences can be subject to change during the entire recruitment process and therefore the onus is on the applicant to log in to Oriel and re-rank their sub preferences as per the guidelines outlined in the Applicant offers document.

Should additional posts be added after the sub-preference deadline then offers will be made according to a process the NSHCS deems appropriate. This will be regardless of whether the post is an additional existing sub-preference or a completely new post (sub-preference).

The NSHCS will forward a recommendation of training notification to successful applicants. Only one recommendation of training will be made per applicant. Applicants will have the opportunity to hold an offer for a fixed period of time should they not be offered their preferred location or specialism initially however once an applicant accepts a post this offer will not be changed. Further detailed offers guidance will be available on the School's website before the interviews take place.

The applicants' details will then be made available to the employing organisation which should commence local employment processes including Disclosure Barring Service (DBS), Occupational Health and reference checks. The NSHCS will provide details of the lead contact from the employing department so that the trainee can progress their employment with them.

The NSHCS will take no further part in the process once the trainee's details have been sent to the employer. Please note a condition of an applicant accepting a post confirms that the NSHCS has the applicant's permission to share their contact details with the employing organisation.

Highest scoring reserve applicants may be recommended for training should any of the higher scoring applicants fail to take up an offer of training.

Applicants should be aware that in accepting the training post offered they will be committing to being based with that employer for the full 3 years of training. There will not be an opportunity to transfer to another employer at a later date unless there are significant personal circumstances that require them to do so. Under these circumstances a request would need to be made to the employer, the NSHCS and the local commissioner for their consideration.

9 The employment of healthcare scientist trainees

Trainees are employed at a local level by the organisation they have been allocated to and should refer any issues relating to employment to them.

Although the NSHCS does not employ trainees, each trainee must register with the NSHCS.

10 Generic job description and person specification

A generic person specification and job description is provided on the NSHCS website (<http://www.nshcs.hee.nhs.uk/join-programme/nhs-scientist-training-programme>). This document will be central to maintaining consistency and fairness in the selection process. This job description should form the basis of the expectations of the trainee during their three years' work based training and can be accessed through the following link: <http://www.nshcs.hee.nhs.uk/join-programme/nhs-scientist-training-programme>

Please note: some specialisms may require the trainee to perform manual handling/lifting of test objects.

11 Employment status and grade

All direct entry trainee healthcare scientists will be employed on a three year, full time, fixed term training contract, for NHS posts this is funded at circa £26,000 per annum.

Any variation to funding should be discussed with the local employer and commissioner for the training.

12 Feedback

Applicants may wish to receive feedback with regard to their interview. Applicants will be able to obtain this information free of charge by emailing hcsapplicants@hee.nhs.uk

Applicants can expect to receive a response within one month from date of request but please note feedback requests will not be processed until after the interview outcomes have been released for all specialisms.

Feedback will normally consist of total interview score (which will be released on Oriel at a later date) and the score required to be eligible to receive an offer. Applicants can, on request be provided with copies of their interview scoresheets by emailing their request to hcsapplicants@hee.nhs.uk

Requests for any additional information will be treated as Subject Access Requests and will be chargeable as per the existing Data Protection Act advice which can be obtained from the Health Education England website.

13 Feedback on the recruitment process

Following completion of a recruitment round, all applicants will be requested to participate in a national feedback survey.

Feedback responses are completely anonymous but feedback received is used when planning recruitment processes for future years.

Feedback received from previous surveys has resulted in process changes so completion of the survey is recommended.

14 Contacts and useful information

Applicants should contact the following email address for general queries regarding the national recruitment process: hcsapplicants@hee.nhs.uk

In order for the NSHCS to offer optimal support to all applicants please ensure you have reviewed both this document and the FAQs in full prior to submitting a query

Useful information and documentation relating to this year's recruitment process can be found on: <http://www.nshcs.hee.nhs.uk/join-programme/nhs-scientist-training-programme>

Information on the background to the Scientist Training Programme including career and specialism information can be found at: www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/stp

Information relating to the STP curricula and learning guides: <https://curriculum.nshcs.org.uk/>