

## CRITERIA FOR SENIOR REGISTRAR APPOINTMENTS

Although the College does not appoint assessors to sit on Appointment Committees for senior registrars (except in the case of Scotland and the Special Hospitals), such Appointment Committees nevertheless consist largely of Fellows and Members of the College. From time to time guidance has been sought about the desirable criteria for such appointments. Following discussions by the Court of Electors and by the Joint Committee on Higher Psychiatric Training, the following statement has been agreed on. It is suggested that psychiatrists who sit on Appointment Committees should keep a copy of this statement or obtain a further copy from the College.

Anyone appointed to a senior registrar post is almost certain to obtain a consultant post in time. Therefore a candidate's potential suitability for a consultant post should be a prime consideration when making the appointment. It is recommended that the entry point for the grade should normally be the possession of the MRCPsych, or an equivalent higher degree (this does not include the DPM).

The question has been discussed as to what might be considered equivalent qualifications to the MRCPsych. The DPM examination is normally taken at the end of two years, and candidates who pass this examination are not expected to have had the breadth of training which would render them equivalent to holders of the MRCPsych. A candidate who holds the Certificate in Psychiatry or Child Psychiatry of the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology, or the Membership in Psychiatry of the Royal Canadian College of Physicians and Surgeons, or the Membership of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists would be considered to hold an equivalent qualification. Furthermore, consideration could also be given to a candidate who has a PhD or MD in psychiatry from a university in Great Britain or the Republic of Ireland. In practice, however, it would be very unusual that candidates with the latter degrees would not have already taken the MRCPsych examination. Degrees at Master level (MSc, MPhil, M Psychol Medicine) which are generally awarded for research would not normally be an acceptable equivalent. Again, it would be very unusual for a candidate for a senior registrar post who held one of these degrees not to have taken the MRCPsych.

A candidate for a senior registrar post in psychiatry (either in general psychiatry or in one of the specialties) will normally have completed at least three years in general professional training in psychiatry. This time will usually have been spent in psychiatric posts, although a period of up to one year of this may be spent in other relevant medical work, including general practice, general medicine, neurology, paediatrics, or appropriate research. The period in general professional training in psychiatry at SHO and registrar level should have included experience in general psychiatry with at least two different consultant teams, and there should have been some additional experience in one or more of the other branches of psychiatry. There should also have been some instruction in the psychotherapeutic skills which are essential to all psychiatrists.

A senior registrar who has not passed the MRCPsych. examination and who continues to work for it during the period of higher specialist training will be unlikely to be able to concentrate sufficiently on obtaining further specialized experience, nor will he have time for teaching, research, and experience of administration if his energies are involved in passing the MRCPsych. examination. There have been examples of senior registrars who have been appointed without the MRCPsych. who have continued to fail it until they have exhausted the number of attempts that may be made, and who have not obtained adequate higher psychiatric training during this time.

For this reason it is suggested that in those few unusual and exceptional cases where a candidate who is recommended for a senior registrar post has not passed the Membership examination it should be stipulated clearly that in the event of his not successfully completing the examination within a period of a year the appointment would not be extended. Such senior registrars on appointment should receive in writing confirmation that the appointment will not be recommended for renewal after one year if they have not completed the examination.

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