

# Application tips for the FMLM CFS recruitment process

This document provides a comprehensive guide with application tips for both the National Medical Director's (NMD) Fellowship and the Chief Pharmaceutical Officer's (CPhO) Fellowship, incorporating insights from past applicants.



Faculty of  
**Medical Leadership  
and Management**

## General application advice

- **Early preparation is key:** Begin the application process early. This allows ample time for reflection, gathering evidence, and refining your responses.
- **Understand medical leadership:** Familiarise yourself with the FMLM website, resources, and the leadership and management standards. Reflect on your understanding of medical leadership and how it translates to your personal experiences.
- **Map your skills and experience:** Identify areas in your practice that demonstrate leadership qualities. Reflect on what you learned, what worked well, and areas for improvement. Connect your experiences to specific skills, drawing from your entire career, including your university years.
- **Champion your interests:** Highlight your passions within healthcare and explain how the fellowship will support your goals. Connect your interests to broader healthcare challenges like digital health, antimicrobial resistance, or women's health.
- **Stay informed:** Be aware of current healthcare trends, NHS long-term plans, and relevant local and international policies (e.g., WHO). Demonstrate your understanding of the current healthcare landscape.
- **Seek feedback:** Request feedback from medical and non-medical colleagues to gain diverse perspectives on your application's content and clarity.
- **Tailor your application:** While this guide provides a framework, remember to tailor your application to your unique experiences and aspirations.

## NMD Fellowship-specific tips

- **Target the person specification:** Use the NMD Fellowship Person Specification and FMLM standards as your guide. Structure your application to directly address the criteria outlined in these documents.
- **Showcase leadership, not just academia:** Highlight leadership skills, project management experience, and any coaching or mentorship roles. This fellowship prioritises leadership qualities over purely academic achievements. Small roles are just as impactful and are considered!
- **Quantify your impact:** When describing experiences, provide specific examples and quantify your impact using data and statistics whenever possible.
- **Reflect on your experiences:** Demonstrate self-awareness by reflecting on your experiences. Discuss challenges, lessons learned, and how you've grown as a leader.
- **Prepare for common interview themes:** Be ready to discuss your passions for medical leadership, your understanding of current NHS challenges (e.g., Long Term Workforce Plan, technology's role, Ockenden review), and how the fellowship aligns with your future aspirations.
- **Secure OOPE early:** Speak to your Training Programme Director (TPD) early about obtaining an Out of Programme Experience (OOPE) for the fellowship. Be prepared to advocate for yourself and escalate to the Head of School if needed.

## CPhO Fellowship-specific tips

- **Document your achievements:** Maintain a log of publications, contributions to policies (local or national), and other relevant impacts on your achievements. This helps demonstrate your impact and provides concrete examples for your application.
- **Understand host organisations:** Research the traditional host organisations for the CPhO fellowship and understand their objectives. Align your application with their goals and highlight how the fellowship will benefit your current role and future career.
- **Communicate with your employer:** If you are currently employed, have early discussions with your line manager about your intention to apply. Follow your employer's secondment policy if one is available. A secondment is a contractual agreement between two organisations for the temporary re-assignment of an employee. It ensures that your existing pay and benefits with your employer continue. If your employer does not agree to a secondment, the alternative is a fixed term appointment but gaining one is dependent on the host organisation.

Remember...



**Securing a fellowship is a competitive process. Don't be discouraged if you are not successful on your first attempt. Use it as a learning experience, gain further experience, and refine your application for future rounds.**

# Interview tips

## General interview preparation

- **Start early, plan ahead:** Begin preparing well in advance. Familiarise yourself with your application and map your experiences to the person specification. Practicing your answers is crucial for confident and articulate delivery.
- **Diverse practice makes perfect:** Practice with individuals from diverse backgrounds (medical, non-medical, experienced, inexperienced, etc.). This exposes you to different perspectives and enhances your adaptability.
- **Leverage technology:** Use tools like Chat GPT to refine your answers, improve conciseness, and develop key phrases. However, avoid sounding scripted – aim for authenticity.
- **Master the STAR Framework:** Structure your answers using the STAR (Situation, Task, Action, Result) framework to showcase your skills and experiences effectively.
- **Stay current:** Be aware of current healthcare affairs, recent publications, and relevant political developments. Demonstrate your understanding and ability to analyse complex information.
- **Record and review:** Record yourself answering practice questions. Analyse your body language, tone, and clarity. Identify any nervous habits and areas for improvement.
- **Time management is key:** Practice answering questions within an allocated time limit for conciseness (usually 5 minutes). For presentation tasks, adhere strictly to the given timeframe.
- **Technical readiness:** Ensure your internet connection, microphone, and chosen interview platform are functioning correctly. Test everything in advance and address any issues promptly.
- **Research your interviewers:** If possible, discreetly research your interviewers beforehand (you can see who they are whilst you are waiting in the waiting room in the interview itself). Understanding their backgrounds and organisations can help tailor your responses.
- **Rank realistically:** Consider organisations where you are genuinely willing to work, considering factors like location, work-life balance, and career aspirations. Don't let full-time positions put you off if you want to go less than full-time, most organisations are flexible.
- **Connect with past fellows:** Reach out to previous fellows for insights into the interview process, expectations, and what interviewers look for. Their experience is invaluable.
- **Pace yourself and avoid burnout:** Interview preparation can be intense. Schedule regular breaks, maintain a healthy lifestyle, and approach the process with a positive mindset.

## NMD Fellowship-specific tips

- **Anticipate common questions:** Prepare for questions about your motivation for leadership, your understanding of NHS challenges and the 10-year plan, and how the fellowship aligns with your career goals.
- **Showcase system-level thinking:** Demonstrate your ability to think strategically and approach challenges from a system-level perspective, moving beyond the viewpoint of a junior doctor.
- **Familiarise yourself with key documents:** Have easy access to key documents during the interview, such as the person specification, leadership commitment document, and relevant FMLM materials.
- **Project confidence and likeability:** Maintain a professional appearance, positive body language, and clear communication. Convey enthusiasm and a genuine interest in the fellowship.

## CPhO Fellowship-specific tips

- **Attend the insight session:** Make the most of the insight session to network with prospective hosts, previous fellows, and learn more about the fellowship experience. Clarify with potential hosts about what kinds of appointments are available (e.g. secondment or fixed term).
- **Anticipate common questions:** Reflect upon your leadership journey and challenges faced. Anticipate questions about challenges facing the pharmacy profession and the NHS in general.
- **Understand host organisation variations:** Research the different host organisations and their projects. Be prepared to discuss how your skills and interests align with their specific needs.
- **Articulate your fellowship vision:** Clearly communicate your motivations for applying, how the fellowship will enhance your professional practice, and your contributions to the pharmacy profession.



### Remember...

**The interview is an opportunity to showcase your skills, passion, and potential. By preparing thoroughly, projecting confidence, and demonstrating your commitment to medical leadership, you can significantly increase your chances of success.**



# Resources

## National Medical Directors Fellowship

- BMJ Leader X account - lots of articles/tweets from X book club
- FMLM Trainee Steering Group How to Guides
- Podcasts on Spotify (A playlist put together by a fellow):  
[https://open.spotify.com/playlist/0e0kWtw7S1Ja3A45Nhhmrp?si=81vtK91rRTysteOyra5I6A&pi=-P7IJJLIDRF67\\_](https://open.spotify.com/playlist/0e0kWtw7S1Ja3A45Nhhmrp?si=81vtK91rRTysteOyra5I6A&pi=-P7IJJLIDRF67_)
- Public speaking podcasts
- Medical interviews books

## National Medical Directors Fellowship

- Chief Pharmaceutical Officer (CPhO) Journal (previous articles about fellowship available)
- NHSE resources around inclusive pharmacy practice
- UpToDate on latest CQC, GPhC, RPS and SPS guidance's published that impact on practice
- Leadership Development Framework and other resources
- BMJ Leader articles and blog posts

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