

Konetic Recruit empowered recruiting:

Case Study: Royal College of Physicians

The Royal College of Physicians was founded almost 500 years ago. It provides a huge range of services to its 25,000 Members and Fellows and other medical professionals. These include delivering examinations, training courses, continuous professional development and conferences; undertaking clinical audits; publishing newsletters, guidelines and books through to maintaining the College's historical collections. It also leads medical debate, and lobbies and advises government and other decision-makers on behalf of its members.

Adoption of Konetic to streamline recruitment process

Every year, over a four month period the Royal College of Physicians (RCP) manages over 2000 trainee applications to place over 1000 trainees in training posts across England and Wales.

About 30 users/recruiters based in 14 Deaneries (regional specialty training organisations) across the country manage this process using Konetic's Applicant Tracking System (ATS).

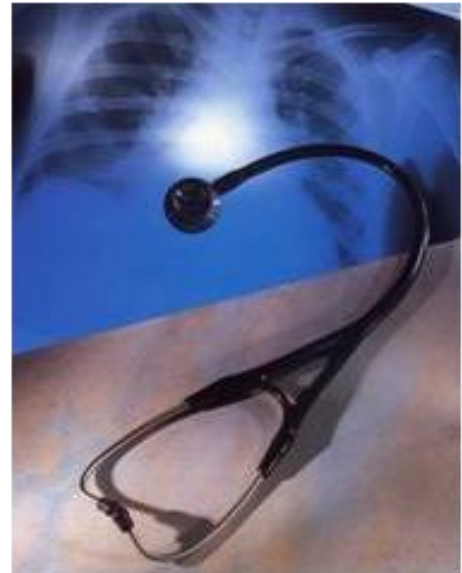
The recruitment process is organised by the Joint Royal Colleges' Postgraduate Training Board and we spoke to their Deputy Medical Director Liz Berkin and Recruitment Project Manager Sarah Lazell to understand their experience of using Konetic.

Why choose Konetic?

It's a typical scenario. When an employer decides they need an Applicant Tracking System (ATS) they usually need it quickly. Yet nothing feels more risky than making a big commitment to a piece of technology when you've limited time to research all the providers. Fortunately, the RCP knew that their sister organisation, the National Recruitment Office for GP Training, had been using Konetic successfully for many years already.

Liz Berkin explains "We knew very little about the world of ATSs. We knew the GPs had been using Konetic for years. Bill Burr, our Medical Director, looked at Konetic and one other major provider. We were happy that the Konetic system would suit our needs."

Konetic is a fully featured configurable system. Sarah Lazell has advice for other organisations looking at Konetic before choosing a system, saying "When Konetic doesn't do something it's only because we have not specified it to do so. Konetic has provided us with a configured system that only needs to do what we need it to do."



Will Konetic save time and money?

All clients want to have an ATS that saves time and money. Few providers can show you measurable reports that prove unequivocally that their system can do this. The Konetic system can. If both your stakeholders and decision-makers need convincing then Konetic's standard and configurable reporting features are what you need.

Liz Berkin has measured the benefits, and expects more to come, saying "The Konetic system saves clinicians a huge amount of time. Most of the shortlisting is now done automatically. In our first year in 2009 the system saved 80% of shortlisting time for Core Medical Training (CMT) applicants. For 2010 it's now all automatic and we expect to save even more time."

For example, in the Yorkshire Deanery in 2008, the year before the RCP started using Konetic, processing trainees' applications took clinicians a total of 600 hours. In 2009 that dropped to 60 hours. Given that busy clinicians have to do this out of hours, unpaid and at short notice, you can imagine how satisfied everyone was with the improved system.

To take another example, scheduling and coordinating interviews is time consuming and normally prone to error, as all recruiters know. You are having to make sure several people appear in the same room at the same time, with everyone bringing the right paperwork with them. Konetic's Online Interview Scheduler is a standard capability of all Konetic systems, not just the RCP version.

Sarah Lazell contrasts how things were done before Konetic was implemented, saying "Recruiters can now quickly create interview spaces in an online calendar, and applicants can schedule themselves in, in real time. Earlier it required emails going to-and-fro to each and every person involved." Essential paperwork is uploaded by the applicant into the system prior to the interview, ensuring all necessary documentation is ready and accessible on the day.

Konetic not only saved time and removed errors for the client, it cut down on the number of interviews required per candidate. The RCP had historically allowed applicants up to two interviews in front of two different panels on different days in different locations. Both interviews served the same purpose: to double-check the performance of the candidate. But the RCP had long suspected that both interviews consistently gave much the same results. To confirm this they used Konetic's ability to store all interview results and comments in a single place, allowing the RCP to compare the results of both interviews. They could, for the first time, confirm that the outcome of the second interview was sufficiently close to that of the first, such that the second interview was not necessary. Therefore, in 2010 only one interview was conducted, saving more valuable time for everyone.

Liz Berkin can even put a figure on the total savings in time alone, saying "When processing applicants for CMT we estimate 2009 saw savings of £500,000 in clinicians' time alone. We expect to save more in 2010. Those are the figures we have for England only!"

CMT went so well in 2009 that the RCP have added five ST3 (advanced specialty training) streams to their Konetic system for 2010, which will increase to eleven in 2011.

How do we ensure applicants are treated fairly?

Traineeships take place in hospitals within a Deanery. If an applicant doesn't get their first choice of traineeship they need to be presented to their next choice with minimum effort for all concerned. This is particularly important for all large organisations, not just the NHS.

Sarah Lazell explains how Konetic ensures this happens without any delays, saying "We see offers accepted and declined in real time. We're confident that we won't lose track of applicants at this vital point in the process. All information is guaranteed to reach applicants because they all have their own personalised online Candidate Portal; if for some reason they've lost the email, they know they can log in to their personal page to view all their communications."

In the past, without a national system, unsuccessful applicants would have to re-apply. Deaneries that had not filled all their posts in the first round would have to re-advertise.

With Konetic, applicants don't need to fill in a new application form to apply to a different Deanery. It is a simple matter for second choice Deaneries to look at applicants "in the pool" and make them offers.

Sarah Lazell says "Konetic enables us to perform a genuine and fair national clearing procedure, which we could never do at a local level without re-advertising and candidates re-applying."

In addition, the system gives the RCP a clear and accessible audit trail for every applicant, which is especially important if the process is questioned by an applicant.

Is Konetic easy to use and intuitive?

The Konetic user interface – for recruiters, clinicians and applicants – has always scored highly. It's intuitive, has all the required sort and filter features recruiters need, and is similar to the industry standard layouts (like Microsoft Outlook) so you don't need to spend time acquainting yourself with the layout. The drag-and-drop facility means each recruiter can tailor the layout to suit their own needs on the fly. Bulk actions are done by simply filtering and selecting all the relevant candidates. The refresh rate of the web pages means everything is in real time. "Style and layout is easy to use compared to other systems we've seen in the last couple of years," says Sarah Lazell.

Can we have customised reporting?

All events that take place on Konetic are logged and time-stamped as standard. Data from the most important processes are easy to access and view. For the first time the RCP has an accurate high level national view of the entire process, as Sarah Lazell explains "Because the system is genuinely national it allows us to make comparisons between the deaneries, and see how applicants use the system."

Any specific aspect of the process can be scrutinised by the reporting tools. The NHS mandates reporting on all key aspects of the RCP's process. In the past this was hugely time consuming and a serious responsibility. Konetic customises the reporting tools so that every client can have exactly what they want, in the format they want it. Konetic has now customised 3 reports specifically for the RCP, and added them to the library of standard reports that come with all Konetic systems. Sarah Lazell explains "With Konetic we now simply press a few buttons to generate our NHS reports." Liz Berkin adds "This is really important for our government audit".

In addition to standard reports and reports configured by Konetic, our latest feature is an Excel-based Konetic Report Writer which allows any RCP user to configure their own unique reports themselves, easily and simply, without our assistance.

Recruitment processes always evolve. What's the development and support like?

Any changes to the process must be implemented on the Konetic system, sometimes at very short notice! For example, national immigration laws and other legislation that impacts all employers affect the RCP's processes. "Changes are time-consuming and often beyond our control. In 2010 on the opening day for applications Konetic had to change our disclaimer to align it with new national legislation," says Sarah Lazell.

Any client with experience of configurable systems with changing requirements over time will know of the challenges. Whether it's development for your own use, or for external reasons e.g. to respond to changes in legislation, Konetic has a clear and efficient process to minimise misunderstandings to get it right first time. Sarah Lazell explains how development and support are key to the success of the service, saying "There are always going to be features unique to us, some never tried before! We have a very good relationship with Konetic. We have no problem telling them when they haven't met our expectations, and they're good at listening, understanding and implementing changes. We want Konetic to be the best for us, and the best for our users."

Will Konetic make the adoption of new technology easy for our staff?

The clinicians who interview and assess applicants are highly skilled professionals. They do not want their valuable time wasted. They are used to questioning new procedures robustly, be it a medical procedure or an IT system. Their protests cannot be ignored, as Liz Berkin explains "Persuading clinicians is a challenge, a huge part of our work. Especially after the very public and catastrophic failure of a national recruiting system for trainee doctors back in 2007."

Konetic's ease of use, reliability, and proven track record greatly helped the RCP in reassuring the clinicians. All launch deadlines were met with minimum fuss. The dramatic savings in clinician time is an unambiguous benefit for the RCP. Liz Berkin says "The clinicians were very pleasantly surprised. Lots of positive feedback." The good word is spreading fast, as Sarah Lazell explains "In 2009 the Konetic system was introduced for England only. In 2010 Wales joined us to their benefit"

What do recruiters think of Konetic?

A 2010 survey of recruiters by the RCP showed that 63.6% of recruiters rated Konetic as better than the other systems they used; 18.6% said Konetic was "about the same." Note that the very same recruiters who use Konetic for RCP trainees use other systems for other disciplines, so they are in a unique position to do a like-for-like comparison. Here are some quotes from recruiters, supplied to us by the RCP:

"I met with the Deanery lead today. He had booked shortlisters for 3 days, they had finished by 3 pm on the first day. He was happy, so was I. Well done team"

"I've finished doing my CMT shortlisting on line. It's excellent - the weighting of questions is much improved and having the entire form online but just scoring a couple of sections is great. Massive improvement on last year. Please let the designers know."

“Training worked really well, saved considerably in terms of time and resources”

“Very easy to use and intuitive”

“Flags and score alerts are very good”

“Allowed for good review of history”

“Good front-end design”

“Favourite element is online short-listing”

“Very reliable”

“Presentation of information was very clear”

“Good communication templates & system”

“I thought the system was excellent and can't think of anything major that needs to be changed”

“Changing candidates from one stage to the next is easy”