



## **ISN Fellowship Program - Advice for Applicants and Hosts in the United Kingdom**

### Background

The UK continues to host many ISN Fellows. The high reputation of nephrology training in the UK and the pre-eminence of English as the international medical language mean that UK nephrology has continued to make a disproportionately large contribution to the ISN Fellowship program.

Hands-on clinical training (as opposed to clinical observership) is a crucial part of the educational experience of most ISN Fellows. However over recent years changes in UK Government regulations have created difficulties for some ISN Fellows who have been offered training in the UK. A number of applicants have been unsuccessful in obtaining visas or other necessary permits to enter the UK and undertake clinical practice. ISN has needed to find alternative training opportunities for some of them in other countries.

### Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide practical advice which will enable the ISN Fellow and the UK host to navigate the necessary processes in a manner which is as timely and efficient as possible.

### Role of Royal Colleges

The International Office of the Royal College of Physicians of London and the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health are able to help with some of the challenges described above and can support the ISN fellows to come to the UK through the sponsorship of the College under the Medical Training Initiative (Route A).

The Medical Training Initiative (MTI) Route A scheme has a number of academic and other professional criteria for eligibility, and these are appropriately assessed through the ISN Fellowship application process. At least 3 years since medical qualification are required, and a postgraduate qualification in their home country is needed. The Fellow must also obtain a sufficient pass in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) – a minimum score of 7.5 overall is required. It is necessary under this scheme that the applicant is paid a salary/stipend/scholarship above the UK National Living Wage, and the present ISN Fellowship stipend is sufficient.

Through the MTI scheme, the RCP and RCPCH facilitate General Medical Council registration for international medical graduates seeking short term training in the UK and who have the intention to return to their home countries on completion. The Colleges also support the

candidates, where required, to obtain a Tier 5 visa. The procedure for each is described below.

### GMC registration

1. The host consultant should contact the Royal College international Office for an application on receiving the candidates CV from the ISN
2. The candidate will need to be formally interviewed using an interview template provided by the College for the purpose. The interview may be conducted over Skype or telephone. The interview notes will need to be kept.
3. The host consultant will be asked to provide the International Office with the following:
  - full job description and timetable/rota for the post
  - interview notes (it is expected that the candidate is selected through an interview process using the college template)
  - formal job offer
  - confirmation of funding
  - a copy of candidate's passport
  - a completed MTI Route A Tier 5 application form signed by the host consultant, the medical staffing officer and a representative of the Deanery. The RCP has contact details of the Deanery signatory and will provide this; alternatively the RCP can request the Deanery sign off.
4. The International Office will contact the candidate and send them an application pack as soon as the details of the candidates are received.
5. Once the candidate returns a satisfactory application pack with references the International Office will apply for the GMC registration on their behalf. The minimum criteria a candidate will need to fulfil (such as experience, qualifications and language skills) can be found at [www.rcplondon.ac.uk/International/iss.htm](http://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/International/iss.htm).

### Immigration

The MTI tier 5 visa has been designed specifically with doctors in mind who are coming for training for up to 24 months who are funded by their home government, their hospital or university, charitable trust or coming into a paid NHS post. The Royal College International Offices support the candidate to obtain Tier 5 visa where required.

Application is through Route A of the MTI (Route B is for doctors who are interviewed by the RCP & matched to posts submitted by the Trusts). The best way to gather the evidence for an MTI is to:

1. Approach the relevant Deanery informally to ensure that they will support the post, and sign the MTI form, before going too far down the path of planning to bring the trainee over to the UK
2. Request an MTI form from the RCP London International Office or RCPCH MTI Coordinator (for paediatric fellows).

3. Check that the trainee's funding will meet the minimum wage requirements of the UK (for a 40 hour training week the funding should be no less than £15,000 )
4. Ensure Part 1 of the form is signed by Medical Staffing and the supervising consultant
5. Send the form to the relevant Deanery, together with the documentation detailed on the form, and request them to sign Part 2.
6. Send the form back to the International Office at the Royal College. This will then be processed, and once the doctor's GMC registration has been granted, the Royal College will help the candidate to apply for visa. Alternatively, the Medical Staffing Department of the host hospital will be able to apply for the MTI Tier 5 visa. It is best to go through the College as the College offers various kinds of support for the candidate whilst in the UK.

**The application process, from initial contact to the day the doctor receives the entry visa is about 6 months (see flow chart below).**

MTI visas are currently for a maximum of 24 months.

RCP contact: **Isla Horesh**, International Office, Royal College of Physicians, 11 St. Andrews Place, Regent's Park, London NW1 4LE, United Kingdom  
Telephone: +44 (0)20 7935 1174 Ext: 319  
Direct fax: +44 (0)20 74864034  
[mti@rcplondon.ac.uk](mailto:mti@rcplondon.ac.uk)

RCPCH contact: **Monika Filasiewicz**, MTI Coordinator, The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health  
5-11 Theobalds Road, London WC1X 8SH  
Tel: 020 7092 6140  
Email: [monika.filasiewicz@rcpch.ac.uk](mailto:monika.filasiewicz@rcpch.ac.uk)

It is important that the Fellow or Home Mentor should not begin any of these discussions or application processes on their own without discussion with the Royal College International Office.

Provided the Fellow and Home Mentor are available by e-mail to respond to any necessary queries, it can usually be expected that all approvals will be obtained within 6 months of the beginning of the application process.

### Timing of Application

It is very important that this process is begun **at least 6 months (preferably 9 months)** before the Fellow is expected to arrive in the UK. It is required for the Fellow to be in clinical practice at home when the application is made in order to fulfil the requirements.

The Royal College advises that it may take 3 to 6 months to process the application. Waiting until the Fellow is already in the UK to begin this process may only bring frustration and disappointment.

The ISN normally requires that a Fellowship begins within 3 months of the award. However ISN recognises these special circumstances in the UK, and will allow 6 months from the award to the start of the fellowship.

## Role of the ISN

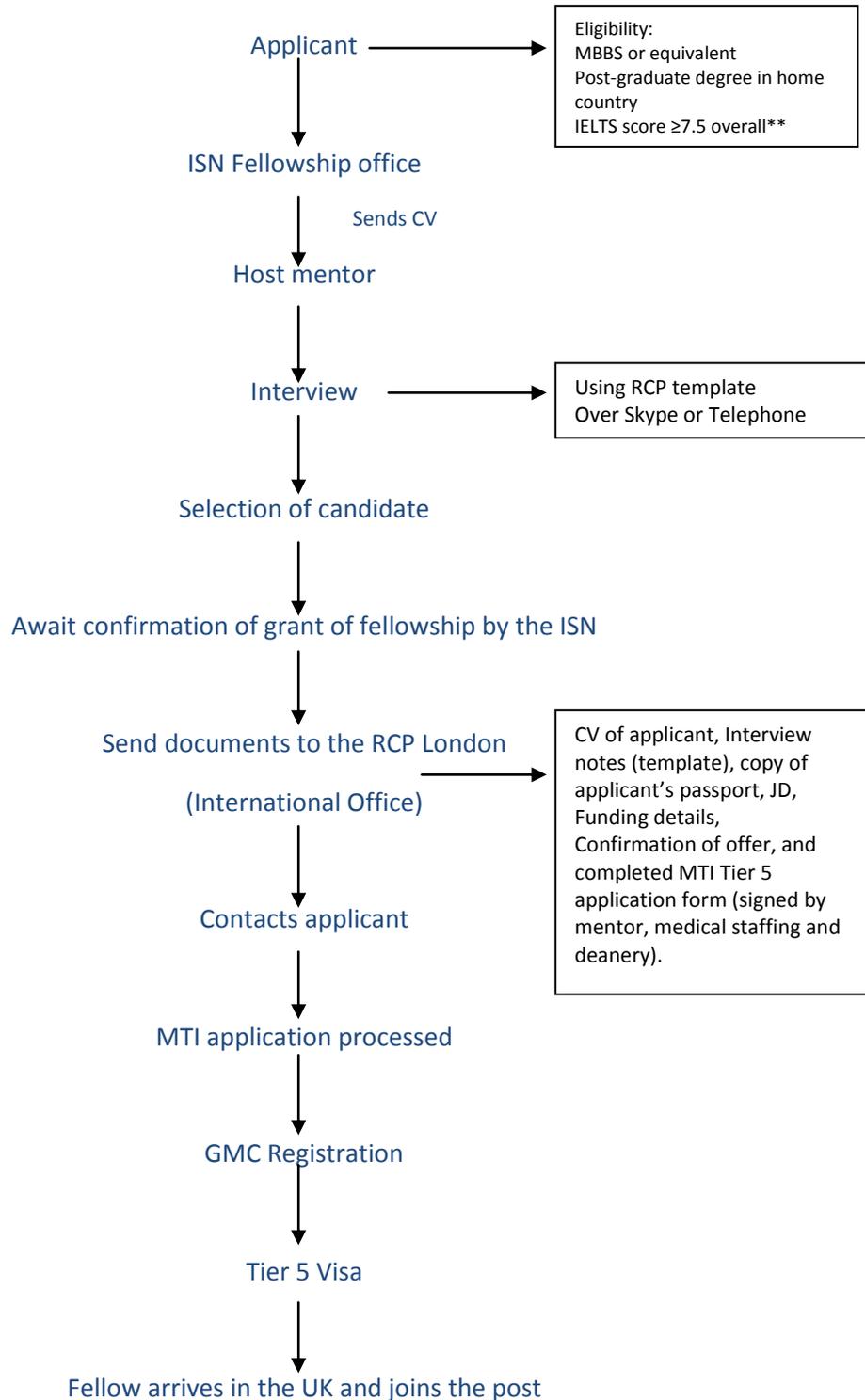
ISN is pleased to provide this advice but cannot enter into direct discussions with UK authorities on behalf of the Fellow or host.

*Indranil Dasgupta & John Feehally*

On behalf of the ISN and the Renal Association International Committee

April 2016

## Flow chart of the process\*



\*It takes around 3 to 4 months to process the documents by the RCP and about 6 months from initial contact to obtain GMC registration and UK visa. Therefore it is advisable to start the whole process at least 6 months (preferably 9 months) before the fellow is expected to arrive in the UK.

\*\* IELTS should be applied for early as it often takes months in the queue to have the chance to sit the exam and multiple attempts may be needed to get the required score.