PALLIATIVE MEDICINE – eligibility guidance for candidates applying from alternative training pathways

Information for candidates

Most applicants to palliative medicine will be physicians (ie undertaking core medical training [CMT] or acute care common stem [ACCS] training programmes.)

However, the specialty welcomes applications from trainees who have not undertaken a standard CMT or ACCS training programme or equivalent, but who have instead trained in general practice, surgery or anaesthesia.

Such trainees must still possess CMT competence, and have experience in some medical specialties.

The details are given in the 2014 ST3 person specification (http://specialtytraining.hee.nhs.uk/files/2013/03/2014-ST3-palliative-medicine-person-specification-v2.0.pdf), but are expanded on here to provide further clarity.

Summary of the three key eligibility requirements

All applicants must have gained:

1. at least 24 months’ clinical experience after the completion of foundation training before commencing ST3 training

2. a professional postgraduate examination in relation to their training pathway (eg MRCP(UK); MRCGP with CCT; MRCS (full); FRCS; FRCA.) These examinations must have been passed prior to commencing an ST3 post

[NB – anaesthesia trainees wishing to use the FRCA qualification must gain the full FRCA to be eligible, not just primary FRCA.]

3. CMT competences prior to taking up an ST3 post.

Applicants from GP/surgery/anaesthesia routes

The palliative medicine curriculum states:

Doctors must be able to manage concurrent general medical problems in their patients, within the context of advanced, progressive disease, without immediate recourse to other specialists and if working in isolated units.


This requires at least 24 months’ full-time equivalent experience in medicine at ST/SHO-level, and competence in some practical procedures.
Clinical experience for applicants from non-physician training routes

The 24 months’ post-foundation experience must be as follows:

a) At least **12 months’ experience** must be in a range of acute hospital medical specialties which admit acutely unwell medical patients and manage their immediate follow-up.

This includes specialties such as cardiology, gastroenterology, respiratory medicine, acute elderly medicine, A&E medicine, renal medicine, acute medicine admissions unit.

Trainees must have a minimum of **four months’ experience** of managing patients on unselected **medical take** that involves ongoing patient management.

Please note – emergency medicine (A&E) without an admissions unit would **not** fulfil this requirement.

b) Beyond this, a **further 12 months’ experience** in relevant specialties is required.

Such specialties may include those above, but other specialty experience that is acceptable includes general practice, palliative medicine, psychiatry, intensive care medicine, oncology, haematology, HIV medicine, neurology, general paediatrics, and rehabilitation medicine.

A **maximum of six months** in any single specialty can be counted towards the minimum requirement of 24 months’ post-foundation experience.

All of the above experience can be counted regardless of which specialty training programme they may have been part of (e.g. paediatrics and psychiatry placements may have been part of a GP programme; but they would just be counted as paediatrics/psychiatry experience for recruitment purposes.)

**Summary of clinical experience required**

- At least 12 months’ experience in acute medical specialties such as those listed in section a) above; this period must include at least four months of unselected take.
- At least 12 months’ experience in other relevant specialties, such as those listed in sections a) and b) above.
- No more than six months in any one specialty can contribute towards the overall experience requirement of 24 months.

**Procedural competences**

The trainee must be competent in the following procedures prior to commencing ST3 training in palliative medicine:

- venepuncture
- cannula insertion
- pleural tap and aspiration
- abdominal paracentesis
- basic cardiorespiratory resuscitation
- urethral catheterisation
- nasogastric tube placement.

Foundation competences must be maintained.
Proving achievement of competences

The person specification states:

*All above routes must be supported by evidence from work-based assessments of clinical performance (DOPS, mini-CEX, CBD, ACAT) and multi-source feedback or equivalent, ARCP or equivalent.*

However, the word ‘equivalent’ is operative here; as it is recognised that not all these assessments will have been undertaken in other, or older, training pathways.

If trainees do not have documents to support their CMT competence as above, it is recommended that **Certificate ACC** (formerly ‘Certificate C’) is used.

To access Certificate ACC and guidance on its use, please visit the ST3 recruitment website at this link: [http://www.st3recruitment.org.uk/am-i-eligible/competences.html](http://www.st3recruitment.org.uk/am-i-eligible/competences.html)

Credit for postgraduate examinations

Please note that possession of the acceptable alternative postgraduate examinations will gain similar credit as the MRCP(UK) at the short-listing stage; provided these examinations are entered correctly into the application form.

Advice on recording this information to your application will be provided within the form itself; as well as on the ST3 recruitment website here: [http://st3recruitment.org.uk/the-application-form/supporting-information.html](http://st3recruitment.org.uk/the-application-form/supporting-information.html)

Advice

Because of the complexity of the eligibility criteria, trainees who believe they are eligible and wish to be considered for palliative medicine should submit an application; detailing their experience and answering the eligibility questions to the best of their ability.

The deanery/UoA recruiting team will assess eligibility at the long-listing stage, consulting with palliative medicine training programme directors as required.

It is appreciated that training pathways can vary in content and complexity; indeed, applications from alternative training routes are welcomed for this reason.

Lastly, please note that as it is only deanery recruiters and interviewers who can determine a candidate’s eligibility when in possession of all the relevant information, it will not be possible for the RCP-SRO ST3 recruitment team to answer individual queries about eligibility in these circumstances.

General guidance on the recruitment process can be given via their helpdesk though; which can be contacted via email at **st3recruitment@rcplondon.ac.uk**.