

Doctor Apprenticeship

Frequently asked questions

1. What stage are you at with the medical doctor apprenticeship?

The Institute has given approval for a group of interested employers, the trailblazer, to develop a medical doctor degree apprenticeship. The employers are currently developing the apprenticeship standard which will mirror Outcomes for Graduates. The draft apprenticeship standard will go out to public consultation for 12 weeks in late June.

2. Why is a medical doctor degree apprenticeship being considered?

According to the NHS there were [7,500 medical vacancies in England in Sept 2020](#).

An apprenticeship could make the profession more accessible, more diverse and more representative of local communities. At present there are many unnecessary barriers that exist, and which hold back talented people.

An apprenticeship could help to change that, while maintaining the exact same high standards of training. We want to spread opportunity out to local communities and help to address the challenge of recruiting and retaining doctors within areas such as the north east.

3. Would this apprenticeship include a medical degree?

Yes, a medical degree will be part of this apprenticeship proposal. The same high standards of training would need to be reached and any apprenticeship for doctors must also be signed off by the General Medical Council. They make sure that all medical professionals have the skills they need.

4. How would apprentice doctors actually help plug the gap?

Offering an apprenticeship could offer a new route into the profession, still offering a medical degree but taking away some of the financial burden associated with the traditional route.

That would help attract talented candidates from all across the country, who are currently locked out due to geographical or socio-economic reasons.

5. What evidence is there that there is a market for a medical doctor apprenticeship scheme?

We know that the majority of medical students come from a small section of society. We also know that for some who have the ability to train in the medical profession the costs associated with undertaking a medical degree means they do not consider it an option. The medical doctor degree apprenticeship would offer those people a route to a career as a doctor.

6. How would the apprenticeship relate to usual medical doctor training routes?

A medical doctor apprentice would complete all the training, including a medical degree, that a medical student following the established route would take, meeting all the same requirements set out by the General Medical Council.

There will be no element, academic or practical, of the established routes that will not be completed.

7. What are the academic entry requirements for doctor apprentices?

These will be the same as the traditional medical degree route for school leavers. However, it will open up the profession and make it more accessible, more diverse and more representative of local communities, while retaining the same high standards of training.

It will also enable employers to recruit apprentices as part of their local workforce plans. Apprentices will need to complete their apprenticeship on an approved medical school degree, enabling them to learn and earn and contribute to the NHS.

8. Is the middle of a Covid pandemic the right time to start this development?

Yes. It will take 9 – 12 months to develop the apprenticeship standard and there will then be lead in time needed for employers and the medical schools to put in place systems and process necessary to be able to offer the apprenticeship. We are aiming for the apprenticeship to be available from September 2022 so we need to start now.

9. Will the new apprenticeship route into medicine be the expected path for certain medical specialities, such as general practice?

The apprenticeship will cover the initial medical degree which includes no specialisms. Some medical school courses already have a greater focus on some areas such as Primary Care and this is likely to continue if that medical school chooses to offer the medical degree as an apprenticeship. As with current medical students all apprentices can pursue the specialty of their choice.