

Frequently Asked Questions - Core Surgical Training

This document contains information on the following range of topics:

- General information
- Eligibility
- Irish Medical Council registration
- The CST training programme
- The online application
- Technical troubleshooting & queries

General

Q: Is there a fee for the training programme?

A: No, but there is an application fee of 50 Euro (non-refundable), payable via credit card at point of submission of application.

Q: Is there an application fee?

A: Yes, it is 50 Euro (non-refundable), payable via credit card at point of submission of application.

Q: Can I get a scholarship/fellowship for CST?

A: There are no scholarships or fellowships available for this programme. Each trainee is employed by the HSE and receives a contract in advance of commencement on the programme and their employment date (Second Monday of July annually) from the allocated Hospital.

Q: Is there limit on how many times I can apply to CST?

A: No, there is no limit to number of times you can apply to the CST Programme.

Q: Should I have my MRCS completed before I apply for the programme

A: No, however, you must have passed both parts of MRCS to be eligible for an ST3 interview. You can review data on MRCS amongst successful CST applicants in the Trainee Progression Data document on our 'How to apply' page [here](#).

Q: I have missed the application deadline, what can I do?

A: No applications can be submitted after the deadline you will need to apply the following year. We advise all applicants to ensure you have all your documentation prepared well in advance.

Eligibility

Q: Am I eligible for CST?

A: Please see eligibility criteria documentation on the webpage [here](#).

Q: Can I join the programme without a Medical Degree?

A: No, you must hold a full Medical Degree to apply for CST.

Q: Do I need to complete an intern year?

A: Yes, please see more details with regard to Registration on the Irish Medical Council website at www.medicalcouncil.ie.

Q: I completed my Medical Degree in English in non-English speaking country. Do I still need to provide IELTS or OET results?

A: Please see documentation in relation to this [here](#).

Q: I am a non-EU national, am I eligible for CST?

A: Please see eligibility criteria documentation on the webpage [here](#).

Medical Council Queries

Q: How can I apply for Medical Council Registration (IMC)?

A: Please visit the Irish Medical Council website www.medicalcouncil.ie for information re eligibility for Registration.

Q: Do I need to pay my registration fee for the IMC before applying?

A: No, you must prove you are eligible for the General Division of the Register, not that you have already registered. An email from the IMC is sufficient proof of your eligibility status.

Q: Why do you ask for an IMC number?

A: While we do not require registration with the IMC to have been completed by the time of application to CST, it can be a lengthy process. To ensure that there will be no delays in completing registration before commencement on the programme, your application to the IMC must be started by the time of application. It also serves as a unique identifier for applicants.

Q: My application with the IMC is still pending, how do I input an IMC number?

A: You will have received an application number with your application to the IMC. This number will become your IMC number for life once your registration is complete. This is a 6 digit number and should be input where the application requests an IMC number.

References

Q: Do I need referees?

A: Yes, it is mandatory to have two referees, you will be required to submit their details once you start your application, your referees will then receive a template to complete and submit online.

Q: Where do I find the reference forms?

A: The reference forms are hosted on our online application site. You will be instructed to provide contact details for your referees and they receive a link via email to complete a reference form for you. Please confirm that each referee is happy to complete a reference for you prior to including them on your application.

Q: Are there stipulations as to who the referees can be?

A: Where possible your referees should be from clinical posts with one being from your current or most recent post.

The Application

Q. Is there a certain Document Format for Online Applications?

A. Allowed file extensions : "jpg", "jpeg", "jpe", "png", "gif" "txt", "doc", "docx", "pdf", "xls", "xlsx", "rtf" If you upload a PDF this will increase the size of the document.

Q. Is there a limit to characters when uploading a document?

A. Yes, please limit to 150 characters including file name and file path

Q. Is there a limit of characters on different sections of the applications?

A. Please see below:

- 1) Title of Publication, Audit, presentations and case reports are **100 characters**.
- 2) Title of research is **500 characters**
- 3) Details of research **4000 characters**
- 4) Verified attendance at meeting is **4000 characters**
- 5) Details of clinical Experience is **2000 characters**

Q. What is your degree entry method if you attended an international university?

A. Please choose 'other' and state direct entry or graduate entry etc as appropriate

Q: What proof is required when submitting presentations?

A: An invitation or email from the meeting or conference team confirming your presentation slot.

Q: What supporting documents are required for Research in Progress?

A: A letter or email of confirmation from your supervisor (must be Consultant level, not another trainee)

Q: How do I provide proof of audit?

A: A letter from you consultant stating the nature/name of the audit and confirming your participation or published abstract from a national meeting programme including your name as a listed author or a published paper from a journal listing you as an author.

Q: What does it mean by 'standards used' for audit?

A: There are a number of specific standards that can be used for developing criteria when performing a clinical audit such as STROBE and NICE. Where a specific criteria for standards has not been used a brief summary of the standards used can be input in this section. Your audit supervisor should be able to guide as to what is the most appropriate for this section.

Q: Can I list an audit with an expected finish date?

A: Audits in progress cannot be added to the audit section, however can be included in the additional information section of the application or as research in progress.

Q: How are different aspects of the application marked (i.e. MRCS status, master's degree, audits, presentations, etc.)?

A: There are no defined scores awarded but would demonstrate a commitment to lifelong learning which would be taken into account under professional development during interview.

The Training Programme

Q: Can a CST trainee avail of the HSE Flexible training scheme or family friendly rotations?

A: The HSE Flexible Training scheme is open to trainees from CST year 2 onwards. Family friendly rotation requests will be reviewed on an individual basis. You can read more on such policies as Job sharing and Post reassignment [here](#) under General Policies and Procedures & Employee/HR Guidelines and Procedures.

Q: How many places are available on the CST Programme?

A: 80 Training places are available each year (subject to review year on year by RCSI, NDTP/HSE)

Q: Can I defer my place?

A: No deferrals are allowed.

Q: How can I study a particular specialty?

A: You must first successfully complete Core Surgical Training for competitive entry to your chosen specialty at ST3.

Q: Can I apply to ST3 in more than one specialty?

A: No, you can only apply in your ST2 specialty. If you want to change specialty in year 2 there is an option to do so.

Q: When will I choose my specialty?

A: We will contact you with information on this midway through CST year 1.

Q: Can I defer my application for ST3

A: No, if you do not apply to ST3 directly from ST2 you will be required to apply via the Equivalent Standards Route (ESR) where available, in any subsequent years.

Q: What is the Equivalent Standard Route (ESR)?

A: Please see information [here](#) under General Policies and Procedures

Q: Will my CST cert be accepted to apply directly to higher training in other countries?

A: You would need to check this with the the training body in the country where you are applying for Specialty training.

Q: Where can I get information about progression rates from Core to Specialty training?

A: Please see information [here](#) under General Policies and Procedures.

Q: Are year one posts allocated competitively? When do you submit your preferences for these?

A: Yes they are, there is an electronic match based on ranking from intake scoring, candidates rank choices from the full list of rotation sets 1 – 80 if they receive a round one offer following interview.

Q: Can I get credit for completing a different training programme and do less than two years on CST?

A: No, you must complete the full two year programme.

Q: Are the year 2 posts paired with any specific posts or does it change from year to year?

A: Year 2 rotations are not linked to year 1 rotations. ST2 posts can fluctuate according to demand and are usually linked pro rata to the number of ST3 SpR posts expected to be available the following year. We offer guidance on indicative numbers when trainees are selecting their preferences.

Some technical questions:

Q: Can I do my application on a smart phone?

A: No, we strongly advise that you use a laptop/desktop for optimum performance.

Q: Can I do my application in my hospital?

A: We recommend you don't try to do your application in the hospital as there can be firewall /internet speed issues.



Q: Is there a recommended browser for the CST online application site?

A: For optimum performance on the CST application site we recommend using Google Chrome

Q: I am having an issue accessing the site or uploading my documents, what should I do?

A: If you are experiencing technical issues we recommend you try a couple of things such as clear your cache on your computer; switch to incognito mode on your browser. (You can readily find information online on how to do this)

Q: When attempting to register for CSTOnline I am receiving the error: "a duplicate user account was found with mismatching information" What should I do?

A: If you are attempting to register with an RCSI email that is, or has been, associated with one of the college portals (student portal, library portal, tutor portal, etc.) you will receive this error message. Please contact corest@rcsi.com providing a screenshot of the error and your RCSI email address in order to have your PortalUser Account reset to enable you to proceed.

Q: I'm having a technical issue with my application and the suggestions listed have not helped, what should I do?

A: Please take some screen shots of the error messages or relevant pages & email them to: corest@rcsi.ie

If your query is not answered above please contact us via email at: corest@rcsi.ie