Medical Training (Prioritisation) Act 2026

CHAPTER 7

Explanatory Notes have been produced to assist in the understanding of this Act and are available separately

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Medical Training (Prioritisation) Act 2026

2026 CHAPTER 7

An Act to make provision about the prioritisation of graduates from medical schools in the United Kingdom and certain other persons for places on medical training programmes. [5th March 2026]

BE IT ENACTED by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

Prioritisation of UK graduates and others for medical training programmes

1 UK Foundation Programme

A person who has a function of deciding offers of places on a UK Foundation Programme must offer places to eligible applicants who are—

(a) UK medical graduates, or

(b) persons in the priority group,

before offering places to any other eligible applicants.

2 Specialty training programmes: offers made in 2026

(1) A person who has a function of deciding offers of places on a UK specialty training programme, where the offers are made in 2026, must offer places to eligible applicants who are—

(a) UK medical graduates,

(b) persons in the priority group,

(c) persons who have completed, or are currently on, a relevant qualifying UK programme, or

(d) persons within subsection (2),

before offering places to any other eligible applicants.

(2) A person is within this subsection if they are—

(a) a British citizen,

(b) a Commonwealth citizen who has the right of abode in the United Kingdom under section 2 of the Immigration Act 1971,

(c) an Irish citizen who does not require leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom under that Act,

(d) a person with indefinite leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom, or

(e) a person who has leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom which was granted by virtue of residence scheme immigration rules within the meaning given by section 17 of the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Act 2020.

3 Specialty training programmes: offers from 2027 onwards

(1) A person who has a function of deciding which applicants to interview for a place on a UK specialty training programme, where the interviews are offered in 2027 or any subsequent year, must offer interviews to eligible applicants who are—

(a) UK medical graduates,

(b) persons in the priority group,

(c) persons who have completed, or are currently on, a relevant qualifying UK programme, or

(d) persons of a description set out in regulations made by the appropriate authority,

before offering interviews to any other eligible applicants.

(2) A person who has a function of deciding offers of places on a UK specialty training programme, where the offers are made in 2027 or any subsequent year, must offer places to eligible applicants who are—

(a) UK medical graduates,

(b) persons in the priority group,

(c) persons who have completed, or are currently on, a relevant qualifying UK programme, or

(d) persons of a description set out in regulations made by the appropriate authority,

before offering places to any other eligible applicants.

(3) Regulations under subsection (1)(d) or (2)(d) may only describe persons who—

(a) in the opinion of the appropriate authority, meet criteria set out in the regulations which indicate that they are likely to have significant experience of working as a doctor in the National Health Service in England, Wales or Scotland or in Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland, or

(b) are persons within any of paragraphs (a) to (e) of section 2(2) or are otherwise described by reference to their immigration status.

Interpretation

4 "UK medical graduate" and "the priority group"

(1) In this Act, "UK medical graduate" means a person who holds a primary United Kingdom qualification within the meaning of the Medical Act 1983 (see section 4(3) of that Act), but does not include a person who spent all or a majority of their time training for that qualification outside the British Islands.

(2) A person is in the priority group for the purposes of this Act if they are within subsection (3) or (4).

(3) A person is within this subsection if—

(a) they hold a primary medical qualification from an institution in Ireland, and

(b) they did not spend all or a majority of their time training for that qualification outside Ireland.

(4) A person is within this subsection if they hold a primary medical qualification from an institution in—

(a) Iceland,

(b) Principality of Liechtenstein,

(c) Norway, or

(d) Switzerland.

(5) In subsections (3) and (4), "primary medical qualification" means a qualification that is treated by the General Medical Council as equivalent to a primary United Kingdom qualification within the meaning of the Medical Act 1983.

(6) The appropriate authority may by regulations amend the list in subsection (4) if the appropriate authority considers it necessary to do so to reflect an international agreement to which the United Kingdom is a party.

5 "UK Foundation Programme", "UK specialty training programme" etc

(1) The following definitions have effect for the purposes of sections 1 to 3.

(2) "UK Foundation Programme" means—

(a) an acceptable programme for provisionally registered doctors within the meaning of the Medical Act 1983 (see section 10A of that Act), or

(b) a programme that is designed to follow on from an acceptable programme for provisionally registered doctors, which lasts for up to a year and which is used primarily for the training of newly registered doctors.

(3) In subsection (2), "newly registered doctor" means a person who has been registered as a fully registered medical practitioner under section 3 of the Medical Act 1983 within the previous six months.

(4) "UK specialty training programme" means a programme of training required for or leading towards the award of a certificate of completion of training under section 34L of the Medical Act 1983 but does not include—

(a) a UK Foundation Programme,

(b) a programme wholly in the area of public health,

(c) a programme for which the majority of training takes place outside the United Kingdom, or

(d) a programme described or specified in regulations made by the appropriate authority.

(5) "Relevant qualifying UK programme", in relation to an applicant for a UK specialty training programme, means—

(a) where their application is for the first or only stage of a UK specialty training programme, a UK Foundation Programme;

(b) in any other case, the previous stage of the UK specialty training programme or a UK Foundation Programme.

(6) "Eligible applicant", in relation to a training programme, means an applicant who meets the eligibility criteria for the programme.

Regulations

6 Regulations: general

(1) In this Act, "the appropriate authority" means—

(a) in relation to medical training programmes anywhere in the United Kingdom, the Secretary of State;

(b) in relation to medical training programmes in Wales, the Welsh Ministers;

(c) in relation to medical training programmes in Scotland, the Scottish Ministers;

(d) in relation to medical training programmes in Northern Ireland, the Department of Health in Northern Ireland.

(2) Regulations made by the Secretary of State under this Act are to be made by statutory instrument.

(3) Regulations made by the Welsh Ministers under this Act are to be made by Welsh statutory instrument (see section 37A of the Legislation (Wales) Act 2019 (anaw 4)).

(4) For regulations made by the Scottish Ministers under this Act, see section 27 of the Interpretation and Legislative Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 (asp 10) (definition of "Scottish statutory instrument").

(5) Any power of the Department of Health in Northern Ireland to make regulations under this Act is exercisable by statutory rule for the purposes of the Statutory Rules (Northern Ireland) Order 1979 (S.I. 1979/1573 (N.I. 12)).

(6) A power to make regulations under this Act includes power to make—

(a) consequential, incidental, supplemental, transitional and saving provision;

(b) different provision for different purposes.

(7) A power of the Secretary of State to make regulations under this Act includes power to make different provision for different parts of the United Kingdom.

7 Regulations: procedure

(1) Regulations under—

(a) section 3 (regulations describing persons who may be prioritised for specialty training programmes from 2027 onwards), or

(b) section 5(4)(d) (regulations excluding specialty training programmes from prioritisation scheme),

are subject to the negative procedure.

(2) The "negative procedure" is to be construed in accordance with the following table—

Where the regulations are made by...	*...the negative procedure means...*
The Secretary of State	that the statutory instrument containing the regulations is subject to annulment in pursuance of a resolution of either House of Parliament.
The Welsh Ministers	that the Welsh statutory instrument containing the regulations is subject to the Senedd annulment procedure (see section 37E of the Legislation (Wales) Act 2019 (anaw 4)).
The Scottish Ministers	that the regulations are subject to the negative procedure (see section 28 of the Interpretation and Legislative Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 (asp 10)).
The Department of Health in Northern Ireland	that the regulations are subject to negative resolution within the meaning given by section 41(6) of the Interpretation Act (Northern Ireland) 1954 (c. 33 (N.I.)).

(3) Before making regulations under section 3 or section 5(4)(d), the Secretary of State must obtain the consent of—

(a) the Welsh Ministers, if the regulations contain provision which would be within the legislative competence of Senedd Cymru if it were contained in an Act of the Senedd;

(b) the Scottish Ministers, if the regulations contain provision which would be within the legislative competence of the Scottish Parliament if it were contained in an Act of the Scottish Parliament;

(c) the Department of Health in Northern Ireland, if the regulations contain provision which—

(i) would be within the legislative competence of the Northern Ireland Assembly if it were contained in an Act of that Assembly, and

(ii) would not, if it were contained in a Bill for an Act of the Northern Ireland Assembly, result in the Bill requiring the consent of the Secretary of State.

(4) Regulations under section 4(6) (regulations amending list of prioritised countries) are subject to the affirmative procedure.

(5) The "affirmative procedure" is to be construed in accordance with the following table—

Where the regulations are made by...	*...the affirmative procedure means...*
The Secretary of State	that a statutory instrument containing the regulations may not be made unless a draft of the instrument has been laid before, and approved by a resolution of, each House of Parliament.
The Welsh Ministers	that a Welsh statutory instrument containing the regulations is subject to the Senedd approval procedure (see section 37C of the Legislation (Wales) Act 2019 (anaw 4)).
The Scottish Ministers	that the regulations are subject to the affirmative procedure (see section 29 of the Interpretation and Legislative Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 (asp 10)).
The Department of Health in Northern Ireland	that the regulations may not be made unless a draft of the regulations has been laid before, and approved by a resolution of, the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Final

8 Extent, commencement and short title

(1) This Act extends to England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

(2) This Act comes into force on such day or days as the Secretary of State may by regulations appoint.

(3) The Secretary of State may by regulations make transitional or saving provision in connection with the coming into force of any provision of this Act.

(4) This Act may be cited as the Medical Training (Prioritisation) Act 2026.

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