Preparing for ST4 applications in psychiatry: A guide for applicants and supervisors

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Setting the context

- The Psychiatry training journey in the UK is marked by two sections: CT1 to CT3 and ST4 to ST6 (core training and specialty training)

- Applicants have to pass the MRCPsych examinations to progress to ST4 training

- Core training applications are ranked on MSRA scores alone

- ST4 applications are ranked by adjusted CASC scores, online interviews and a verified self-assessment score

ST4 SELECTION PROCESS OVERVIEW

- Verified Self-Assessment Score 17.5% No minimum score required

- Online Interview 32.5% At least 50% overall, and a minimum of 6/20 on both Part A and Part B

- CASC exam score (adjusted to be comparable between diets) 50% No minimum score required. All applicants score a minimum of 50% for this element

LET US FOCUS ON SELF-ASSESSMENT

- An applicant's verified self-assessment score will make up 17.5% of their final ST4 Psychiatry score

- There is no minimum score required for the verified self-assessment for them to be considered appointable

- Applicants upload evidence on to a separate self-assessment portal (not Oriel where they put in their application) to support their self-assessment scores across 10 domains

What the assessors do

- It is their job to confirm if the evidence provided meets the set criteria and adjust the score(s) if needed.

- Some evidence may be ambiguous or difficult to score – they send through the details of any queries to the National Recruitment Board members, and they are answered promptly

- Applicants can appeal their verified score at the end of the process. Appeals will be centrally reviewed by members of the National Recruitment board in Psychiatry or senior assessors

Summary of Self-Assessment domains

	Domain
1	Undergraduate Training - Additional Degrees
2	Undergraduate Training – Prizes and Awards
3	Postgraduate Medical Qualifications
4	Postgraduate Training – Prizes and Awards
5	Postgraduate Training in other specialties in the past 7 working years
6	Clinical Governance, Audit and Quality Improvement as a postgraduate in the last 6 working years
7	Research
8	Teaching
9	Academic Publications
10	Presentations and Poster Presentations in last 6 working years

Guidance for applicants

KEY POINTS
- *You need to make it as easy as possible for assessors to interpret your evidence.*
- *This means you should go for quality over quantity when providing evidence. You should not need to submit more than the recommended number of documents in each domain. Remember that the more irrelevant material you upload, the greater the possibility that the assessors will miss key information.*
- *If you do not follow these instructions, then you should be aware that your verified self-assessment score may be lower than the score you have awarded yourself.*

Please make sure you read the applicant guidance before you begin scoring. We will provide you with a copy of this.

DOMAIN 1: Undergraduate Training - Additional Degrees

- All you need is your degree certificate

- Pieces of evidence allowed is 1

- Marks range from 5 to 0

- Highest given to a First-class intercalated BSc (or BA or similar/higher degree) OR

- First-class BSc (or similar/higher) prior to starting medicine and relevant to medicine/ Psychiatry

- No extra points are given for primary medical degrees consisting of 3 years' pre-clinical and 3 years' clinical training.

- MD linked to Primary Medical qualification scores zero

DOMAIN 2: Undergraduate Training – Prizes and Awards

- Pieces of evidence 1 or 2

- Degree certificate and/or transcript

- Degree certificate must clearly state distinction (or equivalent) if marking yourself at that level.

Domain 3: Postgraduate Medical Qualifications

- Marks range from 5 to 0, covering degree, diploma and certifications

- Number of evidence 1- only certificate of the qualification, do not put in additional evidence of module content, individual module passes etc which might hide your effective evidence at the bottom of the list of uploaded evidence. Legible evidence

- Only fully completed qualifications with certificate or official letter of proof of outcome will be counted

- You cannot use the same example in this domain as other domains, teaching for example. It is recommended that you chose the domain that will award you the higher marks

DOMAIN 4: Postgraduate Training – Prizes and Awards

- Personal award or recognition from national body, such as RCPsych, GMC or British Medical Association, e.g. trainee of the year

- Score awarded is 2 if present

- Award certificate or headed/signed letter confirming award

- Some national awards may be organised by a Trust or a Deanery, but the evidence that this has been a national competition should be clear

DOMAIN 5: Postgraduate Training in other specialties in the past 7 working years

- 13 to 36 months' experience in another specialty by the time of appointment anywhere in the world scores 3

- If you have 6 months' experience in a number of different specialties, provide evidence for one specialty and score yourself 1.

- Do not include foundation level posts or posts in Psychiatry

- ARCPs or evidence of appraisals or contract(s) of employment or letter of appointment

- Do not include foundation level posts or posts in Psychiatry.

DOMAIN 6: Clinical Governance, Audit and Quality Improvement as a postgraduate in the last 6 working years

- Scores ranging from 5 to 0 depending on reach of project (national/regional/local) and whether it has resulted in change

- 2 to 3 pieces of evidence

- Multiple audits/QIP at same level will not bring extra scores

- Your involvement needs to be beyond data collection, there needs to be ownership, leadership and planning

DOMAIN 7: Research

- Ranges from 6 to 0

- PhDs are counted here

- MD has to be outside a standard training programme

- Recruitment of patients and data collection scores 1

DOMAIN 8: Teaching

- Masters in medical/clinical education scores 5

- Presentations of audit and research do not count as teaching

- Multiple contributions at the same level do not count for more scores unless you evidence a greater impact

DOMAIN 9: Academic publications

- Publications that involve audit / QI projects which have been awarded points for regional / national presentations in Domain 6 can be awarded additional points here if the work has been published.

- Peer reviewed publications

- Even a letter can get at least one point

- Co-authorship can get points

DOMAIN 10: Presentations and Poster Presentations in last 6 working years

- *I have presented at a regional, national, or international meeting* gets the maximum score of 5

- Most applicants have at least presented a poster at RCPsych Congress or a regional, national, or international meeting

Evidence: General Points

- Each domain in which an applicant has awarded themselves a score must have supporting evidence uploaded in the right portal

- No uploaded evidence means a score of 0

- Assessors only score evidence uploaded against that domain.

- Assessors are not expected to search for evidence in other domains.

- If evidence is in a foreign language, the applicant must also include a certified version translated into English.

- If the applicant has changed their name since the date of any of their evidence, they must include formal evidence of the name change, e.g. marriage certificate, deed poll. This only needs to be uploaded once per name change.

Evidence: Re-using evidence

- In very limited circumstances, applicants can use the same evidence in more than one domain. The applicant must upload the evidence to **both** domains they wish to count it in.
  - Domain 6 & 9 - Candidates can score any publication of audit/QI projects in both domains
  - Domain 7 & 10 – Candidates can score presentations of original research leading to PhD/MD in both domains
- In all other circumstances, the same evidence cannot be used in more than one domain. Select the domain where you score most points.

Appeals / Review

- Applicants will see all feedback and scores entered into Qpercom. Comments need to be constructive, clear and fit for purpose.

- Any score awarded that is lower than the applicant's own score must be explained in the comments section in Qpercom. Lowered scores with no rationale are the primary reason for appeals by applicants.

Systems used in self-assessment verification

- There are two systems in use

Self-Assessment Portal

- Each verifier assigned batch of applications
- Evidence uploaded here

Qpercom

- Applicants' self-scores visible here
- Verified score and any comments added here

How an assessor prepares for verification

- How to use Qpercom
- How to use the Self-Assessment Evidence Verification portal
- Documents supplied:
  - Self-Assessment evidence guidance
  - Qpercom guidance
  - Portal guidance
  - Log sheet

Timeframe

- 9/10 applicants to review evidence for

- In around 10 days

- Applicants will have 72 hours to appeal their verified scores when released

Common mistakes

- Uploading evidence on to the wrong portal
- Giving more evidence pieces than specified, the most important evidence falls to the bottom of the list
- Expecting evidence from other domains to count
- Expecting CV to count for experience
- Giving evidence in a format which is difficult to read or does not open properly
- Leaving submission till the last minute and uploading does not happen properly

Where supervisors can help

- Being aware of the process

- Being aware of the domains

- Guiding a trainee towards gathering evidence over 3 years

- Checking the self-assessment scores

- Being involved in the self-assessment verification process

A word about interviews

- This is not a repeat of CASC stations

- Have a conversation, do not deliver a spiel

- Practise with various people who will ask prompting questions

- You can do a scenario differently each time depending on where the conversation goes

A few final considerations

- When is the right time to apply?

- The competition will not get easier

- Keeping focus is important

- Keeping an eye on current guidance is necessary

Good luck