

# Applying to the 2026 Foundation Programme



# Foundation Schools across the four nations

There are 18 Foundation Schools across the UK

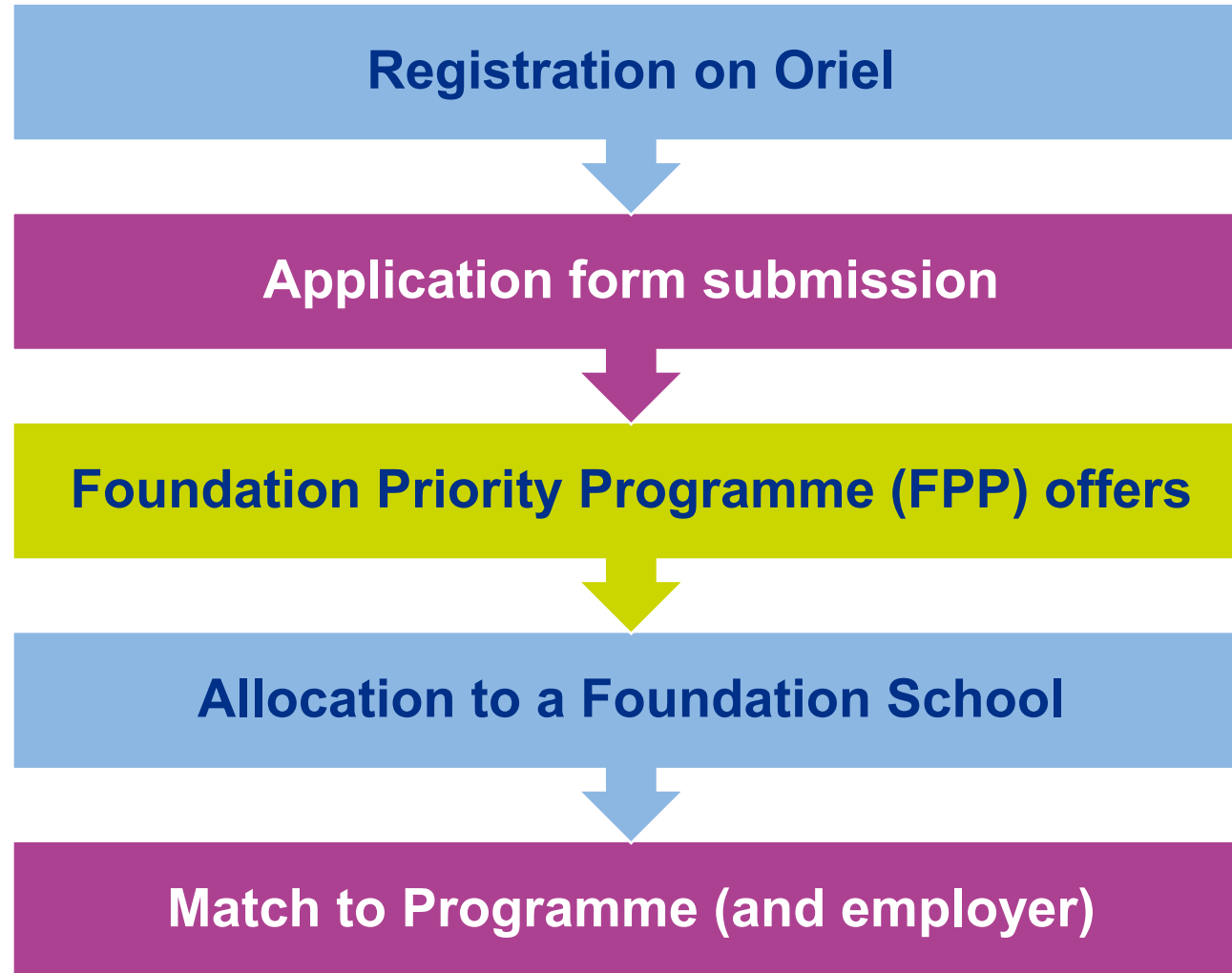
NHS England (NHSE) Foundation Schools in England	
East of England	Severn
Kent, Surrey & Sussex	Trent
Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Rutland	Wessex
London	West Midlands Central
North West of England	West Midlands North
Northern	West Midlands South
Oxford (Thames Valley)	Yorkshire & Humber
Peninsula	

Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW)
Wales Foundation School

NHS Education for Scotland (NES)
Scotland Foundation School

Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency (NIMDTA)
Northern Ireland Foundation School

# National application process



# Application Dates

## Registration on Oriel

- From **16 September 2025 (09:00 BST)**
- Nominated UK medical school applicants will receive an email with a link to register and confirm their nomination on Oriel.
- UK medical school applicants **must not create an account on Oriel in advance.** Please **only use the link emailed to you to register on Oriel.** (You will otherwise end up with two accounts which causes confusion).

## National application window

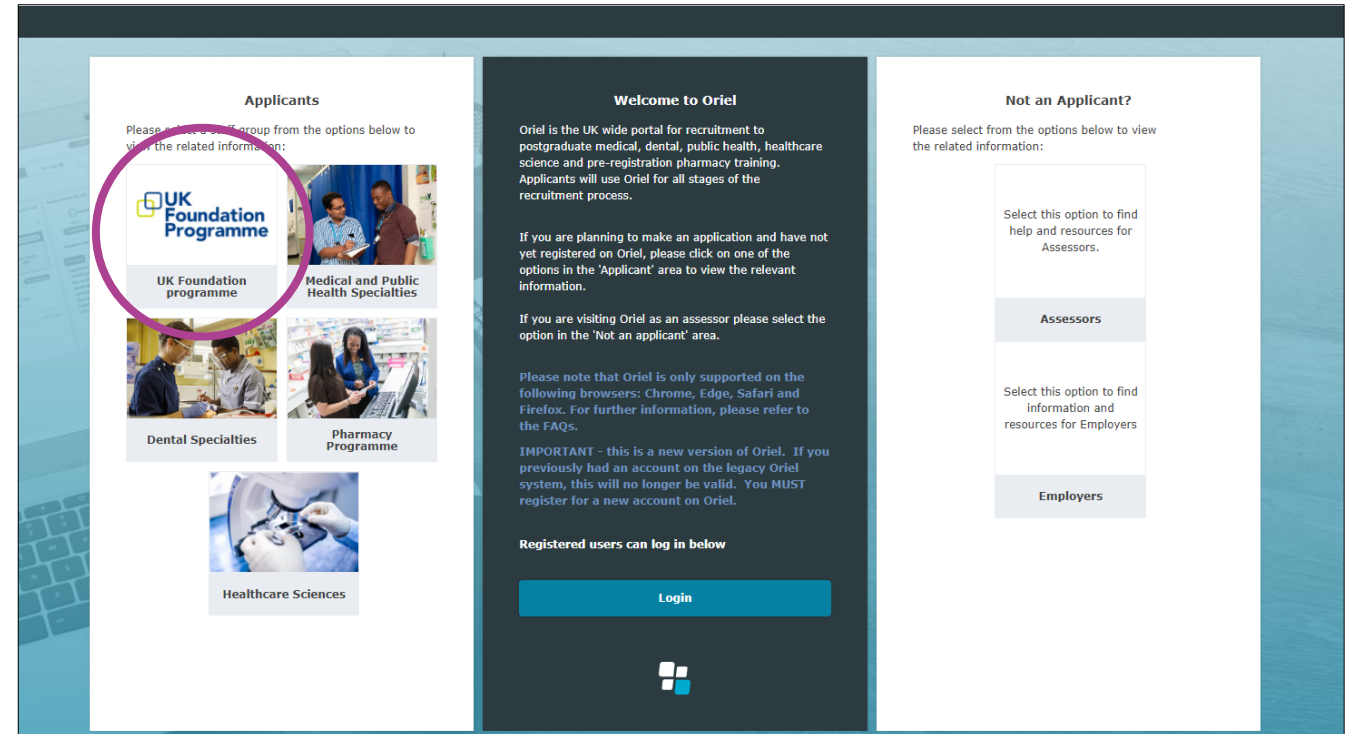
- **Opens 24 September 2025 (09:00 BST)**
- **Closes 08 October 2025 (12:00 midday BST)**

No late applications considered under any circumstances

# Oriel

Oriel is the UK wide portal for recruitment to postgraduate medical, dental, public health, healthcare science and foundation pharmacy training.

The application system is used to manage applications and the allocation process for the Foundation Programme (FP and FPP vacancies).



[www.oriel.nhs.uk](http://www.oriel.nhs.uk)

# UK Medical School Nomination

## UK applicants will be nominated by the medical school

- Applicants who are expecting to qualify from a UK medical school **by 4<sup>th</sup> August 2026 will be nominated by their medical school** as eligible to apply for the UKFP.
- Applicants who qualified **on or after 5<sup>th</sup> August 2024** can also be re-nominated by their medical school as eligible to apply for UKFP 2026. This also applies to applicants who were withdrawn from a previous application (or chose to withdraw) and did not begin their foundation training programme.
  - Applicants who wish to be re-nominated **must inform their medical school**, so that their details are included during the nomination process. **Re-nomination is not automatic.**

# UK Medical School Nomination

## UK applicants who **WILL NOT** be nominated by the medical school

- Military applicants are not required to apply via Oriel and therefore do not need to be nominated for the application process. Training programmes are organised separately by the Defence Deanery.
- If you have qualified from a UK medical school **on or prior to 4<sup>th</sup> August 2024**, you must apply via the [Eligibility application process](#) first (you cannot be re-nominated by your medical school).

# Eligibility Application Process

This is a pre-application process used by the UKFPO to determine if an applicant is eligible to apply to the 2-year FP

- UK graduates are only required to apply via this route if they have qualified from a UK medical school **on or prior to 04 August 2024**.
- Applicants who are studying at or have qualified from a UK medical school campus outside of the UK, i.e. St George's University of London in Cyprus, Newcastle University Medicine in Malaysia (NUMed), or Queen Mary University of London in Malta must also apply via the Eligibility route. (This applies to both non-UK applicants and settled UK nationals).
- The [Eligibility application window is](#) open 02 – 23 July 2025 (12:00 midday BST)



# One application form on Oriel

- **One all-encompassing application form**, applicants will only submit one main application form that will include:
- The option to apply for [Pre-Allocation](#) (an additional form and supporting evidence is also required for this and must be uploaded onto Oriel).
- The option to apply for [Foundation Priority Programmes \(FPP\)](#)

# Foundation Priority Programmes (FPP)

- Incentives for these posts include financial benefits, teaching and leadership opportunities and specialty experiences (look on foundation school websites for details). Refer to [FPP page](#) on UKFPO site.
- Select FPP in main application form if you wish to apply
- You are required to [preference individual FPP programmes](#)
- FPP offers will take place before national allocation to foundation schools
- Offers will be made based on a computer-generated rank, and preferences for FPP.
  - The rank generated for FPP will be different to the rank generated as part of the PIA algorithm in the main FP allocation process.
- If you accept an FPP offer, your FP application will be automatically withdrawn

# Specialised Foundation Programmes

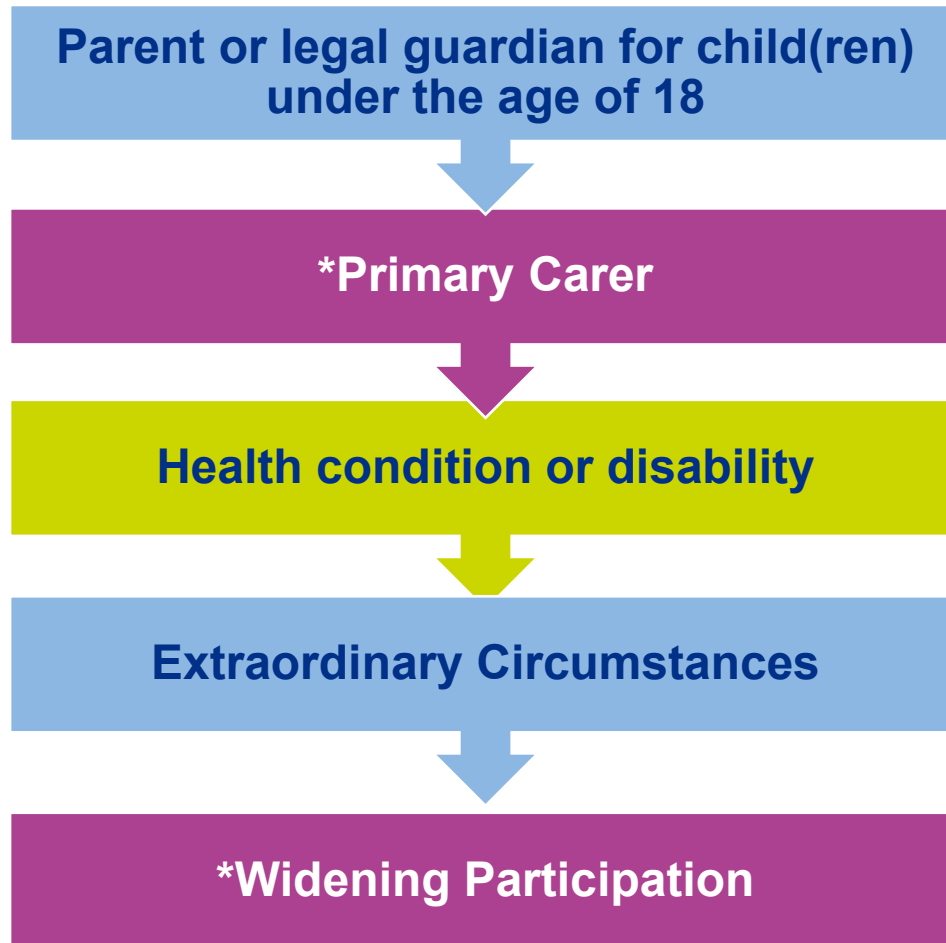
SFP programmes allow foundation doctors to explore research/education/leadership as a career at the same time as developing clinical and generic skills. Foundation doctors are allocated an academic or specialised supervisor

- The process for SFP recruitment in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland changed last year for FP 2025, and the new process remains the same for FP 2026.
- The process in Wales also remains the same (SFP programmes are matched to applicants as part of the main allocation process).
- Refer to each nation's website for details of their SFP process.  
[Links available on this webpage.](#)

# Linked Applications

- Both applicants must preference foundation schools in the same order
- Linking is only possible for FP (it is not possible for FPP or SFP)
- Links will **not be** honoured if: -
  - a) Either or both applicants accept an FPP programme
  - b) The PIA algorithm is unable to match both applicants to the same school
  - c) Either or both applicants are pre-allocated to a foundation school
- Linked applicants will be allocated to school according to the **lower ranked** applicant
- Local foundation school programme matching policies vary at group/programme level

# Pre-allocation Criteria



These are the criteria for pre-allocation to a foundation school for UKFP 2026.

**\*IMPORTANT:** there have been changes made to some criterion. These changes are listed on the next slides.

Applications can only be made under **one** criterion, and supporting evidence must be provided at the time of application.

**Additional or omitted evidence will not be accepted after the submission of the application (or during the appeals process)**

# Pre-allocation Criteria

## Criterion with NO changes

Criterion	Change for 2026 ?	Details
<b>Parent or legal guardian</b>	No change	<p>This criterion remains the same.</p> <p>Applicants can apply to be pre-allocated to <b>any foundation school</b> due to their current personal circumstances.</p>
<b>Health condition or disability</b>	No change	<p>This criterion remains the same.</p> <p>Applicants can apply to be pre-allocated to <b>any foundation school</b> due to their current personal circumstances.</p>
<b>Extraordinary circumstances</b>	No change	<p>This criterion remains the same.</p> <p>Applicants can apply to be pre-allocated to <b>any foundation school</b> due to their current personal circumstances.</p>

# Pre-allocation Criteria

## Changes to criterion for FP 2026

Criterion	Change for 2026 ?	Details of change
Significant caring responsibilities	Yes	This criterion has reverted to <b>Primary Carer</b> only. Applicants will be required to submit a care plan as part of the evidence required for their application. Pre-allocation will <b>only be to the foundation school local to the medical school</b> to reflect the current personal circumstances.
Educational circumstances	Yes	This criterion has been completely removed.
Widening Participation	Yes	Pre-allocation will <b>only be to the foundation school local to the medical school</b> to reflect the current personal circumstances.

# Pre-allocation

## Proof of address

- **Driving licences **will no longer be accepted** as proof of address (this includes full and provisional)**
- Applications which do not include an acceptable proof of address will be unsuccessful.
- Applicants should refer to the list of acceptable evidence for proof of address, e.g. bank statement, utility bill....
  - The updated proof of address list for FP 2026 will be published in due course. The list used for FP 2025 is still available to view in the guidance on the [UKFPO website](#).



# Pre-allocation - general information

- Application is via Oriel (as part of main application form)
  - Word application forms for completion (on UKFPO website)
  - Evidence (completed form and supporting documents) required to be uploaded to Oriel
- Circumstance(s) must be relevant at the time of application
- Supporting evidence and proof of address **MUST** be submitted at the time of application. Cannot be submitted at a later date.
- Not applicable for FPP
- Applications will be considered by a national panel

# National Allocation

## Preference Informed Allocation (PIA)

### Allocation to a Foundation School takes place in spring 2026

- Every eligible applicant who remains in the Foundation Programme application process after allocation to FPP programmes, will be given a computer-generated rank by the Oriel system.
- The ranking will not be informed by performance at medical school.
- Linked applicants will be allocated based on the lower ranked applicant of the pair
- Further details about how PIA works can be found on the [UKFPO website](https://www.ukfpo.org.uk/)

# National Allocation

## Preference Informed Allocation (PIA)

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 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 preferenced foundation school which still has available places. It will do this until it reaches the end of the applicant list.

# Supporting Trainees Entering Practice (STEP)

- Supports transition from medical school to foundation training; two-way transfer
- Health and welfare, educational progress and professional performance, and patient safety
- Students complete STEP form online
- Medical school endorses information
- [Guidance and timeline on UKFPO website.](#)

# Mandatory Shadowing and Induction

- All new F1s are required to attend a mandatory period of shadowing and induction. They will shadow the F1 whose job that they will be taking up and completing the relevant aspects of trust or health board based induction prior to the official start of their F1 post on the first Wednesday of August.
  - The exact duration of the mandatory shadowing and induction period varies by employer and foundation school but will be a minimum of 4 working days.
- This shadowing period aims to help equip new medical graduates with the local knowledge and skills needed to provide safe, high quality patient care, from their first day as an F1 doctor.
- Applicants should take care not to book holidays or important events (e.g. weddings) during the mandatory shadowing and induction week

# References

## Your referee

- You must provide the name and contact details of **one academic referee**.
- Ensure you have asked the individual if they are prepared to provide a reference for you before you nominate them.
- Your referee must be from your medical school. This might be a professor, senior lecturer, lecturer, reader, director of clinical studies or a person holding an honorary medical school contract as advised by your medical school.
- The referee should be someone who has **ideally known you for one year, but for a minimum of six months**, and **should be aware of your performance during ALL years** spent at the medical school.

# Employment

## Employer responsibilities:

- Pre-employment checks, including occupational health and reasonable adjustments
- References
- Pay
- Pension
- Rotas / annual leave queries
- Contract of employment
- Accommodation (if applicable)
- Programme/timetable for mandatory F1 shadowing and induction



# Application submission

## Important

- Do not leave your Oriel registration and application to the last minute!
- **Late applications are not accepted under ANY circumstances, and extensions to finish a partially completed application will not be granted.**
- Applications **cannot be edited** once submitted.
  - After submitting your application, you can only amend the order you have preferenced foundation schools and update your Oriel profile and referee details.
- You will receive an email from Oriel confirming your application has been submitted successfully. You should check separately through the dashboard on Oriel to confirm that you have fully submitted your application. You may also wish to take a screen shot of your confirmed submission.



# Useful Tips

Ensure you read the [applicant guidance](#) carefully and refer to it at various parts of the application process

Check your Oriel account and registered email address for updates regularly

Refer to the [application timeline](#) throughout the application process

Add important dates to your diary - make a note of deadlines

Refer to [Foundation School websites](#) for training programme information

Identify a referee who will be able to submit your reference

# Thank you for listening!

Any questions?

[helpdesk@foundationprogramme.nhs.uk](mailto:helpdesk@foundationprogramme.nhs.uk)

[www.foundationprogramme.nhs.uk](http://www.foundationprogramme.nhs.uk)