



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
BUCKINGHAM

# Your Career – Thinking Ahead

Workbook to accompany a careers  
workshop for UBMS medical students,  
Autumn 2018.

INCLUDES:

Matching yourself to a  
specialty – exercises on  
experiences, skills,  
values, personality, work  
context

With lists of resources  
throughout, including  
the key websites for  
specialty selection  
information

## **Looking ahead, beyond Foundation**

The workshop **Your Career – Thinking Ahead** and this accompanying workbook aim to help you start preparing for your working life after the Foundation Programme. You may already have a clear idea of which specialty you hope to pursue, or you may be mulling over the options and using the experience of foundation jobs to cement your decision-making. Either way there is material here relevant for you.

### **Using this workbook**

This workbook is designed for you to work through on your own. It will help you build up a picture of your values, interests, skills and personality attributes. It will help you compare these to what is required from the specialties in which you are interested. As a result it should help you find the best fit between your aspirations and reality and also be able to demonstrate your suitability for the specialty.

It is best to work through the exercises in order. Use as many of the exercises as you find useful but the more systematic you are, the better will be your self-assessment.

Making the decision which specialty to follow, is a two-way process. It involves your aspirations and skills and it involves a clear understanding of what is required by the criteria set for that specialty, as well as the availability of training places.

## **Matching yourself to a specialty**

This will be one of the biggest decisions of your career – which specialty/ies would suit you? Many consultants believe that a trainee could have a genuinely fulfilling and capable career in a number of different areas of medicine, because to get this far you have demonstrated very positive qualities. Some consultants are open to admitting that theirs was not their first choice of specialty, and they still love their job.

Beware of the expectations of others and take time to work out what will suit you in the long-term. This involves taking a hard look at your strengths and areas for development, at what motivates you personally, and in what kind of clinical contexts you most enjoy working. Spending time on the exercises that follow will also give you material for answering questions at interview around your choice of, and commitment to, specialty.



**Exercise 1:**  
**Your experiences**

**Think back over your time so far at medical school and at school.**

Which experiences have you enjoyed most?

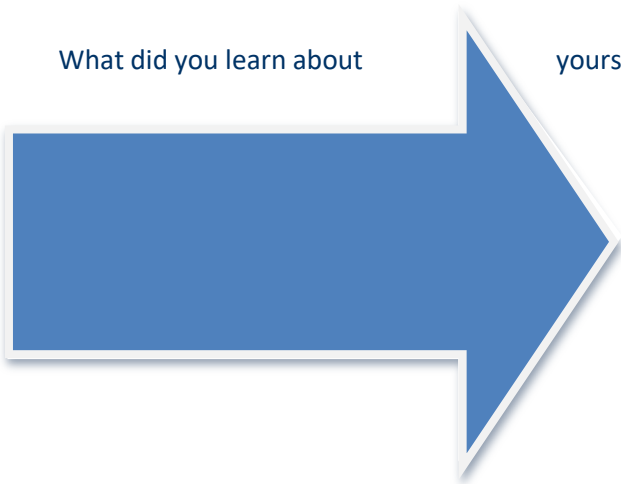
What did you learn about yourself from these experiences?

List the skills you learned through these experiences:

Which experiences have you enjoyed least? Why?

What did you learn about

yourself from these experiences?



What feedback have you had from tutors & peers?

**Values are:**

*“what guide you through every day, every task, every moment of life with a sense of purpose and direction.” (Bolton 2006)*

*“one’s judgement of what is valuable or important in life” (OED)*

- Do you know what really motivates you? Those things that you value and which motivate you now, may not motivate you in ten or twenty years' time. However, your most basic and truly held values are likely to be held dear throughout your life. These are the principles you are unwilling to sacrifice!

## IDENTIFY THE VALUES THAT DRIVE YOU

Rate the following values according to their importance for you at work. Add any others that are missing and rate them too.

**Key:** **V** = Very important   **Q** = Quite important   **N** = Not important   **IN** = Important that its not present

<b>Achievement</b> – work that provides a sense of accomplishment		<b>Pace</b> – a preference for working to stretching deadlines & for being busy	
<b>Adventure</b> – work that involves an element of risk and novelty		<b>Precision</b> – work that requires attention to detail and precision	
<b>Aesthetics/Culture</b> – work that involves contact with art, literature, music and cultural affairs		<b>Physical challenge</b> – preference for work that is active and physically demanding/exacting	
<b>Affiliation</b> – work that allows encourages interaction and provides a sense of belonging to a group		<b>Power</b> – work that involves having authority or status over others	
<b>Altruism</b> – work that involves care for others; being of service to others		<b>Public service</b> – work that allows you to serve the greater good; improving society	
<b>Commercial</b> – work that involves financial dealings; investments, earning profit		<b>Routine</b> – work that allows for order and predictability	
<b>Community involvement</b> – work that allows you to be involved with local affairs		<b>Recognition</b> – work that provides acknowledgment and the opportunity to be known	
<b>Compensation</b> – work that provides high salary with commensurate benefits		<b>Resourcefulness</b> – work that challenges your effectiveness	
<b>Competition</b> – work that provides opportunities to win; energised by competing		<b>Risk</b> – work that has an element of excitement	
<b>Creativity</b> – work that involves imagination, creating new ideas, practices, treatments		<b>Structure</b> – work that provides highly organised ways of working, plans, structures, etc	
<b>Diversity</b> – work that allows for interaction with people who are different to me		<b>Spontaneity</b> – work that does not mean you are constrained by plans, timetables and other constraints; where you can go with the flow	
<b>Entrepreneurial</b> - work that allows experimenting and an element of risk		<b>Practicality</b> – work that allows you to use your hands / physical skills	
<b>Flexibility</b> – work that allows the freedom to make last minute decisions or changes		<b>Team working</b> – working with others rather than on your own	
<b>Justice</b> – work that offers opportunities for improving fairness & reducing inequality		<b>Understanding</b> – work that provides opportunity for you to relate & understand others	
<b>Independence</b> – work that allows you to work on your own/set the direction of travel		<b>Tradition</b> – work that is concerned with standards, ethics and morality, values and quality	
<b>Intellectual challenge</b> – work that is intellectually stretching, less concrete		<b>Variety</b> - work that provides novelty of experiences, activities and interactions	
<b>Knowledge</b> – work that advances understanding in a particular area		<b>Usefulness</b> – Work that provides you with a sense of making a difference	

Now rank your 'V' values. If you have more than 5 carry them on into the 'Q' column.

Very important	Quite important
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

What experiences have you had (in or out of a medical context) that have enabled you to live up to your 'V' values?

Note down any experiences you had (in or out of a medical context) which have challenged your V values

Ask people who know you well (parents/siblings/partner/colleagues) what they believe are the values that guide you. How do their views align with your own? Are these consistent with your own crucial values? Any surprises?

How do your values fit with your current specialty choices?

## Exercise 3:

### Your skills

**A skill** is an expertness; or practised ability (OED)

- Refer to your e-portfolio. What skills does this indicate you have? Place these in the relevant cells. Look on the next page for a list of skills. Log work and also non-work related skills.

	Skills I love using	Skills I quite enjoy using	Skills I don't enjoy using
Skills I perform well			
Skills I perform reasonably well but which need to be developed			
Skills I do not perform well			

Compare your skills to those required by your specialties of interest. Which skills are you most realistically likely to achieve in your specialty choices? If you have had feedback that your skills in a certain area are not adequate e.g. your manual dexterity is lacking, and surgery is your main aim, a rethink now would be wise.

**A list of 246 skills verbs** (from *What color is your parachute?*(2012) Bolles R, republished every year)

Achieving	Acting	Adapting	Addressing	Administering
Advising	Analysing	Anticipating	Arbitrating	Arranging
Ascertaining	Assembling	Assessing	Attaining	Auditing
Budgeting	Building	Calculating	Charting	Checking
Classifying	Coaching	Collecting	Communicating	Compiling
Completing	Composing	Computing	Conceptualizing	Conducting
Conserving	Consolidating	Constructing	Controlling	Coordinating
Coping	Counselling	Creating	Deciding	Defining
Delivering	Designing	Detailing	Detecting	Determining
Developing	Devising	Diagnosing	Digging	Directing
Discovering	Dispensing	Displaying	Disproving	Dissecting
Distributing	Diverting	Dramatising	Drawing	Driving
Editing	Eliminating	Empathising	Enforcing	Establishing
Estimating	Evaluating	Examining	Expanding	Experimenting
Explaining	Expressing	Extracting	Filing	Financing
Fixing	Following	Formulating	Founding	Gathering
Generating	Getting	Giving	Guiding	Handling
Having	Heading	Helping	Hypothesizing	Identifying
responsibility	Imagining	Implementing	Improving	Improvising
Illustrating	Influencing	Informing	Initiating	Innovating
Increasing	Inspiring	Installing	Instituting	Instructing
Inspecting	Interpreting	Interviewing	Intuiting	Inventing
Integrating	Investigating	Judging	Keeping	Leading
Inventorying	Lecturing	Lifting	Listening	Logging
Learning	Making	Managing	Manipulating	Mediating
Maintaining	Memorizing	Mentoring	Modelling	Monitoring
Meeting	Navigating	Negotiating	Observing	Obtaining
Motivating	Operating	Ordering	Organising	Originating
Offering	Painting	Perceiving	Performing	Persuading
Overseeing	Piloting	Planning	Playing	Predicting
Photographing	Prescribing	Presenting	Printing	Problem- solving
Preparing	Producing	Programming	Projecting	Promoting
Processing	Protecting	Providing	Publicising	Purchasing
Proofreading	Raising	Reading	Realising	Reasoning
Questioning	Recommending	Reconciling	Recording	Recruiting
Receiving	Referring	Rehabilitating	Relating	Remembering
Reducing	Repairing	Reporting	Representing	Researching
Rendering	Responding	Restoring	Retrieving	Reviewing
Resolving	Scheduling	Selecting	Selling	Sensing
Risking	Serving	Setting	Setting-up	Sewing
Separating	Sharing	Showing	Singing	Sketching
Shaping	Sorting	Speaking	Studying	Summarising
Solving	Supplying	Symbolising	Synergising	Synthesising
Supervising	Taking	Talking	Teaching	Team-building
Systematizing	instructions	Testing &	Training	Transcribing
Telling	Tending	proving	Trouble-shooting	Tutoring
Translating	Travelling	Treating	Understudying	Undertaking
Typing	Umpiring	Understanding	Using	Utilising
Unifying	Uniting	Upgrading	Winning	Working
Verbalising	Washing	Weighing		
Writing				



## Exercise 4:

### Your personality and attributes

**Why should you consider your PERSONALITY and associated BEHAVIOURAL ATTRIBUTES when making career decisions?** The term personality is all-embracing in terms of an individual's behaviour, and the way it is organised and co-ordinated when he/she interacts with the environment. Your personality is expressed in the way you behave and plays a large role in your career decisions. If you choose a specialty that is particularly suited to you, and you are using the skills you love and are good at, you will enjoy your training and gaining your competences will be a positive challenge. You are likely to feel in flow. For example, if the skills you love using are listening and questioning, and you are

empathic you may find that psychiatry is a path you wish to follow. You will feel in flow.

If you are more focused on the here and now, want to be involved and active; enjoy using your hands and want to see results quickly, sitting for an hour at a time talking to patients about their problems is not likely to play to your personality. Perhaps Emergency Medicine or Anaesthetics might suit you better.

### Collecting data about your personality

Psychometric tests, although subjective (you are answering the questions about yourself), provide you with a language of personality, and help you to identify those areas where you are more like or different to others; or which indicate particular strengths.

Feedback from others will also give you evidence and you should ask for feedback and develop insight in to your strengths and areas for development.

Most personality tests (worth their salt) require a qualified administrator to administer them. Those who give you feedback should be qualified to do so.

One of the most popular and useful is the MBTI (Myers Briggs Type Indicator). You can access a version of the MBTI at [www.humanmetrics.com/cgi-win/JTypes2.asp](http://www.humanmetrics.com/cgi-win/JTypes2.asp)

Or <http://www.teamtechnology.co.uk/myers-briggs/myers-briggs.htm>

One way to access the original MBTI and have individual one-to-one feedback is to ask your tutor or educational supervisor who in the Deanery is qualified to administer it and give you feedback. Some Human Resource professionals in the Trust may be qualified to do use the MBTI.

Web references for articles of interest related to the MBTI and medical careers, eg: <http://careers.bmj.com/careers/advice/view-article.html?id=1267>

### Some personality themes

Use the quick exercise on the next page to think about your personality attributes, and how they might affect the kind of work you do and the work environment in which you are likely to perform at your best. For example, if you tend to prefer reflecting and working on your own with as few distractions as possible, the best environment for you is unlikely to be A&E. You might be better suited to working as a GP or in a laboratory, for example. In each box tick those phrases which sound more like you than not. The tick indicates that you are more likely to have a preference for this behaviours than not.

## Your attributes and preferences

How you prefer to focus your attention and energy	
<p>1A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Involved with people and things – preferring interaction</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Think things through by discussing them with others</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Relax by going out with friends</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Often be first to strike up a conversation with a stranger</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Wide range of interests and prefer breadth</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Action – impatient with jobs that are long and slow</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Like having people around and working in teams</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Enjoy variety and participation</li> </ul>	<p>1B</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Involved with thoughts and ideas – preferring reflection</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Think things through before discussing them with others or acting</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Relax by spending time on your own</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Take time to warm up to new people - reserved</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Narrower range of interest and prefer depth</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Quiet, calm and private space to concentrate and reflect</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Working on your own or in small groups</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Find distractions such as the telephone, noise, interruptions intrusive</li> </ul>
How you prefer to learn and manage information	
<p>2A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Focus on the present</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Focus on detail and facts</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Look at the parts before you look at the whole</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use your senses more than your intuition to understand</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pragmatic and practical</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Examine and inspect</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Following a step by step process</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Preferring set procedures and routines</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Enjoy using your experience and established skills</li> </ul>	<p>2B</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Focus on the big picture before you look at the details</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Instinct and intuition</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Insight</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> See the forest before you see the trees?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pick up themes, connections &amp; relationships</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Observe and survey</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Theoretical possibilities</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Novelty</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Like to innovate and learn new skills</li> </ul>
How you prefer to make decisions	
<p>3A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Analyse using logic, rationality and reason</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Can concentrate on the task without being unduly distracted by emotions</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Decide impersonally and be objective</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Firm/tough minded</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Quick to find flaws/criticise</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Separate what is important from the unimportant and focus only on the former</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Outcome makes sense</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Satisfied by a job well done</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Recognition when job's done</li> </ul>	<p>3B</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use personal conviction, values as a basis for decisions</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Think about the impact on others</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Prefer harmonious relationships</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sympathetic and avoid conflict</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Need appreciation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Satisfied when people's needs are met</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Spontaneously appreciate</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Outcome feels right</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Compassionate</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Accommodating &amp; inclusive</li> </ul>
How your prefer to organise your work and life	
<p>4A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Organised and structured</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Plan carefully</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Like to finish a task before starting another</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Comfortable once a decision has been made</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Dot all the i's and cross all the t's</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Like to control life</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Outcome orientated</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Purposeful</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Organised and predictable work environment</li> </ul>	<p>4B</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Prefer to be spontaneous and 'go with the flow'</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Feel constrained by too many parameters</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Decide at the last minute</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Prefer to explore more</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Postpone decisions</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Adapt to different environments</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Let life happen</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Keep options open</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Flexible work environment</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Comfortable with ambiguity</li> </ul>

NB: No one preference or attribute excludes you from success in a particular specialty & you need to use all the preferences in your work. You may, however, have a particularly strong preference that makes it more difficult for you to work in certain specialties. You can learn to work well in your less dominant preferences.

**How I prefer to focus my attention and energy**

**1A: Extrovert**

Like being with people & interacting; distractions are energising; enjoy discussing; take initiative & action

*For example as in:*

*Multi-disciplinary teams / Surgery/A&E*

**1B: Introvert**

Reflective & like thinking through before deciding; more reserved; enjoy working alone/in small teams

*For example as in:*

*Working with one patient or on your own*

*General Practice/Laboratory based/ Research*

**How I prefer to learn and manage information**

**2A: Sense**

Practical & pragmatic; take a common sense approach; concerned with the here & now; prefer the tried & trusted

*For example as in:*

*Surgery/Laboratory based/ Medicine*

**2B: Intuit**

Use your intuition, see possibilities, connections & patterns; enjoy the new & experimental

*For example as in:*

*Research/Academics/ Medicine*

**How I prefer to make decisions**

**3A: Think**

Logical & rational approach; objective & neutral with a focus on facts; accept the consequences

*For example as in:*

*Surgery/ Trauma*

**3B: Feel**

Based on convictions & feelings; take the big picture into account; concerned with impact on people

*For example as in:*

*All specialties but important in those where giving bad news is a feature; working with couples/families*

**How I prefer to organise my work and life**

**4A: Judge**

Organised & planned; like to finish before starting another project; plan in advance to meet targets & milestones

*For example as in:*

*Clinic based work/General Practice*

**4B: Perceive**

Spontaneous & adaptable; many things on the go in different stages of development; constrained by plans, targets; rush to meet deadlines

*For example as in:*

*Trauma/ A&E*

The type of work situation which would expose my development needs is:

How might aspects of the work and work environment of my specialty options challenge my personality attributes as described above?

## Exercise 5:

### Your preferred work context

**Use these lists to identify the most attractive environment and context within which to work. Tick those most relevant to you**

Work setting	Work style
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> GP practice – small</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> GP practice - medium size</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> GP - super surgery</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Urban, suburban or rural practice</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Community Centre Practice</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> District General Hospital</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Teaching Hospital</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Health Centre</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Private practice (eg Harley Street)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Public Health</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Research centre</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Laboratory</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Private hospital/clinic</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> University – academic/research</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Medical School</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pharmaceutical</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Non governmental organisation (NGO) (e.g. Medecins San Frontieres, VSO)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Not for profit/charity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Casual dress code</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Formal dress code</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Family centred</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Flexible work schedule</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Emergency work</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> No emergency work</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fixed hours</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fixed responsibilities</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Flexible and supportive</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Job share</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Part time</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Locum</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Formal and hierarchical</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Equal partnership</li> </ul>
Patients you prefer	Compensation and benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Chronically ill</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Acutely ill</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Chronic &amp; Acute</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> In-patients</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Out-patients</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Mentally ill</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Palliative care</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Children</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Teenagers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Students</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Adults</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Older people</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Male</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Female</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Male &amp; Female</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Patients in a family context</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Self-employed</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Salaried (NHS)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Salaried (NHS plus private income)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Insurance costs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Opportunity for promotion</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pension</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Continuing education provision</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Salary</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Holiday allowance</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Time off for study</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Opportunities for progression               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Teaching</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Education</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Lecturing</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Medical politics</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Research</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Medical Management</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

How do you want to work?	Location
<input type="checkbox"/> Working on your own – be your boss <input type="checkbox"/> Be in charge of others <input type="checkbox"/> Working in a small team <input type="checkbox"/> Working in a large multi-disciplinary team <input type="checkbox"/> Working with an audience – teaching <input type="checkbox"/> Working one-to-one <input type="checkbox"/> Working in a community	<input type="checkbox"/> Abroad <input type="checkbox"/> City <input type="checkbox"/> Country <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Ship

**After reflecting on those items you have ticked in the box on p14, place them in the relevant sections below**

My preferred work setting:

My preferred work style:

Patients I prefer:

The compensation & benefits I would like most:

Colleagues I prefer to work with:

Location:

Add any other factors that are important to you in relation to the context in which you would prefer to work:



## Resources on matching yourself to a specialty:

Know what makes you tick: the key to specialty selection, Sidgwick E, BMJ Careers 18/9/12

<http://careers.bmj.com/careers/advice/view-article.html?id=20008884>

PSU career podcasts on training within Health Education Thames Valley

[http://www.oxforddeanerycdu.org.uk/career\\_choices/newresources.html](http://www.oxforddeanerycdu.org.uk/career_choices/newresources.html)

<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/career-planning> – has information on all medical specialties

[www.bma.org.uk](http://www.bma.org.uk) - allows members access to Sci59 career choice tool, has career pages , model contracts

HETV PSU (Professional Support Unit) - for one-to-one coach/mentor support. Contact the unit in confidence via

[psu@thamesvalley.hee.nhs.uk](mailto:psu@thamesvalley.hee.nhs.uk)