

Engagement Response

Changes to the allocation process for the Foundation Programme from 2024

Background

1. The four UK statutory education bodies launched a [stakeholder engagement](#) process on January 16, 2023, on possible change to the allocation process for the Foundation Programme for 2024. The engagement process ran for seven weeks until Tuesday 28 February and included a webinar and survey which received over 14,000 responses.
2. Concerns have been raised about the current foundation allocation process that the system is perceived as unfair, stressful for applicants and there is a lack of standardisation within and across medical schools. Understanding the concerns raised about the existing system, the four UK Statutory Bodies, which manage postgraduate medical education across the four UK nations asked the UKFP to undertake an engagement exercise on options for change.
3. The aim of the engagement exercise was to seek stakeholder views on whether the process should:
 - remain in its current format, which sees applicants ranked according to their FP Score based on an Educational Performance Measure (EPM) and their Situational Judgement Test (SJT) mark, or
 - move to a new Preference Informed Allocation system that will see each applicant given a computer-generated ranking.
4. The engagement process gathered feedback on the current system, identified areas of concern or improvement, and explored the potential alternative of moving to a new system that will see each applicant given a computer-generated ranking.

Key findings

5. The majority, 66% responded they would prefer to move to a new system that will see each applicant given Preference Informed Allocation.
6. 33% of respondents favoured retaining the current process of ranking students by the Educational Performance Measure (EPM), and a Situational Judgement Test (SJT).

Engagement outcome

7. Given the significant levels of support for moving to a preference informed allocation system from 2024, the UK statutory education bodies have agreed the UKFP should move to a preference informed allocation system and implement changes from the 2024 application round.

Reasons for change

8. There have been some concerns raised by medical schools and students about the current method of allocation. The current UKFP application score consists of two component parts of equal weighting:
 - Educational Performance Measure (EPM) - applicants are assessed and ranked on their performance at medical school in relation to the graduating cohort up to the point of application to the Foundation Programme; and
 - Situational Judgement Test (SJT) - a computer-based assessment, to assess some of the essential competences outlined in the national Person Specification and is based around clinical scenarios.
9. The main concerns about the current allocation method have been about the stress and workload that the SJT causes final year medical students and the competitive elements introduced by the EPM.
10. There are also differential attainment concerns about SJT outcomes, and how the use of deciles in the EPM discourages teamwork and encourages unproductive competition in students. Furthermore, each institution uses a different methodology to calculate deciles introducing inconsistencies.
11. The engagement exercise sought views on proposals for a new Preference Informed Allocation (PIA) system where applicants will not take the SJT and will not be ranked by medical schools. They will instead be given a ranking which is computer generated (via the Oriel System). Because ranking is computer generated with no meritocratic assessment, the preference-based model should not be associated with any differential attainment according to protected characteristics.
12. Applicants will preference their foundation schools. The allocation process will allocate as many applicants as possible to their first preference. Where there are no remaining vacancies in an applicant's first choice foundation school, they will be allocated their next highest available preferred foundation school. The allocation to programme within Foundation Schools will follow the same model using preference and computer-generated ranking.

13. UK Foundation Programme modelling suggests a higher number of applicants (79.47%) will obtain their first choice Foundation School when compared to the score-based allocation (73.90%).

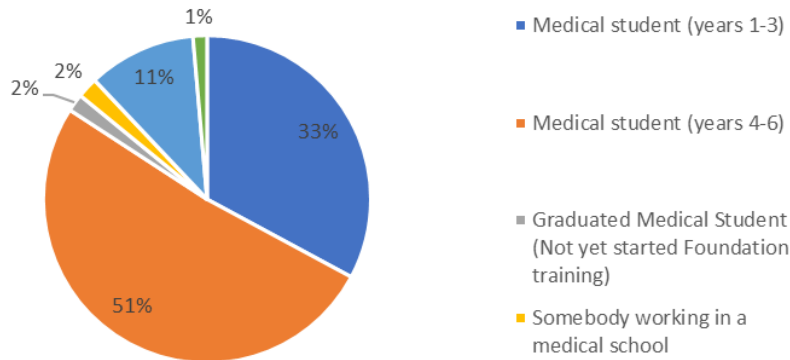
Stakeholder engagement

14. The stakeholder survey yielded 14,639 responses from predominantly individuals (14,533) and 106 organisations. Respondents included Foundation School Directors, Foundation School Managers, Postgraduate Deans, foundation doctors, medical schools, and medical students.
15. The stakeholder survey was used to measure the attitudes of all respondents to a series of statements on the Educational Performance Measure (EPM) and Situational Judgement Test (SJT). The survey provided respondents with a series of statements which they could select strongly agree to strongly disagree across a 5-point Likert scale. The third main theme in the survey asked respondents to indicate their preferred system for the 2024 FP allocation – to continue with the current method or change to a Preference Informed Allocation.

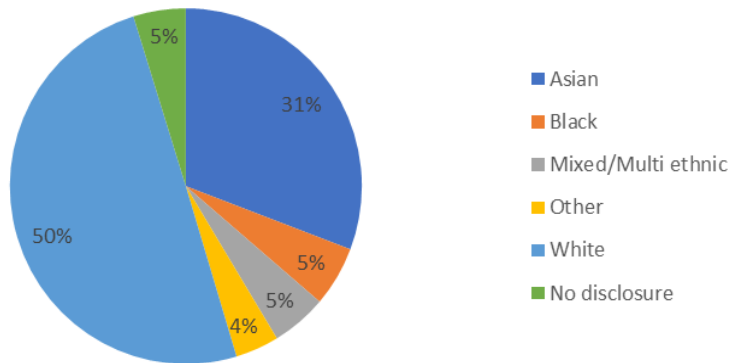
Survey Results

16. Feedback to the engagement shows significant support to move to a new system and found that majority of respondents 66% said they were in favour of a move to a new model for 2024 compared to 33.60% who wanted to continue with the current method.
17. This engagement was key to helping us understand how people viewed the current system and whether they wanted to see something different. Survey findings include:
 - most respondents indicated they would like to move to a Preference Informed Allocation for 2024 (66%);
 - a much smaller percentage wanted to retain the current system (33%);
 - a majority of respondents (67%) disagreed with the statement that the SJT is a good measure of an applicant's ability;
 - A large majority of respondents (85%) agreed with the statement that the SJT can be very stressful for applicants; and
 - (67%) disagreed with the statement that the SJT provides a good indication of how good a Foundation Doctor an applicant will be.
18. Below is a breakdown of respondents by educations/employment status, age groups, ethnic group, and disability status:

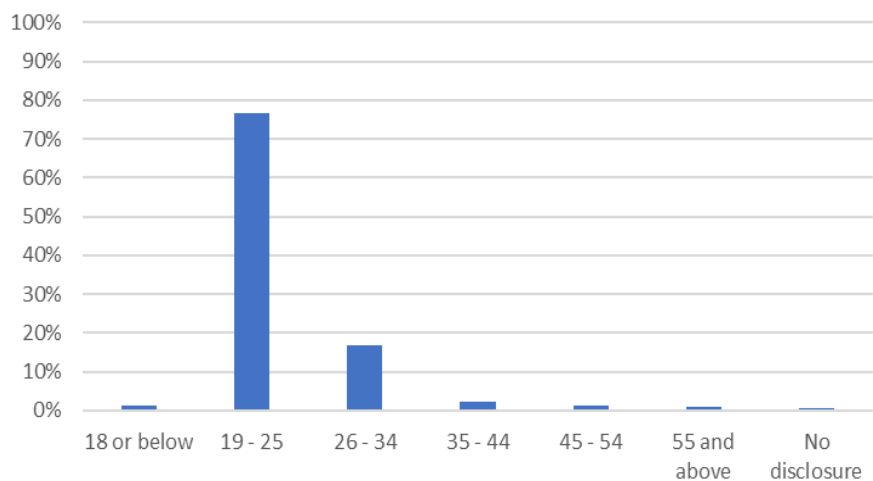
Types of respondents by education or employment status

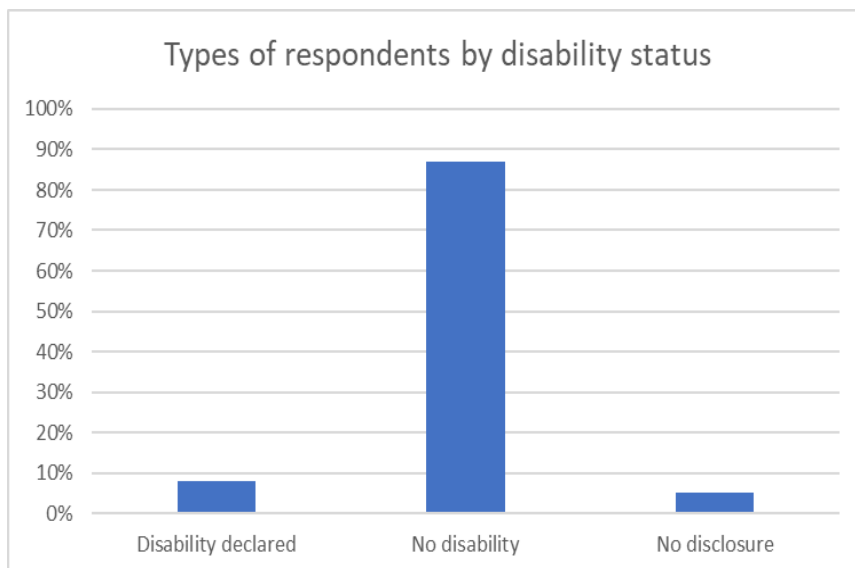


Types of respondents by ethnic group



Types of respondents by age group










Breakdown of Survey Results – Main Themes

Educational Performance Measure

Is the EPM a good measure of an applicant’s ability?

19. The survey results indicated that a majority of respondents (44.18%) do not agree the EPM is a good measure of applicant’s ability. The survey results were mixed with the largest group of respondents (28.90%) agreed that the EPM is a good measure of an applicant's ability, a significant proportion of respondents disagreed (25.02%), 13.72% neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement and 19.16% of respondents completely disagreed with the statement, indicating a relatively high level of scepticism about the EPM. On the other hand, 13.20% of respondents strongly agreed that the EPM is a good measure of an applicant's ability.

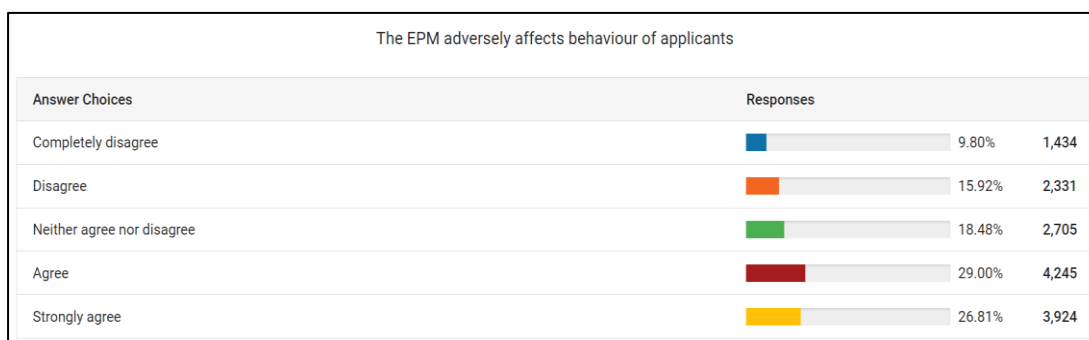
Answer Choices	Responses	Percentage	Count
Completely disagree		19.16%	2,805
Disagree		25.02%	3,662
Neither agree nor disagree		13.72%	2,009
Agree		28.90%	4,231
Strongly agree		13.20%	1,932

Does the EPM adversely impact the behaviour of applicants?

20. The survey results indicated that a majority of respondents (55.81%) believed that the EPM adversely affects the behaviour of applicants. Overall, the data suggests that there is a significant level of concern among respondents regarding the impact of the EPM on the behaviour of applicants,

with a majority of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement.

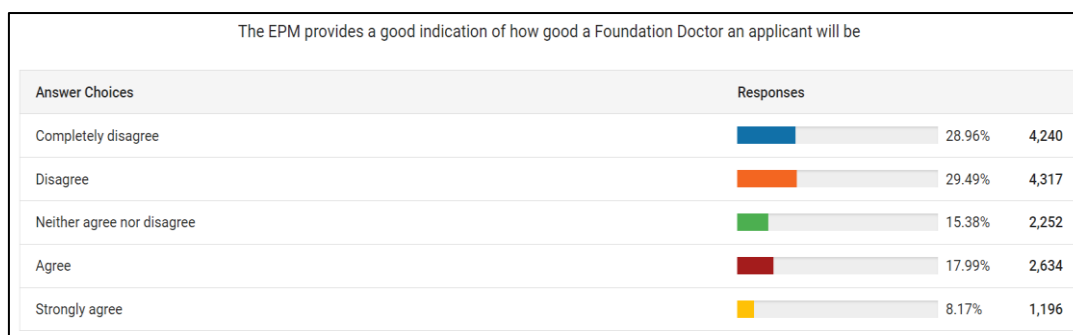
21. This includes 29.0% of respondents who agreed that the EPM adversely affects the behaviour of applicants and 26.81% who strongly agreed with it. On the other hand, a smaller proportion of respondents disagreed, with 15.92% indicating that they disagreed and 9.80% completely disagreeing. A relative percentage of respondents (18.48%) neither agreed nor disagreed, indicating a level of uncertainty.



Does the EPM provide a good indication of how good a Foundation Doctor an applicant will be?

22. **A large proportion of respondents (58.45%) disagreed with the statement that the EPM provides a good indication of how good a Foundation Doctor an applicant will be.** Overall, the data suggests that many respondents do not believe that the EPM provides a good indication of how good a Foundation Doctor an applicant will be. However, a notable minority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, indicating some level of support for the use of the EPM as an indicator of an applicant's potential as a Foundation Doctor.

23. This includes 28.96% of respondents who completely disagreed with the statement and 29.49% who disagreed with it. On the other hand, a relatively small proportion of respondents (17.99%) agreed with the statement and 8.17% strongly agreeing with it. A considerable percentage of respondents (15.38%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.



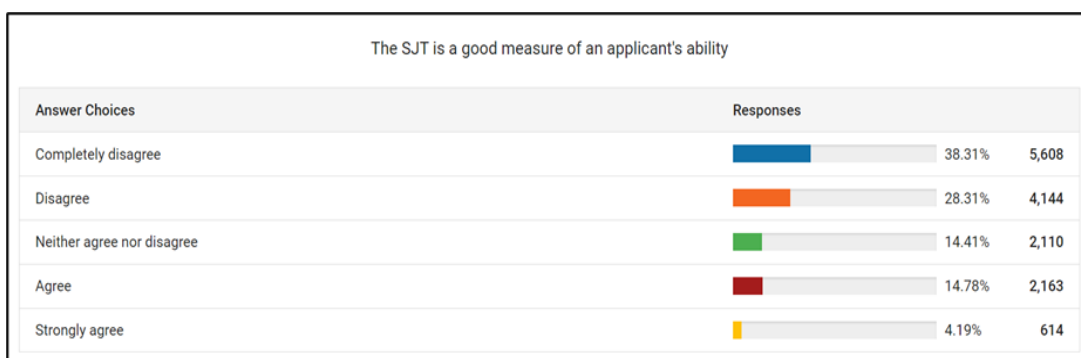
24. Overall, the survey results highlight the need for careful consideration of the use of the EPM and its impact on applicants.

Situational Judgement Test

Is the SJT a good measure of an applicant's ability?

25. **The majority of respondents (66.62%) disagreed with the statement that the SJT is a good measure of an applicant's ability.** Overall, the data suggests that a majority of respondents do not believe that the SJT is a good measure of an applicant's ability. However, it is worth noting that a minority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, indicating some level of support for the use of the SJT as an indicator of an applicant's abilities.

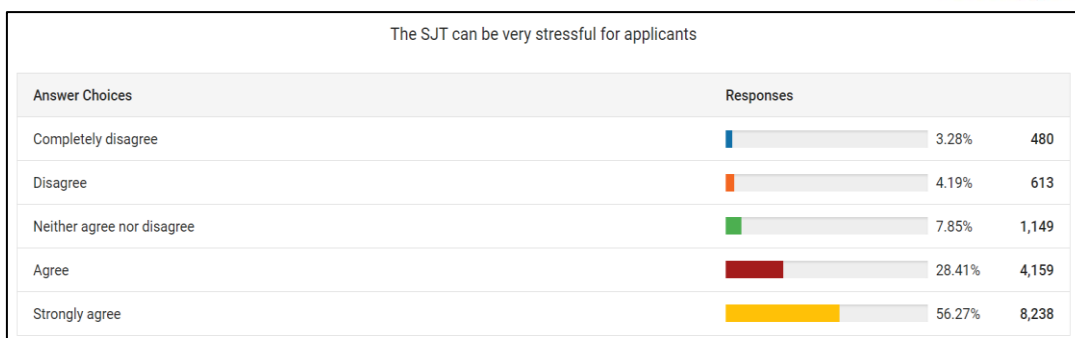
26. This includes 38.31% of respondents who completely disagreed with the statement and 28.31% who disagreed with it. On the other hand, a relatively small proportion of respondents (18.97%) agreed with the statement, with 14.78% indicating that they agreed and 4.19% strongly agreeing with it. A considerable percentage of respondents (14.41%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, indicating a level of uncertainty or lack of information about the topic.



Is the SJT stressful for students?

27. **A large majority of respondents (84.68%) agreed with the statement that the SJT can be very stressful for applicants.** Overall, the data highlights a potential issue with the use of the SJT in the selection process, as it may be perceived as an unnecessarily stressful experience for applicants.

28. This includes 28.41% of respondents who agreed with the statement and a significant proportion of 56.27% who strongly agreed with it. In contrast, a relatively small percentage of respondents (7.85%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, suggesting a lack of information or uncertainty about the topic. Only a very small proportion of respondents (7.47%) disagreed or completely disagreed with the statement, indicating that a very small minority of respondents believed that the SJT was not stressful for applicants.



Does the SJT provide a good indication of how good a Foundation Doctor an applicant will be?

29. According to the survey results, a large majority of respondents (66.68%) disagreed with the statement that the SJT provides a good indication of how good a Foundation Doctor an applicant will be.

Overall, the data suggests that a large majority of respondents do not believe that the SJT provides a good indication of how good a Foundation Doctor an applicant will be. This may be seen as a potential limitation of the SJT in the selection process, as it may not accurately measure the qualities that are necessary for success as a Foundation Doctor.

30. This includes 38.56% of respondents who completely disagreed with the statement and a further 28.12% who disagreed. In contrast, only a relatively small percentage of respondents (16.67%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, suggesting a lack of information or uncertainty about the topic. Only a very small proportion of respondents (16.65%) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, indicating that a very small minority of respondents believed that the SJT was a good measure of how good a Foundation Doctor an applicant will be.



31. Overall, the survey data suggests that a majority of respondents do not have a positive view of the SJT. Findings suggest that the SJT may not be seen as a reliable or effective measure of applicants' suitability for Foundation Doctor positions and may have potential negative impacts on applicants' stress levels.

Preferred FP system from 2024 FP allocation

32. From the survey responses, **a majority (66.40%) of the respondents prefer the "Preference Informed Allocation" option for the 2024 FP allocation system**, where SJT scores and medical school rankings are not taken into consideration. On the other hand, **only 33.60% of respondents preferred the "Score-based allocation" option**, which is the current method that ranks applicants based on their FP Score (EPM + SJT).

33. This suggests there is dissatisfaction among respondents with the current allocation system and its reliance on SJT scores and EPM. The "Preference Informed Allocation" option may be seen as a fairer and more transparent method, as it prioritises applicant preferences and removes potential biases associated with the current method.

1 June 2023