

Mike Masding & Tom Lawson
UKFPO Co-Chairs
via Email

2nd March 2023

Dear Mike & Tom,

Foundation Programme Allocation Review

We are writing to provide a BMA view on the UKFPO's stakeholder engagement exercise on proposed changes to the UK Foundation Programme allocation process. The following views and suggestions have been put forward jointly by the BMA's Medical Students Committee and the Medical Academic Staff Committee:

- We believe that a move to Preference Informed Allocation (PIA) is preferable to the status quo.
- It is our strong view that a two-stage allocation process should be used, so that the ranking used to allocate to foundation school is inverted and students are ranked in reverse order for their programme allocation.
- We believe that PIA is incompatible with running a formal reserve list. If students are to be allocated to foundation school with any form of random allocation, all UK medical school graduates must be guaranteed a placement. Although placements have previously been found for all students, a system which potentially denies UK medical school graduates placements based on random allocation would be extremely problematic as it would impact their ability to achieve full GMC registration within the appropriate timescales.
- We do not believe that any future allocation method should involve a Situational Judgement Test (SJT).
- With the SJT removed the allocation process could be completed much earlier, giving students more time to prepare for their placement.
- We believe that the application process for Specialised Foundation Programmes (SFP) should remain in its current form, at least until the impact of the broader change can be assessed. We strongly believe that the academic component of the SFP represents a vital gateway to a clinical academic career and is a crucial component of the integrated academic training pathway. We also believe that it is essential that there should not be a gap in opportunities for exposure to academic medicine. Furthermore, the programme represents an important stage in developing a greater awareness of

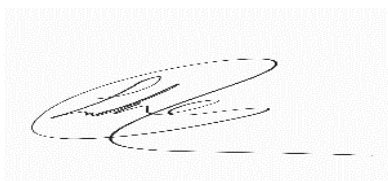


research and education within the NHS's active medical workforce as outlined in our publication [*Every Doctor a Scientist and a Scholar*](#). To those ends, recruitment to the programme must be done on the basis of aptitude for an academic career, as well as the availability of appropriate opportunities and supervision in the applicant's chosen location.

- We believe that PIA should be seen as a temporary measure while time is taken to consider a better and fairer system for the longer-term. This longer-term piece of work should respond to any 'teething problems' with PIA and include a full consultation on possible different models, including:
 - PIA with 'binning'. This would involve students preferencing as per PIA but with the use of 'bins' of five schools, which would allow more students to be allocated to one of their top preferences. Rudolf Cardinal's allocation algorithm could be used for this purpose.
 - PIA with ranking of foundation programme jobs at the initial stage, allowing students to preference their desired location and specialty. This would allow for a more distributed selection of foundation programme jobs as opposed to high competition for desirable foundation schools. If this is pursued, we would request that UKFPO provides a digital facility for students to be able to filter, rank and select foundation programme jobs based on specific hospital, location of rotation, rotation department and foundation school.
 - A model that combines educational performance with preferencing.

Thank you for taking the time to consider our views. We'd be happy to discuss them with you further through our involvement in the UKFPO Board and Recruitment Delivery Group, or in a separate meeting if that would be helpful.

Yours sincerely,



Luke Stephenson-Heskey
MSC Deputy Chair, Education & Training



David Strain
MASC Chair