

National Specialist Training Programme in General Practice

Prospectus 2026



Welcome from the National Director



Dr Cathy Cullen
National Director, GP Training

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the wonderful medical specialty of General Practice. I hope you will find the information contained in this 'National Specialist Training Programme in General Practice' prospectus a useful tool in informing and guiding you on your decision to apply for GP Training. In this prospectus you will find key information on our vision for GP training, our mission, and values, together with the facts about the Irish College of GPs National training programme, the process of recruitment to the programme and details on each of the training schemes.

The Irish College of GPs has sole responsibility for postgraduate medical training in the specialty of General Practice. The Irish College of GPs designs and delivers a world-class, highly innovative and continuously improving GP training programme. There are currently over 1,400 trainees enrolled on the GP training programme and an anticipated 350 places for July 2026. The National Training programme is divided into 4 geographical regions, each region incorporating 3/4 schemes.

As a college, we are always improving our programme: the addition of a trainee health and wellbeing manager last year, an increase of high-quality blended learning modules, focused this academic year on chronic disease management, an e-portfolio- GPEP, a one stop location for your learning needs and a new revised curriculum to be launched in July 2026. Half day release in years 1 & 2 as well as a full day in years 3 & 4 allow GP trainees a unique opportunity to form close supportive networks with their peers with facilitated small group learning from a dedicated scheme directing team and have protected time to consolidate their learning in post. A full year in two separate training practices allows them to experience General Practice in a safe supported environment.

There is a national shortage of GPs, and you will thus be joining this programme and specialty at a most exciting time with numerous opportunities awaiting you on completion of your training.

Please be advised of the following abbreviations in the prospectus:

IMC - Irish Medical Council

RPL - Recognition of Prior Learning

HSE – Health Service Executive

IMC – Irish Medical Council

SJT – Situational Judgement Test

CPST – Clinical Problem Solving Test

INT - Interview using Simulation

About Us

The Irish College of GPs is the postgraduate training body (PGTB) responsible for postgraduate education, training, and research in the specialty of General Practice. The College has a national advisory role in relation to medical standards and engages with the Medical Council, Department of Health, the Health Service Executive, National Doctors Training & Planning and the Health Information & Quality Authority amongst others. As a membership organisation, the Irish College of GPs is responsible for providing and supporting continuous professional development for general practitioners, numbering over 4,500. The Irish College of GPs is the PGTB accredited by the Medical Council to provide professional training for doctors wishing to enter the speciality of General Practice.

Vision Statement



General practice at the heart of patient care, Irish College of GPs at the heart of general practice, and GPs at the heart of College.

Mission Statement



To support our members, trainees, and GP-led Teams to excel and lead general practice through training, education, research, and advocacy, continuing to ensure the highest standards of patient care and providing the tools to shape the future of general practice.

Values Statement

Our values describe the principles that guide us as we work to achieve our mission. We strive to demonstrate...



Leadership

We will through strong leadership inspire others to action on behalf of our members and align policies, guidelines, structures and services to members

Quality

We will achieve the highest quality standards in training, research and medical education in support of continuous quality improvement

Advocacy

We will advocate for general practice as central to the delivery of an effective and equitable healthcare system

Sustainability

We will focus on the long-term wellbeing of our members and colleagues, our profession, our patients, and the world around us

Inclusivity

We will continue to value diversity as part of our communities and treat everyone with respect

Innovation

We will provide an environment which encourages innovation and best practice in everything we do



Overview of GP Training

The National Specialist Training Programme in General Practice is a four-year, run-through programme of training and assessment. Trainees receiving recognition of prior learning may have training shortened to three years. Entry to the programme is by a competitive process followed by matching to training schemes based on candidate preference and selection rank. The programme incorporates 13 training schemes distributed across Ireland.

Training is divided into two phases. In Years 1 and 2, trainees generally undertake rotations in hospital and community settings in secondary care specialties of relevance to general practice. In Years 3 and 4, trainees generally undertake rotations in general practice. Trainees receiving recognition of prior learning are accredited one year for prior hospital-based training, shortening their training to three years in total.

At the start of training, all trainees sign a training agreement which sets out the terms and conditions of their enrolment on the training programme. They must also attend an induction day to prepare them for commencement.

Throughout the programme, trainees engage in workplace-based learning, guided by their designated trainer, and attend a programme of day release teaching and learning delivered by their training scheme. Trainees are assessed at six-monthly intervals on their progress and performance through the competency progression process. Factors considered in assessment include, but are not limited to, workplace-based assessments, attendance and engagement at day release, and success in Membership of the Irish College of GPs examinations (MICGP).

Satisfactory progression through the programme, along with successful completion of all requirements, culminates in the award of a Certification of Satisfactory Completion of Specialist Training (CSCST), whereupon the College recommends to the Irish Medical Council (IMC) that the trainee be placed on the Specialist Register of Medical Practitioners (General Practice Division). The trainee – now General Practitioner— can then commence independent practice as a College member.

The training journey is rewarding and an opportunity for personal and professional growth and development. It is also rigorous and demanding. Trainees who do not progress satisfactorily are afforded additional support and assistance through the training programme and it will in rare circumstances be necessary to evaluate trainees' suitability to continue in training through the Progression Review process. Trainees are also expected to adhere to the highest professional standards throughout training as set down in the Irish Medical Council's Guide to Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Medical Practitioners.

Why Choose General Practice?





GP Inspirational Stories

Take a look at a few of our inspirational stories of being a GP in Ireland.



Dr Anna Linnane

The benefits of being a GP in rural Ireland

- Families grow up with you
- Better work, life balance
- Greater flexibility
- Building a practice that works for me.



Dr Padraic McCarthy

Combining research and a role as a GP

- Opportunity to specialize
- Flexibility to train online
- Delivery of high quality care.



Dr Clodhna NiMhurchu

A career as an Irish speaking GP in Galway

- Deeply rooted in a local community
- Real continuity of care
- Global thinking, local care



See more on [GP Inspirational Stories](#)

You can also listen to our [GP works podcasts](#)

Don't just take our word for it..... here's what others say about general practice



"The breadth and complexity of presentations quickly dispelled my belief that general practice lacked variety."

"This placement not only deepened my respect for the role of the GP but reshaped my career ambitions."

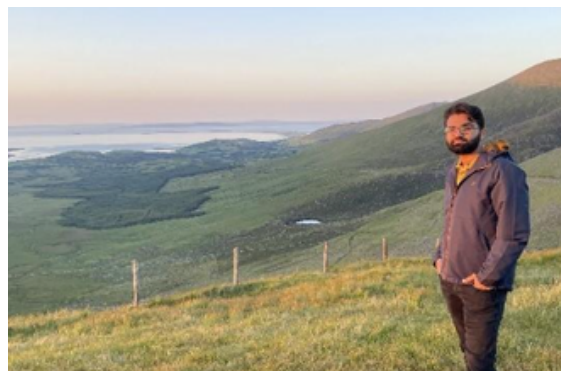
[Read full article](#)

Isaac Lee James
Medical Student
University College Cork

"I loved my training years and am fortunate to have made great friends after the span of those wonderful 4 years."

[Read full article](#)

Dr Uzair Shabbir
Post CSCST Fellow 2024 - 2025



Training to #BeAGP is something I'm very proud of - you can make a lasting difference to your patients lives through the management of their illness, advocating on their behalf or being a source of comfort and guidance. Day-to-day the job brings a sense of fulfilment like no other. With supportive colleagues working alongside you, a vibrant college encouraging you and endless career possibilities ahead - I wholeheartedly recommend you join us and #BeAGP

Dr Therese Lynn
3rd Year GP Registrar
RCSI Scheme

"Since 2023, the Medical Council has inspected and approved 19 GP intern sites. Overall findings were extremely positive."

Feedback from Medical Council following Clinical
Inspection Sites to General Practice Intern Placements



Comhairle na
nDochtúirí Leighis
Medical Council

Build a life in Medicine that works for you

From pediatrics to geriatrics, incorporate your special interest in your own practice. Being a GP facilitates diverse and rewarding career pathways



Start Training and be a General Practice Specialist in 4 Years

We have 13 schemes over 4 regions for GP
Training in Ireland. Train to Be A GP and have
clinical variety, a better life balance and live in a
community of your choosing.



Training to Support You to Learn & Lead

Supporting you in training with protected time for
small group learning and peer engagement





Why our Trainees Choose General Practice as a Career

Career & Financial Security



Community /
Choice of where to live



Work / Life Balance



Clinical Variety





General Practice in 2025

GP Numbers are up

4,600 GPs
now in practice
(up 5% vs 2024)

1,130
GP trainees in
the pipeline

*people are living longer
and managing more
complex health needs*

*GPs are their first and
ongoing point of care*

Patient Care Needs Continue to Grow

+100,000
people added to the
population annually
(+2% annually)

+28,000
more people aged
65+ every year
(+4% annually)

Figures from Irish College of GPs 2025
Statistical Update. Data from HSE, CSO, &
Irish College of GP sources.

General Practice Teams Rising to the Challenge

4.4 visits per person
per year

21m GP consultations
per year

88,000 GP consultations
per day

390,000 prescriptions
issued daily

2,500 chronic disease
reviews daily

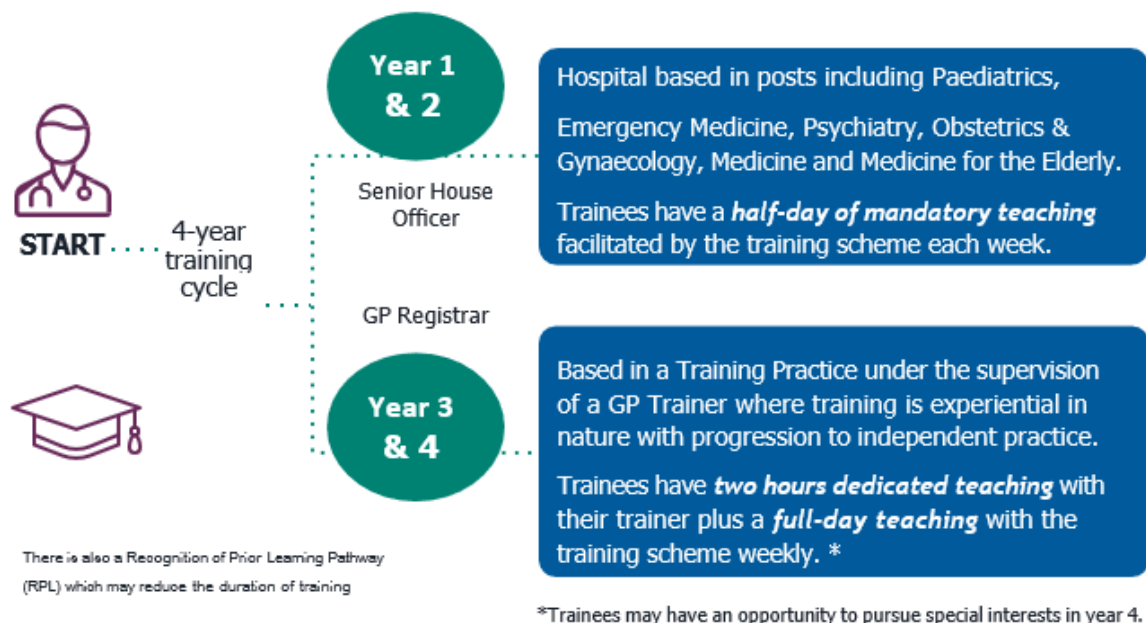
*where you live still shapes
how easy it is to find a GP
and some communities
risk losing services*

Access isn't Equal

Urban 100 GPs per 100k pop.
Rural 60 GPs per 100k pop.

Over 500 GPs work in solo
practices. These GPs are often
older and see rural patients

Irish College of GPs General Practice Training Programme



Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Pathway

We recognise that some applicants have prior clinical experience which is relevant to their GP training journey.

Applicants who have completed Basic Specialty Training (BST) in Medicine, Paediatrics, or Emergency Medicine by 12 July 2026, and passed the relevant membership exams by 30 April 2026 may be eligible for prior learning accreditation. Successful candidates can complete GP training in three years instead of four.

Recognition of Prior Learning

Methods of Teaching and Learning

Small group learning at day release is a core component of the Training Programme which helps facilitate reflective practice for the trainee with their peers and educational supervisors. Practical and simulated training in a supportive environment is a central feature.

The Digital Resources Hub offers trainees a comprehensive library of blended learning modules covering key curriculum topics. Developed by the College, these modules draw on the knowledge and expertise of our leading GPs to support high-quality training.



General Practice E-portfolio platform (GPEP)

GPEP is the e-portfolio platform for GP trainees. GPEP is designed to be the consolidated source of all evidence and information leading to CSCST. The trainee-led e-portfolio will provide a streamlined interface to increase clarity for trainees and schemes on learning progress. All learning progress will be recorded and available via your trainee dashboard.



Dr Muhammad Moazzam Gulzar, Donegal Specialist Training Scheme, Year 3

Assessment

General Practice training is learner-centred and innovative in its delivery. The Irish College of GPs is engaged in competency-based medical education (CBME) and has developed a set of entrustable professional activities (EPAs), specific to Irish General Practice, designed to enhance and focus trainee learning in the workplace.

Trainees are encouraged to actively seek regular feedback from their clinical supervisors and record their EPA feedback in GPEP. A bespoke EPA dashboard in GPEP enables trainees and their clinical supervisors and educational mentors to monitor competency progression. EPA feedback is a mandatory component of clinical placements. Overall trainee progression is reviewed by scheme competency progression committees (CPCs). In addition to demonstrating clinical competence in the workplace and satisfactorily achieving other core criteria, trainees are also required to pass MICGP (Membership of the Irish College of GPs) examinations.

MICGP Examinations

The MICGP is a postgraduate assessment comprising of two examinations. The Core Knowledge Test (CKT) is a single best answer written paper delivered online, and the Clinical Competency Test (CCT) is an in-person clinical examination, designed as a simulated surgery comprising long and short cases.

The MICGP exam is designed to assess a candidate's clinical knowledge, skills and attitudes and determine if they meet the standard appropriate for independent practice as a specialist General Practitioner. Each exam module and question is mapped to a defined area of the GP Training curriculum and competency of a General Practitioner.

Supports





Network of GP Trainees

The Network is the general practice trainee voice on training matters. Any trainee can be a committee member. There are two network GP trainee representatives per scheme.

Aims of the Network of GP Trainees

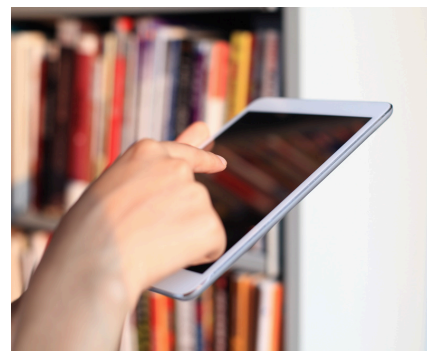
- To advocate for trainees – education, training and professional development
- To represent trainees at the Irish College of GPs and other bodies
- To encourage collaboration between trainees on different schemes
- To encourage involvement of trainees in College
- To keep trainees well informed on education and training related issues
- In conjunction with the Irish College of GPs organise the annual Network of GP trainees Conference

Library & Information Services

The main function of the College library is to support trainees and the wider membership of the College by providing access to relevant publications. It provides access to high-quality, evidence-based information relevant to Irish general practice.

Library Services

- Literature searches: Assist in carrying out literature searches on clinical topics as requested
- Clinical Hub: Access to Forum journal, General Practice Updates (GPUs) and Publications & Online Journals
- Evidence-Based Resources: Useful links to external organisations, databases, newsletters and Irish College of GPs Help Sheets





GP Trainee Wellbeing & Inclusion

At the college, we believe that your wellbeing is essential to your success and fulfilment as a GP trainee. We understand the unique challenges you face and are committed to fostering an environment where you feel supported, valued, and empowered to thrive both personally and professionally.

We celebrate the rich diversity of our trainees, recognising that each individual brings unique experiences and perspectives. By embracing these differences, we foster a more inclusive and compassionate healthcare community. Our commitment is to ensure that every trainee—regardless of background, identity, or circumstance—has the opportunity to succeed and experience a genuine sense of belonging. We are here to support you every step of the way and remain fully committed to cultivating a culture of wellbeing, and inclusion.

We offer dedicated support through a Health & Wellbeing Manager who champions trainee wellbeing and leads initiatives in Wellbeing, Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity (WIDE). This role involves delivering tailored programs for GP trainees, developing supportive organisational processes, and providing personalised guidance to help individuals access the most appropriate services.

Key resources

- Practitioner Health – confidential support for stress and mental health
- NCHD Hub – workplace supports including disability accommodations
- Employee Assistance Programme (HSE EAP) – free, confidential counselling and support for personal or work-related concerns

Peer-to-Peer Buddy Scheme

The Peer-to-Peer Buddy Scheme supports first-year GP trainees as they transition into training. Trainees can request to be paired with a Senior Buddy—another trainee who has completed at least one year of GP training—within their own scheme. Senior Buddies offer informal, friendly support on topics such as navigating HSE systems, cultural acclimatisation, accommodation, and exams. The Buddy Scheme is flexible, voluntary, and coordinated monthly by the Trainee Health & Wellbeing Manager. Participation helps foster collegiality and wellbeing across the GP training community. For more details, contact the [Trainee Health & Wellbeing Manager](#).



Doctors Health Programme

The Irish College of GPs is committed to supporting the health and wellbeing of GPs and GP Trainees through the College Strategy. This is delivered through the college Doctor Health and Wellbeing Programme, which collaborates with other college departments such as Education, Research, Curriculum Development, GP Training, and external liaison with national and international medical colleges, WONCA, policy, and advocacy.

The Irish College of GPs Doctor Health and Wellbeing Program aims to assist college *members with:

Healthy Lifestyles, Work-Life Balance and Self Care

- Personal and professional development, practice management, collegiality
- Promoting good physical health, occupational health, mental health and well-being
- Enhancing job satisfaction, work-life balance, self-care and peer support

Healthcare for all GPs & Trainees by GPs

- Motivating members to register with a GP, to consult their GP during illness or isolated symptoms of concern for comprehensive care including diagnosis, treatment, prescriptions, referrals and follow-up
- Supporting members being a patient
- Supporting members providing healthcare to patients who are doctors

**members include GP Trainees, GPs, F/time, P/time, Locum, IMG, sessional /salaried, GPs who are employers or salaried employees, retired GPs*

The Network of Establishing GPs (NEGs)

The Irish College of GPs Network of Establishing GPs (NEGs) Programme provides a suite of supports and services to establishing College members. Irish College of GPs members are considered to be a NEGs member from the fourth year of training until five years from the date of graduation.

The aim of Irish College of GPs NEGs is to support establishing members and foster active involvement in college.



Support to Members

The Irish College of GPs trains and supports general practitioners in Ireland throughout their career, from initial training to lifelong learning, research and advocacy.

We offer hands-on support throughout your career in General Practice. Some of the benefits of membership include:

- Free Wednesday webinars
- Free or discount rate for college members on education courses and modules
- More flexible ways to earn CPD credit
- Exceptional quality education
- Practice management supports
- Mentorship programme
- General Practice Updates
- Advocacy
- Voice of General Practice
- Grants and supports

» We offer flexible payment terms and a fee category to suit you – whether you are a full-time GP, a part-time GP, a locum, working overseas or retired

Research Opportunities

ICAT is an all-Ireland PhD programme open to GP trainees with a passion for research.

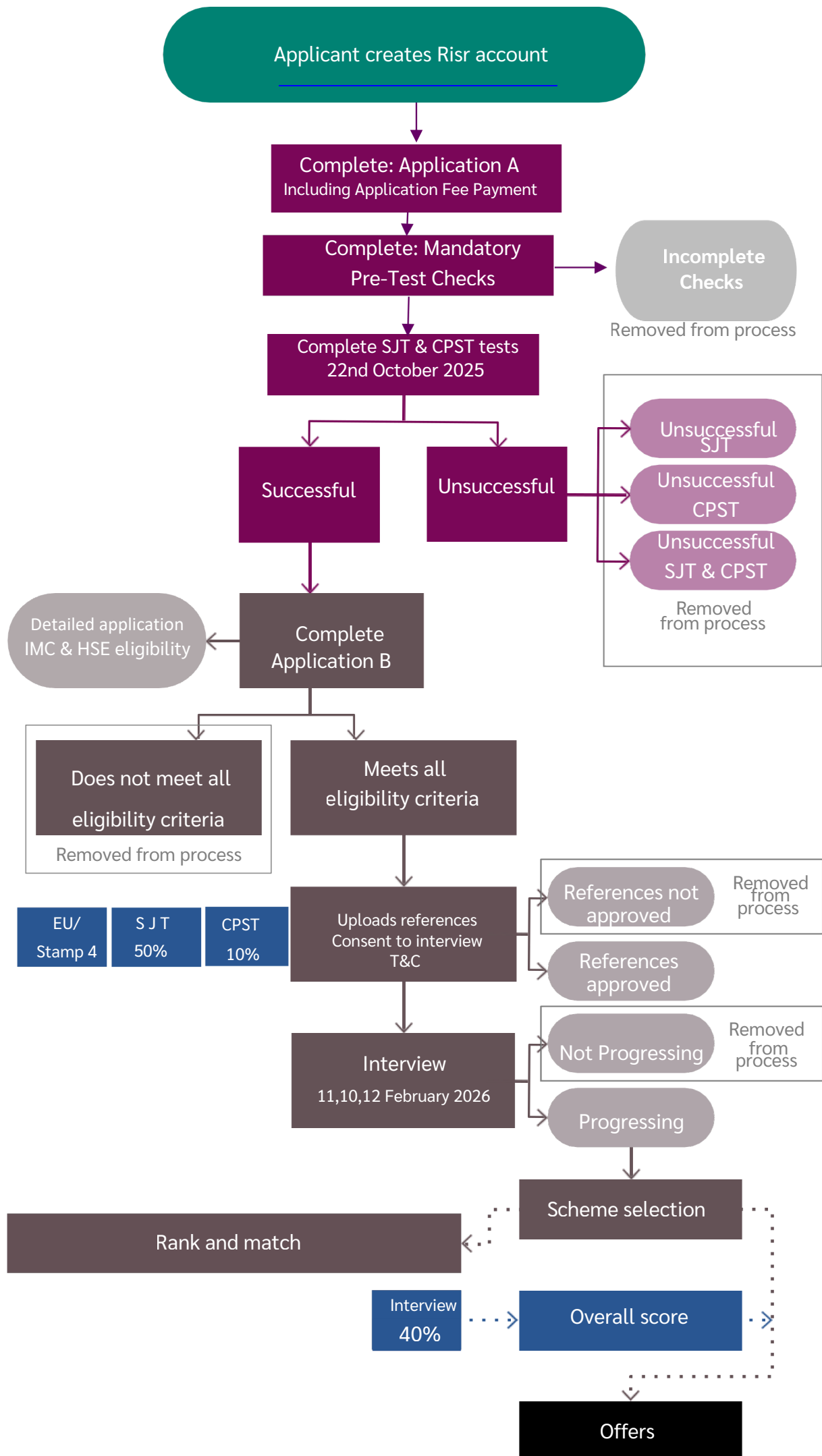
ICAT provides integrated, supported PhD training to excellent postgraduate clinical trainees across all disciplines of human medicine, veterinary medicine and dentistry.



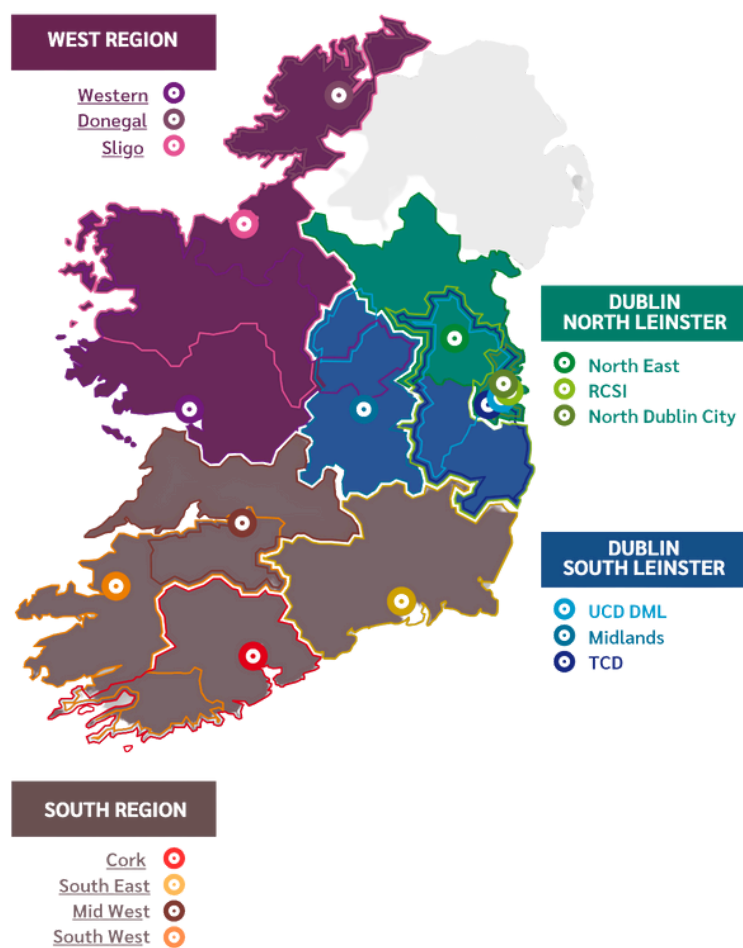
The ICAT pre-PhD year is accredited for clinical training, during which ICAT fellows refine their PhD project designs and build their supervisory teams before starting their three- year PhD in a supported, mentored environment.

For more information please visit the [ICAT Programme](#),

GP Trainee Recruitment 2026



Location of GP Training Schemes



Training Scheme Locations throughout Ireland

[Cork Training Scheme](#)

[Donegal Training Scheme](#)

[Midlands Training Scheme](#)

[North Dublin City Training Scheme](#)

[Mid-West Training Scheme](#)

[North East Training Scheme](#)

[RCSI Training Scheme](#)

[Sligo Training Scheme](#)

[South-East Training Scheme](#)

[South-West Training Scheme](#)

[UCD Training Scheme](#)

[TCD Training Scheme](#)

[Western Training Scheme](#)

Training sites outlined in the above map and in the individual scheme-descriptions on [Be a GP](#) are not definitive. They are for guidance and will be subject to change.

The Irish College of GPs and each individual Training Scheme aspires to ensure that allocation of trainees to training posts is fair and transparent. Some Schemes may have training posts that are preferred by trainees; this can make it difficult to facilitate every trainee with their first-choice post.

As a consequence, training posts may be allocated randomly, according to a trainee's prior experience or due to local workforce requirements. If offered a place on the Training Programme, applicants must be aware that at all stages throughout the training process it may not be possible to facilitate allocation to preferred training sites or posts, and that they must accept the hospital posts and GP training practices assigned to them by their Training Scheme.



For queries regarding 2026 recruitment please contact [GP Training](#).