

NOMENCLATURE & GRADING DOCTORS 1948 - 2012

NHS TRAINING GRADES: 1948-2005

Pre-registration house officer (PRHO): also termed 'House Physician when working in a medical specialty and House Surgeon in a surgical specialty. Where the PRHO works with an SHO (see below) the former is sometimes casually referred to as 'Junior house officer' but this is not a recognised official term. Mean age 23-24.

Immediately after obtaining a medical degree, medical students are appointed as a PRHO. Each post is for 6 months and is normally in general medicine or general surgery (although there are a few exceptions - eg PRHO in general practice). These doctors are not fully registered with the General Medical Council (GMC) so not allowed to practice any form of medicine outside the post to which they were appointed. They are first-on-call on their hospital team and work only under close supervision by the more senior members of the team.

Senior House Officer (SHO): After 12 months as a PRHO, doctors register with the GMC and can apply for SHO posts. These are normally for 12 months (sometimes 6 months) and can be in any of the medical, surgical or laboratory specialties. They provide basic clinical training; an individual doctor may undertake as many SHO posts as they wish, in a single or in different specialties, usually while studying for higher examination(s). Those intending to become general practitioners spend 2 years in such posts; for intended hospital consultants this might stretch to 3 or more years. In University Hospitals, SHOs in general medicine and general surgery might have a PRHO working under them. In the other specialties and in district hospitals they will often be first-on-call, and answerable to a registrar. Mean age 24-27.

Registrar: In general, SHOs applied for registrar posts once they had fixed on the specialty they wished to pursue. Most will have completed at least part of the higher examinations needed for consultant practice. Posts were held for 2-3 years (1 year if in general practice). Those working in hospital specialties often rotated through various teams within the hospital or through different hospitals. They undertook day to day supervision of the SHOs and were answerable to consultants. Mean age 27-32.

Senior registrars: Appointed within University hospitals for up to 4 years, these doctors would have completed higher exams. and were almost certainly destined to become consultants. Although answerable to a consultant, they would

steadily take on more and more individual responsibility and make independent decisions about managing patients. Towards the end of their post they would obtain a Certificate of Completion of Specialist Training (CCST) and start applying for consultant posts. Mean age 30-36.

Staff grades: Not a training post, these are doctors without a CCST given a fixed or even a permanent contract to work at a 'sub-consultant' level. In general they would aspire to consultant level clinical responsibilities but usually without the management and administrative tasks of the latter. The majority are international graduates.

Consultants: Doctors who have completed their training and practice independently within a hospital. They are answerable administratively to a clinical director (usually an older consultant) and thence to the hospital's medical director.

NHS TRAINING GRADES: Since 2005

A new system was introduced from 2005, aimed at reducing the length of training and co-ordinating posts between all hospitals in an NHS teaching region (called 'a deanery'). These doctors are employed by the appropriate University.

Foundation year doctor (FY1 and FY2)

Equivalent to the old PRHO and SHO grades this now represents the general medical training received by all doctors, after which they choose which specialty (including GP) they wish to pursue.

Specialty registrar (ST1, 2 etc etc)

Six years are now spent at this level, while taking higher exams. and rotating through various aspects of a particular specialty, 3-12 months at a time - not always in the same hospital. The STs supervise Foundation Year doctors. There may be more than one on duty at the same time, often one more senior to the other in terms of the number of years of experience. AT the end of their course they take a CCST.

Consultants and staff grades as before

Many doctors, especially those aiming at an academic career as a University lecturer/professor or those in the more sought after specialties are likely to spend some time out of the NHS undertaking research or working outside the

UK so that time from qualification to a consultant post may be longer than stated in the Table below..

Medical graduates employed but Universities in research often have NHS duties as well. They will be graded as lecturer or senior lecturer and honorary specialist registrar or honorary consultant.

	Old system	New system (Modernising Medical Careers)	
Year 1:	Pre-registration house officer (PRHO) - one year	Foundation Doctor (FY1 and FY2) - 2 years	
Year 2:	Senior house officer (SHO)		
Year 3:	a minimum of two years, although often more	Specialty Registrar	Specialty Registrar
Year 4:	GP registrar Registrar & one year	(ST 1,2 etc) in a hospital	(ST 1,2 etc) in general practice:
Year 5:	Senior Registrar five to seven	speciality: minimum six	three years
Years 6-10:	years General practitioner total time in training: 4 years	years Consultant total time in training: minimum 8	General practitioner total time in training: 5 years
Year 10-12:	Consultant total time in training: minimum 8-10 years	years	
Optional	Training may be extended by pursuing medical research (usually two-three years), usually with clinical duties as well	Training is competency based, times shown are a minimum. Training may be extended by obtaining an Academic Clinical Fellowship for research or by dual certification in another speciality	