

Education, Training and Events Department

Dual Sponsorship Scheme



The ROYAL COLLEGE *of*
OPHTHALMOLOGISTS

**Dual Sponsorship Scheme Booklet
for International Medical Graduates
Ophthalmologists-in-Training**

**Sixth Edition
(2024)**

**International Medical Graduates' Training
Sub-committee
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1. Introduction

The Royal College of Ophthalmologists may act as a sponsoring body for International Medical Graduates (IMG) who wish to spend time undertaking part of their training in ophthalmology in the United Kingdom. The College established a Dual Sponsorship Scheme in April 1994 to enable International Medical Graduates of exceptional ability to come to the UK for a period of training. The International Medical Graduates' Training Sub-committee of the College is responsible for administering the Dual Sponsorship Scheme on behalf of the Trustee Board of The Royal College of Ophthalmologists.

Aims of College Sponsorship

1. To sponsor trainees for registration with the General Medical Council (GMC) with restricted exemption from the Professional and Linguistic Assessment Board Examination (PLAB).
2. To enable international ophthalmologists of high calibre to undertake a fixed period of targeted training in ophthalmology in College-approved postgraduate training posts in the UK, before returning to work in their own countries.
3. To ensure that good quality training is provided for these International Medical Graduates.
4. To foster links between postgraduate institutions in the UK and abroad.

Basis of the Dual Sponsorship Scheme

The International Medical Graduates' Training Sub-committee of the College can recommend to the General Medical Council that it grant International Medical Graduates full registration. The College sponsorship is for a specific period of training in a specified training post. This is arranged by a UK sponsor and the International Medical Graduate completing the Dual Sponsorship Scheme application and submitting it to the International Medical Graduates' Training Sub-committee, which, if satisfied with the application, can then recommend to the General Medical Council that the doctor be granted full registration with a licence to practice (see section 9 for details of the application process). In order to maintain acceptable quality assurance of the ability of the doctor, as well as to make certain that the system is not misused, there are strict criteria that need to be maintained by the College in accordance with its agreement with the General Medical Council.

Most training positions are offered as direct placements (refer to section 4).

The Royal College of Ophthalmologists does not have a list of UK sponsors or designated training posts to be offered through the Dual Sponsorship Scheme.

The Royal College of Ophthalmologists will not consider sponsorship unless an approved training post is available to the trainee in accordance with the Scheme criteria.

2. The Training of IMG Ophthalmologists

Under the Dual Sponsorship Scheme, sponsored training is offered for a minimum of six months up to a maximum of twelve months. This can be extended by a further year if a specific need is identified, but only in exceptional circumstances.

International medical graduates eligible for the Dual Sponsorship Scheme

- IMGs who qualified outside of the European Economic Area (EEA) and who do not benefit from the provisions relating to EEA nationality may qualify. The trainee's primary medical qualification must be accepted by the GMC for registration before the International Medical Graduates' Training Sub-committee will consider his/her application to the Dual Sponsorship Scheme.

International medical graduates not eligible for the Dual Sponsorship Scheme

- International Medical Graduates who have failed the Plab test.
- International Medical Graduates wishing to undertake additional training that has been suggested following evaluation of a GMC Certificate confirming Eligibility of Specialist Registration (CESR) application.
- International medical graduates who are EEA nationals **and** EEA qualified; should not apply to the Dual Sponsorship Scheme but should contact the GMC direct. International Medical Graduates who are either EEA nationals **or** EEA qualified (but not both) should contact the GMC.

Trainees who obtained their primary medical qualification (PMQ) from certain institutions will need to check the GMC website on whether their PMQ can be accepted: <https://www.gmc-uk.org/registration-and-licensing/join-the-register/before-you-apply/acceptable-overseas-qualifications>. Trainees with PMQ's from the list on the GMC website should contact the GMC directly for more information.

3. Routes onto the Dual Sponsorship Scheme

Please note that any applications through the below Routes must be compliant with the GMCs ruling (further details see page 9).

Route A

IMGs are recommended to The Royal College of Ophthalmologists by a consultant ophthalmologist in the UK (UK sponsor). The UK sponsor, must be a fully registered medical practitioner whose name is on the Specialist Register of the General Medical Council, a Fellow, Member or Affiliate Member of The Royal College of Ophthalmologists, and should hold an honorary or substantive position as a consultant ophthalmologist in the UK NHS. The UK sponsor must know the trainee's overseas sponsor personally (normally a senior consultant or academic ophthalmologist within the trainee's home department). The UK sponsor and the overseas sponsor must have met; they must not know each other simply through correspondence. The UK sponsor must conform to the description on page 10. Applications will be considered where the two sponsors have not met in person. However, they will need to show that there is a professional relationship and an intention to meet. Where sponsors have only met for the purposes of the scheme to introduce an applicant these applications will not be considered.

Route B

This enables a UK sponsor to arrange a training post in another training unit for the overseas applicant. The UK sponsor (**primary sponsor**) who is known to the overseas sponsor can personally recommend the trainee to another UK consultant (**secondary sponsor**) who is willing to offer a Royal College of Ophthalmologists' approved training post to the IMG, on the recommendations of the primary sponsor, and then proceed with the sponsorship formalities according to the regulations of the Scheme. The primary UK sponsor and the overseas sponsor must have met; they must not know each other simply through correspondence. Both UK sponsors must conform to the description on page 10. Applications will be considered where the two sponsors have not met in person outlined above.

Under this route the secondary sponsor takes on the roles and responsibilities of the UK sponsor in organising the application documentation, organising the training post and mentoring the trainee. The primary sponsor should provide documentary evidence of having met or the relationship with the overseas sponsor.

The primary sponsor can also arrange for a second placement of the trainee if necessary after the first six months in the training unit of a second secondary sponsor known to him/her who is willing to offer a suitable training post.

The College expects the primary sponsor to be kept fully informed of the progress of the trainee by the secondary sponsor(s).

AN IMG CAN ONLY UTILISE ONE OF THE ABOVE ROUTES FOR SPONSORSHIP UNDER THE DUAL SPONSORSHIP SCHEME.

Please refer to Appendix I for flow charts regarding the various routes offered through the Dual Sponsorship Scheme.

4. Training Posts

Training posts offered under the Scheme are usually substantive “fellowship” posts recognised by the Training Committee (see section below). Posts offered under the Dual Sponsorship Scheme need not necessarily be made following a competitive application process as direct placement is possible under the scheme. Quality assurance can be ensured by the overseas sponsors and by discussing the IMG’s curriculum vitae with colleagues in the UK unit. **LAS/ trust (SAS)/ posts or similar are not accepted under the Scheme.**

The post should be the first formal training post the IMG will undertake in the UK and should be a training post with the educational approval from the Postgraduate Dean and the training approval of The Royal College of Ophthalmologists.

Fellowship posts

The Royal College of Ophthalmologists no longer has permanently approved Fellowship posts, but if there is a specific need identified for subspecialty training, then prior approval from the Training Committee of The Royal College of Ophthalmologists needs to be obtained by submitting a Dual Sponsorship Scheme application which should include all the documents listed on pages 14 and 15 below.

Award of the CCT

No training position undertaken in the UK through the Dual Sponsorship Scheme may count towards the award of the CCT.

Direct Placement

This is a well-established way of offering training posts to IMGs and has been accepted by the General Medical Council, Department of Health, the Deaneries, and The Royal College of Ophthalmologists without having to select the candidate in open competition. This has been accepted on the basis that good quality assurance is maintained during the selection process. The personal acquaintance of the overseas sponsor and the UK sponsor underpins this assurance. In addition to which, the curriculum vitae of the trainee should be discussed with other trainers in the unit, the College Tutor and the Programme Director of the region to ensure that the applicant has a good working knowledge of the speciality and is able to hold the position offered.

Fellowship posts can also be offered as direct placements. If the training unit feels that an assessment of the candidate is necessary before offering the post, it should be carried out well before the application is initiated and should be by mutual arrangement with the prospective candidate and the trainers offering the post.

5. The International Medical Graduate/Applicant Requirements

1. All applicants must have been engaged in medical practice for three out of the last five years including the most recent twelve months. **It is therefore essential that the Dual Sponsorship Scheme application is processed and a Sponsorship Registration Certificate issued which will allow the doctor to apply for registration before they finish their current post overseas).** *Internships are not counted as part of the three years.*
 - i. **The doctor must be able to remain in clinical practice until the Dual Sponsorship Scheme application is processed and a Sponsorship Registration Certificate issued. This must be confirmed on the Dual Sponsorship Scheme application form.**
 - ii. **Clinical attachments/observerships are not counted as medical practice and should not be undertaken prior or during the application process.**
2. Have worked for the full 12 months preceding their application for registration with the GMC. No exceptions can be made to this.
3. Still be overseas when the application to the Scheme is being processed.
4. Hold a primary medical qualification, which is acceptable to the GMC for registration **(this evidence will only need to be supplied to the GMC)**
5. Be at least three years post qualification as a doctor, have undertaken a **minimum of two years acceptable postgraduate training in ophthalmology** and be capable of working at the level of a ST3 ophthalmologist on arrival in the UK.
6. Have a recent (*within two years of the application to the GMC*) pass with a minimum score of 7.0 in each section of the IELTS examination and an overall of 7.5, or the OET with a minimum of grade B in each of section, (speaking, listening, reading and writing.) **No exceptions will be granted.**
 - i. These tests can be taken under the auspices of the British Council in any one of the one hundred and eighty centres available in one hundred and ten countries. Please see page 16 for the website of the British Council.
 - ii. It is advised that the certificate date should be not more than eighteen months before an application is made to the College to allow for a buffer period before the application is made to the GMC.

Please note the following before applying;

- No other English language examination will be accepted. The International Medical Graduates' Training Sub-committee cannot accept verification from any third party about the doctor's standard of English in the event that he/she fails to reach the required scores in the IELTS or the OET.
- The International Medical Graduates' Training Sub-committee must be in receipt of the original IELTS or OET examination result sheet before it can consider the application.

- The GMC require that the IELTS or OET examination must have been taken no more than two years before registration is due to commence.
- The overseas referees and sponsor must be ophthalmologists who have supervised the applicant within a four-year period of the application.

During the period of sponsorship

- During the period of sponsorship the IMG must keep a log of surgical cases they have operated on. This needs to be numbers of procedures performed and assisted at rather than individual details. The College will require the number of cases of posterior capsule rupture and vitreous loss. This needs to be certified by the UK sponsor.
- At the end of the training post the College requires doctors to complete an IMG Report on the Dual Sponsorship Scheme. A template of the report will be sent to the doctor towards the end of their training post for completion. This should be completed within one month of completing the post.

6. The UK Sponsor (Primary or Secondary)

The UK sponsor(s), must be all of the following without exception:

1. A fully registered medical practitioner whose name is on the Specialist Register of the General Medical Council.
2. A Fellow, Member or Affiliate Member of The Royal College of Ophthalmologists,
3. A consultant ophthalmologist in a substantive NHS post in the UK (includes honorary posts).

The UK sponsor must:

- Be able to offer the IMG a College-approved training post in his/her hospital for a **minimum period of six months**.
- Provide details of their induction plan for the IMG, this should be geared towards an IMG rather than a home produced doctor.
- Assemble the application and submit all the requested documents to the College within six months of the initial application and in good time to permit processing of the application before the start of the training post
- The completed application must be received by the College not less than two months before the requested registration date to allow for processing by the International Medical Graduates' Training Sub-committee and the General Medical Council in good time.
- Ensure that the proposed start date of the post is within six months of the Dual Sponsorship Scheme application form (ODT01) being received by the College (this is the start of the application process).

Route A: The UK Sponsor must know the overseas sponsor as outlined in point 3 above and have confidence in the sponsor's assessment of the International Medical Graduate.

The primary sponsor is sharing the responsibility to gain PLAB exemption for the IMG. It is important that he/she knows the overseas sponsor well and hence believes the overseas training provided to the IMG is of an adequate standard to deserve exemption from PLAB.

The primary sponsor must:

ensure IMG has access to clinical and educational supervisor during the Fellowship.

The primary sponsor should:

- ensure IMG have access to study leave days and allowance comparable to other Fellows or trainees in the deanery.
- be willing to meet the IMG during the post if the IMG has any concerns about training or similar matters AND
- inform the Royal College if any concerns are raised about the IMG during the training period.

Route B: The primary sponsor must know the overseas sponsor as outlined in point 3 and be willing to accept the referral of the trainee and arrange a placement with a secondary UK sponsor. The secondary sponsor should be

- Willing to accept the recommendations of the primary sponsor and then complete the application to the Dual Sponsorship Scheme as stipulated in the application pack.
- Ensure that the relevant Postgraduate Dean has approved the placement by completion of the deanery approval form.
- Ensure that the relevant Programme Director and College Tutor have approved the placement (by completing the Programme Director approval form and College Tutor approval form). The College Tutor must agree that the fellowship will not detract from the training of other trainees in the unit.
- Provide the Chair of the International Medical Graduates' Training Sub-committee of the College with a report of the sponsored doctor's ability and progress after six months (mid-term report) in the post, or before if any concerns are identified. The mid-term report should include details of progress towards the objectives set in the job description.
- Provide the Chair of the International Medical Graduates' Training Sub-committee of the College with a report of the sponsored doctor's ability and progress after twelve months (end of term report). The end of term report should indicate whether the objectives set in the job description have been met.
- Be willing to act as a mentor to the sponsored doctor throughout the doctor's sponsored period.
- Ensure the applicant undergoes suitable appraisal during the sponsored post and that a copy is provided to the College.

Please note:

A relative of the applicant cannot act as UK sponsor.

During Sponsorship

During the period of sponsorship the College request doctors undergo a formal appraisal, a copy of which must be returned to the Chair of the IMG Training Sub-committee. It is the responsibility of the UK Sponsor to send a copy of the appraisal to the Chair of the IMG Training Sub-committee.

7. The Overseas Sponsor/Consultant

The overseas sponsor must be without exception:

1. A distinguished ophthalmologist of consultant standing with whom the IMG has worked for a period of not less than six months within the last four years, where the trainee has worked for at least six months within the last four years.

An ophthalmologist working in the UK cannot therefore act as an overseas sponsor.

The overseas sponsor must;

- Have personal knowledge of the candidate's work, character and suitability for training in the UK.
- Confirm the applicant is capable of working at the level of a ST3 ophthalmologist on arrival in the UK has the necessary skills, experience and knowledge obtain GMC registration.
- Select candidates on merit and training potential. To qualify for the Dual Sponsorship Scheme the candidate must be of exceptional ability and be deemed to be capable of working at least at the level of a third year trainee (ST3/junior Registrar level) on arrival in the UK. He/she should ratify the IMG's CV prior to submission (the IMG should include a surgical log of cases they have been involved in).
- Know the UK (primary if applicable) sponsor personally or as outlined in point 3 above.
- Confirm that the doctor intends to return to their home country after completion of his/her period of training in the UK and assist the trainee in obtaining a suitable post on his/her return.
- Have completed the form ODT03 as supplied by the College and aide the UK sponsor in providing evidence of the relationship between the UK sponsor and themselves.
- Send directly to the college the doctors most up to date CV and Surgical Log.
- Ensure that the overseas referees are appropriately selected by the IMG.

8. The Overseas Referees

The overseas referees must without exception;

1. Be an ophthalmologist with consultant status who have supervised the ophthalmic training of the applicant within a four-year period of the application.

Reference Forms

Please note that the International Medical Graduates' Training Sub-committee require to see three completed reference forms concerning the International Medical Graduate;

1. ODT03 completed by the overseas sponsor
2. ODT04 completed by overseas referee one
3. ODT05 completed by overseas referee two

The Education, Training and Events Department of the College will send the reference forms to the overseas sponsor and the two other referees respectively. These should be completed and returned **as soon as possible by the recipient of the email or a secretary.**

The IMG should not return these documents, but should encourage the referees to return the documents at their earliest convenience.

The International Medical Graduates' Training Sub-committee cannot consider the entire application until all three reference forms have been returned.

Please note before applying:

An overseas referee cannot act as an overseas sponsor. The Committee requires two referees in addition to the overseas sponsor.

Please ensure that the full hospital address of the referees is completed in the Dual Sponsorship Scheme application form (ODT01) to avoid delays in the application process.

9. The Dual Sponsorship Scheme Application Procedure

AT LEAST FOUR TO SIX MONTHS SHOULD BE ALLOWED FOR THE APPLICATION PROCESS TO BE COMPLETED.

Applications must be complete within the six months, if all documents are not received within six months of the initial application date the application is subject to being placed on hold or closed indefinitely.

It is the responsibility of the IMG and the UK Sponsor to ensure all documents from all relevant parties are returned within a timely manner.

The IMG is making two applications, one to The Royal College of Ophthalmologists (see section A below) and one to the GMC (see section B below).

The requirements for both the College and the GMC must be met and acceptance of information from the College does not guarantee GMC acceptance (and vice versa).

College sponsorship should be obtained before the IMG applies to the GMC to avoid confusion and possible delays.

A. The Royal College of Ophthalmologists

The IMG is requesting confirmation from the College to the GMC that he/she has the necessary medical knowledge, skills and experience to be granted full registration with the GMC. In this application the IMG must prove to the College that his/her clinical knowledge, skills and experience are suitable for GMC registration and that the post he/she wishes to undertake in the UK is an appropriate training post.

RCOphth application process and requirements

After having read this booklet the IMG should complete and return the Dual Sponsorship Scheme application form (ODT01) to IMG@rcophth.ac.uk

It is important that the IMG and the UK Sponsor sign and date the Dual Sponsorship Scheme application form (ODT01) to confirm that the booklet has been read.

When this has been received by the Education, Training and Events Department, the UK sponsor will be sent by email a checklist and documents for completion.

The IMG will be sent by email a checklist stating which documents they will need to submit. Full details of how to pay the relevant fees will be provided by the Dual Sponsorship Manager on receipt of the application. Please do not email payment details.

Incomplete applications will be charged half the price of the complete application.

A completed application to the College should contain the following:

1. Dual Sponsorship Application Form (ODT01).
2. UK Sponsor Application Form (ODT02) (Part A to be completed by the UK consultant and Part B to be completed by Medical Staffing of the UK Trust).
3. An academic IELTS results sheet with a score of 7.0 in each of the four sections and an overall score of 7.5 or original OET Certificate, with a grade B in all elements
4. A curriculum vitae of the applicant supplied by the overseas sponsor which **must** include in detail information on:
 - i. present appointment, previous postgraduate experience in ophthalmology and related subjects, qualifications, and ophthalmic surgical/laser experience (if relevant for the proposed fellowship), research interests, publications, meetings attended
 - ii. an outline of a future career plan with an undertaking to return to the country of origin at the completion of the training period in the UK.
 - iii. Exact full dates must be included for employment; any breaks in employment must be explained e.g. 01/11/2011 – 31/12/2012.
 - iv. An explanation of what clinical practice the IMG has been involved with in the most recent 12 months must be explained. **The GMC state that a doctor must have been engaged in *medical* practice for three out of the last five years including the most recent twelve months.**

It is therefore essential that the Dual Sponsorship Scheme application is processed and a Sponsorship Registration Certificate issued which will allow the doctor to apply for registration before they finish their current post overseas.

The doctor must be able to remain in clinical practice until the Dual Sponsorship Scheme application is processed and a Sponsorship Registration Certificate issued. This must be confirmed on the Dual Sponsorship Scheme application form.

5. A **surgical log** of cases they have been involved in within their curriculum vitae sent by the overseas sponsor.

Please note the CV and surgical log should be sent directly to the College from the Overseas sponsor. The College will request this once the application has been opened. The applicant can also send this directly to the college with the ODT01 form.

6. College reference form from Overseas Sponsor (ODT03).
7. College reference form from Referee 1 (ODT04).
8. College reference form from Referee 2 (ODT05).
9. Details of exchange of correspondence between sponsors relating to the sponsorship of the trainee.

For Route B: exchange of correspondence between the Primary and Secondary sponsor relating to the sponsorship of the trainee will be required. Correspondence should also indicate that the UK sponsor and overseas sponsor have met in person and know each other personally or outline the professional relationship if they have not met in person.

10. A detailed job description of the proposed training post and a timetable. The job

description must include a list of training objectives.

- i. Example 1: to significantly improve the trainee's ability to perform penetrating glaucoma surgery.
Example 2: An improvement in the IMG's ability to diagnose secondary glaucoma.

11. The supervisors must be clearly labelled against the clinical sessions.
12. Full details of how to pay the relevant fees will be provided by the Dual Sponsorship Manager on receipt of the application.
13. Completed approval forms from the College Tutor, Deanery and Programme Director. Educational approval of the Fellowship from the Postgraduate Dean is an essential pre-requisite before the post is accepted by the Training Committee of the College as it implies the post not only has the appropriate training content, but is also funded in keeping with UK employment regulations.

Once the application has been submitted for the committee for review:

When the College receives all the completed documentation, the application is sent to electronically to two members of the International Medical Graduates' Training Sub-committee for independent consideration. When a decision has been reached, the IMG and the UK sponsor will be notified together with the Postgraduate Dean, Medical Staffing and the overseas sponsor. Occasionally the panel will request some further information or seek clarification on some element of the application. The applicant will be contacted about this by the college.

If the International Medical Graduates' Training Sub-committee approves the application to the Dual Sponsorship Scheme, the Sponsorship Registration Certificate will be sent to the General Medical Council by the College.

Once the registration application is approved by the GMC they will notify the IMG who will be provided with a certificate confirming his/her registration.

If the application is unsuccessful, there is an appeals process (see section 11).

Applicants should initiate their application with the College at least 4-6 months in advance of the predicted start date of their training post. The College is not able to guarantee registration will have been granted in time for specified start dates as it cannot assess incomplete applications. Please note it is the onus of the applicant to ensure all parties involved are providing the documents to the College.

Please note the following before applying;

Applications received late are not given priority.

Applicants should contact their UK sponsor and not The Royal College of Ophthalmologists in the first instance for information on the progress of their application, as it is the responsibility of the UK sponsor to submit the application to the College in good time.

This table illustrates the documentation for which each person is responsible, this is the checklist sent out to all applicants upon the opening of an application.

GENERAL DETAILS	
Name of applicant	
Date Received/opened	
Route?	
Proposed post	
Place	
Date of post starting	
Sent to panel/Returned	
Sent to GMC	

UK Sponsor		
Document	Received	Comments
UK Sponsor Application Form (ODT02) Part A – UK Sponsor Part B – Medical Staffing	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Exchange of Letters between UK and Overseas Sponsors (Including details of how you have met)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
College Tutor approval form	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Programme Director approval form	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Deanery approval form	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Job Description	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Training Objectives	<input type="checkbox"/>	

<p>Example1: To significantly improve the trainee's ability to perform penetrating glaucoma surgery.</p> <p>Example 2: An improvement in the IMG's ability to diagnose secondary glaucoma</p>		
<p>Timetable</p> <p>The supervisors must be clearly labelled against the clinical sessions.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>Matrix</p> <p>(Timetable of the unit)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

IMG Applicant		
Document	Received	Comments
Dual Sponsorship Scheme Application form (ODT01)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Letter stating reasons for wishing to train in the UK	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Letter of intent after the completion of the DSS	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>IELTS Results Sheet</p> <p>(Please only scan and send this in or send in a certified copy.)</p>		
<p>Or</p> <p>OET (Occupational English Test)</p> <p>(Please only scan and send this in or send in a certified copy.)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • medicine version of the test • grade 'B' in each testing area (speaking, listening, reading and writing) • grades in the same test • candidate number • obtained the grades in most recent sitting of the test.

Overseas sponsor

Curriculum vitae (Are employment dates clear?) Please note this must be sent directly by the Overseas Sponsor	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Surgical Log Please note this must be sent directly by the Overseas Sponsor	<input type="checkbox"/>	

College		
Document	Received	Comments
Overseas sponsor reference form (ODT03)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Overseas referee (1) form (ODT04)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Overseas referee (2) form (ODT05)	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Payment			
Document		Received	Comments
Balance	£	<input type="checkbox"/>	

ACTION TAKEN AND COMMENTS

B. The GMC

The IMG is applying for full registration with the GMC as a graduate from a medical school in a country outside the UK and EEA who have been selected for sponsorship under an arrangement approved by the GMC.

An offer of College sponsorship provides the GMC with evidence of the doctor's medical knowledge, skills and experience. The GMC requires proof of sponsorship (Sponsorship Registration Certificate) which the College will only issue once it has assessed and approved a full sponsorship application. The GMC also requires additional documentary evidence that is requested for any IMG doctor applying for GMC registration and supplying alternative evidence of their medical knowledge, skills and experience.

The GMC application process and requirements

The IMG should make an online application for full registration via the GMC website.

In order to guide you to the correct on-line application form you will be asked a series of questions. Answering these questions correctly should bring you to a page with the following title:

'Registration as a doctor - graduates from medical schools in countries outside the UK and EEA who have been selected for sponsorship under an arrangement approved by the GMC.'

The GMC will then assess the information provided and email the applicant and the College requesting any further information it requires including photocopies of the documents required to complete the application.

10. Work Permit/Visa

Visa applications are not undertaken by the College.

It is the responsibility of the applicant and the relevant employing authority e.g. the hospital medical staffing department, to ensure that the applicant has obtained the relevant Work Permit/Visa if required. Details can be obtained from the UK Borders Agency.

It is essential that the employing authority can confirm to the Home Office that the remuneration for the trainee will be commensurate to the work undertaken.

The salary should reflect the number of sessions the sponsored trainee is contracted to undertake and any on call commitments.

Government Authorised Exchange Visa (Tier 5)

The Medical Training Initiative (MTI) scheme is designed to allow a small number of doctors to enter the UK from overseas for a maximum of 24 months so that they can benefit from training and development in NHS services before returning to their home countries. Primarily for the benefit of doctors from Department for International Development (DfID) priority countries or the Lower Income and Lower Middle Income (L&LMI) countries as defined by the World Bank², the scheme is run in accordance with a number of agreed principles. For more details and to find out if you are eligible for this type of visa on the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges ([AoMRC](#)) website as the process has been subject to change.

It has been reaffirmed by Department of Health, Health Education England and the AoMRC that the priority focus of the MTI is to provide training opportunities for doctors from DfID priority or LI&LMI countries and have therefore now stated that applicants from countries not considered DfID priority LI&LMI countries can have no guarantee or expectation of receiving a CoS. Please note The Royal College of Ophthalmologists will no longer be supporting applications for the Government Authorised Exchange Visa (Tier 5) route unless the IMG is from a country as per the list on the AoMRC website.

Please contact the Medical Training Initiative Programme Manager for more information (mti@aomrc.org.uk).

Skilled Worker or Health and Care Worker Visa (Tier 2)

Please check the eligibility for a Government Authorised Exchange Visa (Tier 5), if you are not eligible via this route, you can apply for a Skilled Worker or Health and Care Worker Visa (Tier 2) with the support of your Trust, the College will then support with a GMC application only.

11. Completion of Sponsored Training – IMG Report on the Dual Sponsorship Scheme

Once the IMG has completed his/her training post, he/she should provide a report concerning the training experience to the International Medical Graduates' Training Sub-committee. A template of the report will be sent by the College to the IMG before the end of their placement for completion. This should be completed within month of completing the post.

Log of surgical cases

During the period of sponsorship the IMG should keep a log of surgical cases they have operated on. This needs to be numbers of procedures performed and assisted at than individual details. The IMG should keep numbers of cases of posterior capsule rupture and vitreous loss they have operated on. The log should be submitted with the IMG report on the Dual Sponsorship Scheme and certified by the UK Sponsor.

UK sponsor role towards the end of placement

During the period of sponsorship the College requests doctors undergo a formal appraisal, a copy of which must be returned to the Chair of the IMG Training Sub-committee. It is the responsibility of the UK Sponsor to send a copy of the appraisal to the Chair of the IMG Training Sub-committee.

12. Extensions

Extensions can be made if the original post was less than 24 months. The maximum time for an IMG to participate in the Dual Sponsorship Scheme is 24 months, after which the IMG will need to return home to their country.

The extension application will need to be made to the Royal College in the first instance, once approval has been obtained an application will then need to be made to the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges. An extension application pack will need to be requested from the Education, Training and Events Department, img@rcophth.ac.uk. Please note, extension applications can take up to three months, therefore please leave ample time to make a complete application. Various documents will need to be provided, please see the checklist as per below with regard to all the documents that will need to be submitted. Please note there will be an additional fee for all extension applications.

13. Appeals Mechanism

IMGs whose application for sponsorship or renewal of sponsorship has been unsuccessful have the right of appeal. In the first instance the application is reviewed by the Chairman of the Training Committee and, if the matter cannot be resolved, a further appeal can be made to the President of The Royal College of Ophthalmologists.

14. Useful Information

All enquiries regarding ophthalmology training in the UK for overseas doctors should be addressed to:

Education, Training and Events Department
The Royal College of Ophthalmologists
18 Stephenson Way
London
NW1 2HD

Tel: 00 44 (0) 20 7935 0702

Fax: 00 44 (0) 20 7935 9838

Email: img@rcophth.ac.uk

College website address: www.rcophth.ac.uk

Enquiries about the examinations structure of the College should be addressed to:

The Examinations Assistant (at the above address.)

Tel: 00 44 (0) 20 7935 0702

Fax: 00 44 (0) 20 7383 5258

Email: exams@rcophth.ac.uk

Other useful contacts:

Academy of Medical Royal Colleges

<http://aomrc.org.uk/>

The British Council

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/>

British Medical Association

<http://www.bma.org.uk>

Immigration and Nationality Department

<http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/>

General Medical Council

<http://www.gmc-uk.org/>

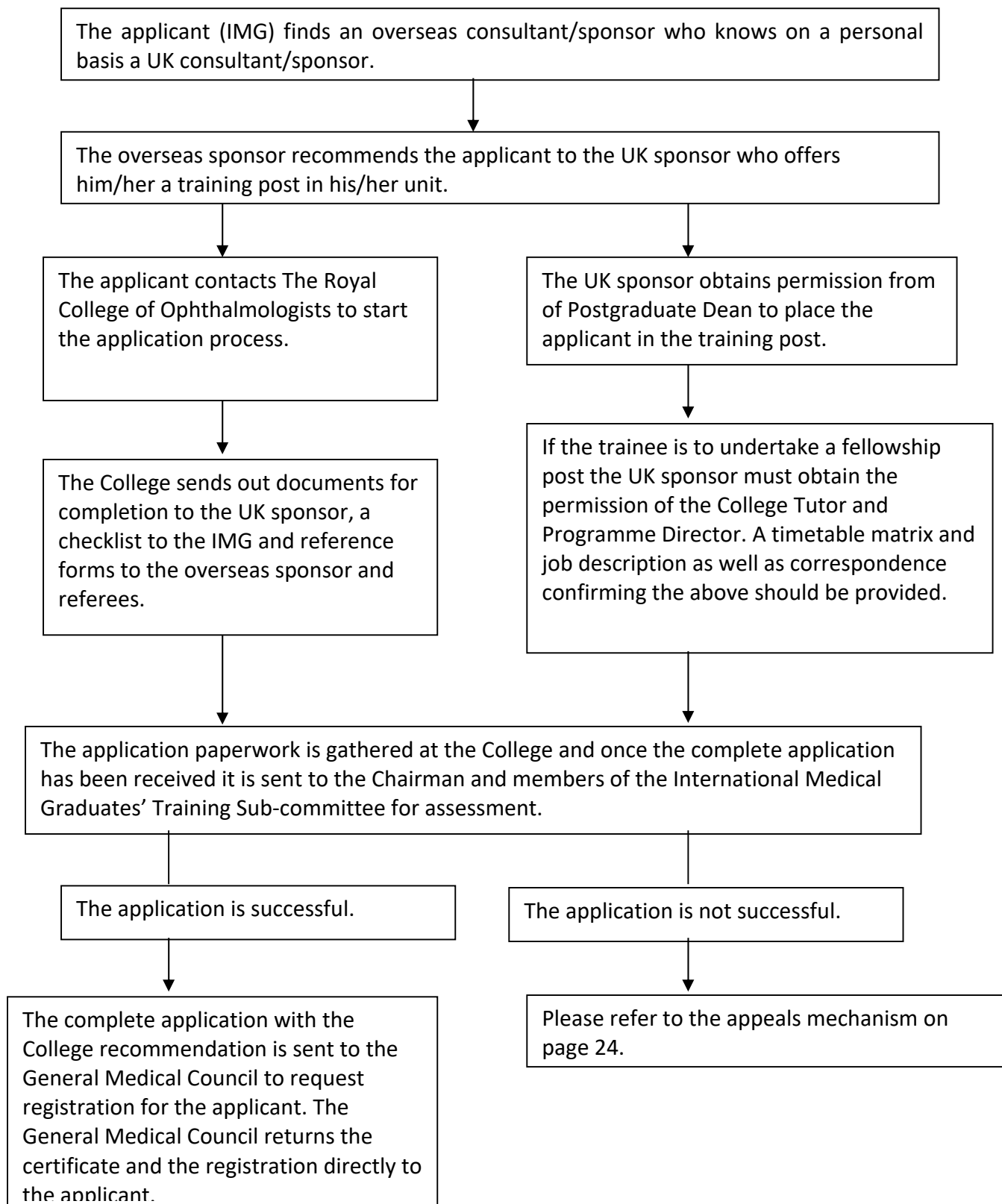
15. Glossary of terms

BMJ	British Medical Journal
BST	Basic Specialist Training
CCT	Certificate of Completion of Training
CESR	Certificate confirming Eligibility for Specialist Registration
DSS	Dual Sponsorship Scheme
EEA	European Economic Area
FRCOphth	Fellowship of The Royal College of Ophthalmologists
FTSTA	Fixed Term Specialty Training Appointment
GMC	General Medical Council
GP	General Practitioner
HES	Hospital Eye Service
HST	Higher Specialist Training
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
IMG	International Medical Graduate
LAS	Locum Appointment for Service
LAT	Locum Appointment Training
MCQ	Multiple Choice Question
MRCOphth	Membership of The Royal College of Ophthalmologists
MTI	Medical Training Initiative
NHS	National Health Service
OET	Occupational English Test
OMP	Ophthalmic Medical Practitioner
OST	Ophthalmic Specialist Training
PLAB	Professional Linguistics Assessment Board Examination
PRHO	Pre-registration House Officer
RITA	Record of In-Training Assessment
SATQ	Self-Assessment of Training Quality
StR	Specialty Registrar
ST	Specialty Training e.g. ST3 means Specialty Training Year 3
STC	Specialty Training Committee
TSC	Trainee Selected Component

Appendix I

The flow charts below briefly outline the process of an application for each of the routes onto the Dual Sponsorship Scheme.

ROUTE A



Please allow at least four to six months for the application process.

ROUTE B

The applicant (IMG) finds an overseas consultant/sponsor who knows on a personal basis a UK consultant/sponsor.

The overseas sponsor recommends the applicant to the UK sponsor (**primary UK sponsor**) who recommends the applicant to a colleague (**secondary UK sponsor**) who offers the applicant a training post in his/her unit. (Please note from hereon in this chart references to the UK sponsor mean secondary sponsor).

The applicant contacts the College to start the application process.

The UK sponsor obtains permission from Postgraduate Dean to place the applicant in the training post.

The College sends out documents for completion to the UK sponsor, a checklist to the IMG and reference forms to the overseas sponsor and referees.

If the trainee is to undertake a fellowship post the UK sponsor must also obtain the permission of the College Tutor and Programme Director. A timetable matrix and job description as well as correspondence confirming the above should be sent to the College.

The application paperwork is gathered at the College and once the complete application has been received it is sent to the Chairman and members of the International Medical Graduates' Training Sub-committee for assessment.

The application is successful.

The application is not successful.

The complete application with the College recommendation is sent to the General Medical Council to request registration for the applicant. The General Medical Council returns the certificate and the registration directly to the applicant.

Please refer to the appeals mechanism on page 16.

Please allow at least four to six months months for the application process.