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Inter-Foundation School Transfers (IFSTs) 2025 Applicant Guide

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England
Northern Ireland
Scotland
Wales

UK Foundation
Programme

March 2025

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Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to provide information about how applicants and current foundation doctors can apply to transfer from one foundation school to another via an Inter-foundation School Transfer (IFST).

Applicants who need to be in a certain part of the UK for their Foundation Programme, due to their **current** personal circumstances which meet one of the nationally agreed criteria can apply for a transfer to a specific foundation school.

The application forms for each criterion are available on the UKFPO [website](#).

National IFST review panels meet to review and agree outcomes for all applications received by the national application deadline.

The IFST process has been designed to support transfers in cases where individual circumstances have changed **since the point of initial application/allocation** to a 2-year foundation programme.

The process allows F1 doctors who are working as part of a two-year programme to apply for a transfer to take effect from the start of their F2 year, and for applicants who are applying to the foundation programme to apply for a transfer to take effect from the start of their F1 year in August.

It is recognised that situations will arise outside of the national IFST process and national application window, therefore the opportunity to apply for a transfer due to exceptional circumstances throughout the course of the training programme will continue to be available and will be managed by individual Foundation Schools and Deaneries via the [Out of Window](#) IFST process.

Key changes for IFST 2025

The following changes have been made to the titles of the IFST criteria for UKFP 2025:

- Criterion 4 Unique Circumstances has been renamed “Extraordinary Circumstances”.
- Character limits have been introduced on the application forms for the applicant statement section and other applicant and supporting signatory answer boxes.
- Mandatory fields in the application form are now identified with an asterisk, “*”. If a mandatory field has been marked with “*” information is required from either the applicant or supporting signatory in that section/field of the form. If a field is marked as mandatory and has been left blank, the application may be rejected by the national review panel.
- IFST applications from current foundation doctors who are already working in a training programme (either the F1 or F2 training year) are now required to have a declaration and supporting signature from the current Foundation School Director (FSD).

Applicants should note that a supporting signature from the FSD does not mean that the IFST application has been approved. The national IFST review panel is responsible for

agreeing on the outcomes of all IFST applications received during the national submission window.

General Principles

- An application for an Inter-foundation School Transfer is based on the premise that the applicant is no longer able to manage their training and their health or caring responsibilities in their allocated or current location.
- Applicants **must** have had a change in circumstances **since the point of initial application/allocation** to a 2-year foundation programme to be eligible for a transfer. **The change in circumstances must meet one of the nationally agreed IFST criteria.**
- An approved transfer can only take place if there is a vacancy in the receiving foundation school. Approval of an application does not guarantee a specific programme or employer within the receiving foundation school because it is dependent upon a vacancy arising.
- Transfers will normally take place either before the start of foundation training (F1) or at the start of the F2 year.

Before Applying

Applicants who believe that they meet one or more of the criteria are **strongly advised to discuss their circumstances with their current foundation school before completing the inter-foundation school transfer (IFST) application form.** The purpose of this discussion would be to help set realistic expectations for potential applicants and to explain the necessary forms and supporting documents to be supplied and timeframes.

Having discussed alternative support arrangements with the foundation school and considered all options available to you, you should make an informed decision about whether you still wish to apply for a transfer. If you do decide to apply for a transfer, you **must** inform your foundation school of this decision.

- Foundation doctors should discuss their transfer application with their Educational Supervisor or Foundation Training Programme Director (FTPD) and/or Foundation School Manager if you are already in a foundation training programme.
- Medical students/applicants should discuss their transfer application with their medical school pastoral support tutor and the Foundation School Director and/or Foundation School Manager from the allocated foundation school, as soon as possible after allocation to a foundation school has taken place.
- It is important to understand that whilst foundation schools will do their best to accommodate specific location requests for approved transfers, they may not be able to

offer a place in the location requested due to the availability of vacancies within the foundation school.

- It is useful to understand all the geographical areas within the foundation school to which you would like to be transferred to, and the training locations within it. A list of geographical areas for each foundation school and can be found on the UKFPO [website](#).
- Applicants **should not** contact a potential receiving foundation school directly to ask if there are vacancies.

Process Overview

Applicant experiences a significant and unforeseen change in personal circumstances since their application to the two-year programme / commencing foundation training



Applicant discusses their situation with pastoral support at the medical school / Educational Supervisor / Foundation Training Programme Director to consider all possible options. If the most appropriate option is to apply for a transfer, applicant must discuss this further with the current / allocated foundation school / Foundation Training Programme Director (FTPD) or Foundation School Director (FSD)



Applicant to review the eligibility criteria to apply for a transfer and if satisfied they fulfil the criteria, complete the supporting documents listed in the criteria descriptions, and seek endorsement from appropriate signatories



Submit an application form with supporting documents relating to the criterion to your current/allocated foundation school, within the national application window. Foundation school submits applications to national IFST panel.



National IFST panel to consider all applications for IFST to determine whether applicants meet the IFST criteria. Foundation schools will try to identify a suitable vacant programme for approved applicants.

IFST Application Timeline

Applicants should refer to the 2025 IFST application timeline available on the UKFPO [website](#).

Am I Eligible?

Applicants who have not yet started the foundation programme

- You **must** have had a change in circumstances **since the point of initial application** to a 2-year foundation programme to be eligible for a transfer. You must be able to demonstrate in your application that a significant change in personal circumstances has occurred that could not have been foreseen at the time of national application to the foundation programme.
- Your change in circumstances must meet one of the national criteria and you must be able to provide the requested supporting evidence and documentation at the point of application for an IFST. **All supporting documentation** must be submitted alongside the application within the national IFST application window.
- Applicants who **previously applied for pre-allocation** to a foundation school within the same recruitment round and had their application rejected by the national review panel **are not eligible to apply for an IFST transfer under the same set of circumstances**. However, if the circumstances are now different and therefore have changed since the pre-allocation application was submitted, then an IFST application can be considered.

Current Foundation doctors in training (F1 or F2)

- Applications for a transfer to another foundation school from a foundation doctor will only be considered if their circumstances have changed since **commencing** their foundation training.
- Foundation doctors who have already submitted an IFST application and have had it rejected within the same training year are not eligible to submit another IFST application for the same set of circumstances.
- Current foundation doctors cannot apply for an IFST if they are currently on long-term sick leave from their foundation programme (ARCP outcome “Other”).
- Current foundation doctors should note that approval of an IFST application is subject to being in receipt of a satisfactory ARCP Outcome 1 (for completion of the F1 year).

For both F1 and F2 applications, ARCP outcomes 3, 5 and Other will also not usually be accepted, except possibly in exceptional circumstances and this will usually only apply to applications which are considered outside of the national process and timeframes and therefore will be considered under the [Out of Window IFST guidance](#).

The Foundation School Director who signs and supports the IFST application will be asked to confirm the points above when they complete their section of the form.

All applicants

- Your change in circumstances must meet one of the [nationally agreed criteria](#).
- If your application to transfer is approved, it is expected that you will be able to take up a new foundation school placement with the new employing organisation within the national timeframes and start your programme in August. It will not be possible to defer a transfer start date unless there are statutory reasons for doing so and that reason is due to circumstances that have occurred since applying for the IFST. This is for the applicant to discuss with the new foundation school and employer.
- All applicants are asked to disclose if they are currently the subject of a grievance, General Medical Council (GMC), criminal or any other investigation. If you indicate that you are subject to any of the above, you are required to provide additional information through the Fitness to Practice (FTP) disclosure to support your application (appendix 2). Failure to disclose this information could result in the withdrawal of an application from the process.
- Your IFST application will not be considered by the national panel unless all of the supporting evidence required for the criterion has been provided by the national application deadline.

Completing the application form

- It is only possible to submit **one application** and apply under **one criterion**. Applicants who believe they meet more than one of the criteria should discuss their circumstances with their foundation school before applying.
- Applications must be based on **current** personal circumstances and cannot be based on expected or anticipated future events. This includes applications based solely on pregnancy.
- Applicants can only list one “receiving” foundation school, and this is the foundation school where an approved application will be sent. Where two or more appropriate foundation schools have adjoining geographical borders, and either of them would be suitable to meet the applicant’s needs, it will be up to those foundation schools to discuss and advise the applicant which is the most appropriate.
- All applications **must be submitted on the 2025 IFST application form**. Application forms from previous years will not be accepted and the application will be rejected by the national review panel.

- All **sections** of the relevant 2025 application form must be completed by the applicant. Alternative formats will not be accepted.
- The supporting statement section of the application form should be completed and signed by the supporting signatory. **If an applicant needs to submit a letter or other document from their supporting signatory instead of them completing the UKFPO application form, this is permitted.** However, the letter/document provided **MUST** include all the information that is requested in the UKFPO application form. If mandatory information is not provided in the letter/document the application may be rejected by the panel.
- If an applicant chooses to submit supplementary evidence which is not mandatory (in addition to the completed application form and mandatory supporting evidence), the letter/document that is provided **MUST** be dated/issued within the windows described below.
- Applicants whose circumstances do not meet one of the national criteria should not apply under criterion 4 Extraordinary Circumstances if they do not truly have extraordinary circumstances. There is not a criterion for all personal circumstances and in the absence of one that fits, applicants should not use criterion 4 unless their circumstances really are extraordinary.
- Applicants who select the wrong criterion for their IFST application may have their application rejected for this reason.
- The national IFST review panel will not contact applicants or supporting signatories for additional/supplementary information. The application process requires that this is all submitted by the national application deadline.

Supporting documents

It is expected that all evidence and supporting documentation for an applicant is recent and therefore evidences the **recent** change in circumstances.

- All supporting statements and documents therefore must be dated or signed as below. Any supporting evidence that has been provided which is dated earlier will not be accepted by the IFST review panel.
 - **Applicants who have not yet begun the foundation programme**
Evidence, statements, proof of address and signatures must be dated **after** the close of the application period for the foundation programme (i.e. on or after 09 October 2024 for FP 2025)
 - **Current foundation doctors (either in F1 or F2)**
Evidence, statements, proof of address and signatures must be dated **after** commencement of the foundation programme. (i.e. on or after the August start date).

Applicants address

The applicant's home address which they provide on their application form **must** be in the region of the foundation school they have applied to transfer to and **must match the applicant's proof of address** which is provided as supporting evidence.

- Proof of address must be in the applicant's full name.
- The list of acceptable documents for proof of address can be found in [appendix 1](#). Other types of documentation may be rejected by the IFST review panel.

Foundation School Director declaration

- IFST applications from current foundation doctors who are already working in a training programme (either the F1 or F2 training year) must have **the support and declaration** signature from the current Foundation School Director (FSD). The FSD can also choose to provide other information in a comments box provided, in support of the application.
- Applicants should note that a supporting signature from the FSD does not mean that the IFST application has been approved. The national IFST review panel is responsible for agreeing on the outcomes of all IFST applications received during the national submission window.
- A supporting signature from the FSD is not required for incoming/new F1 doctors who are starting in programme in August 2025.

Character limits in application form

The maximum permitted number of characters that can be entered into different parts of the application forms are listed below. This includes spaces between words. The national panel will only accept and review the limits listed below, and these must be provided within the national application form.

Application form section	Character limit including spaces
Criterion 1 Parent or Legal Guardian - applicant supporting statement	1500
Criterion 2 Primary Carer – applicant supporting statement	1500
Criterion 2 Primary Carer - applicant answers per box	750
Criterion 2 Primary Carer – supporting signatory answer box	1500
Criterion 3 Health Condition or Disability – applicant answers per box	750
Criterion 3 Health Condition or Disability – supporting signatory answers per box	700

Criterion 4 Extraordinary Circumstances – applicant supporting statement	1500
Criterion 4 Extraordinary Circumstances - supporting signatory answers per box	750

Supporting signatories

Supporting statements/documents must be signed by an appropriate signatory as outlined for each of the criterion. Alternative signatories may not be accepted if they are considered unsuitable and the application may be rejected for this reason.

- Supporting signatories cannot be a doctor in training of any grade (up to ST8). An application is likely to be rejected by the national review panel if a doctor in training has been used as the supporting signatory.
- Typed signatures will be accepted. There is no need for a supporting signatory to provide a hand-written or electronic signature, but these are acceptable too if they are preferred by the applicant or signatory.
- Supporting signatories should ideally have known the applicant for **1 month or more**. In circumstances where this is not the case, the applicant must provide an explanation as to why their supporting signatory has not known them longer, and why an alternative signatory could not be used to support the application.
- The UKFPO and the national review panel will **not** contact supporting signatories to follow up on or verify the information they have (or have not) provided in an application (including signatures and dates). This is not a part of the application or review process.

How to apply

- Applicants must download and complete the relevant IFST application form from the [UKFPO website](#). There is a separate IFST application form for each of the four criterion.
- You should ensure that you use the correct form for the criterion that you will be applying under. Incomplete and/or incorrect applications will be rejected from the process.
- Applications must be submitted via email to the **current allocated foundation school** within the [national IFST application window](#). The window dates and application deadline can be found in the published IFST timeline.
- Applications must not be emailed to the UKFPO or to the requested foundation school
- Contact details for foundation schools can be found on the UKFPO [website](#)

- You must ensure that all supporting evidence required for your IFST application is provided at the time of application, as there will be no opportunity to provide this later or via an appeal process if the application is rejected.
- For the application process to remain consistent and fair, the transfer process must operate in accordance with the published timescales. **Late applications will not be accepted under any circumstances.**
- Information provided at the application stage, including information supplied in additional supporting documents, should be completed to the best of your knowledge. If it subsequently transpires that any of the information provided is false or misleading, or that relevant information has been withheld, particularly information regarding eligibility and fitness to practice, your application may be rejected, or a transfer withdrawn. It may also be appropriate to report any such incidents to the General Medical Council (GMC).
- IFST applications will be collated by each foundation school in accordance with the national timeline. All applications will then be shared with the UKFPO and reviewed by the national IFST review panel.
- Successful applicants will be placed in new locations in time for the start of the training year, provided that vacancies exist in the requested foundation school.
- The only IFST applications that will be reviewed outside of the national application window will be those that are due to truly exceptional circumstances. Applications submitted outside of the national timeline and process will be managed as an “Out of Window” IFST and it is the responsibility of individual foundation schools to manage such applications. Refer to the [Out of Window IFST guidance](#) for further information.

Supporting Documents

- Depending on the criterion under which you are applying, further supporting documents will also be required as mandatory pieces of evidence, at the point of submission. Please refer to the [criteria](#) descriptions for details of the mandatory evidence required under each criterion.
- It is your responsibility to ensure that you submit a complete application, with the required supporting statement(s) and any required pieces of evidence at the time of application.
- You are advised to check that you have correctly completed and included all mandatory documents for the criterion you are applying under, along with your application form.
- Any application that is not completed to the required standard and does not include the correct supporting documents or evidence will be rejected.

The Criteria

The inter-foundation school transfer (IFST) process has been developed to support applicants and current foundation doctors who have had an unforeseen and significant change in circumstances since their initial application to the Foundation Programme or during the two-year training programme.

The significant change in circumstances must fall under one of the nationally agreed criteria:

- 1) Parent or legal guardian
- 2) Primary carer
- 3) Health condition or disability
- 4) Extraordinary circumstances

Where individuals meet more than one criterion, the onus is on the applicant to decide which one they apply under, as this chosen criterion will be the one that the application is reviewed under, by the national panel. All applications must include supporting evidence specific to the criterion the applicant is applying under (see below).

Criterion 1: Parent or legal guardian

You are a parent or legal guardian of a child or children under the age of 18 at the start of the training year who reside(s) primarily with you and for whom you have significant caring responsibilities, and your circumstances have changed since submitting your original application or commencing your foundation training.

- You must **describe how your circumstances have changed** and why you need to move to meet your parental responsibilities.
- If the sole criterion is that you (or your partner) has become pregnant since submitting your Foundation Programme application or since commencing your foundation training, this will not be regarded as a reason for an IFST.
- If you and the child(ren) do not normally reside together, this should be referred to on the application form, and information supplied as to why the caring responsibilities remain equally significant.
- It is expected that the foundation school requested for the transfer will be the foundation school that you and your child(ren) live local to. Your proof of address must be for a home that falls within the boundaries of the requested foundation school.

Completing the application form:

- Part 1 of the application form must be completed by you, in which you provide an applicant statement with information about your current parental or legal guardian responsibilities and list the details of your child(ren).
- Part 2 of the application form is a supporting statement which must be completed by a supporting signatory who can confirm that they **know both you AND the child(ren)**. This person must have a **professional working relationship with the child(ren)**.

The signatory must:

- be over 18
- have a relevant professional working relationship with the child(ren) e.g. school teacher, headteacher, pre-school/nursery manager, midwife, health visitor, GP/doctor, social worker
- not be a doctor in training of any grade (up to ST8)
- not be related to the applicant by birth or marriage
- not be in a personal relationship with the applicant
- not live at the same address as the applicant.
- have known the applicant for **1 month or more**. In circumstances where this is not the case, the applicant must provide an explanation as to why their supporting signatory has not known them longer, and why an alternative signatory could not be used to support the application

If it is not clear from the role/job title of your supporting signatory how they know your child(ren) in a professional capacity, please provide information in the applicant statement box to explain the context of their professional working relationship with your child(ren).

You are required to supply the following supporting evidence:

- 1) A copy of the birth certificate for each child listed in your application.
 - If a birth certificate has been issued by a country outside of the UK and is not fully written in English, a translated copy must be provided so that the national review panel are able to read it.
 - If a translated copy is not provided the IFST application may be rejected by the review panel.
 - The applicant's name as the parent must be listed on the birth certificate for each of the children listed in the application (unless legal guardianship applies, see point 2 below).
- 2) For legal guardians, a copy of the legal document that confirms your status for the child named in the birth certificate (if applicable).

- 3) Proof of current address in your name, and which is in the region of the foundation school that you need to be allocated to (see appendix 1 for the list of acceptable documents).

Criterion 2: Primary Carer

You are the primary carer for someone who is disabled (as defined by the Equality Act 2010) and your circumstances have changed since submitting your original Foundation Programme application or commencing your foundation training.

- An applicant is eligible for this criterion if they are the primary carer for somebody. This person would normally be a partner, sibling, or parent.
- You must **describe how your circumstances have changed** and why you need to move to a different foundation school region. You must present clear arguments as to why current caring arrangements cannot continue as they presently do.
- If the person you are caring for is not your partner, sibling or parent, you will have to explain clearly and present a strong case as to why you have the role of primary carer. You must explain why alternative carers cannot be arranged.
- If you provide care for a person as part of a group of carers, e.g. a family, you are not eligible to apply under this criterion because you are not the “primary” carer.
- You must provide care over the course of a typical week and not just at weekends (that is, your caring responsibilities require you to be in the requested region on a constant basis.
- It is expected that you and the person who you care for in this category will remain at your current address(es), and the application for IFST will be to the foundation school local to that address. If this is not the case, relevant evidence must be supplied as to why caring arrangements could not continue as present.

Definition of 'disability' under the Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 defines a disabled person as someone who has a physical or mental impairment, and that the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. For the purposes of the Act:

- *substantial* means more than minor or trivial
- *long-term* means that the effect of the impairment has lasted / is likely to last for at least 12 months
- *normal day-to-day activities* include everyday things like eating, washing, walking, and shopping

People who have had a disability in the past that meets this definition are also covered by the scope of the Act. There are additional provisions relating to people with progressive conditions.

People with HIV, cancer and multiple sclerosis are protected by the Act from the point of diagnosis. People with visual impairments are automatically deemed to be disabled.

Some conditions, such as a tendency to set fires or addictions to non-prescribed substances, are specifically excluded.

Completing the application form

- Part 1 of the application form must be completed by you, in which you provide information about your primary carer responsibilities. The form includes a section within which you are asked to provide information about a care plan, detailing the caring arrangements and explaining how the responsibility of working as a foundation doctor and as the primary carer will be combined and managed.
- If you are already in receipt of a formal care plan (e.g. provided by social services) this can be provided **as an additional document**. You should complete all sections of the application form too.
- Part 2 of the application form must be completed the **general practitioner or social worker of the person being cared for**, which confirms your role as primary carer and explains the level of care you currently provide.

The signatory must:

- be over 18
- not be a doctor in training of any grade (up to ST8)
- not be related to the applicant by birth or marriage
- not be in a personal relationship with the applicant
- not live at the same address as the applicant.
- have known the applicant for **1 month or more**. In circumstances where this is not the case, the applicant must provide an explanation as to why their supporting signatory has not known them longer, and why an alternative signatory could not be used to support the application

You are required to supply the following supporting evidence:

- 1) Proof of current address in your name, which is in the region of the foundation school that you need to be allocated to (see appendix 1 for the list of acceptable documents).

Criterion 3: Health condition or disability

You have a health condition (physical or mental health) or disability for which treatment and ongoing follow up for the condition in the specified location is an absolute requirement.

You must **describe how your circumstances have changed** and why you need to move to a different foundation school region. You must present clear arguments as to why follow up arrangements and treatment can't continue as it presently does.

- As you already have this health condition or disability, it is expected that you will remain at your current address, and your IFST application will be to the foundation school local to that address
- If the request for a transfer is not for the foundation school local to your current address, relevant evidence must be supplied as to why follow up arrangements could not continue as present. The requirement is to provide information as to where your treatment needs to take place. The supporting evidence needs to be clear and explicit.
- Please note that as it is possible to take time off work to attend infrequent appointments, this can be accommodated within Foundation training and does not require an IFST.

Completing the application form

- Part 1 of the application form must be completed by you and includes the applicant's supporting statement.
- Part 2 of the application form must be completed by the current medical specialist treating your health condition or disability in which they are required to:
 - describe your current health condition (physical or mental health), or disability
 - describe the nature of the ongoing treatment
 - confirm the frequency of the ongoing treatment
 - explain why the follow up treatment must be delivered in a specific location rather than by other treatment centres in the UK, and why this is an absolute requirement.
- The information provided by the supporting signatory needs to be legible, clear and explicit, and it must state why you need to be pre-allocated to a particular foundation school.

The signatory must:

- be over 18
- not be a doctor in training of any grade (up to ST8)
- not be related to the applicant by birth or marriage
- not be in a personal relationship with the applicant
- not live at the same address as the applicant.
- have known the applicant for **1 month or more**. In circumstances where this is not the case, the applicant must provide an explanation as to why their supporting

signatory has not known them longer, and why an alternative signatory could not be used to support the application

You are required to supply the following supporting evidence.

- 1) Proof of current address in your name, which is in the region of the foundation school that you need to be allocated to (see appendix 1 for the list of acceptable documents).

Criterion 4: Extraordinary Circumstances

If you consider that there are extraordinary circumstances that require you to be in a particular location whilst you undertake your foundation programme, **and your circumstances have changed** since submitting your original application or commencing your foundation training, you can use this criterion to submit your IFST application.

Applications under this criterion are for extraordinary circumstances only, and not just any other circumstance for which evidence is not available to meet the requirements for one of the other criteria.

- Applicants should refer to the list below which gives examples of circumstances that would and would not be considered extraordinary.
- Applications that are submitted for circumstances that are not extraordinary and evidenced to have an absolute requirement for an IFST, will not be approved.
- Caring responsibilities that do not meet the requirements of criterion 2 (primary carer) are not considered to be extraordinary circumstances and should not be submitted under this criterion. Those that are, are likely to be rejected.

Any application which relates to health grounds must be submitted under criterion 3. This includes mental health conditions. Applicants who request a transfer to a foundation school for any type of health-related reason under criterion 4 are likely to be rejected.

Completing the application form

- Part 1 of the application form must be completed by you and includes the applicant's supporting statement.
- Part 2 of the application form must be completed by the supporting signatory. This must be an individual who holds a professional role and is in a position of authority in relation to the request. They should describe the current extraordinary situation and explain why foundation training can only be carried out in a specific location rather than another location in the UK.

The signatory must:

- be over 18
- not be a doctor in training of any grade (up to ST8)
- not be related to the applicant by birth or marriage
- not be in a personal relationship with the applicant
- not live at the same address as the applicant.
- have known the applicant for **1 month or more**. In circumstances where this is not the case, the applicant must provide an explanation as to why their supporting signatory has not known them longer, and why an alternative signatory could not be used to support the application

You are required to supply the following supporting evidence.

- 1) Proof of current address in your name, and which is in the region of the foundation school that you need to be allocated to (see appendix 1 for the list of acceptable documents).

Examples of extraordinary circumstances

The list below provides examples of circumstances that would be considered extraordinary by the national review panel. This list is not exhaustive, and there will be other circumstances considered extraordinary.

Athlete

An applicant who is an athlete supported on a national or international sports training programme. The requirement would be to remain in a particular location to continue their training.

- The application would need to be signed by the national coach/manager with an explanation to why the applicant needs to transfer to the location requested and cannot undertake their foundation programme elsewhere, as an athlete may be able to train at any athletics club.
- It would be acceptable if the application is part of a national training programme and the rest of the team are based in one location, for example.

Armed Forces Commitments

An applicant who is a member of the armed force reserves. The applicant intends to continue with this commitment whilst undertaking foundation training. The applicant therefore needs to access force training during the week and at weekends.

The application would need to be signed by their commanding officer and evidence of why the applicant needs to be at the location requested and not any other reservist training camp would need to be provided.

Adapted housing

An applicant who has a long-term disability which does not impact on their ability to work as a foundation doctor but requires an IFST on the basis of remaining in adapted housing.

- It is expected that the applicant would already be living in a home that has been adapted to support their needs, and the request for an IFST would be to the foundation school region within which that home address falls under.
- The application should be supported and signed by a professional from a housing department, social worker or medical practitioner.

Examples of circumstances NOT considered extraordinary

The list below provides examples of circumstances that would not be considered extraordinary by the national review panel, and the application would likely be rejected. This list is not exhaustive, and there will other circumstances which will not be considered extraordinary.

Relationships

- Long-term relationships
- Marriage
- Civil partnerships
- Common-law partnerships
- Family members

Housing

- Home/property ownership
- Wishing to live with a partner, family member or friend (including for financial reasons)
- Existing or future accommodation/ housing arrangements

Other

- Financial hardship
- Pursuits and hobbies
- Other work/voluntary roles

National review panel

A national IFST review panel will consider all IFST applications. The panel will comprise of senior members of the UKFPO, an independent Foundation School Director, Foundation School Manager, and foundation doctor representative.

The purpose of the review panel is to determine if the applicants meet the requirements for a transfer in accordance with the national IFST criteria. Applicants will be advised of the outcome of their application in line with the national timeline.

If an application is approved, a copy of the application form and supporting documentation will be forwarded to the requested foundation school which will work to identify a suitable programme to allocate to the successful IFST applicant.

If the panel does not approve an application for an inter-foundation school transfer, the applicant will be notified of the reason(s) why the application has not been approved.

Applicants will be advised of the national appeal process and the date by which an appeal must be submitted. Applicants can submit an appeal if they believe that processes or procedures have not been followed, or there is evidence of unfairness in how the process has been implemented, and the objectivity of decisions is called into question.

Approved transfers

The requested foundation school will seek to place all applicants who have been approved for a transfer following the national IFST review panels.

- In the event that there are more applicants approved for a transfer to a particular school than there are available places, applicants will be placed on a waiting list in case a place becomes available in time for the start of the F1 or F2 year.
- Applicants will remain the responsibility of their current foundation school until a programme in the receiving foundation school has been confirmed.

Applicants are advised that it might not be possible for a transfer to take place if there are no places available in the receiving foundation school.

Applicants are applying for an IFST due to changes in their circumstance which make it impossible to manage their training and their circumstances in their current allocated location. It is therefore expected that an applicant will take up any programme offered to them by the receiving school.

If an applicant decides not to take up the offered programme, the IFST application will be terminated, and the applicant will be expected to stay in their current foundation school.

Applicants **must** provide notice to their current/allocated employing organisation once a transfer has been finalised and they have been allocated to a new programme and employing organisation. Prior to this, foundation doctors should let their current employer and Foundation Programme Director know that they are applying for a transfer and awaiting the outcome.

Less Than Full-Time (LTFT) Training

An applicant's less than full-time (LTFT) status cannot be guaranteed and an application to work LTFT will need to be submitted to the new foundation school and employer.

A foundation doctor who is currently working LTFT will still be considered for a transfer to a full-time vacancy should one arise. The foundation doctor will be expected to follow local procedures and fulfil the requirements necessary to work LTFT in the receiving foundation school. This will require submitting a new application for LTFT.

Visas and sponsorship

Applicants who require a Skilled Worker visa and wish to transfer to a different nation to the one they are currently allocated to, will need to contact the visa sponsorship team for that nation to discuss the timeframes and process involved for sponsorship. The timeframes for the visa application process must also be considered.

Doctors who already hold a Skilled Worker visa for one nation and are therefore sponsored by that national sponsorship team, cannot use that visa in another nation.

- For example, if you are currently sponsored by NHS England you cannot use this sponsorship and visa for a training programme in Scotland. You would require a new CoS (certificate of sponsorship) and a new visa.
- If you apply for an IFST and your application is successful (and you have been allocated a programme in the new foundation school) you would need to notify your current sponsorship team for England/Scotland/Wales/Northern Ireland and let them know about your change in location.
- Doctors who already hold a Skilled Worker visa for one nation can use the same CoS and visa to remain working in that nation but **must notify the sponsorship team** if they successfully transfer to a new Foundation School and new employing organisation. The details of the sponsorship will need to be updated with the new employment and training details.
- Contact details for the sponsorship teams in each of the four nations can be found on this [webpage](#)

Appeal Process

The appeals process for IFST application outcomes will be managed in accordance with the UKFPO national appeals process and timeline. These details can be found in the Appeals section of the [Resources webpage](#) of the UKFPO website.

The UKFPO will convene a national appeals panel which will include senior members of the UKFPO team, an independent Foundation School Director, Foundation School Manager, and foundation doctor representative. The national appeals panel will convene to review all appeals received.

In the event that an appeal is upheld, the UKFPO will take the appropriate steps to try and find an appropriate training place with the requested foundation school in line with the initial request for transfer.

Applicants are advised that the principles of the IFST process will still apply, and that all transfers are dependent on availability of training places in the receiving foundation school.

Approval of an appeal for an inter-foundation school transfer does not guarantee a specific programme or locality within the receiving foundation school.

Out of window applications due to exceptional circumstances

The national process for managing Inter-foundation School Transfers (IFSTs) has been introduced to provide a consistent, robust and transparent process to allow foundation doctors to transfer between programmes across the UK.

Where possible, we would encourage foundation doctors to utilise the national IFST application window and process and follow the national timelines for fairness and continuity across the community of applicants and foundation doctors. However, in cases where **unforeseen situations occur**, and an applicant's or a Foundation doctor's personal circumstances change **outside of the national IFST timeline**, out of window applications will be accepted and managed by **foundation schools** as the need arises.

Out of window applications are reserved for **significant and unforeseen changes in circumstances requiring urgent review**, as they necessitate that a doctor **must** train in a particular geography and this review cannot wait until the next IFST window. There is no indicative list for such circumstances, as you cannot define exceptionality.

The Out of Window IFST process ensures that there is a flexible support mechanism in place for applicants/foundation doctors whose exceptional and unforeseen circumstances mean that a move to another foundation school is required at short notice. Any submission outside of the

national IFST window should be made to the current foundation school and **is not subject to the same review process or governance as the national IFST process.**

The UKFPO are not involved in any part of the Out of Window IFST application or review process.

Out of window IFSTs will only take place if both foundation schools agree that the applicant's personal circumstances have changed **after** the national closing date for IFST applications and meet one of the nationally agreed IFST criteria. There must also be a place available in the receiving foundation school.

If an applicant has already had an application rejected by the national IFST panel, a repeat out of window application stating the same circumstances will be declined by the foundation school.

Applicants must still use the national IFST application forms for an Out of Window application. The national IFST criteria and application guidance will still apply. Applicants will be required to demonstrate in their application that their circumstances meet one of the criteria and provide the supporting evidence which is required for the criterion they are applying under.

The completed application form must be submitted to the current foundation school (and not to the UKFPO).

Decisions around Out of Window IFST applications will be made by the Foundation School Directors, and as by definition, these are exceptional changes in circumstances where decisions are made on a case-by-case basis, **there is no mechanism for appeal against this decision.**

Applications will still be dependent on a vacancy being available at the receiving foundation school regardless of the circumstances.

Appendices

APPENDIX 1 – Acceptable evidence for proof of current address

Documentation which does not meet the below requirements will not be accepted by the national review panel, and the IFST application is likely to be rejected.

Statements that can be printed off at home from accounts online, such as bank statements or utility bills, are acceptable.

The UKFPO will accept the following documents as proof of address:

The document must:

- be in the **applicant's full name** (first name and surname) and not solely in somebody else's name.
 - If your name is shown as an initial for your first name, and then your surname in full, this is permitted.
 - If the document is addressed to both the applicant and to the other account holder (e.g. partner) and is therefore in both names, this is permitted (if it also meets all of the other criteria explained in this guide)

The following types of evidence will be accepted as per the below timeframes:

- Utility bill (gas, electricity, water, satellite television, landline phone bill, internet provider)
- Current UK driving licence (full and provisional accepted)
- Bank, Building Society or Credit Union statement or passbook
- Solicitors letter confirming recent house purchase or land registry confirmation of address
- Council or housing association rent card or tenancy agreement
- Benefit book or original notification letter from the Benefits Agency/child benefit
- NHS Medical card
- Letter of confirmation from GP's practice of registration with the surgery

The proof of address evidence must be dated/issued as per below:

- **Applicants who have not yet begun the foundation programme**
 - Proof of address must be dated/issued **after** the end of the application period for the foundation programme (i.e. on or after 09 October 2024 for FP 2025)
- **Current foundation doctors (either in F1 or F2)**
 - Proof of address must be dated /issued **after** commencement of the foundation programme. (i.e. on or after the August start date).

The following types of evidence will be accepted if they as per the below timeframe:

- Annual local authority council tax bill
- Annual mortgage statement (original) from a recognised lender
- Annual HMRC self-assessment letters or tax demand
- Electoral Register entry
- Annual TV licence letter
- Student loan/finance letter

The proof of address evidence must be dated/issued as per below:

- The proof of address **must** be dated/issued **within the last 12 months prior to the close of the 2025 IFST application window** (refer to [IFST application timeline](#) for the application closing date).

Documents we will not accept include, but are not limited to:

- Mobile phone bills
- Credit card statements

APPENDIX 2 – Fitness to Practice (FTP) Disclosure

An applicant's current/allocated foundation school is required to inform a receiving foundation school of any applicant who has a positive fitness to practice declaration. This is to ensure the foundation school is aware of the circumstances and can provide additional support or adjustments for the doctor during their training programme.

Applicants who have not yet started the foundation programme

Applicants should declare any fitness to practice issues to their allocated foundation school, by sending an email directly to the Foundation School Director and/or Foundation School Manager. This information should also be provided on your STEP form. Information about the STEP process can be found on the UKFPO [website](#).

Current Foundation doctors in training (F1 or F2)

Foundation doctors should declare any fitness to practice issues to their allocated foundation school, by sending an email directly to the Foundation School Director and/or Foundation School Manager. This information should also be provided in your Form R on your ePortfolio.

Foundation schools may decide to reject an application for an inbound IFST due to a positive fitness to practice declaration. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis.

The sharing of information between foundation schools will be done so in accordance with GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) rules. Information regarding fitness to practice issues will be shared with relevant parties at the receiving foundation school on a need-to-know basis only.