Admissions procedure

Admission is based on an initial score, a letter of motivation, an interview and a trial period. Successful applicants are granted a fixed-term study right for two years, during which they must complete a six-month trial period. After successfully completing the trial period, applicants to specialist training in medicine will be granted a final study right for ten years, while applicants to specialist training in dentistry will be granted a final study right for six years, with the exception of specialist training in oral and maxillofacial surgery, where applicants are granted a final study right for ten years.

New applicants

A new applicant denotes an applicant who does not have a valid right to complete specialist training in medicine or dentistry.

Transfer applicants

If an applicant wishes to transfer between specialities and/or universities, they must apply through the joint application procedure. The applicant must relinquish their previous study right after completing the trial period, on the basis of which they are granted the final study right in the training programme for ten years.

The applicant cannot reapply for a study right valid at the beginning of the application round.

Eligibility

Applicants to specialist training in medicine must be in possession of the following:

1) A Finnish degree of Licentiate of Medicine or an equivalent degree in medicine completed abroad

2) A right to practise the profession of physician in Finland as a licensed professional granted by the National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health Valvira (not a limited licence granted for a fixed term and a specific facility; section 4 of the Act on Health Care Professionals, 559/1994)

Applicants to specialist training in dentistry must be in possession of the following:

1) A degree of Licentiate of Dentistry completed in Finland or an equivalent degree in dentistry completed abroad

2) A right to practise the profession of dentist as a licensed professional granted by the National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health Valvira (not a limited licence granted for a fixed term and a specific facility; section 4 of the Act on Health Care Professionals, 559/1994)

3) At least two years of professional experience in clinical work as a dentist after being granted a licence
Two years of professional experience in clinical work as a dentist required for the specialist training in dentistry

- The following are taken into account for meeting the requirement of two years of professional experience in clinical work:
  - Professional experience in clinical work is calculated starting from the granting of a licence (limited or full) immediately after graduating with a degree of Licentiate of Dentistry.
  - If the clinical work as a dentist is performed on a part-time basis, the required duration is proportionally extended. Professional experience in clinical work must be attained in employment where working hours are no less than 50% of full-time employment.
  - When considering discontinuations, the same rules are applied when calculating professional experience for specialist training in dentistry (see the section on calculating professional experience for specialist training in dentistry).
  - Two or more periods of employment under different employers with working hours under 50% of full-time hours during the same period cannot be combined into one period of full-time (100%) employment. For example, if one service period constitutes 60% and another concurrent service period 40% of full-time hours, only the period exceeding 50% of full-time hours is accepted. If both service periods are half time (50% and 50%), both can be accepted.
  - Service counted towards the required two years of professional experience in clinical work does not expire.

**Language proficiency**

To complete the training, applicants must be sufficiently proficient in both Finnish and Swedish. The National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health Valvira is responsible for verifying the language proficiency of physicians and dentists in conjunction with licensing.

Specialising physicians and dentists need both Finnish and Swedish in their work. An amendment to the Act on Health Care Professionals (559/1994, section 18a) stipulates that a healthcare professional must have the knowledge of languages necessary for managing his or her duties. The employers of healthcare professionals must ensure that the professionals’ language proficiency is at a level appropriate for their duties.

Applicants must have language proficiency sufficient for completing the training. Language proficiency is assessed as part of the interview.

**Initial score**

Specialist training in medicine

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial scoring/specialists in medicine</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work experience</td>
<td>10 p</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Scoring of professional experience for specialist training in medicine, max 10 p

I Work experience from a health centre, max 2 p

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 9 months</td>
<td>0 p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 months</td>
<td>2 p</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

II Work experience in the specialty applied for*, max 6 p

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time (in p/month)</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-6 months</td>
<td>0–6 p</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

III Work experience in another specialty**, max 2 p

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 3 months</td>
<td>0 p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 to under 6 months</td>
<td>1 p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 months or more (in one or two specialities, no less than 3 months for each)</td>
<td>2 p</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Work experience in the specialty applied for:
In general medical practice, more than 9 months of health centre service.

**Work experience in another specialty:
Calculating the initial score for research experience

Initial points are given for the section with the highest score in which the applicant has the required experience. For example, an applicant admitted to pursue a doctoral degree who has also published two articles receives 2 points.

**Work experience in another specialty:**
Experience of teaching positions in medicine at universities is also accepted. No more than 3 months of teaching experience can be accepted.
In the specialties of internal medicine, surgery and psychiatry, practical training in a number of fields of internal medicine, surgery and psychiatry can be accepted under the section on work experience in the specialty applied for.
Accepted fields (internal medicine):
endocrinology, gastroenterology, infectious diseases, cardiology, clinical haematology, nephrology, rheumatology, internal medicine
Accepted fields (surgery):
gastroenterological surgery, hand surgery, paediatric surgery, orthopaedics and traumatology, plastic surgery, urology, vascular surgery, general surgery, cardiac and thoracic surgery, oral and maxillofacial surgery
Accepted fields (psyciatry): forensic psychiatry, child psychiatry, adolescent psychiatry, psychiatry

### Scoring of research experience for specialist training in medicine and dentistry, max 8 p

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scored Item</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral degree* in medicine or dentistry</td>
<td>8 p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least 3 publications in medicine or dentistry classified by the Finnish Publication Forum (levels 1–3)</td>
<td>6 p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral degree in a field outside medicine or dentistry</td>
<td>4 p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One or two publications in medicine or dentistry classified by the Finnish Publication Forum (levels 1–3)</td>
<td>2 p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The applicant has been accepted (study right is valid) to pursue a doctoral degree in medicine or dentistry at a Finnish university.</td>
<td>1 p</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*A Finnish degree as stipulated in section 7 of the Universities Act (558/2009) or a degree equivalent to at least a Finnish doctoral degree. In unclear cases, the coordinator of the specialty decides on the eligibility of the doctoral degree.*
Scoring completed training for specialist training in dentistry

Completed training is assessed in conjunction with the interview. No more than 4 points can be given for completed training according to the table below. **Interviewers assess** the scope of education specific to/supporting the specialty and the reliability of the training providers, after which they score the completed training in the form. In addition to education specific to/supporting the specialty, scoring takes into account attendance at the Finnish Dental Convention and Exhibition organised by the Finnish Dental Society Apollonia (7.5 hours/day) and the **Apollonia Symposium** (7.5 hours/day).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Completed training (assessed in conjunction with the interview)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On average &gt; 50 hours/year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On average &gt; 40 hours/year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On average &gt; 30 hours/year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On average &gt; 20 hours/year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Scoring of professional experience for specialist training in dentistry, max 10 p

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I General experience of working as a dentist (not focused on the specialty applied for or a related specialty, or otherwise unspecified focus), max 3 p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to under 12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 to under 18 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 months or more</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>II Service in the dental specialty/focus area applied for*, max 6 p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 p/month, no more than 6 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>III Service in another specialty/focus area in dentistry*, max 1 p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 3 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 months or more</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Experience of teaching duties in dentistry is also accepted. No more than 3 months of teaching experience can be accepted.
**Scoring work experience gained in health centres**

When calculating the initial score for health centre service in the joint application procedure for specialist training in medicine, no content requirements apply to such service.

*If the applicant is admitted as a specialising physician, health centre service completed before receiving the study right can be included in the specialist training only if it meets the requirements of the course catalogue of the specialist programme.* All specialist programmes in medicine include a compulsory nine-month health centre service period whose content and rules are available in the specialty-specific course catalogues for specialist training in medicine ([https://guide.student.helsinki.fi/en/node/375](https://guide.student.helsinki.fi/en/node/375)).

**Work experience**

In accordance with general guidelines, work experience denotes experience gained after being granted a professional licence with a sufficient number of working hours (at least 50% of full-time hours). To provide proof of their work experience, applicants must enclose with their application employment certificates specifying any discontinuations or absences, or the lack of thereof. Applications are also accepted from applicants with no work experience.

When applying to **specialist training in medicine**, work experience is calculated from the day when the applying physician was granted a right to practise the profession of physician in Finland as a licensed professional by the National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health Valvira (not a limited licence granted for a fixed term and a specific facility). Initial points can only be given for work experience attained in Finland.

When applying to **specialist training in dentistry**, work experience is calculated from the day when the applying dentist was granted a right to practise the profession of dentist as a licensed professional by the National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health Valvira (not a limited licence granted for a fixed term and a specific facility). Dentists must have completed two years of clinical work as a dentist after being granted a licence to practise the profession subsequent to their graduation as a Licentiate of Dentistry (eligibility criterion). Only work experience gained after completing the two years of professional experience in clinical work can be counted towards work experience eligible for initial points. Initial points can only be given for work experience attained in Finland.

If the service is completed as part-time work, the working hours must be at least 50% of full-time hours (at least 18.5 h/week, from 1 February 2017 at least 19.13 h/week). The duration of the service period is extended correspondingly.

Work experience cannot be from more than 10 years before the end of the application period. When applying to specialist training in medicine, health centre service does not expire. When applying to specialist training in dentistry, general work experience (two years of professional experience in clinical work) does not expire.
The shortest accepted individual service period is one month, or 30 calendar days.

**Calculating work experience**

Work experience may be included in the degree up until the date stated on the employment/service certificate. For example, if the duration of employment/service is from 1 January 2010 to 31 March 2010 but the certificate is dated 15 February 2010, only the service period from 1 January 2010 to 15 February 2010 (one month and 15 days) may be included in the degree.

**NB!** Service certificates must always indicate all absences and discontinuations, or the lack thereof. No initial points are given for work experience for which the employment certificate does not state absences/discontinuations, or the lack thereof.

**Effects of discontinuations**

A total of one month (30 days) of leave of absence due to illness or another compelling reason, or of maternity, paternity or parental leave or a leave of absence for studying for the national specialist examination may be counted towards the degree if the relevant appointment is valid. However, only one month of maternity, paternity or parental leave per child may be counted towards the degree even if the leave granted by the employer spans two or more calendar years. Leaves of absence due to personal reasons will extend the required service period accordingly.

**The following (among others) will not be considered a discontinuation:**

1. Annual leave
2. Holiday pay leave
3. Saved leave (paid)
4. Leave compensating for on-call service
5. Continuing training (paid and required by the employer)
6. International training (paid)

**When the sum total of, for example, the following absences exceeds 30 days per calendar year, the time of service required will be extended by the excess amount:**

1. Sick leave (paid)
2. Temporary child care leave (paid/unpaid)
3. Compelling family reasons
4. Maternity leave, paternity leave, parental leave (paid/unpaid)
5. Study leave under the Study Leave Act
6. Studies (unpaid)
7. Other leave taken for studies
8. Military training refresher course
9. Temporary layoffs

NB! Only one month of maternity, paternity or parental leave may be counted towards the degree even if the leave spans two or more calendar years. The month will be counted towards the training component during which the leave was taken. Maternity, paternity or parental leave cannot be counted towards the degree if the specialising physician or dentist did not hold a valid appointment at the time.

The following absences shall be directly subtracted from the service time (i.e., are considered a discontinuation):
1. Absence for personal reasons (unpaid)
2. Leave of absence (paid/unpaid)
3. Sick leave (unpaid)
4. Child care leave (unpaid)
5. Job-alternation leave (unpaid)
6. Voluntary additional leave (unpaid)
7. Research work

The coordinator of the specialty or a person to whom the coordinator has assigned the authority to confirm the initial score will confirm the initial score, when necessary.

Interview

Number of applicants invited for an interview

Applicants are invited to a structured interview on the basis of their initial score. The number of applicants invited for an interview is proportionate to the number of available places, no less than three applicants for each specialty. If two or more applicants have identical initial scores, all of them are invited for an interview.

The number of interviewees for specialist training in medicine is as follows:

- 1 available place – 3 interviewees
- 2–10 available places – twice as many interviewees as there are available places
- More than 10 available places – 1.5 times as many interviewees as there are available places

For specialist training in dentistry, three times as many applicants are invited for an interview as there are available places. If there is only one available place, four applicants will be invited.
Applicants can be interviewed for the first specialty in their priority list for which their highest initial score suffices. In other words, even if an applicant applies for three specialties, they can only be invited for an interview for no more than one specialty. Applicants who are not invited for an interview based on their initial score will be notified at this stage. For these applicants, the application process ends here.

**Content of the interview**

The interviews are organised individually, lasting approximately 30–45 minutes per interviewee.

The interview helps determine whether applicants have a realistic view of the specialty and its working. The interview also helps to assess basic skills in interaction and communication, as well as determine the motivations applicants have for specialising.

The interviews are conducted by the coordinator of the relevant specialty at the university or a university representative authorised by them, as well as individuals confirmed by them, such as representatives of the health service system from the specific catchment area of the relevant hospital district.

**Schedule**

Autumn 2019: interviews will be held in November 2019

Spring 2020: interviews will be held in April–May 2020

The exact date and time will be announced to those invited for an interview, no later than two weeks in advance.

Applicants cannot reschedule their interview, and they are personally responsible for any travel and other expenses related to the interview. The interviews are held in the city of the relevant training programme. In certain specialties, a national interview format can be used. In such cases, the interview can be held within the area of any university that provides education in medicine. For well-grounded reasons, such as illness, applicants can request a new interview slot. However, the faculties cannot guarantee that one will be provided.

**Points**

The interview questions cover four themes: experience in the specialty and motivation for familiarising oneself in it, teamwork and interaction skills, specialty-specific questions as well as special skills and the ability to withstand pressure. Nationally, specialty-specific questions are the same.
The maximum score for the entire interview is 10 points for specialist training in medicine and 12 points for specialist training in dentistry. The maximum score for the motivation component as well as the teamwork and interaction skills component is 3 points each for specialist training in medicine. For specialist training in dentistry, the maximum score for the motivation component is 5 points, while that of the teamwork and interaction skills component is 3 points. No more than 2 points are given for each of the components pertaining to the specialty and special skills. At least one point must be received for each thematic component, or the applicant cannot be admitted. In other words, the required minimum score for the interview is 4 (specialist training in medicine) or 5 points (specialist training in dentistry).

Answers are graded on the following five-tier scale: excellent, good, satisfactory, passable, poor. Points are given in the following manner: excellent/1 p, good/0.75 p, satisfactory/0.5 p, passable/0.25 p, poor/0 p. Therefore, one question yields one point at the most.

When applying for specialist training in dentistry, educational experience is assessed in conjunction with the interview. No more than 4 points can be given for completed education (see the table on page 5).

One of the sections assessed in the interview is the applicant's language proficiency.

The coordinator of the specialty confirms the interview score (the above scoring scale to be used in the summary).

**General Medical Practice**

On the basis of their initial score, applicants are invited to an opening seminar, to be followed by a four-week online course during which they draw up a personal study plan (PSP). The number of applicants invited to the opening seminar is no more than 1.5 times the number of available student places. In the seminar, at least the coordinator of the specialty or a person from the relevant university authorised by the coordinator will serve as interviewers, as will a representative of the health service system. PSPs are assessed by two individuals. Individuals serving as the facilitators/instructors of the online course cannot assess the PSPs completed in their course.

The content of the opening seminar and online course encompasses the following themes: experience in the field and motivation for familiarising oneself in the field, teamwork and interaction skills, specialty-specific questions, the ability for reflection, special skills, and the ability to withstand pressure. The questions have been nationally determined for the specialty to ensure the comparability of applicants within the specialty. As in the case of work experience, the maximum score for the entire interview (opening seminar, online course and PSP) is 10 points.
A detailed description of the opening seminar, online course and PSP, which constitute the equivalent of an interview, can be found below. At least one point must be received for each thematic component to gain a conditional study right.

### Scoring of the opening seminar and personal study plan (PSP), max 10 p

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY IN THE OPENING SEMINAR, max 1 p</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation in the discussions held in small groups and among all participants</td>
<td>1 p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation only in the discussions held in small groups OR among all participants</td>
<td>0.5 p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No participation in discussions</td>
<td>0 p</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY IN THE ONLINE COURSE, max 1 p</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation in discussions throughout the course</td>
<td>1 p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in only certain discussions</td>
<td>0.5 p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No participation in the online course discussions</td>
<td>0 p</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PSP STRUCTURE, max 1 p</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structure in line with course instructions</td>
<td>1 p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure partially in line with course instructions</td>
<td>0.5 p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No structure</td>
<td>0 p</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### PSP CONTENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applicant analyses the importance of their education and employment history in their development as a specialist, max 2 p</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflection and personal experience easily identifiable</td>
<td>2 p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some reflection</td>
<td>1 p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only a description of earlier work history</td>
<td>0 p</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applicant identifies personal development needs and describes concrete measures with which they aim to develop their skills, max 2 p</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Needs identified and development plan described</td>
<td>2 p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs identified, no plan OR plan completed without specifying needs</td>
<td>1 p</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
No needs identified and no plan | 0 p
---|---
**Applicant describes their objectives and the short-term goals for specialisation, max 1.5 p**
- Personal and realistic description | 1.5 p
- General description | 0.5 p
- No description | 0 p
**Applicant plans and carries out practical measures to increase their skills, max 1.5 p**
- Feasible plan presented | 1.5 p
- Plan outlined | 0.5 p
- No plan | 0 p

The interviews are conducted so that applicants can be interviewed for the first specialty in their priority list for which their highest initial score suffices. Even if an applicant had applied for three specialties, they can only be invited for one interview or none at all.

After the interviews, the applicants’ initial and interview scores (opening seminar, online course and PSP) are tallied up. Selections will be made on the basis of these total scores.

**Letter of motivation**

Applicants must write a letter of motivation for each specialty they are applying to, no more than three letters. The letter of motivation answers the following questions:

1. Why are you applying to specialise in this specialty at this university?
2. How do your educational background and work experience support successful specialisation in the field?
3. How would your other abilities and skills support specialisation in the field?
4. How will specialist training support your professional goals?

The maximum scope of the letter of motivation is 6,000 characters, spaces included. The letter of motivation is not graded, but it must be submitted as an enclosure to the application. The letter can be utilised in the interview.

**Total score**

In the application procedure for specialist training in medicine, the applicants’ total score is composed of the initial score and interview score. In the application procedure for specialist training in dentistry, the total score
is composed of the initial score, the interview score and the score given for education. Applicants are admitted to the first specialty in their priority list for which their total score suffices.

If two or more applicants have identical scores after the interviews, the score given for the first interview question is used to determine the order of these applicants.

General Medical Practice: If two or more applicants have identical scores after the interviews, the score given for the personal study plan (PSP) is used to determine the order of these applicants.

**Official translations**

If your documents are in a language other than English, Finnish or Swedish, official translations into one of these languages are required. In addition, certified copies of the original documents must be submitted. The following are accepted as official translations:

- A translation made by the educational institution that originally awarded the document (original document)
- A certified copy of a translation made by the educational institution that originally awarded the document
- A translation made by an authorised translator (original document)
- A certified copy of a translation made by an authorised translation

Each page of authorised translations must bear the stamp and/or signature of the translator. Official translations must be accurate translations of the original documents. Translations made by applicants themselves are not accepted. Regular copies of official translations are not accepted; all copies must be certified.

**Presentation of documents**

Finnish universities provide instructions to applicants on presenting the original documents. The authenticity of certificates is verified on the basis of guidelines set by the universities.

If an applicant fails to present relevant documents in accordance with the university guidelines by the deadline, their temporary study right will be revoked.

**Attachments and enclosures, submission of documents**

The required documents are to be electronically enclosed in the application form in the Studyinfo service.

If applicants intend to refer to a certain document in the application process, they should submit the following attachments:

1. Degree diploma from medicine or dentistry (official translation), if the degree was completed abroad
2. Certificate of a licence to practise the profession independently in Finland (decision by Valvira) and in the case of specialist training in dentistry, also a certificate of a limited licence (awarded immediately after graduation as a Licentiate of Dentistry)
3. Diploma of a completed doctoral degree
4. Certificate of attendance from the university that has awarded the right to pursue a doctoral degree
5. Scientific articles
6. Letters of motivation
7. Certificates of employment specifying any discontinuations or absences, or the lack thereof
8. In the application procedure for specialist training in dentistry, the applicant’s list of training completed in the past three years and certificates of participation for the continuing education stated in the summary. The list must include the following details: name, place and date of training, training provider and the number of completed hours.

Trial period

TRIAL PERIOD GOALS:

The purpose of the trial period is to assess the suitability of specialising physicians and dentists to the specialty.

After completing the trial period, specialising physicians and dentists will have established the following:

- A comprehensive understanding of the content, duties, most common procedures and requirements of the specialty
- An understanding of their own qualifications for working in the field
- Interest in and motivation for specialising in the field

During the trial period, trainers assess the following aspects of specialising physicians and dentists:

- Interest in acquiring information and developing their skills
- Qualifications for working in teams and work communities typical of the specialty
- Qualifications for duties and procedures typical of the specialty
- Skills in interacting, both orally and in written form, with patients, relatives and colleagues, as well as when communicating within a multiprofessional team
- Special skills, if any, and the ability to withstand pressure in relation to the demands of the specialty

A passing grade for the trial period is a requirement for receiving the final study right. During the trial period, the development of specialising physicians’ and dentists’ skills and their motivation are monitored with the help of a structured assessment form. The assessment is carried out in accordance with predetermined learning outcomes that have been announced to the specialising physicians and dentists.

COMPLETING THE TRIAL PERIOD IN PRACTICE:
Beginning the trial period:
After receiving a study right, each specialising physician and dentist is personally responsible for finding a suitable location to complete their trial period, as well as the rest of the specialist training positions in training units approved by the Faculty and fulfilling the quality criteria.

Fixed-term study rights are valid for two years. The duration of the trial period is six months.

A list of the training units approved by the University of Helsinki is available in the training unit register maintained by the Faculty: https://www.helsinki.fi/en/faculty-of-medicine/postgraduate-professional-education/specialist-training/agreements-on-training-units.

Agreements on training units:
A personal training agreement is concluded with the training unit on the completion of the trial period. The agreement is signed by the trainer at the training unit and the coordinator of the specialty or a person authorised by the latter. The signed training agreement is submitted to the Faculty’s academic administration.

Completing the trial period:
The trial period is primarily completed at a single unit in one continuous stretch. This is in the interest of both specialising physicians and dentists and the persons responsible for the trial period, as this makes it possible to gain a sufficiently comprehensive understanding of the specialising physician’s or dentist’s advancing skills.

During the trial period, work in the specialty is primarily full-time work. The service may also be completed part-time, provided that the objectives of the service are achieved. However, part-time work must be at least 50% of full-time hours, or at least 19.13 h/week. The duration of the trial period is extended correspondingly. A trial period completed part-time must be completed within two years of receiving the conditional study right.

Persons responsible for the trial period:
Ensuring the completion of the trial period is the responsibility of the coordinator of the specialty or a person authorised by them, as well as the trainer and immediate supervisor or one or more persons authorised by the trainer at the training unit.

RULES ON DISCONTINUATION
The trial period can be discontinued or rescheduled in the case of leave granted due to illness or another valid reason (see the standing orders for specialist training in medicine and dentistry). However, the trial period must be completed within two years of receiving the fixed-term study right.

If the duration of leave in compensation of on-call service or other types of leave stated above is extensive, the coordinator of the specialty must ensure that the assessment on suitability required for the trial period can be carried out.

Transfers between trial period training units
Transferring from one training unit to another in the middle of the trial period is only accepted in exceptional cases and at the decision of the coordinator of the specialty or a person authorised by them. The discontinuation must be reported to the Faculty’s academic administration and the coordinator of the specialty or a person authorised by them. Discontinued trial periods are assessed according to the normal assessment procedure (see section ‘Trial period assessment’). The coordinator or a person authorised by them
decides on a case-by-case basis how the trial period is to continue in the next training unit. The coordinator or a person authorised by them assesses whether the service completed in the discontinued trial period can be counted, either partially or in its entirety, towards the service completed at the next trial period training unit, or whether the six-month trial period starts from the beginning.

TRANSFER APPLICANTS

Transfer applicant denotes applicants who are transferring between specialities or universities and who have completed a trial period in another specialty or in the same specialty at another university. In addition to the completed trial period, transfer applicants can have work experience in the specialty.

The coordinator of the specialty makes an assessment and decision on the recognition of previously completed service by transfer applicants and its impact on the need to complete a trial period or its duration.

Specialising physicians and dentists transferring between specialties: A trial period completed in another specialty cannot be accepted. Transfer applicants must complete another trial period.

Specialising physicians and dentists transferring between universities: As the goals and assessment of the trial period are nationally standardised, trial periods completed in the same specialty at another Finnish university are accepted (e.g., transfer from paediatrics in Tampere to paediatrics in Helsinki). The coordinator of the specialty makes an assessment and decision on the recognition of any service previously completed at another university and its impact on the need to complete a trial period or its duration.

TRIAL PERIOD ASSESSMENT

The assessment is carried out in accordance with predetermined learning outcomes that have been announced to the specialising physicians and dentists.

The trial period is always assessed by three individuals: the specialising physician or dentist, the trainer and the immediate supervisor. The trainer can authorise one or more persons from the training unit to substitute for either or both of the last two. First, the assessors independently complete an assessment form and, on the basis of the forms, a joint assessment form which is signed by the assessment parties and submitted to the coordinator of the specialty or a person authorised by the coordinator.

Assessors must commit to absolute impartiality in the assessment. Assessors must disqualify themselves on the basis of the following disqualification criteria:

- The assessor and specialising physician or dentist are in a treatment relationship or business relationship or have a shared financial interest.
- The assessor is a close relative of the specialising physician or dentist. Close relatives include 1) a spouse (also de facto), child, grandchild, sibling, parent, grandparent or a person otherwise especially close (e.g., fiancé/e or a close friend), as well as their spouses (also de facto), 2) a sibling of a parent or his/her spouse (also de facto), a child of a sibling, a previous spouse (also de facto), 3) a child, grandchild, sibling, parent or grandparent of a spouse as well as their spouses (also de facto), a child of a spouse’s sibling, or 4) a half-relative equivalent to the above.
Discussions with the specialising physician/dentist

The trainer appointed for the trial period will have three separate discussions with the specialising physician or dentist: a preliminary, intermediate and final discussion.

In the preliminary discussion, the trainer and specialising physician or dentist draw up a personal goal-oriented plan and agree on the goals of the trial period. The specialising physician or dentist will be notified of the learning outcomes to be achieved during the trial period.

In the intermediate discussion, the trainer and specialising physician or dentist will review the attainment of personal learning outcomes by the latter. The trainer gives constructive and, when necessary, corrective feedback. The trainer and specialising physician or dentist consider together areas in which the latter could develop their skills during the trial period.

In the final discussion, the trainer, the immediate supervisor (or one or more persons authorised by the trainer at the training unit) and the specialising physician or dentist assess how the latter has achieved the set learning outcomes, as well as how their special skills and qualifications required for the specialty have developed during the trial period. Furthermore, they consider further measures and record them if any area has been assessed as insufficient and/or the trial period is yet to be successfully completed.

The assessment form is first submitted to the coordinator of the specialty or a person authorised by them, who will make the final decision on whether the completed trial period is approved. The assessment form signed by the coordinator or a person authorised by them is submitted to the academic administration of the Faculty.

Problems

Trainers and/or immediate supervisors or other authorised persons at the training units record any problems arising during the trial period in the assessment form.

Confidentiality

Training agreements and assessment forms contain confidential information concerning specialising physicians and dentists. Persons processing the data are bound by confidentiality. Documents are protected from inappropriate processing.

SUBMISSION OF THE TRIAL PERIOD ASSESSMENT TO THE FACULTY FOR RECEIVING THE FINAL STUDY RIGHT

Trial period assessment forms are submitted to the academic administration of the Faculty:

Further information:

After successfully completing the trial period, specialising physicians and dentists are granted the final right to complete specialist training for ten years.
If issues arise or the trial period is not approved, the specialising physician or dentist is advised on appropriate measures (assessment of working ability, workplace early support models, career guidance services included in the model for measures of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health), which are based on valid professional practices.

**Trial period in general medical practice**

During the trial period, the following elements of the applicants' skills are assessed:

- Basic clinical knowledge and skills
- Use of diagnostic strategies and techniques suitable for primary healthcare (ability to cope with the uncertainty related to the work and to make appropriate decisions even on unfinished matters)
- Cooperation skills
- Professional interaction skills
- Potential for development

The assessment of trial periods completed at training health centres includes two skills assessments completed by the specialist trainer and a statement by the immediate supervisor. The appointed trainer assesses work performance on the basis of the principles of outcome-based training and conducts feedback discussions with the specialising physician. Trial period performance is assessed by using an indicator designed for assessing the progress of physician’s consultations. The coordinator of the discipline makes a final decision on whether the trial period is approved.

**Trial period in occupational healthcare**

The trial period in the specialty of occupational healthcare is a 24-month occupational healthcare service period included in the specialty training. Systematic orientation towards the learning outcomes of the specialty begins immediately at the outset of the trial period. Supervision is carried out with the support of weekly guidance provided by the trainer, training provided at the training unit and a log book where completed training and related reflections are recorded. To enable systematic guidance, the diagnostic assessment of specialising physicians’ initial skills level and the assessment of prior learning to be recognised and validated are initiated already at the beginning of the trial period. Specialising physicians must also attend an opening seminar organised by the university providing the specialist training. The online course launched at the seminar helps specialising physicians specify their specialisation plan/PSP during the trial period.

Assessment of the trial period is based on the completion of training: completed training is approved by the university, work performance by the health service system. The university’s coordinator of the specialty or a person authorised by them verifies and approves the log book and the specialisation plan/PSP amended during the trial period. The log book will be approved if the actual completed training aimed at attaining the learning outcomes and related reflections have been completed in an appropriate manner during the trial period. Trainers confirm completed training with their signature. The health service system monitors and assesses work performance as part of regular work activity. If concerns arise during the trial period pertaining to a
specialising physician’s performance or suitability to the specialty, any observations concerning professional conduct, work performance or customer feedback are recorded in the form of headings in a separate form dedicated to concerns, while the underlying factors are investigated through discussion. When necessary, the university’s coordinator of the specialty or a person authorised by them take part in the discussion.

If concerns arise or the trial period is not approved, the specialising physician is advised on the appropriate measures to be taken (assessment of working ability, workplace early support models, career guidance services included in the model for measures of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health), relying on valid professional practices. The coordinator of the specialty makes a final decision on approving the trial period.