

## Tips from recently-appointed ST3 doctor, Paul Coulter...

### The online application process



Before applying it is vital to go online and become familiar with the person specification and the application scoring system, so you can tailor your application answers appropriately.

<http://st3recruitment.org.uk/>

<http://www.mmc.nhs.uk/>

You get a month to complete the form and prioritise your four UoAs. On the form itself, it's wise to prepare answers ready to transfer online to the specific sections: qualifications, supporting information (presentations, publications, teaching and clinical audit), experience and personal statement. Your scores in these sections determine your success of securing an interview. Submit early to avoid IT problems close to the given deadline (though the application team are contactable and helpful if you have any questions).

### The interview

If shortlisted, communication is via emails and text messages. There are three stations of ten minutes each: application review, which covers your commitment to the specialty and professional development to date; a clinical scenario and question on professional issues; and an ethics/communication station. Check with the UoA for instructions on how the interview panel wishes your evidence folder to be presented. This will save time and give you the chance to gain more points.

### Overall

I enjoyed the interview process. It lasted approximately 50 minutes and was well-organised. The best advice I can give is to become familiar with the allocation of points both for the application form and the interview **as the scores will be combined**. The weighting of certain achievements is detailed so the applicant will know what to concentrate on. The joy I felt after securing a palliative medicine ST3 post made all the preparation worthwhile.

## Getting into Palliative Medicine



*A Guide from the Association for Palliative  
Medicine of Great Britain and Ireland*

Why pick Palliative Medicine as a career? A selection of thoughts from those in the field...

- The work is more patient-centred, I find, and I get to give the kind of care to patients that I myself would want ...
- It's a young specialty that's developing fast ... we link well with other specialties that deal with chronic conditions
- It's got it all: research, management, education, service development ... you will find your niche

## Do I have the right experience?

Most applicants are physicians with **24 months' clinical experience**, post foundation training, through core medical or ACCS training. Those who have completed **General practice training** (MRCGP with CCT) are strongly encouraged to apply. You should also consider palliative medicine if you have trained in **surgery** (full MRCS) or **anaesthesia** (FRCA). Applicants without MRCP(UK) need at least **12 months' post-foundation experience** in a **range of acute hospital medical specialties**, giving at least **four months' experience** managing patients on **unselected medical take with ongoing patient management**. A **further 12 months' experience** in relevant specialties is also required (only a maximum of 6 months of any single specialty can be counted): general practice, palliative medicine, psychiatry, intensive care medicine, oncology, haematology, HIV medicine, neurology, general paediatrics, rehabilitation medicine.

## How do I improve my chances of getting into Palliative Medicine?

Check the ST3 Person-Specification paperwork available at this stand and pick your "units of application" (UoA) wisely

You are allowed up to four UoAs and it is important to pick these carefully. Recent consultant census data, collected in 2011, by the Royal College is illustrated on the map. There are clearly some parts of the country which are in greater need of consultant expansion than other parts, which may affect your future job prospects.

### Market yourself and your interest in the specialty

It is harder, nowadays, to gain a standalone training post in a hospice, which would give you the ideal experience of what a career in palliative medicine involves and whether you really can commit yourself to it. Nevertheless, look for other opportunities where you can link up with specialists in palliative medicine. For example, as a post-foundation doctor, try to organize a 'taster-session' during your training with a local hospice. If you are an undergraduate, why not flex your writing muscles and enter the APM's annual essay prize.

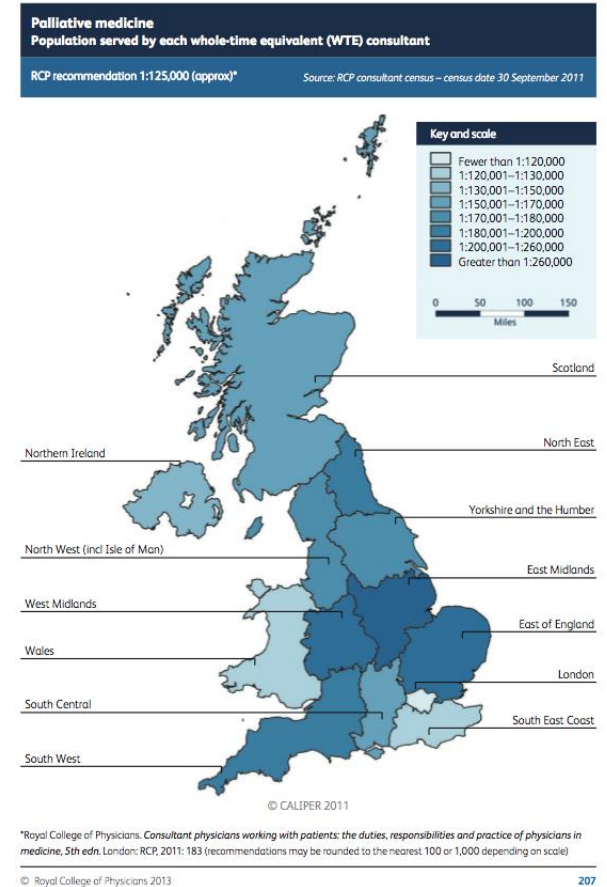
**Undergraduate Palliative  
Medicine Essay Prize**  
(<http://www.apmonline.org/page.php?pageid=211>)

This year's prize will be judged by a panel from the Ethics Committee.

Essays should be submitted by

**4<sup>th</sup> November 2013**

**First prize: £250. Second prize £100**



## Note the application deadlines and do not give up!

Often the competition ratio drops at round 2, so your chance of securing a training-numbered post in palliative medicine rises. If you are unsuccessful after both rounds of recruitment, seek advice from your deanery's training programme director for palliative medicine. If your heart is set on the specialty, consider a non-training grade hospice post, which would give you valuable clinical experience in the specialty as well as demonstrate your commitment