





# UKFP 2024 Applicant Guide to Allocation

## Preference Informed Allocation (PIA)



Two-year  
Foundation  
Programme



UKFPO  
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## Introduction

This document provides applicants with information about the foundation school allocation process which takes place in March 2024 and the programme matching process which takes place from April 2024 onwards.

Applicants should refer to the application timeline on the [UKFPO website](#) for the full list of dates and deadlines which relate to allocation, programme preferencing and programme matching.

### **Allocation to the Foundation Programme 2024 and onwards**

In February 2023 the four UK statutory education bodies launched an engagement process to seek views on a possible change to the allocation process for the 2024 Foundation Programme.

The aim was to explore whether the process should continue to allocate applicants based on a rank that used their FP Score (their Educational Performance Measure (EPM) combined with their Situational Judgement Test (SJT)) or whether it should move to a new system where each applicant is given a computer-generated ranking via the Oriel System, also known as Preference Informed Allocation (PIA).

In June 2023 it was announced that allocation for the Foundation Programme 2024 onwards would use the new PIA allocation method. Further information on the Foundation allocation stakeholder engagement process and the outcomes can be found on the [UKFPO website](#)

Due to the introduction of the Preference Informed Allocation process and a computer-generated rank, the Situational Judgement Test (SJT) and EPM/decile score will no longer be used for application to the Foundation Programme and has been removed from the FP2024 application process.

## Preference Informed Allocation (PIA)

Preference informed allocation has been designed to give as many applicants as possible their first choice of Foundation School.

### **How will Preference Informed Allocation work?**

Every eligible applicant who remains in the Foundation Programme application process after allocation to SFP or FPP programmes, will be given a computer-generated rank by the Oriel system. The ranking will not be informed by performance at medical school.

The ranks will be generated when the allocation algorithm is run in Oriel. This takes place in March which is after Foundation School preferencing has closed and at the point that applicants are allocated to Foundation School, also known as Unit of Application (UoA).

Applicants will not be informed of their individual rank until after the programme matching process is completed for all applicants. The programme matching process will follow a national timeline which will be published in due course.

The Oriel application system will use an algorithm that will work through the list of applicants in computer-generated rank order. This will happen in two passes through the system:

### **Pass 1 - First choice Foundation School allocation only**

The algorithm will work through the applicant list in computer-generated rank order. If there are places available in an applicant's first choice Foundation School, they will be allocated a place in that Foundation School. If no places are available in their first choice Foundation School, that individual applicant will be skipped over and the algorithm will continue to work through the full list of applicants, giving as many as possible their first preference. It will do this until it reaches the end of the applicant list.

### **Pass 2 – Allocating unplaced applicants**

Next, the algorithm will again work through the applicant list in computer-generated rank order. Any unplaced applicants will be allocated a place in their highest preferred Foundation School which still has available places. It will do this until it reaches the end of the applicant list.

## **Linked Applications and Preference Informed Allocation (PIA)**

### **The process of application linking in PIA will work as follows:**

- Applicants can request to link their application to another applicant by selecting this option when completing the application form on Oriel (for guidance on this process, refer to “2024 Guidance on How to Apply to the Foundation Programme” which will be published in August 2023).
- The rank of the lower ranking applicant will be used to allocate both linked applicants to a foundation school (and in some cases to group as well, if used by the foundation school).
- When the allocation process is run on Oriel, during the first pass, the applicant with the higher rank will be skipped over.
- When the allocation algorithm gets to the lower ranked applicant of the pair, if it is possible to place both linked applicants in their first-choice Foundation School then both applicants will be placed.
- If it is not possible to place both applicants in their first-choice Foundation School (because all places are taken by higher ranked applicants) then both applicants are skipped.
- On the second pass, the applicant with the higher rank will again be skipped over.
- When the allocation algorithm gets to the lower ranked applicant of the pair it will attempt to allocate them a place in their highest preferred Foundation School that has two places available.

- If none of the Foundation Schools still have two places available, the link will be broken and the whole allocation process will begin again for all applicants. Both applications will then be processed as unlinked applications.
- Refer to the flowcharts provided in this document to see how the PIA process will work for applicants.

## **Specialised Foundation Programme (SFP) application process and PIA**

The SFP application process will continue to be managed by each separate Foundation School (also known as a Specialised Units of Application or SUoAs). Local SFP selection processes will no longer use decile scores in the selection process (longlisting and shortlisting). Foundation Schools and SUoAs are making changes to their local selection and scoring criteria for the 2024 application process. Information will be published on Foundation School websites in due course.

## **Foundation Priority Programme (FPP) application process and PIA**

The FPP application process will be unchanged except that instead of applicants receiving a rank based on the total FP score (decile + SJT), a computer-generated rank will now be used which is a different rank from the one generated for the main Foundation Programme. Offers will be made based on the computer-generated rank and FPP programme preferences.

## **Computer generated rank**

The rank that is generated for applicants for the main Foundation Programme will not be used during the Specialised Foundation Programme (SFP) selection and offer process or during the Foundation Priority Programme (FPP) application and offer process.

## **Pre-allocation and PIA**

There is no change to the pre-allocation application process or to the criteria. Applicants should refer to the Pre-allocation guidance which will be available on the UKFPO [website](#) in due course.

## **Applicant behaviour and PIA**

During the stakeholder engagement exercise, modelling data for both the allocation based on the total FP score and the new PIA were presented. This data was taken from the 2022 Foundation Programme recruitment process and used preferencing data from that cohort.

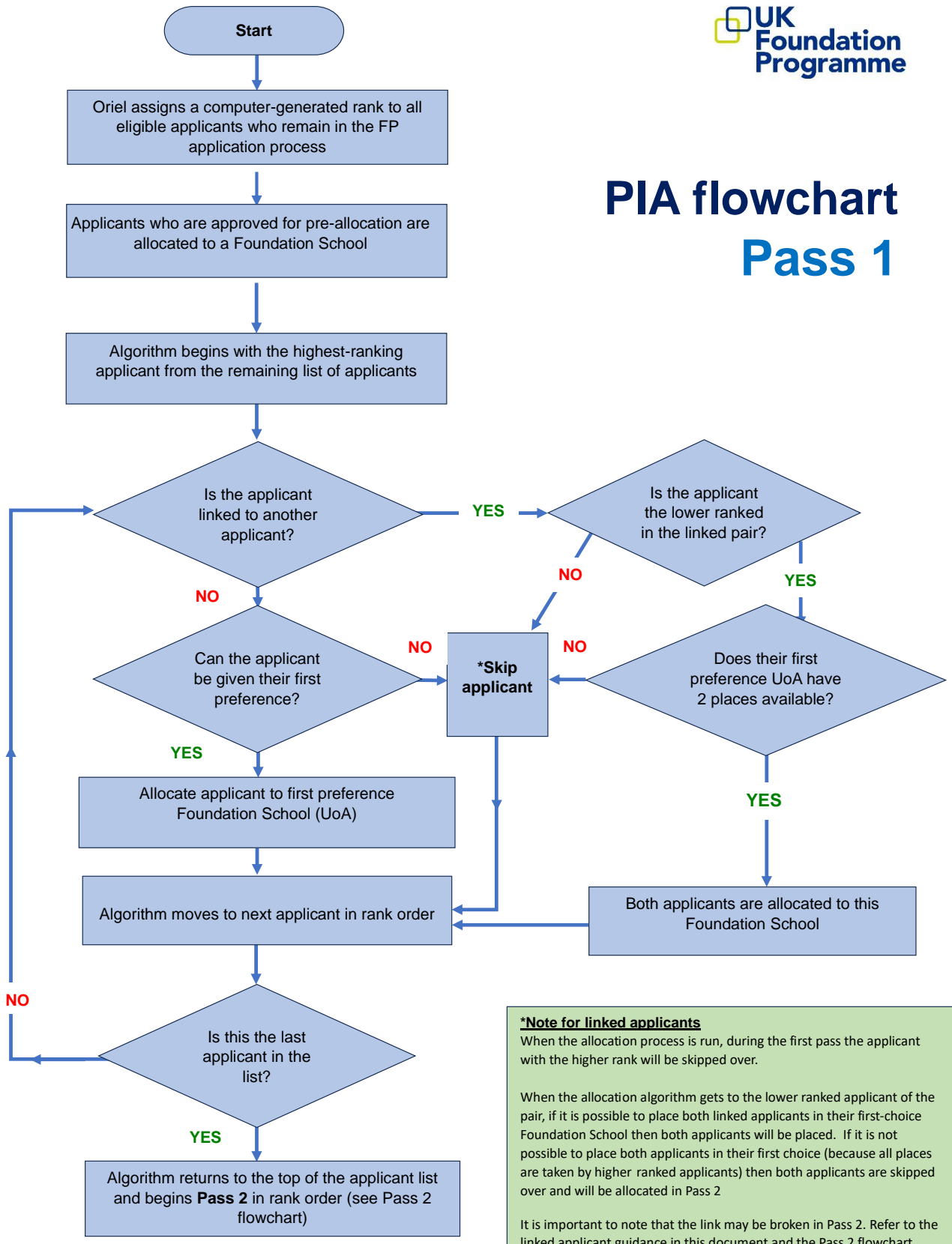
The outcomes for PIA each year will depend on the applicant preferencing behaviour in the system for that given year. For example, if a school has 1,000 places and 3,000 applicants choose to list it as their first preference, then a relatively lower percentage of applicants will receive their first-choice allocation.

The UKFPO will work with its stakeholders to monitor the outcomes of the new Preference Informed Allocation process carefully and implement agreed changes in future years where necessary.

# Flow charts showing the allocation algorithm



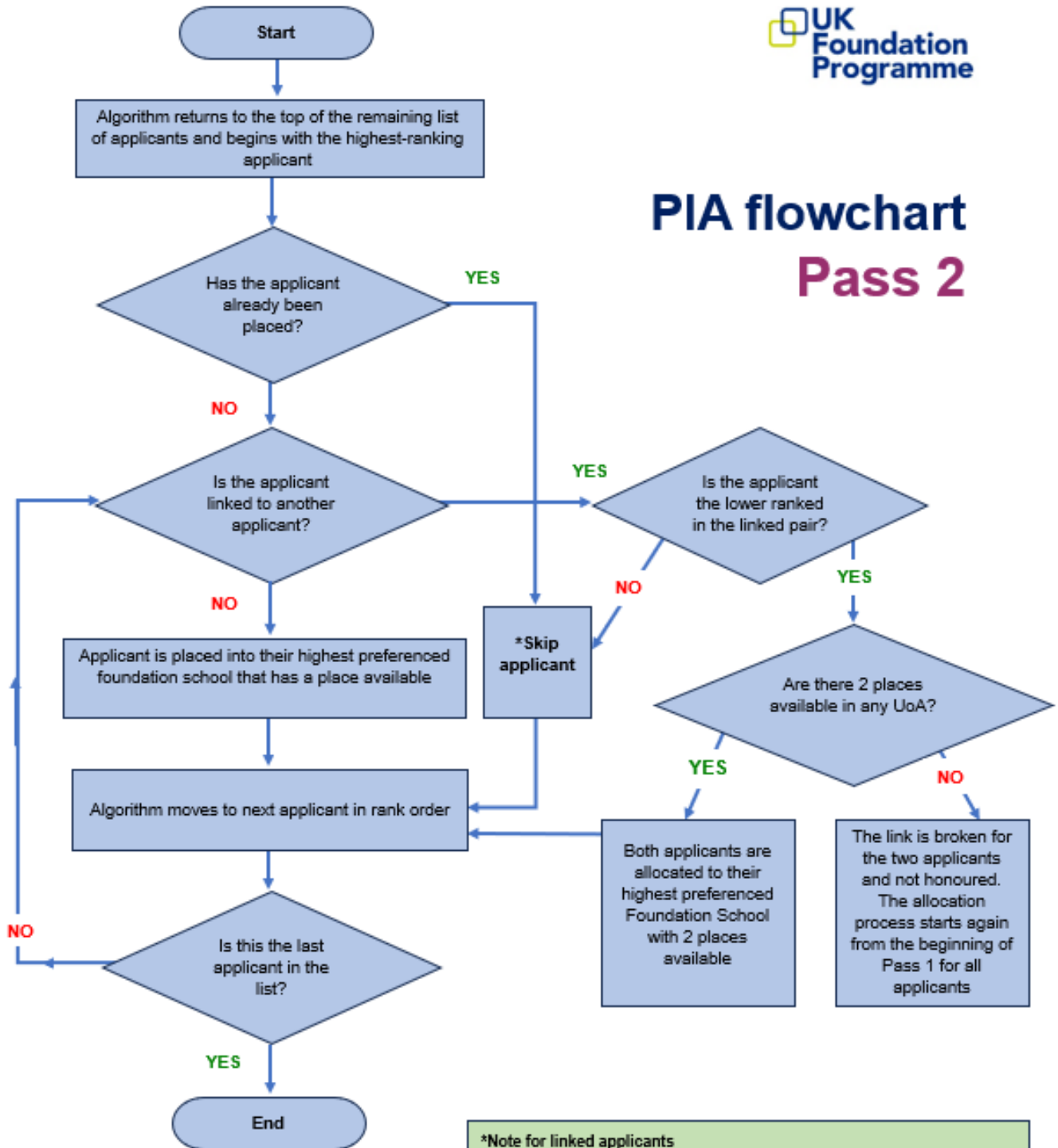
## PIA flowchart Pass 1



**\*Note for linked applicants**  
 When the allocation process is run, during the first pass the applicant with the higher rank will be skipped over.  
 When the allocation algorithm gets to the lower ranked applicant of the pair, if it is possible to place both linked applicants in their first-choice Foundation School then both applicants will be placed. If it is not possible to place both applicants in their first choice (because all places are taken by higher ranked applicants) then both applicants are skipped over and will be allocated in Pass 2  
 It is important to note that the link may be broken in Pass 2. Refer to the linked applicant guidance in this document and the Pass 2 flowchart.



# PIA flowchart Pass 2



**\*Note for linked applicants**  
 On the second pass, the applicant with the higher rank will again be skipped over.  
 When the allocation algorithm gets to the lower ranked applicant of the pair it will attempt to allocate them a place in their highest preferred Foundation School that has at least two places available.  
 If none of the Foundation Schools still have two places available, the link will be broken and the whole allocation process will begin again for all applicants. These two applications will then be processed as unlinked applications.

## Allocation to a Foundation School

Allocation to the Foundation Programme will take place on **7 March 2024**. All eligible applicants will be allocated to a Foundation School on this day.

Applicants will receive a notification email from Oriol (which will be sent to the email address that is registered on their account) with the details of their allocation. Applicants can also view their allocation result directly on Oriol by logging in to their account.

Applicants should check their junk/spam folder within their email account if they cannot find the notification email in their main inbox.

## Matching to a Foundation Programme

Applicants will be invited to preference groups/individual programmes once allocated to a Foundation School and this will take place from March onwards.

Applicants will then be matched to a groups and programmes in cohorts from April onwards. This process will be managed locally by foundation schools and will follow a national timeline which will be published in due course.

Dates and details of the programme preferencing and matching process will be communicated to applicants by the UKFPO and their allocated foundation school.

**The same computer-generated rank will be used when allocating applicants at the group/programme match stage. Applicants will not receive a new rank for group or programme matching. The same rank will be used at all stages.**

(This applies to the standard Foundation Programme only. Information about the recruitment process for the Foundation Priority Programmes (FPP) and Specialised Foundation Programmes (SFP) is available in separate guidance documents).

In rank order, each applicant will be allocated to their highest preference group and foundation programme. Applicants in the first cohort will be matched to a programme in April 2024.

Further programme matches will take place from May 2024 onwards to ensure that all applicants are matched to a foundation programme within their allocated foundation school.

Applicants should refer to the applicant timeline on the [UKFPO website](#) for the dates and deadlines which relate to the programme match for each cohort. The dates will be available to view in early 2024.

**In previous recruitment years, Foundation Schools created and published histograms or bar charts that displayed the range of FP total scores received by applicants allocated to the Foundation School. As the FP total score is no longer used within the allocation process, these charts will no longer be produced.**



## Two-stage match using groups (match to group and then match to programme)

Foundation schools with many programmes may choose to cluster programmes into groups (for example, themed by location). In this instance, applicants will be matched to programmes in two stages: -

- 1) **Matched to a group:** applicants are required to preference groups in order of choice. You will be matched to a group based on your rank and preferences.
- 2) **Matched to a programme:** once matched to groups, applicants will be invited to preference the programmes in that group in order of choice. You will be matched to programme in accordance with your rank and preferences.

## One-stage match (match to programme)

If the allocated foundation school does not use groups, applicants will be invited to preference all of the programmes in that Foundation School in order of choice without having to preference groups. Applicants will be matched to programmes based on their rank and preferences.

## Linked applications at Group and Programme stage

- Applicants must follow the process for linking on Oriel as detailed in the “2024 Guidance on How to Apply to the Foundation Programme” which will be published in August 2023.
- The rank of the lower ranking applicant will be used to allocate both linked applicants to a foundation school (and in some cases to group as well if used by the foundation school).
- Not all Foundation Schools allow linking for the match to group and applicants should consider local Foundation School policies prior to submission of their linked application. Applicants should contact individual Foundation Schools directly for further information.
- Additional information about how applicant linking will work with the new Preference Informed Allocation (PIA) process is available earlier in this guidance document.

## Oriel system

The Oriel preferencing page is set to time out after 59 minutes of inactivity.

- Make sure you save your preferences if you leave your computer part-way through preferencing.
- Do not have Oriel open on two browsers/tabs at the same time, as your preferences will not be saved.
- **Applicants are advised not to use smartphone devices to preference groups and programmes.**

If it is not possible to match you to one of your preferred programmes, that is those that have been preferred positively, the system will randomly allocate you to a vacant programme based on the number of places in each group/programme, after others that have expressed a preference have been matched.

- You will be allocated randomly if you fail to preference programmes by the deadline.
- **Late preferences cannot be submitted under any circumstances.**
- You are advised to familiarise yourself with foundation school local timelines and to allow sufficient time to preference programmes.

### Programme match

All applicants will be informed of their match to programme results by email and this will include a pdf attachment of the results. If you have any queries about your programme, you should contact the foundation school directly. Applicants are matched to one programme only.

- You are not required to confirm acceptance of this match on Oriel (that is, this is not an 'offer' like a specialised or priority foundation programme).
- Your programme match will be final, and your foundation school will be in touch with you regarding next steps in preparation for your employment.
- As far as possible, foundation schools aim to honour programme allocations. However, it is important to note that after being matched to a programme, placements within that programme may change as a result of service redesign, working time regulations or national directives.
- If you withdraw your application, you will be withdrawn from the entire application process and you will need to reapply to the Foundation Programme the following year. If you choose to reapply, you will be required to complete a new application form. No part of your application or the selection process will be carried over to the next recruitment year.
- Once allocated to a foundation school and programme, there is **no system for swaps** between foundation schools or within individual foundation schools and programmes. Swaps will not be facilitated by the UKFPO or by Foundation Schools under any circumstances.

# Employment

## Unable to take up allocated foundation programme

If anything should happen which would prevent you from commencing training on the expected date (such as illness or final exams failure), it is vital that you let your **foundation school AND employing trust or health board** know as soon as possible to allow them to recruit to the vacancy.

## Start date

It is not possible for applicants to defer their foundation programme start date (except for statutory reasons).

All applicants are expected to commence in post on **7 August 2024** and must also attend the mandatory shadowing and induction period.

## Induction/Shadowing period

As a newly appointed foundation doctor, the health service in the UK requires foundation doctors to undertake a mandatory shadowing and induction period prior to the start of the training programme. The shadowing period will include observing the F1 doctor they will be taking over from.

The employer will provide details of the shadowing and induction period which is likely to take place in the week(s) before the start date of employment. The start date for this varies according to Foundation school and/or employer but will generally commence on or before Wednesday 31 July 2024. Allocated applicants will be informed by their Foundation school or employer of the exact start date.

**Applicants must arrange for their provisional registration with the GMC to cover the shadowing and induction period.**

## Pre-Employment Checks

Pre-employment checks include Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) or Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG), and occupational health checks. Applicants must ensure that their reference is provided, as employers will not be able to offer a contract of employment without it.

If your reference has not been collected on Oriel within the main reference submission window, your employer will contact you about providing this reference offline and will let you know if further information is required.

## Contract of Employment

Formal offers of employment will be made by employing healthcare organisations (hospital, Trust, or health board).

Contracts of employment will only be offered once you have qualified from medical school, attained provisional registration with a licence to practise with the GMC in the UK, and completed the necessary pre-employment checks. **For this reason, applicants are strongly encouraged to apply for provisional registration with the GMC as early as possible.**

Pre-employment checks are unrelated to the STEP form as the STEP form is not passed to employer HR teams; therefore, questions may be duplicated. The employing organisation is responsible for all contractual issues such as pay, banding, rotas and accommodation. The employing organisation will confirm your start date.

## Supporting Trainees Entering Practice (STEP)

The GMC standards [Promoting excellence](#), requirement 3.15, places an obligation on UK medical schools to ensure their students meet the outcomes required.

All organisations involved in medical education and training are required to ensure there are processes in place to share information about learners between different stages of training: *R2.17 “Organisations must have a process for sharing information between all relevant organisations whenever they identify safety, wellbeing or fitness to practise concerns about a learner, particularly when a learner is progressing to the next stage of training”.*

In applying for the Foundation Programme, applicants accept that such a transfer of information will take place.

**The STEP process is intended to support applicants and ensure that any reasonable adjustments are made in line with the needs of foundation doctors in a timely manner before the start of training.**

All applicants are required to complete a STEP form to support the transition from undergraduate medical education to postgraduate training. UK students will be required to complete an online STEP form and medical school teams will communicate directly with students about the process and provide a link to the online form.

Applicants are encouraged and reminded of their responsibility to ensure that their STEP form contains relevant information that may support the delivery of training. UK medical schools will also have an opportunity to review and add to the information provided. Further details about the STEP process can be found on the UKFPO [website](#).

Applicants who applied via the UKFPO's Eligibility process are required to complete a MS Word based STEP form which is available on the UKFPO [website](#).