

# International Paediatric Sponsorship Scheme (IPSS) - guidance for applicants

## [Recruitment & Careers team](#)

The IPSS facilitates GMC registration for eligible medical graduates from outside the UK, who also fall outside the priority nations list for the MTI(p) scheme. Applicants will need to be entering UK posts with a sufficient training/educational component and have organised a route the right to live and work in the UK. This is a step by step guide for applicants.

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## Table of contents

- [Who is IPSS for?](#)
- [What is IPSS?](#)
- [What kind of posts are suitable?](#)
- [Step 1 – Am I eligible?](#)
- [Step 2 – Applying for a post](#)
- [Step 3 – Application for IPSS sponsorship](#)
- [Step 4 – College review of completed application documents](#)
- [Step 5 – Acceptance letter and offer of sponsorship](#)
- [Step 6 – Applying to the GMC](#)
- [Contact](#)

## Who is IPSS for?

IPSS is a sponsorship scheme that can facilitate GMC registration for international medical graduates (IMGs) who do not fall under the eligibility criteria of the [Medical Training Initiative \(paediatrics\) scheme](#). These are doctors who are from nations [listed by the World Bank as Upper or Upper Middle income](#).

Applicants must hold a job offer for a suitable position and a route to have the right to live and work in the UK. Ordinarily this is a working visa offered by your new NHS employer.

The IPSS scheme cannot facilitate registration for those entering service roles. It also cannot

facilitate those wanting to work in private healthcare or those seeking entry onto the specialist (consultant) register (please see [our CESR information](#) instead).

## What is IPSS?

IPSS is a sponsorship agreement with the GMC (General Medical Council) to allow eligible overseas graduates to enter the specialist register and train in the UK, with the RCPCH acting as sponsor. Applicants must satisfy us, as a sponsor, that they possess the knowledge, skills and experience required for practicing as a fully registered medical practitioner in the UK.

Unlike the MTI(p) scheme, the RCPCH does not facilitate visas for IPSS applicants, and we must therefore see evidence that applicants will have the ability to live and work in the UK, as part of the application process.

## What kind of posts are suitable?

Posts are usually offered from ST3 through to ST8 equivalent, often referred to as 'middle' or 'senior' grade registrar positions.

The RCPCH requires that all doctors entering posts sponsored via the IPSS to have a dedicated educational supervisor and to have a training plan shortly drawn up, after beginning their NHS induction.

## Step 1 – Am I eligible?

1. You must ensure that you are from a non-MTI priority country, as described on our [MTI guidance for applicants page](#). If you are from an MTI priority country, you will need to apply through that scheme, which is set up to ensure the UK does not recruit doctors on a long-term basis from countries where their clinicians are of particularly great need.
2. You must secure a job offer for a post that has a strong training/educational component. The IPSS scheme cannot sponsor clinicians going into service roles, as the sponsorship pathway to registration is focused on training and development.
3. You must provide evidence of a means to enter, live and work in the UK. Usually this will be a Tier 2 visa offered by the employer; however, you may have other means. Please note the IPSS scheme, unlike the MTI scheme, cannot help facilitate you with a visa.
4. You must demonstrate necessary competence in the English language, as evidenced by one of the following. Please note results from both tests are valid for two years and the minimum scores must be attained in one sitting, and they must be obtained in your most recent sitting.
  1. Pass the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Academic examination, with a minimum score of 7.0 in each category and an overall score no less than 7.5
  2. Pass the Occupational English Test (OET) Medicine with a minimum grade of 'B' in each testing area.
5. You must hold a primary medical qualification accepted by the GMC. As part of your application this will need to be pre-verified by the Educational Commission for Foreign

Medical Graduates (ECFMG). This process is carried out by a third party, working on behalf of the GMC, and this process is not controlled by RCPCH.

6. You should have a three-year postgraduate qualification in paediatrics that is accepted by the RCPCH for sponsorship purposes. This can be found out by emailing us on [ipss@rcpch.ac.uk](mailto:ipss@rcpch.ac.uk). If your qualification is not present and familiar to us already, we can separately organise a review of your qualification to establish eligibility. Please note this does not establish equivalency between your qualification and MRCPCH.
7. You must have been in direct clinical practice for a minimum of 36 out of the last 60 months. Observerships and pure research positions do not count towards clinical practice as defined by the GMC.
8. You must have been in direct clinical practice for the whole of the last 12 months. Observerships and pure research positions do not count towards this. If you have any employment gaps beyond four weeks that fall outside of contracted leave, you should clarify with the IPSS team on your eligibility status.

## Step 2 – Applying for a post

Eligible candidates can apply for jobs on the [NHS Jobs website](#), or may find suitable positions by searching on the [BMJ Jobs board](#).

Posts must have a sufficient training or educational component. Usually these are advertised as clinical fellowships or Trust grade posts; however you should carefully look at the job description. If in doubt you can email our team on [ipss@rcpch.ac.uk](mailto:ipss@rcpch.ac.uk) to clarify. In some cases posts do have a training element but this needs to be highlighted clearly in the job description in order to be suitable for IPSS sponsorship.

Posts are checked for suitability of training, structure of induction process, appointment of an independent educational supervisor, appropriate salary levels, protected study leave and so on. Our IPSS guidance for Trusts webpage can provide more information on post requirements.

Often prospective IPSS applicants will have secured a post in advance and then turn to the RCPCH IPSS scheme to help facilitate sponsorship. This is perfectly acceptable but applicants must be aware that all of the above must be met, and that holding a job offer does not guarantee an offer of sponsorship via IPSS.

Once you hold a job offer and are ready to begin your application for sponsorship, please contact the team on [ipss@rcpch.ac.uk](mailto:ipss@rcpch.ac.uk) with the following information attached to a single email:

- An up-to-date copy of your CV, listing all of your qualifications and giving a detailed breakdown of your work history over the last five years, being careful to fully mention and explain any clinical gaps
- Contact details for the medical staffing/human resources team member at your new employing NHS Trust/Health Board. We will need to get in touch with them separately
- A job offer letter, if you have been provided with one

The RCPCH team will then check these documents and make sure that you are eligible for sponsorship. We may ask you some additional questions at this stage. Provided all is satisfactory, the RCPCH will then open an application for sponsorship.

Please note that the proposed start dates for posts should be at least 4 months in advance. Timely processing of the sponsorship application is dependent on prompt submission of candidate and employer paperwork.

### **Step 3 – Application for IPSS sponsorship**

You will next be issued an application pack to complete, together with guidance. Our team will support you in completing this. The application pack consists of important documents we must receive before we can progress to a final review and provide an offer of sponsorship.

These items should be submitted in the form of clear, scanned documents.

At the same time your employing NHS Trust or Health Board will be provided their own 'Trust pack' to complete. These will also need to be submitted to the College before a final review can take place.

This process can take up to two months as certain documents can be difficult to get hold of, depending on the local authorities and institutions. NHS Trusts may take longer to provide their side of the paperwork, but this is not uncommon and should not be cause for alarm. The RCPCH IPSS team will liaise with both parties during this process.

Please note: applications cannot be progressed until **all of the documents from both candidate and employer have been supplied to the College team.**

The IPSS scheme does not charge application fees; however doctors joining the scheme are expected to [enrol as Associate Members](#) as part of their application in order to receive RCPCH ePortfolio access.

### **Step 4 – College review of completed application documents**

The IPSS team will review all of the submitted, required paperwork.

If there are any issues the IPSS team will work with all stakeholders to make the necessary amendments and corrections, wherever possible.

The review process can take 10-15 working days although it is usually considerably shorter.

### **Step 5 – Acceptance letter and offer of sponsorship**

If the above review process is successful then you will be issued an acceptance letter from the RCPCH, offering you GMC sponsorship via the IPSS pathway.

This letter will contain instructions on how to begin your registration with the GMC (General

Medical Council).

## **Step 6 – Applying to the GMC**

It is only at this stage that you should begin an application to register with the GMC via their website, as you now hold an offer of sponsorship from an authorised sponsoring body (RCPCH).

Once you submit an application for registration as per our instructions, the GMC will request a certificate of sponsorship from the College, along with some other key documents. These will already be available to you in almost all cases as they form part of the RCPCH application pack you'll have already submitted.

The College will draw up the certificate of sponsorship and submit it directly to the GMC. You will not receive a copy of this document.

Provided your application is successful, the GMC will offer you provisional registration, and ask you to come in for an identity check. There is a three-month window during which you will need to attend your ID check, otherwise your application will expire and you will need to reapply to the GMC.

You will now be able to enter the UK, attend your identity check and enter the medical register, allowing you to begin work in your new role.

## **Contact**

For any queries, please contact the IPSSS team at the College on [ipss@rcpch.ac.uk](mailto:ipss@rcpch.ac.uk).