



The ROYAL COLLEGE of  
OPHTHALMOLOGISTS

4 October 2019

**To Heads of School, Training Programme Directors,  
Regional Education Advisors, College Tutors, Educational Supervisors  
and all Ophthalmologists in Training**

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Dear Colleagues,

**Re: Summary of National Recruitment Changes**

ST3 recruitment was paused for 2019 to carry out a full consultation of the College membership. The results of this consultation are that:

- 1) Entry into training will be possible above the ST1 level.
- 2) Recruitment (all levels) will be done at the same time in the same location.
- 3) ST4 will be the highest appointable level to accommodate future curriculum changes.

### **National Recruitment 2020**

National Recruitment will next take place on **6 and 7 February 2020** in Bristol.

Those applying for entry above ST1 level will be interviewed on Thursday, 6 February. They will have a gap analysis of their competencies and portfolio to ensure that they are of an appropriate level for the post they are applying to.

Doctors applying for ST3 will need a minimum of 24 months of experience by the time of appointment. The upper limit to the stage of entry will be ST4 to accommodate focussed training in special interest areas after the implementation of the new OST curriculum in the coming years.

It will be known before this date what vacancies are available and at what level.

ST1 recruitment will run on Friday, 7 February without any changes other than the entry level requirement, which allows no more than 18 months of ophthalmology experience by the date of interview (including medical ophthalmology).

### **Planned Ophthalmology Recruitment Changes**

As many of you are aware, there is a recruitment crisis in the UK with geographical locations routinely not able to fill posts while there is a surplus of candidates in other regions. In several competitive specialties applicants accept a National Training Number (NTN) in less popular regions, gain excellent training and then re-apply the following year with the aim to move into a more popular region.

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(SC045652)

This has several significant effects on the less popular regions: loss of trainees, gaps in rotas, persistently more junior trainees on the rotation, trainer fatigue, etc.

The eligibility criteria for ST1 has changed this year to be:

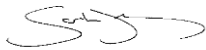
- 18 months' or less experience in Ophthalmology including Medical Ophthalmology (not including Foundation modules) by date of interview.

It is the plan of the Recruitment Sub-committee to apply to the GMC to prevent candidates from re-applying when they already have a NTN. This application will proceed in 2020 with an aim to start in 2021.

This will allow time to explain to candidates during the debrief session of 2020 recruitment of the plan to stop those with NTN numbers re-applying, therefore encouraging candidates to accept NTN in regions that they will commit to for the duration of their training.

The Inter Deanery Transfer (IDT) process will remain unchanged.

Yours sincerely,



**Mrs Sarah Maling FRCOphth**  
*Chair – Recruitment Sub-committee*



**Miss Fiona Spencer FRCS (Glas) FRCOphth**  
*Chair – Training Committee*