

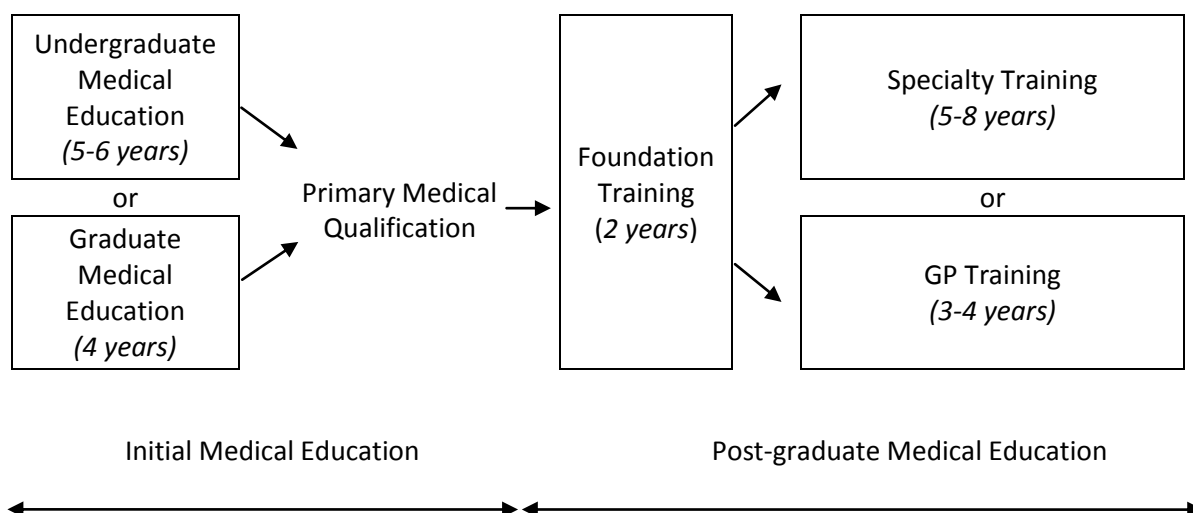


Trends in Medical Education and Training in the United Kingdom

1. Brief Overview of Medical Education and Training Pathways

- Entry to medical education in the United Kingdom (UK) can occur in two ways: students can either access medical schools directly from secondary school (which is the traditional way with students usually pursuing 5-6 years of studies to obtain their degree) or after having received a first bachelor's degree (in which case they may be able to complete their degree in 4 years only). This second option to enter medical schools was established in 2000, with the goal of expanding access to medical education (Garrud, 2011). Some medical schools require the first bachelor's degree to be in a science-related subject, while others do not stipulate any specific field of studies (NHS Careers, 2014a).
- As of July 2014, there were 31 universities (or combination of universities) issuing medical degrees in the UK. All students successfully completing their initial medical education are awarded a Primary Medical Qualification (PMQ).
- Following this qualification, new medical graduates follow a 2-year period of Foundation Training. During that time, they rotate every 3 to 4 months between different specialities. The first year leads to a registration with the General Medical Council. The completion of the second year allows the trainee to apply for specialty training programmes (General Medical Council, 2014b).
- After having pursued this Foundation Training, these physicians in training can choose between a specialist or a general practitioner (GP) clinical training route, which can last between 3 and 8 years depending on the area of speciality.
- Hence, to become a doctor in the UK, on average, a student can expect between 10 to 15 years of university education and post-graduate training (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Medical education and training paths, United Kingdom

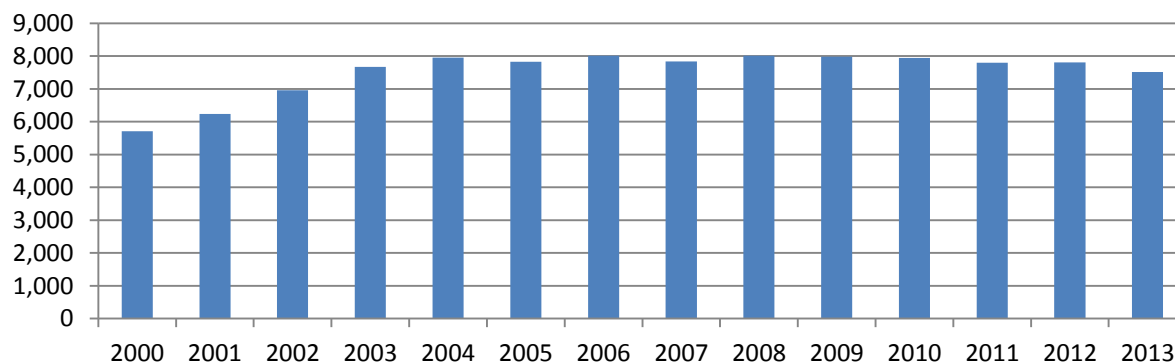


Source: General Medical Council (2011), available at <http://www.gmc-uk.org/publications/10586.asp>.

2. Trends in Admissions to Medical Schools

- Figure 2 shows trends in the number of students admitted to medical education in the UK from 2000 to 2013. Admissions to medical education in the UK increased rapidly between 2000 and 2004, stabilising at the new higher level after that. In 2013, the number of students admitted decreased slightly. This followed a recommendation from the Health and Education National Strategic Exchange to reduce by 2% medical school intakes in 2013 because of concerns that there might be an over-supply of doctors (particularly specialists/consultants) in the coming years (Department of Health and Higher Education Funding Council for England, 2012).

Figure 2. Students admitted to initial medical education, United Kingdom, 2003-2013

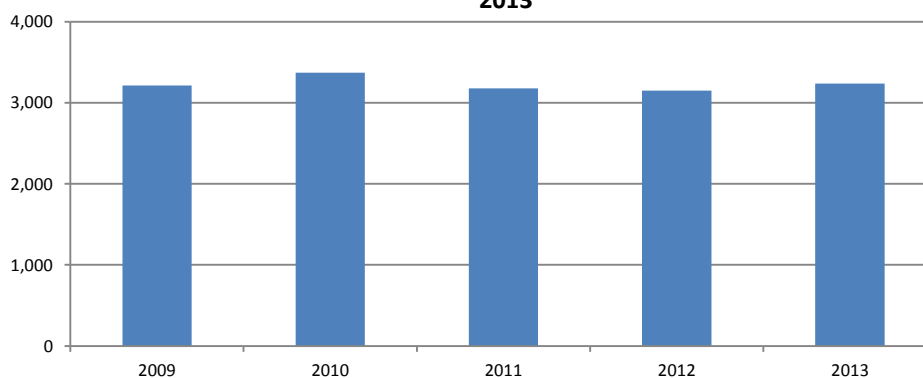


Source: 2000 to 2007 - Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (2014), Facts & Figures, <http://search1.ucas.co.uk/fandf00/index1.html> (accessed 12 June 2014); 2008 to 2013 - UCAS (2014), Data & Analysis, <http://www.ucas.com/> (accessed 12 June 2014).

3. Trends in Admissions to Post-graduate Training

- After having completed their 2-year Foundation Training, students can choose between following a specialist or a general practitioner (GP) clinical training.
- Figure 3 shows that the number of students admitted to post-graduate GP training was fairly stable between 2009 to 2013, with the number exceeding slightly 3 000 per year.

Figure 3. Admissions to Post-graduate GP Training, United Kingdom, 2009-2013



Source: General Practitioner Recruitment.

- In 2013, the government mandated Health Education England (HEE) to reach a target of 50% of medical graduates pursuing GP training by 2015 (Department of Health, 2013). In order to achieve this goal, key stakeholders have come together to elaborate an action plan: *Building the Workforce – the New Deal for General Practice*. The plan aims to support Health Education England in recruiting 3250 GP trainees by 2016 and elaborates on ten important actions to promote, recruit and retain doctors in general practice (Health Education England, 2015).
- The number of posts available for specialist training programmes varies by specialty (General Medical Council, 2014b). As of 2011, there were a total of 61 specialties and, within these, 34 sub-specialties, approved by the GMC (General Medical Council, 2011).

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