

A guide to working in the UK

The NHS is the world's largest publicly funded health service, dealing with over one million patients every 36 hours. It employs more than 1.3 million people and annual expenditure is around £105 billion. The services the NHS provides are organised into primary care and secondary care.

Primary care is generally the first point of contact for patients, through general practice, general dentistry, pharmacy and other services, such as walk-in patient clinics and services and the NHS 111 telephone service.

Secondary care includes emergency treatment and planned elective specialist hospital care, usually following referral from one of the primary care services.

The NHS in England is organised locally by clinical commissioning groups (CCGs). The CCGs receive some 60 per cent of the NHS's funds. They are responsible for using these to purchase the primary and secondary care services for their local population.

Doctors in primary care usually work as general practitioners (GPs) and are employed by individual and independently-run practices, which have a contract with the local CCG for providing NHS care to patients. The terms of this contract, and payments to the practice, are set nationally. A proportion of the payment to the practice is based on the quality of the services provided. Sometimes doctors might be employed directly by a CCG or another organisation, which will have a contract for providing primary care and other services to patients. In secondary care, doctors are employed by hospitals providing acute, specialist or mental health and some community services to patients. There will be a wide range of career and training roles offered in these hospitals. The devolved administrations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland run their local NHS services separately.

I'd like to work in the UK

All doctors wishing to work in any capacity in the UK, whether in the NHS or elsewhere, must be registered and licenced to practise with the GMC. The licence needs to be revalidated periodically if the doctor wishes to continue to practise in the UK. Revalidation is based on regular evaluation of all practising doctors (using a structured annual appraisal) against agreed professional standards in the workplace. The GMC takes a decision, normally every five years, as to whether a doctor's licence to practise should be renewed.

There are two categories of registration to work as a doctor in the UK: provisional registration and full registration.

Provisional registration enables doctors to participate in and complete the first year of the

Foundation Programme (Foundation year one, or F1) only. The law does not allow provisionally registered doctors to undertake any other type of post.

In addition, for a doctor to work as a general practitioner (other than in a training capacity) or take an appointment to a substantive consultant post in the NHS they must be on the GP or specialist registers held by the GMC. On 25 June 2014 a change in the law gave the GMC new powers to check the English language skills of doctors in the UK. The GMC can direct any doctor working in the UK to undergo a language assessment, should a serious concern be raised about their ability to communicate effectively in English. In addition to this, the minimum score the GMC will accept in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) has increased. A score of at least 7.0 in each of the four areas tested (speaking, listening, reading and writing), and an overall score of at least 7.5 are required.



EEA GPs

To be able to work, EEA GPs will need to be able to evidence a level of training or certification equivalent to UK medical qualifications, be registered with the UK's General Medical Council and be able to communicate effectively in the English language.

Within the EEA there is mutual recognition of equivalent training and qualification and the right to free movement of workers between member states. Doctors who are citizens of another EEA country and have completed their basic medical training are therefore entitled to full registration with the GMC in the UK.

Doctors will need to apply and provide evidence of their nationality and qualifications. Their ability to communicate effectively in the English language will be checked by a prospective employer as part of the appointment process. They will also need evidence from their national professional licensing authority that their practice is not impaired or subject to any proceedings. Doctors may also apply to join the specialist or GP registers, provided they have the requisite equivalent training and qualifications.

GMC registration requirements – doctors from outside the EEA

For doctors outside the EEA, whether to apply for provisional or full registration, and GP or specialist registration, will depend on the nature and extent of a doctor's postgraduate experience.

Doctors can apply for full registration if they have a recognised medical degree and have satisfactorily completed either Foundation Year 1 in the UK, or a 12-month period of similar postgraduate clinical experience (for example, an overseas internship) that, in the GMC's view, provides an acceptable foundation for future practice as a fully registered medical practitioner. If they have not, they may only apply for provisional registration.

The GMC will require evidence to support applications for registration, demonstrating that the doctor:

- holds an acceptable primary medical qualification
- has the requisite knowledge and skills for registration
- is not impaired from practise
- has the necessary knowledge of English.

Doctors may demonstrate their medical knowledge and skills in one of the following ways:

- a sufficient score in the professional and linguistic assessments board (PLAB) test. This is an examination of language skills and medical competence in two parts. Part 1 can be taken overseas. Part 2 must be taken in the UK. Fees are payable for both parts
- sponsorship by a medical Royal College or other sponsoring body for specific further postgraduate training, where suitability has been determined by the sponsor who is approved for that purpose by the GMC
- an acceptable postgraduate qualification
- eligibility for entry in the specialist or GP registers.

An acceptable level of proficiency in the English language could be demonstrated by the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), administered by the British Council in several countries. For more information, refer to the British Council website.

Doctors applying for full registration must also submit evidence that they have satisfactorily completed either Foundation Year 1 in the UK or a period of postgraduate clinical experience that provides an acceptable foundation for future practice as a fully registered medical practitioner. Further details are available on the GMC website.

Permission to work

In addition to professional registration with the General Medical Council (GMC) or General Dental Council (GDC), any doctor or dentist wishing to work in the UK must satisfy immigration requirements and have permission to work. The immigration rules are set by the Home Office, and there are several routes under which doctors and dentists may qualify.

Doctors and dentists who are EEA nationals have the right to work in the UK, although nationals from Croatia may be subject to worker authorisation. This means that they are only able to work in the UK if they hold a valid accession worker authorisation document or if they are exempt from authorisation

GMC Application - doctors from EEA

Your application will be an online application. You have three months to submit your application from when you start it online.

Your next steps

- Set up an online account (unless you already hold provisional registration)
- Log in, complete your application and pay your fee
- Send copies of your supporting documentary evidence by post
- Visit one of GMC offices for an identity check

- Once you have completed your application online, but before you submit it, you will be asked to pay a fee for full registration with a licence to practise. You will not be able to submit your application without paying the fee. When you apply for registration with a licence, you will need to give details of a number of important documents to complete the three stages of the application process.

Stage 1: Recognising qualification

Stage 2: Licence to practise

GMC needs to be satisfied you have the necessary knowledge of English to communicate effectively before they give you a licence. This is so you do not put the patient's safety at risk. Communicating includes speaking, reading, writing and listening.

GMC may ask you to give evidence that you have the necessary knowledge of English.

Stage 3: Completing the registration process

You will need to bring the original versions of all your documents assessed to this point, including any English translations, to your identity check. GMC will send you an identity check invitation and tell you all the original documents we need to see.

Official translations

You must submit a complete and accurate translation of every document you provide that is not in English, along with the document in its original language.

Documents you must submit: proof of identity

You will be asked to provide details of your signed EEA or Swiss passport.

Alternatively, if you have a national identity card, you can use this as proof of your identity.

Your national identity card must include a photograph and clearly state your nationality. If you are not an EEA or Swiss national you must submit evidence of your EC rights.

All identity documents must be valid and up-to-date.

As part of the application process you must submit evidence of your qualifications.

If you are eligible for direct entry onto the GP Register, you **should make your application for this at the same time as your application for full registration with a licence to practise.**

Applying for GP registration

If you are an EEA national and have been awarded a GP qualification in an EEA member state please see the EEA qualifications section on GMC page to see what evidence you are required to submit.

(http://www.gmc-uk.org/doctors/registration_applications/evidence_of_qualifications.asp)

If the title of your GP qualification does not appear in Annex V (5.1.4) of the Directive 2005/36/EC you may be eligible to apply for an entry onto the GP Register with a Certificate of Eligibility for

You will need to hold full registration with a licence to practise before you make your application for entry onto the GP Register.

You will be asked to provide details of each medical regulatory authority that you have been registered or licensed with in the last five years, even if you have not practised in that jurisdiction.

You will need to submit a Certificate of Good Standing (CGS) from each of the medical regulatory authorities that you have listed.

The CGS must confirm that

- you are/were entitled to practise medicine in the appropriate country AND
- you were not disqualified, suspended or prohibited from practising medicine AND
- the regulatory authority is not aware of any matters that call into question your good standing.

CGS are only valid for three months from the date that they are issued and must be valid on the date that the application is approved.

When completing your application, you will be asked to provide details of all of your work experience from the last five years both medical and non-medical. You must account for all periods in the last five years when you were not engaged in medical practice including:

- alternative employment
- clinical attachments
- vacation
- study leave
- maternity leave
- career breaks
- unemployment

Documents you must submit: employer references

If there are any periods during the last five years in which you have not been registered or licensed with a medical regulatory authority, but have been working in either a medical or non-medical capacity, you must provide a reference from each employer.

Each letter must be on letter-headed paper and signed and dated by a person in authority. (If possible, this person should be your direct line manager or a member of human resources.) The signatory must state their position in the organisation.

Alternatively, you can ask each employer to complete an employer reference form.

Each letter or form must confirm:

- The dates of your employment
- That they are not aware of any matters that call into question your good standing.

If you were working in a medical capacity, the letter or form must also confirm that you are or were not required to hold registration or a licence with a medical regulatory authority to undertake the post.

Please note that reference letters and forms are only valid for three months from the date they are signed.

You will be asked to complete a set of questions regarding your fitness to practise. Depending on your answers to these questions, you may need to provide more evidence to support your application.

When you have submitted your details on GMC Online, your application will be assessed. Once your qualification has been recognised, GMC will then email you to invite you to book an identity check at London or Manchester offices. When you attend, they will take your photograph and inspect the original documents that you provide in support of your application.

You will need to attend this identity check within three months of your application being approved. If you do not, GMC will not be able to grant your registration with a licence to practise. Before taking up any employment you must ensure that you are registered with a licence to practise and that your registration with a licence to practise is appropriate for the type of post or practice that you will be undertaking. You can check your entry on the Register and the date from which it is effective on the List of Registered Medical Practitioners.

Knowledge of English – European doctors

When you apply for registration with a licence to practise (or if you have ever held registration and you are applying for your first licence), GMC needs to be satisfied you have the necessary knowledge of English to communicate effectively before they grant your licence. This is so you do not put the safety of patients at risk. Communicating includes speaking, reading, writing and listening.

Summary of types of evidence of knowledge of English

There are different ways in which doctors may be able to demonstrate their knowledge of English. GMC will consider evidence of knowledge of English only if it:

1. is recent (less than two years old at the point of application)
2. clearly shows you can read, write and interact with patients, relatives and healthcare professionals in English
3. can be verified through contact with recognised medical institutions, regulators or other official bodies:

GMC routinely accepts:

- A valid IELTS certificate that meets their criteria

OR

- An original letter or certificate from the institution where you qualified that confirms:
 - All of the course, including clinical activities, were taught and examined solely in English, and
 - At least 75% of any clinical interaction, including personal contact with patients, their families and other healthcare professionals, which took place as part of the course of study, was conducted in English, and
 - The date you passed your final examination.

If your PMQ is more than two years old at the point of application GMC will also need:

- Original references from all your employers over the last two years, outlining your

English language capability in a country where English is the first and native language.

OR

- Other evidence

The quickest way to get your licence is to take the IELTS test and meet our minimum scores. Please consider taking IELTS if you need your registration and licence quickly.

International English Language Testing System (IELTS) requirement guidance

This page sets out the criteria that your IELTS certificate must meet to satisfy GMC that you have the necessary knowledge of English.

To accept your IELTS certificate it must show:

- that you got a score of at least 7.0 in each testing area (speaking, listening, reading and writing), and an overall score of 7.5.
- that you got these scores in the same test
- that you took the academic version of the test
- the original stamp and test report form (TRF) number (we use this to validate all certificates)

How long is it valid for?

IELTS certificates are valid for two years.

GMC registration for Polish GPs

Medical regulatory authority in Poland:

Naczelna Izba Lekarska
Ul Jana Sobieskiego 110
00-764 Warsaw
Poland
Tel: +48 22 851 5115
Fax: +48 22 851 7136
Email: sekretariat@hipokrates.org

Please note that you should in the first instance contact your local regional medical chamber rather than the Naczelna Izba Lekarska (supreme medical chamber).

Full registration with a licence to practise

If you have previously held provisional registration you will need to send to GMC: A certificate confirming you have successfully passed the National Medical Exam (Lekarski Egzamin Końcowy).

OR

If you have previously held provisional registration and completed your internship in the UK you will need to send to GMC: A Certificate of Experience form completed by your designated signatory. GMC will send you a blank Certificate of Experience that you will need to pass to your designated signatory to complete.

If you have not previously held provisional registration, the documents you will need to send to GMC depend on the date you began your basic medical training. Please see the table below.

Important dates	Documents required	Documents must be issued by
You began your basic medical training on 1 May 2004 or later	<p>A Dyplom ukończenia studiów wyższych na kierunku lekarskim z tytułem "Lekarza" (higher education medical diploma with the title "Lekarza")</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Your certificate confirming you have successfully passed the National Medical Exam (Lekarski Egzamin Końcowy). If you completed your basic medical training before 1 May 2004 you may not hold this certificate.</p>	<p>Polish university</p> <p>Centrum Egzaminów Medycznych</p>
You began your basic medical training before 1 May 2004	<p>Both of the above certificates. If you do not hold a certificate confirming you have successfully passed the National Medical Exam (Lekarski Egzamin Końcowy), the document from the regional medical chamber must also confirm that your practical training meets the standards detailed in Article 24 of Directive 2005/36/EC.</p> <p>AND EITHER</p> <p>A document confirming that the training leading to the award of your primary medical qualification meets the standards detailed in Article 24 of Directive 2005/36/EC</p> <p>OR</p> <p>A document confirming that you have effectively and lawfully been engaged in actual medical practice for at least three consecutive years during the five years preceding the award of the certificate as detailed in Article 23.1 of Directive 2005/36/EC</p>	<p>Polish university</p> <p>The regional medical chamber with which you are registered</p> <p>The regional medical chamber, or the competent authority of the EEA Member State or Switzerland where you are now working</p>
<p>If the title of your Polish degree is not as described as above you will also need to send to GMC a document from the regional medical chamber with which you are registered which confirms that this qualification is treated by Poland as equivalent to the Dyplom ukończenia studiów wyższych na kierunku lekarskim z tytułem "Lekarza" as detailed in Article 23.6 of Directive 2005/36/EC.</p>		

Applying for entry onto the GP Register

To be entered onto the GP Register you must hold full registration.

Direct entry

If you are eligible for direct entry onto the GP Register, as set out below, and you do not already hold full registration, you should apply for full registration with a licence to practise and entry onto the GP Register at the same time.

The documents you will need to send to GMC for entry onto the GP Register depend on the date on which you started your GP training:

Important dates	Documents required	Documents must be issued by
You began your basic medical training on 1 May 2004 or later	A Dyplom uzyskania tytułu specjalisty w dziedzinie medycyny rodzinnej (specialist in family medicine)	Centrum Egzaminów Medycznych
You began your basic medical training before 1 May 2004	<p>A Dyplom uzyskania tytułu specjalisty w dziedzinie medycyny rodzinnej (specialist in family medicine)</p> <p>AND EITHER</p> <p>A document confirming that the training leading to the award of your GP certificate meets the standards detailed in Article 28 of Directive 2005/36/EC.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>If you are eligible for entry onto the GP register, on the basis of acquired rights specific to general practitioners, you will need to send to us:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A certificate of acquired rights for general medical practice. The certificate must state that it was awarded to you in accordance with Article 30(1) of Directive 2005/36/EC. 	<p>Centrum Egzaminów Medycznych</p> <p>Polish Medical Chamber</p> <p>Polish Medical Chamber</p>

Performers list

Medical performers wishing to provide medical services in primary care within the NHS must be included in the national medical performers list.

There are three national lists for Medical, Dental and Ophthalmic performers. The lists provide an extra layer of reassurance for the public that GPs, Dentists and Opticians practising in the NHS are suitably qualified, have up to date training, have appropriate English language skills and have passed other relevant checks such as with the Disclosure and Barring Service and the NHS Litigation Authority.

To apply for entry onto a performers list, you need to complete the application form. The document is provided in PDF format, which needs to be printed off and then completed. The same form is used for all three performers' lists.

NHS England is responsible for managing entry to performers lists. This work is managed by the Area Team of NHS England.

To find out which Area Team you need to apply to, please use the 'look up' function on NHS England national performers lists website for clarity of which area team to apply to. This is available at: <http://www.performer.england.nhs.uk/AT/SearchByPostcode>.

This will give you the contact details for the person or team managing performers lists in your area. Please contact your Area Team for detailed instructions on where to send your application. Do not send any documentation without first checking the procedure with your Area Team. Enquiries about performers lists should be directed to the contact given for your Area Team in the first instance.

Search for Area Team - example

Country: <input type="text" value="United Kingdom"/>	Postcode: <input type="text" value="EX2 7QE"/>	<div>A postcode is not required for Ireland or other non UK countries.</div>
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Area Team

- Code: Q66
- Name: Devon, Cornwall and Isles Of Scilly Area Team

Contacts

- Type: GP
- Name: Performer List Team
- Telephone: 0300 421 1215
- Email: SBS-I.ContractsSW@nhs.net
- Address: NHS Shared Business Services, Sanger House, 5220 Valiant Court, Gloucester Business Park, Brockworth, Gloucester, GL3 4FE

The area team to which the performer should be aligned may differ depending on their place of work or their place of residence.

Performers who work at more than one practice should apply and be assigned to the area team where they are based for the majority of their time.

In the case of performers who have not yet secured a place of work, the area team to which they are assigned will be determined by their UK home address as recorded by the General Medical Council (GMC). However it is possible that the performer may have provided the GMC with their home address in their country of origin when they first registered. In this case the applicant should be advised to notify the GMC to amend their records to reflect the UK home address.

Applicants must make an appointment with the PCS office to submit their supporting documentation in person in respect of their application for inclusion in the medical performers list.

All applicants must submit the following:

1. An electronically completed application form (hand written application forms will no longer be accepted). The application should have already been received by the PCS office, however the applicant should have a copy with them when they attend the appointment.
2. An enhanced disclosure and barring certificate.
3. An occupational health clearance certificate from an NHS occupational health provider or from a Safe Effective Quality Occupational Health Service (SEQOHS) accredited occupational health provider.
4. Current passport (original) or (where the applicant does not have a passport) an acceptable photo ID (original) as defined on the Disclosure and Barring Service website.
5. Curriculum vitae.
6. Copy of most recent appraisal – where available.
7. Evidence of membership of a professional defence organisation, at appropriate level.

Applicants from outside the UK must also include with their application the following documents:

1. A certificate of good standing from their relevant professional body.

2. Work permit (non EEA applicants to UK after 1985 only).

Applicants who cannot provide UK residency details for last five years must also include with their application:

1. A police check to identify any criminal activity the applicant has been involved in while outside of the UK – this is required for all countries the applicant has been resident in their absence from the UK.

Documents demonstrating communication skills: applicants who have studied or trained in the UK or Irish Republic must provide a certificate of graduation or postgraduate training from a UK or Irish Republic medical school;

If applicants have not studied or trained in the UK or Irish Republic, they must provide one of:

A certificate indicating a pass obtained within the last two years of one of the current accepted language tests (or equivalent), at the required level of IELTS 7.5 or equivalent as defined by the regulator.

Previously, a certificate issued by the Criminal Records Bureau was a requirement. This certificate is no longer acceptable as it has been superseded by an enhanced disclosure and barring certificate issued by the DBS.

Details can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/dbs-update-service>.

The disclosure and barring update service applicant guide, dated January 2014 states that subscription to the online update service is not a requirement of the DBS but some organisations may make subscription a condition of employment.

NHS England has placed this requirement on all applications to the performers list.

In addition it is a requirement that applicants must register for the online update service within 14 days of the certificate being issued. This subscription to the DBS online update service must be renewed every year and is at the cost of the applicant. Verbal or written consent must be obtained from the applicant for NHS England to undertake status checks on the DBS certificate.

Police check and certificate of good standing

The police check to identify any criminal activity the applicant has been involved in while outside of the UK should be obtained by the applicant by contacting the Home Office or Embassy (guidance is available on the DBS website).

The certificate of good standing should be obtained by the applicant by contacting their registered professional body.

Where a police check or certificate of good standing is required, this should be supplied in English and if not in English, the applicant must provide a translation that has been issued in the UK and signed by an official translator.

All documents must be originals. However as some defence organisations now only issue

electronic certificates, applicants may present their printed certificate as evidence of membership.

Photocopies cannot be accepted. A certified translation must be provided if the original documents are in a language other than English.

Please note: It is the responsibility of the applicant to obtain all information required for the application.

And finally after all that effort you can enjoy working in the UK!