



Improving Selection to the Foundation Programme - Development timeline -

2005 – Foundation Programme introduced

The *Modernising Medical Careers* (MMC) Programme Board, on behalf of the four UK health departments, introduces the [UK Foundation Programme](#), a national online application open to UK and non-UK medical school undergraduates. Applicants are awarded a score reflecting their academic performance (40%) and answers to white-space questions mapped against the Foundation Programme person specification (60%). Eligible applicants are allocated to a Foundation School based on their preferences and their application score.

June 2008 – Next Stage review published

The Department of Health publishes its '[Next Stage](#)' review, which states that 'new work needs to be undertaken to develop more reliable and valid selection tools for recruitment to Foundation Programme Training'.

January to September 2009 – ISFP Option Appraisal

The Department of Health commissions the Medical Schools Council to lead a Steering Group (later [Project Group](#)) to complete an Option Appraisal to evaluate the existing selection methods and alternative methods of selection. The process consists of three [academic literature reviews](#) to examine the international best practice for high stakes selection, extensive stakeholder consultation, the advice of an International Panel of Experts, an independent [Cost Benefit Analysis](#) to assess quantifiable economic costs and non-quantifiable benefits, and an online validation questionnaire to seek stakeholders' views on medical selection.

The Department of Health accepts the recommendations of the ISFP Steering Group to pilot and further evaluate the use of a Situational Judgement Test as a measure of aptitude for employment, together with an Educational Performance Measure, to reflect the integrated nature of the Foundation Programme as employment and continued education and training.

Read more on the [Option Appraisal](#) page.

September to December 2009 – EPM consultation

There are two in-depth consultations with all 30 UK medical schools to identify and evaluate the current methods of calculating quartiles, and the range of assessments used by the different medical schools.

Read more in the [Final Report of the EPM Pilot](#).

January to April 2010 – Design specification of the SJT and Job Analysis

A literature review, together with a series of student micropilot reviews and a job analysis, is undertaken to inform the initial design specification of the SJT. This in turn is used to plan the item writing process, the format and structure of the FY1 SJT and the target domains (commitment to



professionalism, coping with pressure, effective communication, working effectively as part of a team and patient focus).

Read more in the [Report of the Job Analysis and SJT Design Specification](#).

May 2010 onwards – Programme of SJT item development initiated

A continuous programme of SJT item writing, development, review and analysis begins. Two methods of item-writing are used; item-writing workshops, with clinicians trained in the principles of item-writing; and items written by psychologists with scenarios created through telephone interviews with clinicians. All items are subject to a rigorous process of review and refinement before piloting.

Read more in the [Final Report](#).

May 2010 – Pilot of a draft EPM framework

Twenty five UK schools take part in a pilot of a draft EPM framework, instructed by the two consultations in Autumn 2009. Students are given two scores, one for written and one for practical performance. The results of the pilot demonstrate the importance of a nationally agreed framework, and the clear need for greater granularity leads to the implementation of ranking by deciles, rather than quartiles.

Read more on the [EPM Pilot](#) page and in the [Report of the EPM Pilot](#).

September 2010 – EPM Task and Finish Group established

The Task and Finish Group is convened to recommend criteria for a standardised EPM framework in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders. The Task and Finish Group makes recommendations to the UKFPO Rules Group regarding additional degrees, presentations, prizes and publications, and guidelines surrounding extra-curricular activities.

Read more in the [Final Report of the Task and Finish Group](#) and on the [Task and Finish Group](#) page.

October 2010 to April 2011 – Large scale SJT pilots

SJT pilots took place at 17 UK and two non-UK medical schools involving over 1,000 students. Final year medical students took a two hour invigilated SJT, answering 60 questions. Analysis of the results confirmed that the SJT is a reliable, valid and fair method of selection into the Foundation Programme.

Read more in the [Evaluation of the SJT Pilots](#).

May 2011 – ISFP Project Group and Medical Schools Council agree EPM framework

The EPM framework is agreed by students, employers and all medical schools following consultation, piloting and the advice of the Task and Finish Group.

August 2011 – Final Report of 2010-11 pilots published by ISFP Project Group

The final report evaluated the design, development, and extensive pilots of the SJT and EPM.



The Department of Health accepts the recommendations of the ISFP Project Group that selection to the Foundation Programme from 2013 onwards should be based upon an invigilated SJT to replace 'white space' questions and an EPM to replace quartiles and additional academic achievements.

Read more in the [Final Report of the Pilots](#).

August 2011 – Parallel Recruitment Exercise initiated

Work is initiated to deliver a full-scale shadow Parallel Recruitment Exercise (PRE) SJT and EPM run concurrently with the current application process for FP2012, to ensure that the logistics are in place ahead of implementation for selection to FP 2013.

Read more in the [Final Report](#) and on the [PRE page](#).

October 2011 – PRE Teams briefed

Academic, SJT and EPM leads from every medical school attended a workshop in London to learn about the PRE, SJT and EPM, to contribute to the development process and to ask questions during round-table discussions and Q&A sessions.

PRE Teams provided with slideset to present to final year medical students in order to explain the rationale for the changes and ask them to take part in the PRE SJT.

The UKFPO Medical Students Board agrees to act as 'Student Champions' for the PRE.

November 2011 – January 2012 – Parallel Recruitment Exercise SJT

Over 90 percent of applicants to FP 2012 take part in a one hour, 30 item SJT pilots on national dates. Medical schools delivered the SJT locally according to agreed national standards.

Read more in the [PRE Report](#) and on the [SJT page](#).

January 2012 – Conclusion of medical school consultations on EPM deciles

Medical schools consult with students and staff about the "basket of assessments" to be used to calculate deciles in order to align their methods with the principles of the EPM framework.

May 2012 – Final Report of Parallel Recruitment Exercise published, Conclusion of ISFP Project

The Final Report of the PRE summarises the successful completion of the Parallel Recruitment Exercise, with over 90 percent of applicants to FP 2012 sitting an invigilated SJT. Additionally, academic performance of all UK applicants is ranked into deciles under new EPM framework. The logistics of SJT are tested successfully ahead of live implementation for FP 2013, new SJT content is piloted and awareness raised amongst potential applicants and other stakeholders.

Read more in the [PRE Report](#).

In line with previous research and piloting, results of PRE confirm that the SJT in combination with EPM is a valid, reliable, robust and cost-effective measure for selection to the Foundation Programme.