



NHS Management Executive  
St. Andrew's House  
Edinburgh EH1 3DG

18 March 1996

Dear Colleague

**IMPLEMENTING THE REFORMS OF SPECIALIST  
MEDICAL TRAINING:**

**I - COMMISSIONING THE SPECIALIST REGISTRAR  
GRADE**

**II - A GUIDE TO SPECIALIST REGISTRAR TRAINING**

1. This letter provides detailed information on the introduction of the Specialist Registrar grade.
2. In October 1995 the UK Health Departments announced the commissioning of the Specialist Registrar grade and other key reforms of specialist medical training arising from *Hospital Doctors: Training for the Future* (the 'Calman Report'). Specialist training programmes were successfully introduced in 2 vanguard specialties, general surgery and diagnostic radiology, in December last year.
3. Appendix A provides information on, and the timetable for introducing the Specialist Registrar grade in all other specialties in the year from 1 April 1996. It follows Circular NHS MEL(1995)70 on Commissioning the Specialist Registrar grade issued on 31 October 1995.
4. I should be grateful if information on the roll-out programme could be disseminated widely and brought to the attention of all those who need be involved to ensure that they can implement the changes.

Yours sincerely

*MR SIBBALD*

M R SIBBALD  
Director of Human Resources

**Addressees**

For action:

Chief Executives, NHS Trusts

General Managers, Health Boards

Executive Director, Scottish Council  
for Postgraduate Medical and Dental  
Education

General Manager, Common Services  
Agency

General Manager, State Hospitals  
Board for Scotland

Postgraduate Deans and Director

For information:

Deans of Faculties of Medicine

General Manager, Health Education  
Board for Scotland

**Enquiries to:**

Mr F Brewis  
Directorate of Human Resources  
Department of Health  
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St Andrew's House  
EDINBURGH EH1 3DG

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COMMON SERVICES AGENCY	
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**APPENDIX A**

**IMPLEMENTING THE REFORMS OF SPECIALISTS MEDICAL TRAINING**

**I - COMMISSIONING THE SPECIALIST REGISTRAR GRADE**

**II - A GUIDE TO SPECIALIST REGISTRAR TRAINING**

**Timetable**

1. The Specialist Registrar grade, which will replace the existing registrar and senior registrar grades, will be launched formally on 1 April 1996 - the *Grade Commissioning Date*. During the following 12 months the process of transition to the new grade for all specialties will begin. The roll-out programme, which has been agreed between the medical Royal Colleges, postgraduate deans and the UK Health Departments, will be managed in 4 tranches starting on: 1 April, 1 July, 1 October and 1 January.

2. The specialties starting transition on 1 April 1996 are:

- *Anaesthetics;*
- *Obstetrics and gynaecology;*
- *Orthopaedic surgery;*
- *Urology.*

A proposed roll-out programme for the transition of all specialties is at Annex A; this will be reviewed regularly and may be adjusted if necessary.

**Action and Further Guidance**

3. Employers should ensure that:

- the transition to the new Specialist Registrar grade begins on 1 April 1996 with the 4 specialties listed at paragraph 2;
- *no new appointments* to the registrar or senior registrar grades in those 4 specialties are made after 1 April 1996. Therefore, *with immediate effect*, all higher specialist training appointments advertised in these specialties will be for placements in Specialist Registrar training programmes;
- *it is essential that, in the specialties which begin their transition in the later tranches from 1 July onwards, the normal registrar and senior registrar recruitment procedures are applied until individual specialties begin their transition. If it is necessary to vary the date on which recruitment to existing grades ceases, a separate announcement will be made.*

4. Employers need to be aware that:

- transition to the new grade for all remaining specialties will be phased in a rolling programme in the 12 months following the *Grade Commissioning Date* on 1 April 1996. The agreed start date for each specialty will be announced in advance by the Health Departments;
- all doctors who transfer to the Specialist Registrar grade should receive new contracts in the grade. Details of revised terms and conditions of service will be circulated by the Health Departments;
- Initial Specialist Registrar numbers for each specialty in Scotland were issued in September. The Department will continue to review every year the numbers of doctors in higher specialist training; and
- SCPMDE and postgraduate deans will work with Trusts to ensure that sufficient and appropriate structured training programmes are provided.

5. These are significant changes. They have major implications both for the medical profession and for the organisation of medical services in NHS hospitals. The changes will produce shorter, more structured and organised training which will ultimately enable the NHS to provide higher quality care to patients.

*A Guide to Specialist Registrar Training*

6. The first edition of *A Guide to Specialist Registrar Training*, published in November last year, was designed to help launch the specialist registrar (SpR) grade in the 2 vanguard specialties which began their transition to the new training programmes on 1 December 1995. A new, revised edition which will be used during the coming year when all the remaining specialties will begin transition, and which will be distributed by regional Postgraduate Deans, has now been published.

7. The new guide is the result of an extensive consultation exercise with the NHS and discussions with interested parties. Its publication will be widely publicised by SCPMDE and Postgraduate Deans. New SpR terms and conditions of service and pay scales will also be published.

8. The overall aim is to make sure that a wide understanding is achieved of the significant changes to training which are heralded by the new grade. It is important, of course, that existing higher specialist trainees are aware of the choices available to them and the effect the transition period will have in the coming year. It is equally important to explain the new arrangements to SHOs and other doctors who will be aspiring to enter SpR training once the transfer of existing higher specialist trainees has been completed. Not least, if a smooth transition is to be achieved, those who will be engaged in delivering and organising training, conducting recruitment and managing trainees require detailed guidance.

9. The guide is designed as an operating manual which covers all aspects of the grade from entry, through progress to the arrangements for leaving the grade. Detailed as it is, however, it is doubtful whether all the questions and problems which will arise over the next year have been foreseen. For this reason, Health Departments will monitor the transition period closely and issue further guidance when necessary.

10. The Health Departments aim to provide all existing higher specialist trainees, and a broad range of others, with their own copy of the guide. Health Departments aim to reach as wide an audience as possible over the next few weeks. Employers and clinical tutors should promote awareness of the literature now being issued and ensure that copies are available in Trust libraries.

11. Further copies of the Guide can be obtained free of charge from: Department of Health Distributions, PO Box 410, Thorpe Arch Trading Estate, Wetherby, West Yorkshire LS23 7LA.

12. Any enquiries on the content of this letter or the guide itself should be addressed to Francis Brewis (0131-244 2479) Scottish Office Department of Health, Room 72, St Andrew's House (*please note we do not carry supplies of the guide at St Andrew's House*).

**ROLL-OUT PROGRAMME OF SPECIALTIES****1 April 1996**

Anaesthetics  
 Obstetrics and gynaecology  
 Orthopaedic surgery  
 Urology

**1 July 1996**

Accident and emergency medicine  
 General psychiatry  
 Child and adolescent psychiatry  
 Forensic psychiatry  
 Mental handicap  
 Old age psychiatry  
 Psychotherapy  
 Neurosurgery  
 Medical ophthalmology  
 Ophthalmology  
 Oral and maxillo-facial surgery  
 ENT surgery  
 Surgical paediatrics  
 Plastic surgery  
 Cardiothoracic surgery

**1 October 1996**

Audiological medicine  
 Clinical chemistry  
 Clinical cytogenetics and molecular genetics  
 Clinical genetics  
 Neurophysiology  
 Dermatology  
 Haematology and blood transfusion  
 Immunology  
 Microbiology and virology  
 Medical oncology  
 Histopathology  
 Occupational health  
 Medical paediatrics  
 Paediatric cardiology  
 Palliative medicine  
 Radiotherapy  
 Genito-urinary medicine

**1 January 1997**

Cardiology  
 Clinical pharmacology and therapeutics  
 Communicable diseases  
 Public health medicine  
 Endocrinology and diabetes  
 Gastroenterology  
 General medicine  
 Geriatric medicine  
 Neurology  
 Nuclear medicine  
 Rehabilitation medicine  
 Nephrology  
 Respiratory medicine  
 Rheumatology



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Trust Chief Executives

Our ref: MTP/4/17

15 March 1996

Dear Colleague

**IMPLEMENTING THE REFORMS OF SPECIALIST MEDICAL TRAINING:  
COMMISSIONING THE SPECIALIST REGISTRAR GRADE**

Can you please arrange to distribute the enclosed letter to all doctors for whom you have responsibility?

Yours sincerely

C J FAZAKERLEY  
Directorate of Human Resources

COMMON SERVICES AGENCY	
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19 MAR 1996	
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To all Hospital and Community Health  
Service Doctors

15 March 1996

Dear Colleague

**IMPLEMENTING THE REFORMS OF SPECIALIST MEDICAL TRAINING:  
COMMISSIONING THE SPECIALIST REGISTRAR GRADE**

I wrote to you in October last year about changes to specialist medical training in the UK to implement recommendations in the 1993 report "Hospital Doctors: Training for the Future". My letter included a summary paper explaining what the effect of the introduction of the new Specialist Registrar grade would be for doctors.

I am now writing to provide you with information on, and the timetable for, the introduction of the new grade. The Specialist Registrar grade, which will replace the existing registrar and senior registrar grades, will be formally launched on 1 April 1996 - the *Grade Commissioning Date*. During the following 12 months the process of transition to the new grade will begin for all specialties.

These are important changes which will have an effect not only on doctors currently in training but also on future generations of trainees. The new grade offers better, more structured training which in some cases will lead to earlier completion of training. The changes will ultimately enable the NHS to provide higher quality care to its patients.

Attached is a brief paper with the timetable for introducing the Specialist Registrar grade and information on the guidance that is being made available.

*Robert Kendell*

R E KENDELL  
Chief Medical Officer

## IMPLEMENTING THE REFORMS TO SPECIALIST MEDICAL TRAINING: COMMISSIONING THE SPECIALIST REGISTRAR GRADE

1. The Specialist Registrar grade, which will replace the existing registrar and senior registrar grades, will be formally launched on 1 April 1996 - the *Grade Commissioning Date*. During the following 12 months the process of transition to the new grade will begin for all specialties. The roll-out programme, which has been agreed between the medical Royal colleges, postgraduate deans and the UK Health Departments, will be managed in 4 tranches starting on: 1 April, 1 July, 1 October and 1 January.

2. The specialties starting transition on 1 April 1996 are:

- *Anaesthetics;*
- *Obstetrics and Gynaecology;*
- *Orthopaedic Surgery;*
- *Urology.*

A proposed roll-out programme for the transition of all specialties is attached at Annex A. The programme will be reviewed regularly and may be adjusted if necessary.

3. A new edition of *A guide to Specialist Registrar Training* (the 'orange guide') will be available early in March, and all existing higher specialist trainees, and a broad range of others, will be provided with their own copy. The guide is designed as an operating manual which covers all aspects of the Specialist Registrar grade from entry, through progress to the arrangements for leaving the grade.

4. The General Medical Council will be writing separately to doctors with information on the process for applying for entry to the Specialist Register.

5. *No new appointments* to the registrar or senior registrar grades in the 4 specialties listed at paragraph 2 will be made after 31 March 1996. Therefore, *with immediate effect*, all higher specialist training appointments advertised in these specialties will be for placements in Specialist Registrar training programmes.

6. All doctors who transfer to the Specialist Registrar grade should receive new contracts in the grade which, as set out in Circular NHS MEL(1996)10, will be held by Trusts, with the exception of doctors in training in Public Health Medicine, whose contracts will continue to be held by Health Boards.

7. Initial Specialist Registrar numbers for each specialty in Scotland were set out in Circular NHS MEL(1995)56 issued in September. The Department will continue to review every year the numbers of doctors in higher specialist training.



## ROLL-OUT PROGRAMME OF SPECIALTIES

**1 April 1996**

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 Urology

**1 July 1996**

Accident and emergency medicine  
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 Neurology  
 Nuclear medicine  
 Rehabilitation medicine  
 Nephrology  
 Respiratory medicine  
 Rheumatology