

# Interview guidance for applicants to the Higher Specialist Scientist Programme (HSST)

## Contents

Interview venues .....	3
Arrival and timing .....	3
Document check .....	4
Standards .....	4
Interview stations .....	4
Operational aspects .....	5
Scoring .....	6

We are committed to delivering interviews to a high and professional standard. All interviews are designed to be fair, equitable and transparent and all processes will be applied consistently. This document explains what you can expect from your interview experience.

## Interview venues

We try to ensure a quiet environment for interviews. However, there will be a certain amount of low-level noise during the interviews.

If you need any reasonable adjustments under disability legislation, please email [hcsapplicant@hee.nhs.uk](mailto:hcsapplicant@hee.nhs.uk) at least 10 working days before your interview. We can only make adjustments if you have notified us in your application form that you have specific requirements.

If you have any issues on the day because of the venue, please speak to the on-duty senior manager from the School.

## Arrival and timing

You will need to arrive a minimum of 30 minutes before your interview time, to allow enough time for your briefing and document check. When arranging your travel, please make sure you consider any possible delays. You should expect to be at the venue for up to two hours.

We may ask you to move to a different interview time if a slot becomes vacant. However, you are not obliged to accept this request. If you arrive late for your interview, we may not be able to offer you a later slot and you may have to forfeit your interview. Telephone us on **0121 695 2529** if you are running late for your interview.

If you cannot attend your interview, please email us at [hcsapplicants@hee.nhs.uk](mailto:hcsapplicants@hee.nhs.uk) no later than three days before your interview.

If you have any issues on the day about the timing of your interview, please speak to a member of our staff.

## Document check

Upon arrival at the venue we will check your documents, including your identification and right to work documentation. You must bring the **original of each** of the following documents

- Passport
- Second form of photographic identification such as a driving licence, student ID or NHS staff ID
- Visa/Home Office documents if non-UK/EU/EEA
- International English Language Testing System (IELTS) examination certificate or alternative evidence of English language proficiency if applicable (contact us if you require further information regarding this)
- UK NARIC equivalence if you are relying on non-UK qualifications.  
(<https://www.naric.org.uk/naric/>)

The document check normally takes place before the interview. However, it may be deferred until after your interview if you arrive late or if you have agreed to move up the interview timetable.

You will be given a name badge to wear during your interviews. Please make sure it is visible throughout the interviews.

## Standards

All interview panel members are briefed on the interview process, and specifically on the importance of consistent scoring. The panel members may probe and challenge your answers and statements if they feel they need further information. However, they may also conclude the interview early, if they feel they have obtained enough information to assess you. Neither the questioning nor the early finish should give you cause for concern; both are consistent with the expected process for interviews.

## Interview stations

The interview will consist of three interview stations, each 20 minutes long. These interviews are designed to explore your knowledge, suitability and skills. You will start at any of the stations and then rotate to each station until all three have been completed.

The stations will include

Station	Area covered
1	<b>Scientific and Clinical service station</b> focusing on the specific HSST curriculum you have applied
2	<b>Research and Innovation station</b> designed to assess scientific, policy or educational research. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You will deliver a pre-prepared 10-minute PowerPoint presentation, which is followed by a 10-minute question and answer session.</li><li>• You will be told the presentation topic by email when you are invited to interview and given a deadline for submission.</li><li>• You must email your presentation to <a href="mailto:hcsapplicants@hee.nhs.uk">hcsapplicants@hee.nhs.uk</a></li><li>• Please bring with you a copy of your presentation on a memory stick, together with three paper copies in case there are any IT issues. No changes can be accepted to presentations after the deadline.</li><li>• Versions 2003, 2007 and 2010 of PowerPoint are supported.</li></ul>
3	<b>Leadership and Management aligned to Good Scientific Practice</b> This station focuses on patient centred care and safety, leadership, professionalism, innovation, teaching and learning, quality improvement, and research methods.

### Operational aspects

The interviews are structured in streams, each consisting of three stations. Each station usually has two interviewers. Generally, three applicants are interviewed in each stream, with one applicant per station at any one time.

You will be shown to your first interview station. A knock on the door will tell you when the 20 minutes is up. If you finish before the end of the 20 minutes you may leave the station. You will have a two-minute break between each of the stations. At the end of the break you will move to the next station in the sequence, someone will guide you if you are not sure where to go.

## Scoring

Each station will usually have two interviewers. However, due to unforeseen circumstances we may on occasion only have one interviewer at a station. You will receive two scores per station; a total station score and communication skills score. Each interviewer will score you independently using a scale of 1 - 5. As a result, scores awarded by interviewers on the same station may vary.

If an interviewer gives you a score of 1 or 2 for either the station or communication skills, this will be reviewed and may result in you being deemed to have failed the station, whatever your total score. If two interviewers give you a score of 1 for either the station content or communication skills, you will automatically fail the station. You must pass all the stations in order to pass the selection process.

We quality check and review all scores before sending you the results.