

Questioning your choice of specialty

Realistic

- What have you done to investigate this specialty?
- How many people working in this specialty have you spoken to?
- Have you obtained advice and feedback from others on your suitability?
- What areas of this specialty will you find most difficult?
- How much of your decision making is based on random things that have happened to you rather than information you have sought out?

Opportunities

- How thoroughly have you investigated alternative options?
- What other specialties have you seriously considered?
- What other specialties have you rejected? Why?
- What specialties have you never even thought about?
- What is your plan B, plan C, etc.?

Anchors

- When did you last think about why you are pursuing a career in medicine?
- What are your priorities for your future career?
- What are the key components of job satisfaction for you?
- Have you made a list of pros and cons for each of the specialties you are considering?
- How confident are you that your choice will fulfil your career needs?
- What compromises will you have to make?

Development

- Have you investigated how the nature of this specialty changes as you progress within it?
- How far ahead have you investigated?
- Have you factored in how your priorities might change over time?
- How often do things change in this specialty?
- What will sustain your interest when you have mastered the skills of this specialty?

Stress

- What are the downsides of your chosen option?
- How bad would the disadvantages have to get before they outweighed the benefits?
- What particular causes of stress do you find it most difficult to cope with — workload, deadlines, responsibility, tragedy, boredom, conflict, competition, change, performance?
- Have you looked at how many people leave this specialty and why?

Based on the ROADS structure from *The ROADS to Success* by Caroline Elton and Joan Reid. Published by the Postgraduate Deanery for Kent, Surrey and Sussex, 2008.