

Guidance for direct entry local interviews to be conducted by employers for Scientist Training Programme 2020

Introduction

This guidance explains the process for conducting direct entry local interviews for the Scientist Training Programme in the exceptional circumstances of the COVID-19 emergency. As we approach the interviews, further information and FAQs will be added to the School website, so please check for any new material before you conduct your interview.

Process for setting up the interview

1. We give you the contact details of the applicant.
2. You negotiate with the applicant a time and date for the interview to suit all of you. Ideally the interview should take place within one week of the notification. Applicants should be given at least two days' notice wherever possible. It is in your interest to interview promptly: if it is left too late it might not be possible to provide an applicant from the standby list if you decline your original applicant. All interviews should be concluded by **5 June 2020**.
3. You tell us the agreed date and time for interview and provide contact details for the interviewers.
4. We send a Skype for Business invitation to all parties. Participants will be able to join online or dial in via telephone in the event of technical issues.
5. We or the Academy for Healthcare Science may provide an observer for the interview, in which case we will inform you and will make it clear to the panel and the interviewee on the day.
6. We provide an agenda and interview questions.
7. We provide score sheets to be completed electronically by the interviewers, in the form of a Word template which you complete and email to us.

Basic requirements

- You will need to ensure you have access to a computer with a good internet connection and equipped with working sound and camera (preferably Windows PC/laptop – if using a Mac

please note that Skype for Business does not work well through the Safari browser so you should if possible use Chrome).

- A quiet space free of interruptions.
- Be aware of your background – neutral to give a professional impression.
- Wear professional work clothing.

Readiness

Please ensure in advance of the interview date and time that the technology works for you and you are able to access the video conferencing. If you are confident of this, that is fine. But you can if you wish test it with us by asking us to arrange a 'dummy run'. This will consist of the School sending you a Skype for Business invitation and you joining a video call for just long enough to ensure there are no issues with your firewall, sound or picture quality.

Nature of interview

The interview is confirmatory. The expectation is that the applicant will be appointed unless there are overriding reasons for declining them.

Why might there be an observer/lay representative from the National School of Healthcare Science or the Academy for Healthcare Science?

These interviews are carried out for admission to a national commissioned programme, and Health Education England must be satisfied that they are carried out to a consistent standard, are fair, transparent and not discriminatory, and that applicants are not declined for reasons other than the following.

Reasons to decline

You may decline an applicant if

- Their level of scientific knowledge/deductive reasoning falls well below what you would expect (bearing in mind that the level you are looking for is for entry to the programme, not that of a qualified clinical scientist)
- Their communication skills give you cause for concern
- There is anything in their answers that gives you cause for concern about their values, behaviours or leadership potential (again bearing in mind that you are not looking for the level of a fully qualified professional)

Scoring sheets will be provided and the scoring scale is described below.

All applicants have been shortlisted by specialist scientists. This means that all have been confirmed as meeting the essential requirements for the role. You do not have the option of declining an applicant on the basis that they do not meet these requirements (e.g. on the basis of their qualifications).

The interview panel

Interviews should be carried out by two representatives from the department. Normally they should be the training officer and a senior manager. This could include an operations manager; but it is essential that at least one interviewer is a scientist (preferably a clinical scientist) in the specialty concerned. Two specialist scientists would be the optimal panel because a major part of the interview consists of specialist science questions. The interview is based closely on the format of the national interview event and it will be beneficial if at least one of the interviewers has previous experience of the national interviews.

Length of interview

45 minutes plus private discussion.

Number of questions

Six set questions, plus questions from the applicant and final confirmatory question.

Use the questions provided

- 4 from 6 on specialist science,
- 2 from 4 on leadership, management, values and behaviours.

These questions were set by scientist colleagues and approved for the national interview event for your specialty.

Some of the questions approved for the national interviews include graphs and illustrations. Where possible we have excluded these questions. Where that is not possible we will email the illustrations to all parties in advance, but without giving the applicant notice of what questions will be asked about them.

Time per set question

Allow a minute to ask each question, and 4 minutes per answer, including follow-up questions/ answers as necessary to probe (the question sheet will include follow-up questions).

Interview plan

Interview component	Time (minutes)
- Brief introduction of interviewers: name and job title only - Introduction for any observers - Confirm identity of applicant – ask for full name and presentation of ID documents – please see attached guidance on what ID documents are required - Confirm that the applicant is alone in the room and will respond to questions without referring to technology (e.g. Google) – verbal confirmation is sufficient - Explain what happens next (see speaking notes)	5
Questions on specialist science From the questions provided by the National School of Healthcare Science, ask four from the six specialist science questions 1 minute to ask each question 4 minutes response time per question including any follow-up questions	20
Questions on leadership, management, values and behaviours From the questions provided by the National School of Healthcare Science, ask two from the four values, behaviours, leadership and management questions 1 minute to ask each question 4 minutes response time per question including any follow-up questions	10
Any questions from the applicant about the department and role	5
- Confirm with the applicant that they accept the location; are committed to completing the training period in your trust, and will accept the post if offered. Please do not tell the interviewee at this point whether they have been successful. - Explain what will happen next – no decision to be given there and then but will let them know within two working days. - Confirm with the applicant that the interview has been completed without any technical difficulties.	5

Thank the applicant and ask them to leave the call.	
Post interview	Time (minutes)
- Interviewers stay on the call and complete their score sheets independently. - Score as indicated, for knowledge/question performance and for communication, on a scale of 1 – 5. The scoring scale is as follows 1. Poor - The candidate is un-appointable 2. Area for Concern - Possibly appointable subject to discussion 3. Satisfactory - The candidate is appointable 4. Good - The candidate has number of good attributes and understanding 5. Excellent - The candidate has excellent understanding/knowledge and approach and has most of the attributes required Any score of 1 or 2 is cause for concern. If both interviewers give a score of 1 or 2 in any section this may lead to declining the applicant. If you give a score of 1 or 2 you must write your justification. - Score sheets exchanged and discussion between interviewers, with National School of Healthcare Science representative observing. - If no causes for concern noted, and applicant has confirmed that they will accept the post, applicant will be accepted (see post-interview process) - If causes for concern noted and interviewers decide (following review by the School) that the applicant is un-appointable, the School will notify applicant. Score sheets and interview outcome must be emailed to the School before the call is closed. Applicants will have a right to obtain their interview outcome and see any written comments.	At discretion of interviewers

Post interview process

1. If the applicant is successful, we will notify them through Oriel and provide them with your contact details and send on the remainder of the application form so that you can begin pre-employment checks. We will tell you when this is done.
2. If the applicant is declined, we will notify them through Oriel. They will then be out of contention for any post this year. We will provide, on request, their interview outcome including any comments given as feedback. Where possible we will provide you with an applicant from the standby pool, provided there is one available in your specialty and who has identified your location as a preference.
3. Wherever possible, notification will be made on the day of the interview or on the next working day.