



Medical Interview Preparation Highlights Coaching Shift as Training Post Rules Widen

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Applications for United Kingdom specialty training posts starting in 2027 open on 22 October 2026, and for the first time the priority rules created by the Medical Training (Prioritisation) Act 2026 will apply at the shortlisting stage as well as at the offer stage. NHS England has confirmed the change, which is expected to bring a larger share of prioritised applicants through to interview and place greater weight on how candidates perform on selection day.

Specialty training is the route by which doctors move from resident doctor roles towards consultant or general practitioner status, and posts are allocated through a national recruitment process run on the Oriel system. Round 1, covering most core and run-through programmes beginning in August 2027, opens at 10am on 22 October and closes at 4pm on 19 November 2026.

In the 2026 round, approximately 37,689 applications met the appointable standard for around 9,520 advertised posts. Once prioritisation was applied at the offer stage, the effective ratio among prioritised applicants fell to roughly two appointable applications for every post. The Department of Health and Social Care is expected to publish regulations in early autumn setting out which applicants will form the priority

group for 2027, defined by significant experience in the health service rather than by immigration status alone.

Post numbers are also changing. The agreement that ended the resident doctors dispute in June 2026 committed to up to 4,500 additional specialty training places over three years. More than 350 of those places have been released for February 2027 starts, exceeding the 250 originally committed for this year, with around 650 further places due to be advertised in Round 1 for August 2027 starts.

Dr Nalin Wickramasuriya, a retired consultant paediatrician and founder of Medical Interview Preparation, stated that the shortlisting reform changes the shape of the round rather than its difficulty. He added that when a larger and more evenly matched field reaches interview, the margin between an offer and a place on the reserve list narrows to how clearly a candidate reasons aloud, structures an answer and handles an unfamiliar scenario under time pressure, which places renewed focus on Medical Interview Coaching in the weeks before selection day.

Selection methods continue to vary considerably between specialties. Some programmes score a verified self-assessment before interview, others use the Multi-Specialty Recruitment Assessment for shortlisting, and several now assess portfolio evidence during the interview itself rather than through an application form. Core Surgical Training weights its portfolio station and its management and clinical station at 45 per cent each, with the assessment contributing the remaining 10 per cent.

Competition also differs sharply by specialty, and applicants may submit only a limited number of programme applications in Round 1. That constraint links the choice of specialty closely to interview performance, since a candidate who is shortlisted but not appointed has few remaining routes within the same cycle.

Medical Interview Preparation provides one-to-one consulting, group programmes and digital resources for doctors applying to specialty training posts in the United Kingdom. Founded by a retired consultant paediatrician, the company works with candidates through mock interviews, structured feedback and preparation guidance ahead of national recruitment rounds.

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Medical Interview Preparation

We coach doctors, mainly based in the UK, to improve their interview technique when aiming to progress their careers by getting into a specialist training program, or onto a fellowship or to obtain a consultant position in an NHS hospital.

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