

Changes to physician training curricula: what it means for specialist registration applications

The curricula for physician training is changing to align with the [Excellence by Design](#) standards the General Medical Council (GMC) launched in 2017. The standards support greater flexibility in postgraduate training and require curricula for all medical specialities to be outcomes-based and more responsive to patient and service need.

We've answered your questions about what these changes are and what they mean for doctors applying for specialist registration via a Certificate of Eligibility for Specialist Registration (CESR).

Q. How are the curricula for physician training changing?

A. The new physicianly curricula are outcomes-based, meaning that trainees will be assessed against the fundamental capabilities required of consultants in the working week (Capabilities in Practice – CiPs). These include the general skills which all doctors need to have as well as those needed to carry out all the specific day to day tasks undertaken by a consultant physician.

Internal Medicine Training stage 1 now forms the first three years of post-foundation training. And, for the main specialties supporting acute medical care, an indicative 12 months of further Internal Medicine (stage 2) is being integrated flexibly with specialty training in a dual programme. These specialties are known as group 1. This model enhances training in internal medicine to prepare doctors for the challenge of managing acutely unwell medical patients, who may also have complex needs including chronic disease and comorbidities.

Q. When are the curricula changing?

A. We have produced new curricula for all of our specialties, and we are going through the process of curriculum approval with the GMC. All group 2 curricula have been approved and were implemented for training in August 2021. The timelines for publication of the group 1 curricula following approval are given on the website [here](#).

Q. Will I have to meet the requirements of the new curricula?

A. Due to the significant changes that are being made to the curriculum in some specialties, once a curriculum has been approved and published, you can make your CESR application in either the new curriculum or the previous version of the curriculum. This transition will continue for a period agreed on a specialty-by-specialty basis.

Giving you two curricula to choose from in your application gives you more flexibility, allowing you to submit an application against the curricula most appropriate for you.

If you have already started an application in [GMC Online](#), the GMC will get in contact with you to keep you updated on the progress of curriculum development in your specialty and how this will affect your application.

If you haven't started your application in GMC Online yet, it's really important that you keep checking your specialty curriculum for updates to make sure you provide sufficient and relevant evidence in your application for the curriculum under which you are applying. If you choose to apply under the new curriculum you will need to submit evidence for any updated competencies in the curriculum approved at the point you submit your application.

Q. How do I decide which curriculum to apply under?

A. This is your choice, but the GMC can discuss your options with you. You may want to consider the different requirements of both available curriculums, the [supporting specialty specific guidance](#), and your own unique body of evidence.

You can find more information about the key differences between each specialty's curricula on the [Specialty Specific Guidance webpages](#).

Q. How do I confirm which curriculum I'd like to apply against?

A. There is a specific section in your GMC Online application to indicate which curriculum you wish to apply against. You should then provide evidence in the specific sections for the curriculum you have chosen to apply against.

Q. How long will the curricula transition period last for?

A. The transition period begins when the new curriculum is approved and published, and the timetable of approval is unique to each specialty.

The transition period is recommended by the specialty's Speciality Advisory Committee, based on their expert professional opinion, taking account of the needs of that specialty and applicants. Visit [here](#) for more information.

Q. What happens when the transition period ends?

A. You need to submit your application and pay your GMC fee by the [published deadline](#) if you want to apply under the previous curriculum. If you miss this deadline, your application will be assessed against the current version of the curriculum and you will need to reorganise your evidence in GMC Online to reflect this.

Q. Do you expect the transition period to be extended?

A. We don't anticipate making any further extensions, we will post updates on the [CESR webpage](#) if this changes.

Q. Will individual requests be considered for extensions to the availability of previous curricula?

The GMC will not be able to accommodate individual requests for an extension of the transition period set out for each specialty. You need to submit your application and pay your fee by the [published deadline](#) if you want to apply under the previous curriculum.

If you miss this deadline, your application will be assessed against the current version of the curriculum and you will need to reorganise your evidence in GMC Online to reflect this.

Q. Why is a second CESR in another specialty being given to applicants who apply in particular specialties?

A. A key aspect of the new curricula for [group 1 physician specialties](#) is that the internal medicine learning outcomes are embedded in the curriculum to meet service needs. To complete the speciality, doctors need to demonstrate internal medicine capabilities to the level of unsupervised practice and will therefore be awarded an additional CESR.