

A career in
emergency medicine



Careers Strategy

The Royal College of Emergency
Medicine Recruitment and
Careers Committee

A strategic approach

The Recruitment and Careers Committee set out to create a careers strategy for the College, aiming to:

- Promote Emergency Medicine as an attractive career
- Provide information to doctors and practitioners considering a career in EM
- Support retention of those already in the specialty at key moments in their careers
- Encourage role models and inspirational leadership from established EPs

Following initial discussions, we decided to approach this by dividing our target audience into distinct stakeholder groups, as the messaging needs to be tailored according to the different stages of the career journey. These groups reflect the diverse nature of career paths; some individuals may be on a formal training route, while others may be following an alternative pathway at a similar stage. The groups are:

- Medical students
- Foundation doctors and those immediately post-foundation
- Core trainees
- Higher trainees
- EMSAS doctors
- Consultants
- Advanced Clinical Practitioners (ACPs)

In this strategy document we describe the particular characteristics of each of these groups, and we identify the key messages needed and opportunities to communicate with them. There are particular moments in the career pathway where communication and support are important and will have the greatest impact. A series of recommendations are presented which should inform future work.



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Why emergency medicine?

We have identified six key words that describe and summarise the reasons for choosing Emergency Medicine as a career, which serve as common themes throughout the strategy.



Excitement

- Work is fast paced and never boring.
- You never know what might happen next.
- You will make life-saving decisions and interventions.



Variety

- No two shifts are the same.
- Work with patients of all ages with all types of presentation.
- Develop a broad range of skills and subspecialty interests.



Flexibility

- Less than full time and flexible working is encouraged.
- Annualised rotas mean that you can work to suit your lifestyle.
- There is flexibility within both training and alternative career pathways.



Challenge

- You will have to think on your feet and use your problem-solving skills.
- You will receive leadership training to manage a busy environment.
- You will learn how to negotiate and advocate for your patient.



Teamwork

- Be part of the Emergency Department family.
- You will never be on your own with support from colleagues on the shop-floor 24/7.
- You will work in a large multidisciplinary team and with specialties from across the hospital and beyond.



Reward

- You make a difference to people's lives every day.
- You will receive immediate feedback on your performance, fine-tuning your skills.
- Trainees have protected Educational Development Time and at ST4-6, a higher rate of pay than other specialties.

Medical students

Embracing early enthusiasm



Strategic Objective

To cultivate early interest and engagement with Emergency Medicine (EM) among medical students, providing them with meaningful exposure, clear information, and opportunities for participation that encourage them to consider EM as a viable and rewarding career path.



Strategic Priorities

- Enhancing Undergraduate Exposure to Emergency Medicine
- Strengthening Links with Student Societies
- Promoting Emergency Medicine at Undergraduate Careers Events
- Leveraging Digital Channels to Inspire and Inform
- Growing and Enhancing Student Membership
- Supporting Student Participation in Conferences and Events
- Delivering and Expanding Careers Events

Key Messages for Medical Students

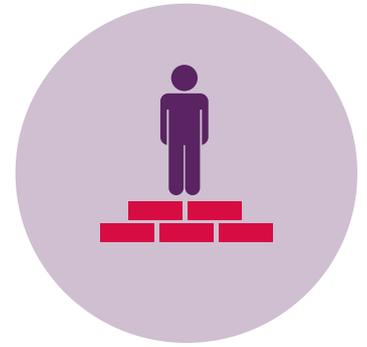
- Inspiration Through Experience: Practical exposure and real-life stories spark interest and shape career intentions.
- Access to Information: Clear, relevant guidance is essential to help students understand and navigate EM as a career.
- Early Belonging: Creating meaningful, early links with the EM community fosters long-term interest and commitment.

The College will:

- Utilise faculty expertise to develop resources that support undergraduate Emergency Medicine teaching.
- Actively engage with student societies through the RCEM Affiliation Scheme to build sustained relationships.
- Ensure the RCEM website and events portal effectively connect local faculty with undergraduate event organisers.
- Maintain engaging, regularly updated content across the website and social media platforms.
- Review and enhance the student membership offering to increase uptake and visibility.
- Continue delivering the national Careers Day, while supporting similar initiatives at a regional level.

Foundation Doctors

Supporting critical choices



Strategic Objective

To support Foundation Doctors during their early exposure to Emergency Medicine, ensuring they receive adequate guidance, experience, and opportunities to make informed decisions about their career pathways, while addressing challenges related to work-life balance, flexibility, and career sustainability.



Strategic Priorities

- Strengthening the Foundation Year EM Training Experience
- Addressing Work-Life Balance and Flexibility
- Promoting the Flexibility and Sustainability of Emergency Medicine Careers
- Engaging Foundation Doctors through Digital and Social Media Channels
- Supporting Foundation Doctors at Local and National Careers Events
- Fostering ACCS Career Pathways

Key Messages for Foundation Doctors

- Support and Guidance: Foundation Doctors need clear and consistent support to navigate the challenges of their early exposure to Emergency Medicine.
- Flexibility and Sustainability: Highlighting the work-life balance, flexibility, and long-term sustainability of a career in EM is crucial for retention.
- Informed Decision Making: Providing Foundation Doctors with comprehensive information will empower them to make well-informed decisions about their future specialty.

The College will:

- The RCEM website should be regularly updated with accessible and engaging content about the EM training pathway.
- Deliver targeted social media campaigns aligned with the key recruitment timeline, ensuring Foundation Doctors are prepared and informed.
- Provide high-quality printed materials, including new leaflets and posters, to support EM recruitment and career development discussions.
- Continue hosting the annual ACCS Careers Day as a face-to-face event, while expanding regional opportunities to support future trainees.

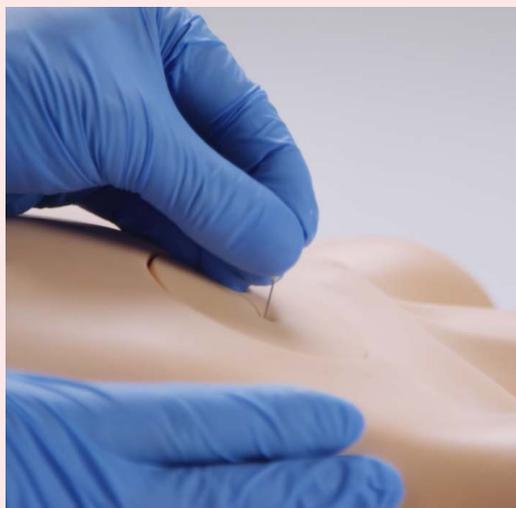
Core Trainees

Welcoming new recruits



Strategic Objective

To provide comprehensive support and foster a strong sense of belonging for Core Trainees in Emergency Medicine (EM), helping them navigate the challenges of their ACCS rotations and maintain strong links with the EM family throughout their training. This strategy will focus on enhancing communication, providing flexibility, and offering wellbeing support.



Strategic Priorities

- Strengthening Trainee Integration into the EM Community
- Providing Ongoing Support Throughout the ACCS Training Period
- Promoting Flexibility and Career Development within the Training Pathway
- Signposting Wellbeing and Support Services

Key Messages for Core Trainees

- Integration and Support: Ensure Core Trainees feel fully integrated into the EM community, with ongoing support throughout their ACCS rotations.
- Flexibility and Career Options: Promote the flexibility of training and career options within EM, demonstrating the potential for long-term, sustainable careers.
- Wellbeing: Provide clear pathways to wellbeing resources to help Core Trainees navigate the stresses of training.

The College will:

- Welcome Pack for New Trainees: RCEM should provide a welcome pack to all new Core Trainees when they register on the e-portfolio, including practical items for their clinical practice and an official welcome letter.
- Ongoing Support During ACCS Rotations: RCEM should ensure regular communication with Core Trainees and consider establishing local support groups to provide additional peer-to-peer networking and advice.
- Targeted Messaging via the e-Portfolio: The e-portfolio should be utilised to send targeted messages of support and advice, particularly around critical times such as ARCP (Annual Review of Competence Progression).

Higher Trainees

Supporting through challenge



Strategic Objective

To support the professional development, well-being, and long-term success of higher trainees in Emergency Medicine by providing comprehensive resources, fostering flexibility in training, promoting leadership development, and offering tailored career progression pathways. This objective aims to ensure higher trainees are equipped with the skills, knowledge, and support necessary to thrive within the specialty, progress smoothly into consultant roles, and maintain a sustainable work-life balance throughout their career journey.



Strategic Priorities

- Continued Support from the College
- Supporting Flexible Working and Subspecialty Options
- Profiling Life as a New Consultant to Inspire Higher Trainees

Key Messages for Higher Trainees

- We've Got Your Back – The College understands the challenges you face and is committed to supporting you through this demanding stage of your career.
- Flexibility is Key – Emergency Medicine offers a range of flexible working options to help you maintain a work-life balance, including less than full time and tailored working patterns.
- Shape Your Career – Higher trainees have the opportunity to specialise and focus on areas of interest, with the support and resources needed to pursue subspecialties or portfolio careers.
- Develop Leadership Skills – Our higher training programme is designed to hone your management and leadership abilities, preparing you for a successful transition to consultant roles.
- Clear Pathway to Consultancy – We're here to guide you through the transition from trainee to consultant, with clear job planning, autonomy, and professional support tailored to your goals.
- Sustainability Matters – The College is committed to promoting work-life balance and mental well-being, ensuring that you can build a long-term, fulfilling career in Emergency Medicine without burnout.

The College will:

- Continue to deliver a strong, supportive message to higher trainees, emphasising: "We've got your back."
- The College website will be enhanced to serve as a comprehensive resource hub, offering detailed information and advice on flexible working arrangements and subspecialty options, while showcasing the diverse career choices available to trainees.
- Develop website and social media content will include profiles of new consultants, highlighting their career transitions and providing higher trainees with a clear vision of their future career path within Emergency Medicine.

EMSAS

Boosting retention and career diversity



Strategic Objective

To enhance the professional development, retention, and recognition of EMSAS clinicians by providing tailored career support, promoting pathways for career progression, and fostering a strong sense of community within the Emergency Medicine workforce. This will be achieved through active membership engagement, targeted training opportunities, clear career development pathways, and continued support for EMSAS-led initiatives, ensuring that EMSAS clinicians are empowered, valued, and integral to the delivery of high-quality emergency care.

Strategic Priorities

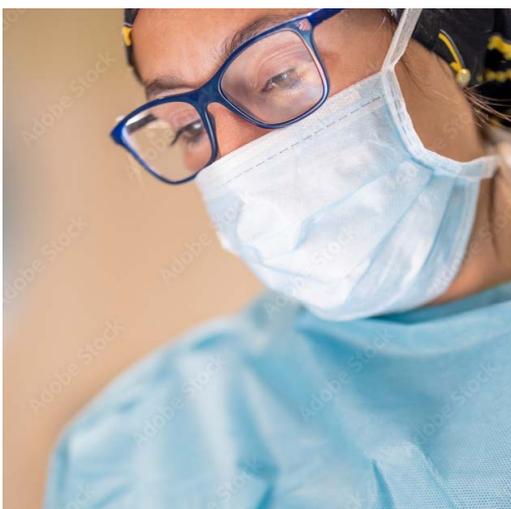
- Identifying Members and Supporting Career Progression
- Pro Facilitating Training and Development
- Providing Information and Promoting Career Development
- Supporting the EMSAS Conference

Key Messages for EMSAS Doctors

- EMSAS clinicians are vital and valued members of the ED team, contributing at all levels with extensive experience and expertise.
- Becoming an EMSAS doctor is a considered choice, offering flexibility and autonomy to balance work-life priorities.
- EMSAS doctors are integral members of the team with unique career development needs.
- EMSAS career pathways offer an exciting, fulfilling career in Emergency Medicine while allowing for control over work-life balance.

The College will:

- Will work to actively identify and recruit EMSAS clinicians to College membership, ensuring they are well-supported in their roles.
- The College supports the review of contracts for EMSAS doctors and encourages employers to ensure clinicians are on appropriate contracts with progression to Speciality and Specialist grades where appropriate.
- The College will continue to support local and national training events aimed specifically at EMSAS clinicians, while ensuring they are included in broader College events and conferences.



Consultants

Identifying the champions



Strategic Objective

To engage Consultants as key influencers in the promotion, development, and sustainability of careers in Emergency Medicine (EM), ensuring long-term workforce retention through visible role-modelling, strategic leadership, and sustainable working practices.



Strategic Priorities

- Identifying and Empowering Local Careers Champions
- Supporting Trainees at Critical Junctures
- Sharing Real-Life Consultant Career Pathways
- Promoting Sustainable Working Practices

Key Messages for Consultants

- You are vital to attracting and retaining future EM professionals.
- Become a Careers Champion to promote the specialty locally and nationally.
- Support and inspire trainees through mentorship and shared experiences.
- Show how EM can be a sustainable and fulfilling long-term career
- Your influence can shape the future workforce of Emergency Medicine.

The College will:

- Establish a national network of Careers Champions.
- Enhance support for trainees at risk of leaving the specialty.
- Profile and promote real Consultant career stories.
- Continue to disseminate resources that support sustainable and flexible working practices.

Advanced Clinical Practitioners

Diversifying the workforce



Strategic Objective

To recognise, support and integrate Advanced Clinical Practitioners (ACPs) as an essential and valued part of the Emergency Medicine workforce, ensuring their development, progression and long-term contribution to the specialty.



Strategic Priorities

- Enhancing Understanding of the Credentialing Process
- Strengthening the ACP Identity Within the EM Workforce
- Supporting ACP Development and Progression

Key Messages for ACPs

- Integration and Value: ACPs are integral members of the Emergency Medicine team and should be recognised and supported as such.
- Transparency and Support: Clear, accessible guidance around credentialing helps ensure successful progression.
- Development and Recognition: Structured opportunities for non-clinical growth, leadership, and professional contribution are key to long-term retention and satisfaction.

The College will:

- Continue to provide clear, accessible information on the RCEM credentialing process.
- Reinforce the role of ACPs as valued members of the Emergency Medicine workforce.
- Promote structured development opportunities, including teaching, leadership, and non-clinical time, as standard elements of ACP progression.
- Share examples of best practice from leading Trusts to support the national development of ACP roles

Conclusion

This strategy has allowed the formulation of a number of recommendations to shape the future work of the Recruitment and Careers Committee and inform the wider work of the College. It is hoped that by following these recommendations we can continue to inform and inspire to recruit and retain the best workforce for the future of Emergency Medicine.





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