

# **GURKHA RECRUITMENT – SELECTION MEDICAL GUIDE**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- The Armed Forces require anyone who enters to be medically fit to serve worldwide.
- New entrants to the Armed Forces and GCSPF undergo intensive training, which is both physically and mentally demanding. The medical authorities have to be aware of your medical history and of any conditions that may affect your performance as a serviceman. Applicants who do not meet the required medical standards may be rejected.
- Your medical history is confidential and will not be given to anyone not authorised to hold this information.

## **2. MEDICAL SELECTION PROCESS - GENERAL**

- “Fit to attend physically arduous selection process proforma”. This form is self explanatory and must be completed and brought with the potential recruit to register to assist the medical staff.
- Examination will take place in 3 phases where only those candidates who are assessed to meet the medical selection criteria will be passed:
  - Phase 1 - Registration at BGP, BGD and AWC Bheri by Medical Assistants.
  - Phase 2 – Initial Selection at BGP by Medical Assistants.
  - Phase 3 - Final Selection at BGP by a full medical team including 4 doctors.
- To help avoid any unnecessary travel and expense, the Senior Recruiting Assistant (SRA) or Gallah Wallah in your area are trained to give advice and help explain the criteria and process.
- Candidates may also be advised in the Advertising by the Area Recruiting Officers (ARO) that they have an obvious medical issue which will make it unlikely for them to be successful.
- The medical screening process of Phase I - Registration, Phase 2 – Initial Selection and Phase 3 – Final Selection is designed to select those potential recruits (PR) who are healthy and have no medical conditions that prevent service in British army.
  - During the medical screening process you will be asked for information about illnesses, operations or other medical conditions you have had in your life. Please ask your parents, carers or doctors for information about your health during childhood and be prepared to discuss this information with medical staff. If you have any significant medical condition (previous diseases or operations) please bring medical documentation with you if you have it.
- You will sign the medical documentation confirming that what you tell us is true and correct. If it is discovered that you have withheld, falsified or given incorrect information you will be deselected during the recruiting process. If it is discovered

that you have withheld, falsified or given incorrect information after successful recruitment into the British Army you will be subject to disciplinary action including discharge from the British Army.

- Presenting to the medical selection process implies consent to medical examination and investigation to confirm your medical status.
- A number of tests are performed by the medical services within the camp to decide on the medical fitness of each candidate. These results are binding and a decision by the medical services is final. It is possible (although unusual) for candidates to have normal medical checks privately before central selection but abnormal results during the medical phase leading to deselection. We do not consider the results of tests or examinations conducted by other doctors.
- We are aware that many PR's pay to be medically examined prior to central selection. As stated it is only our examinations and testing that count, regardless of not whether a PR has previously been passed fit by another doctor not of the British Army.

### **3. MEDICAL SELECTION PROCESS – PHASE 1 - REGISTRATION**

- There will be some basic medical checks to assist suitability for Military Service.

### **4. MEDICAL SELECTION PROCESS – PHASE 2 – INITIAL SELECTION**

- **Interview.** The Pre-medical Screening Proforma will be discussed and clarified. You will be asked for information about illnesses, operations or other medical conditions you have had in your life.
- **Past Surgery.** If you have had any surgical, please bring original documentation to describe this surgery. Examples are hernia repair, appendectomy or ear operation. If you do not have documentation, and your scars look recent, you may be deselected.

You should be able to do three months strenuous physical activity compatible with military training after your surgery before attending for selection. The following activities are considered representative:

- Running 30-40 minutes 3x weekly
- Hill walking with 10kg for 8miles weekly

- **Height and Weight.** Potential recruits will be expected to have a healthy Body Mass Index (BMI).

The BMI of any individual (male and female) must be between 18 and 28.

- **Cardiovascular Testing.** A blood pressure (sitting) and Peak Expiratory Flow (standing) is performed.

Blood pressure must be below 140 / 90.

Peak Expiratory Flow must be more than 80% of predicted value for height and age.

- **Ear Testing.** The ears are examined.

Any active perforation of the ear drum is a bar to entry. Any active infection, or evidence of chronic infections is a bar to entry.

Loud noise will reduce hearing levels temporarily. Please refrain from listening to any loud sounds (music, industrial machinery, motorbikes) three days before testing. If you do have your ears syringed before selection please ensure this is done correctly by a qualified practitioner. Please do not use cotton buds to clean ears.

- **Eye Testing.** The visual standards are tested. Colour Perception is tested. The minimum standards for uncorrected vision is 6/6 in the right eye, and 6/9 in the left eye.

- **Medical Examination including Functional Testing.** A limited medical examination in shorts and barefoot, plus a movements test will be performed.

The candidate must be able to conduct the physical testing elements of selection within limits.

The skin must appear normal. There must be no raised scars, raised marks/lesions (including birthmarks), or cystic acne in the area that would be covered by a t-shirt or head/face, nor any on the forearms. Any active skin disease (infection or eczema) is a bar to entry.

The trunk should appear normal, with no apparent difficulty in wearing body armour.

The joints must appear normal, and the candidate have a normal walking pattern.

The feet should appear normal, with no fixed overlapping of toes.

The candidate must be able to walk 10 steps on tip toes.

The candidate must be able to perform a deep squat, and then walk 10 steps whilst remaining in the squatting position pain free.

The candidate must be able to touch their thumb to the tip of each finger of the same hand.

The candidate must be able to touch the opposite shoulder with the palm of the hand.

The candidate must be able to perform 5 press ups, and then hold the press up position for 20seconds.

Eye movements should be normal, with no squint.

The candidate must have no obvious dental disease of the front teeth (incisors and canines), and no more than one tooth missing or obviously diseased (eg open cavities), nor obvious gum disease. Chips to the teeth are acceptable if not painful.

## 5. MEDICAL SELECTION PROCESS – PHASE 3 – FINAL SELECTION

- **Interview.** You will be asked for information about illnesses, operations or other medical conditions you have had in your life, as well as alcohol and smoking status.
- **Previous Applications.** If you have been deferred from the previous year of Central Selection you must bring original documentation demonstrating the criteria set for re-applying has been met. This should include any tests results and doctors notes / letters.
- **Vaccination.** If you have had any vaccination during your lifetime please bring evidence or documentation of this to central selection.
- **Height and Weight.** Potential recruits will be expected to have a healthy Body Mass Index (BMI).

The BMI of a male individual must be between 18 and 28, with a waist circumference of less than 94cm.

The BMI of a female individual must be between 18 and 28, with a waist circumference of less than 80cm.

- **Urine Testing.** Urine is tested for sugar, blood and protein. Any abnormality will be repeated to test persistence of the problem.

Again, candidates are advised not to undertake strenuous physical activity for 3 days before attending central selection (including, but not limited to the Stamina Assessment Test practice). Again, candidates are advised not to take large amount of sugar in their diet for 3 days before attending central selection.

- **Cardiovascular Testing.** The heart is tested by history, listening to the heart, and an electrocardiogram (ECG). An ultrasound test of the heart is performed if required. A blood pressure (sitting) and Peak Expiratory Flow (standing) is also performed.

This is to identify risk of sudden cardiac death during heavy exercise. The results of these tests are reviewed by a British Army Cardiologist in the UK, who has the final decision on pass/fail of a candidate.

- **Ear Testing.** The ears are examined and a hearing test is performed. The medical team will syringe ears to clear any earwax if this is necessary.

High frequency loss of hearing is a bar to entry. Any active perforation of the ear drum is a bar to entry. Any active infection, or evidence of chronic infections is a bar to entry.

Loud noise will reduce hearing levels temporarily. Please refrain from listening to any loud sounds (music, industrial machinery, motorbikes) three days before testing.

If you do have your ears syringed before selection, ensure this is done correctly by a qualified practitioner. Please do not use cotton buds to clean ears.

• **Eye Testing.** The eyes are tested for red reflex and movements. The back of the eye (retina) is examined. The visual standards are tested. Colour Perception is tested.

The minimum standards for uncorrected vision is 6/6 in the right eye, and 6/9 in the left eye.

Colour Perception is tested using Ishihara plates. Any colour perception is currently permitted entry into Brigade of Gurkhas, but note that abnormal colour perception could limit future trade opportunities in engineers, logistics and signals trades.

Any previous laser correction is a bar to entry.

• **Dynamic Functional Testing.** A dynamic (moving) functional test will be performed to ensure all the joints work correctly.

This consists of a collection of movements such as squats, press ups, walking on tip toes, walking on heels.

• **Medical Examination.** A full medical examination will be performed by the doctor to assess all other criteria for entry into the British Army.

All final decisions regarding medical suitability for entry are made at the discretion of the Senior Medical Officer for Gurkha Recruiting.

• **Common Failures.** The commonest reasons for medical 'fails' at central selection are heart conditions, blood pressure, hearing tests, eyesight, perforated ear drums and musculoskeletal issues.

**Specialist Testing.** Additional specialist tests (such as blood tests, or ultrasound) may be requested by the Senior Medical Officer on an individual basis after review of the candidates Past Medical History and Family History.

## 6. MEDICAL EXCLUSIONS

• **Temporary Conditions.** The following conditions require the selection procedure and/or entry to be temporarily put on hold until you are fully

recovered, discharged from hospital follow-up, and fit to undergo arduous training:

Waiting list for an operation

Temporary illness or injury

• **Permanent Conditions.** The conditions in the table below make a person permanently unsuitable, except where specifically time limited, for entry into the Armed Forces:

<b>System</b>	<b>Specific</b>
Eyes	Vision in only one eye. Any visual field defects or night blindness Glaucoma, cataracts or cataract surgery, or detached retina. Double vision or abnormal eye movements Squint or squint surgery in the previous six months. Corneal grafts or recurrent corneal ulcers. Previous penetrating injury to the eye. Other ongoing eye disease e.g., keratoconus, retinitis pigmentosa. Previous laser eye surgery.
Ear, Nose and Throat	Deformity of the ears which would interfere with hearing protection. Ongoing ear disease, e.g acute otitis externa, acute otitis media, and chronic otitis media, grommits, perforated eardrum, or hearing loss. Deformity of the nose which would interfere with face masks Uncorrected cleft lip / palate
Cardiovascular	Active heart disease. Congenital heart conditions. Any heart valve abnormalities. Any symptomatic heart arrhythmia, or needing medication. Any structural abnormality including cardiomyopathy. Familial hyperlipidaemia High blood pressure (reading above 140/90) including if treated. Raynaud's disease. Symptomatic varicose veins
Respiratory	Asthma, wheeze or asthma symptoms. Any previous spontaneous pneumothorax (traumatic is permitted). Chronic bronchitis, emphysema, bronchiectasis, cystic fibrosis Active Tuberculosis.
Gastrointestinal	Ongoing abdominal, digestive or liver disease. Irritable Bowel Syndrome needing any treatment in the last 2 years. Inflammatory Bowel Disease, e.g. Crohn's disease / Ulcerative colitis. Gastric or duodenal ulcers. Requirement for specific dietary restriction including Gluten or Lactose Active Pilonidal Sinus or

	Haemorrhoids. Loss of the spleen (splenectomy), or enlarged spleen or liver Chronic hepatitis or alcohol induced pancreatitis. Any untreated hernia.
Renal and Urological	Persistent urinary abnormalities. Previous nephritis. Any urinary tract abnormality, including congenital disease Previous kidney stones
Neurological	Ongoing nervous system disease. Severe or recurrent headache (including migraine, or any headache needing time off school in the last 2 years). Epilepsy or more than one seizure/fit after the age of five. Any single seizure/fit within the last five years. Any head injury with loss of consciousness lasting over 30minutes. Any previous skull fracture Hydrocephalus (with or without shunt).
Endocrine	Diabetes, including impaired glucose tolerance or gestational diabetes. Any glucose present in the urine (without special tests to clear). Adrenal disorders Pituitary disorders Certain thyroid diseases
Dermatology	Any skin disease which would interfere with wearing body armour, helmet, gloves or camouflage cream. Cystic acne affecting the shoulders, chest or back. Active skin disease including dermatitis or eczema of any type Psoriasis affecting more than 5% of the body.
Reproductive	Undiagnosed scrotal masses, or chronic testicular pain. Any chronic disease or infection Menstrual disorders sufficient to warrant time off school / work. Current pregnancy or breastfeeding
Musculoskeletal	Any disorder incompatible with military training. This includes hypermobility and hyperextension >10 degrees of the knees Any fracture or surgery within 12months (fingers 6 months) Any fracture in the joint line (intra-articular) or spinal fracture. Any healed fracture with residual deformity Loss of thumb or more than one finger. Any loss of hand, wrist, elbow or shoulder function. More than one episode of shoulder dislocation Any spinal surgery. Any persistent back pain (more than three episodes) or sciatica Fixed toes, overlapping toes, or loss of the big toe. Unstable ankle, anterior knee pain, knee surgery including ACL repair Any hip symptoms or history of disease Any arthritis.
Psychiatry	Alcohol or drug dependence Schizophrenia or psychosis Persistent depression, anxiety, mania, or bipolar disorder
Dental	Uncorrected cleft lip / palate. Facial fractures with residual symptoms. Gross oral neglect (multiple open cavities, multiple adult tooth loss, dental disease of incisors or canines, outstanding dental work)

Other	HIV, Hepatitis B or Hepatitis C. Previous blood clot / DVT. Chronic fatigue syndrome, or ME Genetic congenital disease is likely a bar to entry, with some exceptions. Previous malignant disease is a bar to entry, with some exceptions. Cured childhood cancers may be considered. Previous heat illness / heat stroke / heat collapse Previous frostbite, freezing cold injury or non-freezing cold injury. Splenectomy Transplant Urticaria, any systemic allergic reaction or anyphalaxis
GCSPF specific	Any x-ray evidence of active Tuberculosis.

• **Note:** This table is not comprehensive and is intended for general guidance only. It is also subject to change, and reflects the latest guidance in the Joint Service Manual of Medical Fitness (JSP 950 Medical Policy Part 1 Leaflet 6-7-7, Section 4).

• Many conditions that are compatible with civilian employment and sport may be considered incompatible with military service. If you have a recurrent medical condition that is not mentioned below, or if you are unclear about the impact of your medical history, you should seek further advice via your SRA.