

Recruitment Principles

GP Practice medical student placements 2026-27 academic year

The GP Sub Deanery is taking the lead role in GP placement recruitment for 2026-27.

In the past two years, the number of offers from GP Practices across NI has been higher than the number of student placements required across both medical schools. We do not know whether this will be the case for 2026-27, but we need to plan for the possibility that there are more offers than placements available. We thank all Practices for their enthusiasm and commitment to teaching at such a stressful time for our teams.

We have been working closely with both medical schools to fully understand the recruitment and allocation principles used in preceding years. As key stakeholders, we have been listening to GP teams across NI, having visited >110 of the 180 current teaching Practices in our first year. This has reminded us that there is no perfect process for recruitment, and GP Practices have differing opinions on what is best.

The changes to the next recruitment cycle are part of the intended transition to a full GP Sub Deanery-led allocation of undergraduate medical student placements from the following year (contingent on continued Department of Health funding). The aim of these changes is to ensure a consistent, clear, and transparent process for allocations.

Earlier this year we shared in our newsletter our key values.



We are basing our recruitment principles on two themes that have been most frequently suggested by Practices (these align with a previous large QUB survey of GP Practices in 2024): -

- **Quality** - We have a quality assurance role and need to ensure that students have excellent learning opportunities in their GP placement.
- **Equity** – We want all Practices to have the opportunity to access medical student placements.

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WHAT WILL BE CHANGING FOR 2026-27 RECRUITMENT?

1. On Tuesday 6th January 2026, an email will be sent from the GP Sub Deanery to all Practices who have requested to be informed. If you are unsure if you are on the mailing list, then please click to [Confirm your contact information! – Fill out form.](#)
2. The email on 6th January will :-
 - a. confirm recruitment is now open.
 - b. provide direct links to both QUB and UU recruitment application forms.
 - c. include an MS Form that must be completed by every Practice. The data from this form will assist the GP Sub Deanery with ranking Practice applications should there be an oversupply. (One form per Practice unique cypher code, not per medical school application).
3. The recruitment window will be the same for both medical schools; from **Tuesday 6th January 2026 - Friday 27th February 2026.**
4. The GP Sub Deanery will aim to provide new Practices who have not taught this academic year the opportunity to host a GP placement (dependent on a satisfactory onboarding visit by the GP Sub Deanery team).
5. UU has in place a 3-year rolling commitment for its current host Practices. This has worked exceedingly well with high student satisfaction and exceptionally low Practice dropout rate. As only a small number of opportunities become available each year, we will give priority to new Practices not teaching medical students for either medical school in 2025-26 to these placements.
6. Unlike previous years, UU applications will **not** be allocated on “first come first served”.
7. To allow us to meet our aim of providing equity of access to placements, we expect it is very unlikely that any individual Practice will receive the maximum allocation of 4 pairs of year 4 and 3 pairs of year 5 QUB students. **Practices offering to host year 4 or 5 for QUB will be asked to provide their availability across all blocks to assist with allocations.**

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HOW WILL PRACTICE APPLICATIONS BE RANKED?

Ranking will only be used if the number of offers is greater than the number of placements available for any placement type. We know there is no perfect ranking system, and we have limited criteria that we can rank upon. Example criteria include: -

A. QUALITY

- Recognise GPs teaching in the Practice who have educational qualifications. This is an objective way to demonstrate a commitment to good teaching practice. Examples include PgCert in Clinical Education (or higher), Learning & Teaching – Becoming a GP Trainer (NIMDTA course).

B. EQUITY

- New Practices who have not taught medical students from either medical school in this academic year. (This will include fallow Practices).

WHAT ADDITIONAL FACTORS MAY INFLUENCE A PRACTICE ALLOCATION?

1. Practices will be asked to rank their preferred placement types on the MS Form (if they are offering to host more than one placement type). This will be taken into consideration if there is an oversupply of Practices for a particular year group.
2. On some occasions geographical considerations may influence which Practices we can involve (e.g., the Trust location of Year 3 QUB students, or the distance from campus for UU year 2 and QUB Family Medicine).
3. Practices **currently** hosting students in harder to recruit placement types e.g. year 3 QUB, Family Medicine QUB, may be allocated one additional placement type.
4. Students can fail to progress between years, or withdraw from medicine for various reasons, often at short notice. We acknowledge the adverse impact this regrettably has on the small number of Practices where those students had been allocated, but that is clearly beyond the control of any allocation process.
5. If there has been a previous serious quality concern (for example where medical students have been withdrawn) in a Practice, the GP Sub Deanery will review any evidence it holds and discuss with the relevant medical school/s before any decision is made on allocation.

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6. The GP Sub Deanery may review the overall numbers of placement offers made by each Practice for both medical schools. Whilst there is currently no maximum number of students that can be hosted by a Practice at any time, higher student numbers can risk reducing the number of learning opportunities.
7. Late returns will not be accepted unless specific placement types are not fully recruited, or if there is a need in a specific geographical area.

WHEN WILL PRACTICES KNOW THEIR STUDENT ALLOCATION?

This is in part dependent on the number of Practices who apply. We recognise the need to inform Practices as early as possible to allow them to plan. We anticipate offers will be made by 30th April 2026 at the latest.