

Medical Training (Prioritisation) Bill – FAQ_v2

The Government has introduced a bill to prioritise UK medical graduates for foundation training. This gives priority to graduates that undertook the majority of their undergraduate medical training within the UK, and to doctors with significant NHS experience for specialty training. This legislation is completing the final stages of its passage through the UK Parliament and will shortly come into effect.

1. What does this mean for NUMed MBBS Students?

The UK Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has confirmed that NUMed graduates remain eligible to apply to the Foundation Programme. The Bill introduces prioritisation criteria but does not remove eligibility. The government acknowledges there are expected to be more Foundation posts available than applicants within the priority groups, meaning there are likely to be places available for international graduates, including NUMED.

2. What is the University doing?

The University has worked with Peers across all political parties, and the leadership of other universities that have been similarly affected, to try to amend the Bill. While significant support was garnered from MPs and Peers across both Houses, the Government has not accepted the proposed amendments. The Bill has now passed through the House of Lords and is advancing to its final parliamentary stages before receiving Royal Assent and coming into effect. The University continues to monitor all remaining avenues for continued advocacy.

3. Who is advocating for NUMed students at the highest levels?

Senior University leadership have lead the advocacy, working with the leadership of other similarly affected universities, to engage directly with the Medical Schools Council, UK MPs, members of the House of Lords and government officials.

4. Is the University challenging or seeking an amendment to the legislative wording that disadvantages NUMed graduates?

The University has worked with Peers across all political parties to try to amend the Bill. While significant support was garnered, the Government has not accepted the proposed amendments. The Government's rationale for prioritisation is that UK-trained graduates have first-hand experience of working within the NHS and that capacity can be more easily aligned with NHS workforce needs. The prioritisation of Republic of Ireland and EFTA graduates is due to longstanding international agreements, not educational equivalence.

5. What contingency plans are being considered if legislative amendments do not progress in time?

Given that amendments were not accepted, the University is advising students on the following position:

(a) the NUMed MBBS remains a GMC accredited Primary Medical Qualification and eligibility to apply for the Foundation Programme is unchanged.

(b) NUMed graduates, holding a UK qualification with proven NHS readiness, remain in a very competitive position. Alternative pathways continue to be evaluated in collaboration with national bodies.

7. How will the University communicate developments and support affected students?

We will provide regular updates through email communications, briefings and dedicated information sessions. Support will be offered to current students and applicants who made decisions based on previous expectations of UK Foundation Programme eligibility.

8. In the proposed UK Parliamentary Bill in its current form, which applicant groups will be prioritised for Foundation programme?

Up to date information can be found on the NHS website:

<https://medical.hee.nhs.uk/medical-training-recruitment/medical-specialty-training/important-update-medical-specialty-training-and-foundation-programme-2026-recruitment>

The following applicant group is currently proposed as the priority group in the Bill:

- A) 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.
- B) A person who holds a primary medical qualification from an institution in Ireland, and they did not spend all or a majority of their time training for that qualification outside Ireland.
- C) A person who holds a primary medical qualification from an institution in Iceland, Principality of Liechtenstein, Norway, or Switzerland.

9. Has the Government confirmed NUMed graduates can still apply for the Foundation Programme?

Yes. The DHSC confirmed in a correspondence dated 21 February 2026 that graduates of overseas campuses of UK medical schools, such as NUMed, are not excluded from applying to the Foundation Programme. Anyone currently eligible to apply will remain eligible. The Bill introduces criteria for who is prioritised, not for who may apply.

The Government also expects there to be more Foundation Programme posts available than the number of applicants who accept places within the priority groups, meaning some non-prioritised applicants may secure places.