

**JOINT STATEMENT ABOUT VISA REQUIREMENTS FOR DOCTORS FUNDED BY THE AUTHORITIES IN THEIR HOME COUNTRIES TO UNDERTAKE TRAINING IN PATHOLOGY SPECIALITIES IN THE UK**

We are writing this statement in our role as international advisors to the Royal College of Pathologists.

We are aware that, for many years doctors have been funded by the authorities in their home countries to train in the UK either as a part of the requirements of their domestic curricula for specialist qualifications, or to obtain UK awards.

Recent changes in UK work permit regulations have had a direct impact upon the opportunities open to government funded doctors to come to the UK for training.

In the past, doctors seeking training in the UK were exempt from the work permit regulations, however since March 2006, this 'permit free training' status has been ended. The medical royal colleges have raised with the UK immigration authorities the position of funded doctors coming to the UK for honorary training posts and there has been an acknowledgement that there should be a place in the work permit regulations for such doctors.

The outcome has been the Medical Training Initiatives (MTI) visa (<http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk/workpermits/workpermitarrangements/twesworkpermits/>). In order for doctors to obtain such a visa, doctors and the post that they intend to take must meet a number of requirements, one of these is that the doctor on an MTI visa is paid at a rate no less than the UK national minimum wage. Currently this is £5.52 per hour for workers aged 22 years and older, this is equivalent to £11,500 per annum based on a 40 hour week. This requirement is a reflection of UK law and there is no scope for discretion on an individual basis, regardless of the country that the doctor is coming from.

Doctors should also note that:

- MTI visas are granted for a maximum period of two years, regardless of any funding beyond that time scale.
- Following a period in the UK under an MTI visa, doctors must then leave the UK and may not return for a period equivalent to the length an MTI visa was granted for.
- It is not possible to 'switch' from an MTI visa to another type of visa. Given this, doctors in the UK under an MTI visa would not be able to enter specialty training leading to the award of the CCT as they would not be eligible for a work permit.

Given these restrictions, all doctors considering coming to the UK should take great care to ensure that they are adequately prepared for any training in the UK and carefully consider the timing of any placement in the context of their overall career plans and aspirations. For example, if the career objective is training towards completion of the College membership examination, doctors should ensure that

training is at an appropriate level and will ensure that they are at a stage where they will be able to take the exam in no more than two years.

We would like to make clear to you that this is a decision that is out of the hands of this College and the work permit regulations are set by the UK authorities and there is no scope for exemptions.

We now ask that you make any prospective trainees in your countries, planning to come to the UK, aware of these new regulations in order that they can make appropriate preparations.

Under this new system, opportunities for training are contingent upon obtaining the necessary visa, which requires funding to a level that satisfies the UK authorities.

This statement does not apply to doctors who have the right to work in the UK or who have an immigration status that allows them to work in the UK.

Should you wish to discuss the implications of this further, please contact Duncan Turton at the College ([duncan.turton@rcpath.org](mailto:duncan.turton@rcpath.org)).

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