

Lay Representatives

Interview Guide



Version Control

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1 Introduction

This handbook provides instruction and guidance to Lay Representatives (LR) involved in the recruitment and selection process managed by recruitment teams across Health Education England. The 'Gold Guide – A Guide to Post Graduate Specialty Training in the UK' requires that all appointment committees involved in the recruitment and selection of applicants to medical and dental training posts on behalf of a Postgraduate Dean, are attended by a layperson. This constitutes appointments to all training posts in medicine and dentistry with the exception of appointments to medical Foundation training, which is managed externally. The focus of this guide is the interview days and doesn't take into account shortlisting or offers.

What are the responsibilities of the Lay Representative (LR)?

The LR must ensure that the agreed processes are followed and that robust records are kept. The LR must ensure that any issues arising at a recruitment episode are managed appropriately, with escalation to the Recruitment and Clinical Leads, where necessary and that senior staff are informed using the LR Feedback Form

The interviews

The panel members will not normally convene in-person until the interviews, so all developments relating to the recruitment will be conveyed via e-mail and telephone communications. The LR will be informed of all relevant changes to the interview event.

A key requirement of the LR is to ensure that applicants receive consistent and equitable treatment throughout the interview process. Below is an overview of LR role, in addition to the Clinical Lead (CL) and Recruitment Lead (RL), as all parties will be required to be involved in certain aspects of recruitment. The CL will also be sent the overview so all parties understand their role on the interview days.

Calibration

In some specialties calibration of interview stations and panellists is a requirement. Where this takes place the Lay Rep should ensure that they have sight of the documentation arising from this and where possible observe these calibration sessions.

2 Overview of roles

Lay Representatives role overview

- To ensure a consistent, transparent, fair experience for all applicants
- To provide independence and impartiality
- To provide a balanced approach, representing all parties
- To provide impartiality and externality to ensure a fair and equitable approach to the process and decision making
- To observe processes and feedback accordingly, to ensure agreed national processes are followed
- To support the RL/ CL in probity discussions, panellist disagreements (including scoring discrepancies, to ensure objectivity is delivered)
- To remain unbiased throughout the recruitment event
- To identify areas of notable practice during the recruitment event
- To identify areas for improvement during the recruitment event
- To complete recruitment summary form at the end of the day
- Ensure candidates are briefed regarding procedures on the day

- **WHAT IT IS NOT:**
 - Managing any part of the process independently, or any team member on the day
 - Leading the wash-up or briefings (however contribution is required and comprehensive notes should be kept)
 - Being actively involved in the interview
 - Making or influencing panel decisions

Clinical Lead role overview

- Lead panel briefing and wash-up (with support from RL and contribution from LR)
- Liaise with RL & LR throughout the day
- To lead where possible rolling discussions on borderline/unappointable candidates
- Manage clinical issues as they arise
- Make decisions on patient safety concerns
- Offer objective advice to panellists, where differences in opinion arise
- Manage panellist behaviour (e.g. when not following agreed policies and procedures)
- Feedback on suitability of questions, panel integrity

- When decisions are made ensure RL/LR is informed so there can be consistency across circuits or days
- Ensure candidates are briefed regarding procedures on the day

- **WHAT IT IS NOT:**

- To manage local team/deanery staff members.
- To delegate decision-making to LR or RL (particularly clinical or probity issues)

Recruitment Lead role overview

- Managing the organisation and smooth running of the day
- Overseeing the administration process
- Local Team/Deanery staff management
- Communication on the day – updating necessary staff on changes
- Keep CL informed of decision-making to seek agreement, plus LR when required to ensure consistency across circuits or days
- Ensuring digital scoring system is setup adequately for the recruitment event
- Ensuring all scores have been inputted onto the system by panellists
- Assisting the CL, as required, in leading on the briefing and wash-up discussions, involving the LR where required
- Ensuring national processes are delivered
- Ensure candidates are briefed regarding procedures on the day
- **WHAT IT IS NOT:**
 - Making decisions relating to clinical suitability, e.g. facilitating discussion at wash-up, not informing decision-making
 - To defer all leadership and decision making to CL and/ or LR

3 Common issues and expected responses

Below is a table which shows a list of issues or complaints that may arise at recruitment interviews and the role of the LR if this happens. These are possible examples and local discretion should be used.

Issue/ Complaint	Lay Rep	Recruitment Lead	Clinical Lead
Patient Identifiable Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To observe discussion and take appropriate notes To ensure consistency in approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To offer advice and input to discussions if and when required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To discuss with candidate and decide on action based on seriousness of confidentiality breach and candidate response/ insight
Probity (overstating)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To observe all discussions and ensure adequate notes are taken To raise any concerns with the consistency of the approach/decision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To offer advice and input to discussions if and when required To offer information provided during application process e.g., self-assessment questions/guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To review areas of concerns with panellists To discuss concerns with applicant and decide on the action to be taken
Probity (Plagiarism)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To observe all discussions and ensure adequate notes are taken To raise any concerns with the consistency of the approach/decision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To offer advice and in- put to discussions if and when required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To review evidence and discuss areas of concern with panellists To discuss concerns with applicant and advise of potential outcomes

Issue/ Complaint	Lay Rep
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To notify RL of any concerns
Scoring discrepancies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arbitrate between panel and agree outcome
Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To notify RL of any concerns

Recruitment Lead	Clinical Lead
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To manage all staff Responsible for management of interview timings and to assist or offer support if needed Responsible for managing all staff on the day Quickly manage any issues raised regarding poor performance Manage any issues relating to unacceptable behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To notify RL of any concerns
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To raise, assist and advise on any matters relating to scoring discrepancies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To discuss any discrepancies with panellists where opinions are divided
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To offer advice and investigate any eligibility queries raised by panellists during the interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To advise panellists on scoring and appointability but not eligibility To notify RL of any concerns

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Issue/ Complaint	Lay Rep
Applicant complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To escalate the complaint to RL and CL To ensure that appropriate action is taken with regard to complaints To ensure that decisions are fair and consistent for all candidates, note details as appropriate
Venue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise any concerns with the RL
Panellists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through observations and applicant feedback report any issues or deviation from processes & support CL & RL in resolving

Recruitment Lead	Clinical Lead
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that all applicant complaints arising on the day are dealt with and any outcomes facilitated To provide an experienced team member to assist with any issues raised during check out 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To make decisions based on the evidence available and where possible resolve action on the day e.g. re-interview a candidate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaise with the venue team on the day to facilitate any adjustments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise any concerns with the RL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advise on process and procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure any deviation from processes are discussed with panellists and manage panel swaps should this be required

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4 The format of the interview event

It is crucial that the LR is made to feel welcome on arrival. All involved within the recruitment activity should introduce themselves and allow time for the LR to do the same.

In addition, time must be spent with the LR to introduce the content of the recruitment activity and an overview of the day must be explained. It is vital that the LR fully understands the expectations of the day and indeed the role that they have, ideally through providing information prior to the day e.g. ST3 interview guidance.

In order to ensure that all aspects of the selection process are appropriately addressed, the interview event should keep to the following structure:

Activity	Lay Rep	Recruitment Lead	Clinical Lead
Arrivals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all LR paperwork is present. • Meet with RL and CL to ensure familiarity between all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all panel members and staff are marked as present • Ensure briefing starts on time • Ensure all panel members and staff have their interview packs e.g. name badges, E&D documentation, calibration paperwork 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage panel makeup and swaps if no shows occur • Ensure briefing starts on time
Briefing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure adequate procedures to confirm E&D training has been completed and any issues resolved prior to interviews • Explain the LR role • Provide reminders – see crib sheet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set expectations for the day • Introduce members of the team • Input to briefing presentation • Direct panels • Ensure digital scoring briefing is delivered to panellists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead briefing • Input to calibration discussions

Activity	Lay Rep
Starting the day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check to see if any panel members know candidates due to attend and resolve through discussions with RL & CL
During the day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observe all panels/stations regularly to ensure a consistent approach Raise any immediate issues to RL & CL
Lunch and Breaks	

Recruitment Lead	Clinical Lead
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all panels are happy with the documentation/equipment and have everything required Assist CL with walk through of circuits answering FAQs Ensure timers and document checkers are ready to start Introduce LR to recruitment staff Ensure the digital scoring lead has system up to date with last minute panel swaps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walk through circuit to answer all FAQs Manage any last minute panel swaps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaise with document checkers and timing staff throughout the day to ensure circuits are running to time. Trouble shoot any issues as they arise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be on hand to respond to calls throughout the day Liaise with RL and LR as to any issues that may have occurred
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all staff have adequate time for all breaks Coordinate breaks ensuring the process is not affected. Coordinate panel breaks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure panel members are returning from breaks at the correct times

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Activity	Lay Rep
Wash up/rolling discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep clear and concise notes on each candidate discussion witnessed • Comment on levels of consistency
Closing and documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver all notes from the day and ensure forms are accurately completed

Recruitment Lead	Clinical Lead
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss potential candidates for review with CL and LR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead the wash up • Use clinical knowledge to lead discussion and make a final appointability decision
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all scores and feedback is received on the system • Ensure digital scoring system is made inaccessible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read and confirm all comments are accurate and any issues noted on LR report

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5 Candidates known to panel member

Recruitment leads should ensure that there is a mechanism in place for interviewing panel members or trainees to declare any conflict of interest e.g. knowing an applicant, for example by providing a list of prospective candidates to the panel(s) before the interviews commence.

Where possible, the applicant(s) known to one or more panel members should be switched to another panel. If this is not possible then the administrative team should arrange for a lay representative or other member of the recruitment team (e.g. the recruitment lead) to be present, in addition, at the relevant stations.

If it is not recognised in advance of the station that a candidate is known to a panel member, and there is no opportunity to institute the measures described above, the interviewer should note their prior knowledge of the candidate on the scoresheet and also notify the selection team of this before or during the post-interview wash up, to ensure that any potential aberrant scores can be reviewed.

6 Other roles a lay representative may be asked to undertake

In certain circumstances, for example if a panel is a panel member short or if it has been decided before hand by the lead, a Lay Representative may be asked to undertake one of the following, once approved and signed off by a senior manager. The below list is not exhaustive and again would be down to local discretion.

Invigilation

Where a test requires that candidates are supervised under examination conditions, lay persons may be asked to take on an invigilation role. A full briefing / training will be available.

Sitting on the interview panel

Lay persons may be asked to assist in on the interview panel. In such an instance the Lay Representative will no longer be deemed to be performing the role of Recruitment Lay Representative. Local teams would have to ensure the consistency of the recruitment is upheld and would be down to local discretion.

7 Operational complaints on the day of interviews

Non-exhaustive selection:

Issue	Effect	Remedy
<p>Knocks – timed wrongly or misunderstood</p>	<p>Causes exits at wrong times – too much or too little time for candidate at station</p>	<p>Too little time</p> <p>Is there scope for candidate to return immediately to complete scheduled time if any doubt that sufficient time to assess was not had?</p> <p>Lay Representative/recruitment lead/ timer has conversation with interviewers on station (candidate not present) to elicit whether sufficient time was had to score candidate fully. If yes, panel notes early exit and ability to score fully on criteria on score sheets. Candidate informed of outcome.</p> <p>If no, additional time must be given for interview to be concluded.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be noted in Lay Representative report. <p>Too much time</p> <p>Unlikely to cause a complaint – but should be noted in Lay Representative report.</p>

Issue	Effect	Remedy
<p>Preparation – confusion regarding prep time and or materials</p>	<p>Candidate given too much or too little time</p> <p>Candidate misses their slot</p>	<p>Too little time</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is there scope for candidate to complete scheduled time and hold back start of station? 2. If not, LR/RL/timer speaks to interviewers on station ahead of candidate entry to brief them on circumstances. Interviewers to be aware when scoring. Interviewers to note this on score sheets. <p>Missed slot</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Where possible allow candidate to be given the prep materials while they wait or for set period of time immediately before entry. 2. Where possible candidate enters this station as soon as possible. 3. LR/RL/timer speak to interviewers on station ahead of candidate entry to brief them on circumstances. Interviewers to factor this in when scoring. Interviewers to note this on score sheets. 4. Should be noted on Lay Representative report. <p>Wrong or missing materials</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Candidate should be provided with correct/ full set of materials and assigned to another rotation. 2. Interview panel should be briefed before candidate enters on the disruption to candidate interview.

Issue	Effect	Remedy
Wrong rotation order - candidate not expected at station:	<p>Confusion regarding experience/CV</p> <p>Confusion regarding questions on different scenario than expected</p> <p>Confusion leads to less time answering questions</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide interview panel with all facts. 2. Candidate must be given the right scenario and provided with scheduled time to read it. 3. Candidate must be given scheduled amount of time to complete station.
Interruptions – fire alarms, phone calls, etc.	<p>Candidate interview disrupted, potentially causing confusion or less time at station</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rotation should be extended to allow extra minutes for time disruption lasted. 2. Interview panel should note disruption on score sheets, as well as period of extension if this was implemented. 3. LR should note incident on Lay Representative report.
Delayed entry - due to locked door, malfunctioning equipment, etc.	<p>Candidate interview disrupted, potentially causing confusion or less time at station</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rotation should be extended to allow extra minutes for lost time 2. This should be noted on interviewer score sheets
Panel oversight – failed to view/ collect portfolio summary sheet, etc	<p>Less effective interview for the candidate</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. LR/RL should speak to interview panel as soon as discovered and determine whether full assessment was possible without view/collection of portfolio summary score sheets. 2. Notes should be made on interview score sheets. 3. This should be noted on the Lay Representative report.

Must happen for all of the above:

1. Interview panel note any occurrence out of the ordinary on the interview score sheets and affirm where appropriate and accurate that the panel was aware of the circumstances and believe they were able to score candidate in line with established parameters nonetheless.
2. Recruitment lead needs to carry out quick overview of candidate scores across stations – any significant discrepancies on station in question must be communicated to the lay representative and addressed directly with interview panel/ mini ‘wash-up’.
3. Incidents must be captured in Lay Representative and recruitment lead notes (at the very least as a reference to a completed incident report form)