

Scientist Training Programme (STP)

Interviewing Process for Applicants

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1 What applicants can expect if invited to interview

The National School of Healthcare Science is committed to delivering interviews to a high and professional standard.

1.1 Processes

Interviews are run in accordance with set processes. All interviews are designed to be fair, equitable and transparent and all processes will be applied consistently.

1.2 Venues

National School of Healthcare Science uses a range of venues to host interviews. While care is taken to ensure a quiet environment for interviews, unexpected noise can occur and applicants are advised to be prepared for a certain amount of low-level noise. Applicants who have any special adjustment needs are asked to contact hcsapplicant@hee.nhs.uk a minimum of 10 working days prior to interview to make this known and will have answered “yes” to specific interview requirements on their application form.

Should applicants experience an issue to do with the venue on the day of interview, they are asked to speak to the on duty senior manager from the National School of Healthcare Science who will be present at the interviews on the day.

1.3 STP sub preferences (locations/employers)

Applicants who are invited to interview and those applicants that receive a status and email of SHORTLIST RESERVE will be asked to log back into the online application portal to choose their sub preferences. Sub preferences are defined as location/employers. Information about available posts can be viewed by accessing the following link under the heading “STP Specialisms by Location” <http://www.nshcs.hee.nhs.uk/join-programme/nhs-scientist-training-programme/stp-specialisms-by-location>

Applicants are advised to check this list regularly as information may be subject to change.

Applicants will be able to choose as many sub preferences as there are available but must be within the specialism for which they have applied and been shortlisted.

For example, if an applicant chose the specialisms of Medical Physics and Clinical Engineering during the application window and are shortlisted for both specialisms, they will only be able to choose the sub preferences (locations/employers) that have Medical Physics posts and Clinical Engineering posts.

Applicants will also be able to state what sub preference(s) they are interested in, what sub preference(s) they do not mind and also what sub preference(s) they do not want. Please note that should an applicant identify any sub preference they are not interested in this will exclude them from any offers available for that particular sub preference even though they may have been ranked high enough at interview to have been offered that sub preference.

There will be a window of time for which applicants will be able to choose their sub preferences and this period will be outlined in the invite to interview/shortlist reserve email at the time of request for interview/notification of shortlist reserve.

An applicant, who has been invited to interview, will have their status change to INTV on the online application portal as well as receiving an invite to interview email.

Any applicants on the shortlist reserve list will have their status change to SHORTLIST RESERVE on the online application portal as well as receiving an email of this. A status and email of shortlist reserve is defined as an applicant who has not been ranked high enough to be offered an interview at

this stage but depending on any subsequent interview withdrawals could possibly be invited to interview (please note this could be at short notice) depending on their shortlisting rank and scores.

1.4 Timings

Every effort is made to ensure that interviews run to time. Applicants are asked to arrive a minimum of 30 minutes early to allow sufficient time for document checking and necessary briefings. Applicants are asked to be mindful when making travel arrangements that delays are possible. For STP we would recommend that applicants expect to be at the venue for up to 2 hours allowing for potential delays during the interviews.

If another applicant has failed to arrive in time for their interview, National School of Healthcare Science staff may ask the applicant to move up the interview schedule. Applicants are not obliged to agree to this request.

Should applicants be unable to attend their interview, they are asked to notify National School of Healthcare Science via hcsapplicants@hee.nhs.uk no later than 3 days before the interview date.

Applicants who arrive late for their interview, should be prepared that it may not be possible to offer them a later slot and that their interview may be forfeited. The contact telephone number for anyone running late is **0121 695 2529**.

Should applicants experience issues to do with timing on the day of interview, they are asked to speak to the on duty senior manager from the National School of Healthcare Science.

1.5 Document check

- Applicants can expect to undergo a document check, including verification of identification documentation, and right to work documentation at their interview. Applicants are expected to bring **original** documents as well as **one photocopy** of each of the following documents
- Passport
- Second form of photographic identification such as a driving licence, student ID or NHS staff ID
- 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) UK NARIC equivalence for those applicants that hold international qualifications. (<https://www.naric.org.uk/naric/>)

The document check generally takes place prior to interview. Applicants may be asked to defer their document check until after their interview in cases where applicants have arrived late or have agreed to move up the interview schedule. All applicants will be issued with their name badge prior to going into interviews and are advised to ensure they keep this name badge visible throughout the interview process.

1.6 Standards

All interview panels will have been briefed on the interview process, and specifically on the importance of maintaining consistent scoring parameters. Applicants can expect their interview panel to probe and challenge their answers and statements if the panel feel they need further information. This allows applicants a fair opportunity to answer the question(s). Similarly, applicants can expect panels to conclude their interview with applicants prior to the designated time if the panel feels it has obtained sufficient information to assess an applicant. Neither probing questioning, nor an early finish should be grounds for concern and are consistent with the expected process for interviews.

Applicants cannot take notes through the interview stations. Bags and coats can be left with a member of the National School of Healthcare Science in the registration room or in the interview room and

collected after the interviews have taken place. The National School of Healthcare Science does not accept responsibility for any applicant/person's personal belongings.

Applicants are advised not to discuss the interview process/questions until they have left the venue. Furthermore, it is the National School of Healthcare Science recommendation that applicants refrain from discussing the interview process/questions, until conditional offers are released.

1.7 Interview Stations

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.

Interviewers will ask applicants 4 questions from a choice of 6 per station. Each station lasts 10 minutes and includes a range of topics designed to explore your knowledge and skills on the topic. Applicants will rotate to each station until all 4 have been completed (see attached diagram). Note that applicants may start at any of the stations.

| Station | Area covered |
|---------|--|
| 1 | General aptitude for science and understanding of scientific services in society |
| 2 | Specialism specific questions to assess scientific knowledge and skills |
| 3 | Specialism specific questions to assess scientific knowledge and skills |
| 4 | Values and behaviour and leadership and management with a focus on potential |

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.

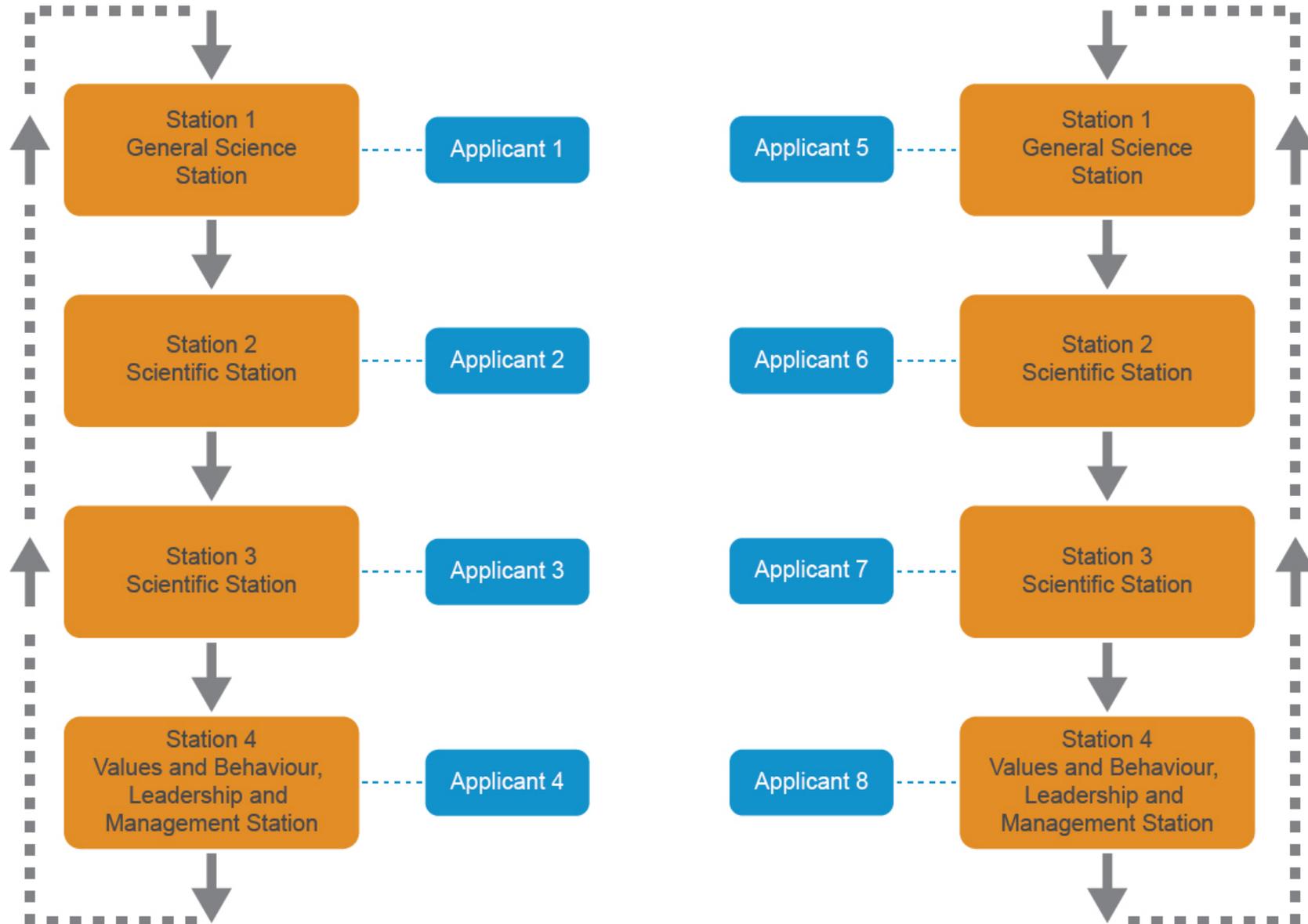
1.8 Interview Process

The interviews are structured into streams, which consist of 4 interview stations. There will be between 1 – 4 streams running simultaneously. Each station should have 2 interviewers. Generally, 4 applicants are interviewed in every stream, with one applicant per station.

Each station is 10 minutes long (with a 2 minute break per interview station) and applicants rotate until they have been seen at all stations (40 minutes in total for the interview stations). Panel members are given a 2 minute warning before each station ends.

- All interviews will be supported by a dedicated team who will coordinate the movement of the applicants through the streams and will collect and collate the interview scores from the panels.

Diagrammatic Representation of the Interview Process for STP Recruitment 2018



1.9 Scoring

The NSHCS will always aim to have a minimum of two interviewers on any given station. However this may not always be the case, in some situations, due to unforeseen circumstances, a station may be comprised of one panel member. Interviewers are asked to score independently, between 1– 5 and in whole numbers. Applicants will receive two scores from each interviewer; a total station score and communication skills score which will be weighted. Scores awarded by interviewers on the same interview station/panel may vary.

If an interviewer score a 1 or a 2 for either the station or communication skills, this could be subject to **further review** and as a result may not necessarily result in a conditional offer, even if the applicant has a high enough total score that would have otherwise been ranked high enough to have received a conditional offer. If two interviewers score a 1 for the station or communication skills, the applicant will be deemed un-appointable and hence will not receive a conditional offer.

The National School of Healthcare Science quality check and review all scores prior to making offers of training. Where discrepancies in scores are deemed to be justified - specifically, each interviewer has scored consistently within set scoring parameters - the score stands; where deemed not to be justified, the score may be amended. An amendment is a reasonably rare occurrence.

With regard to scoring across interview stations, it is common for applicants not to be equally strong in all areas and this tends to be reflected in their scores across stations, which are devoted to different competency areas.

Applicants will therefore receive a wide range of scores from multiple interview stations, interviewers and station questions giving each applicant optimal opportunity to perform to the best of their abilities at interview.