

Training and development (Intensive Care Medicine)

This page provides useful information on the training and development for this specialty and also has tips for people at all stages of their training including medical school.

Training

[Intensive Care](#) ^[1] Medicine (ICM) training takes a minimum of seven years on the single training pathway and 8.5 years on the dual training pathway.

There are four main training pathways for [intensive care](#) ^[1] medicine:

- Acute care common stem training (ACCS) - any of the ACCS training pathways: anaesthetics, acute medicine route (AM), or emergency medicine (EM), these are three-year programmes
- Core anaesthetic training (CAT), which is a two-year programme
- [Core medical training](#) ^[2] (CMT), which is a two-year programme
- Internal medicine stage 1, which is a two to three-year programme. Trainees may join [intensive care](#) ^[1] medicine after year 2 if they have full [MRCP](#) ^[3] Diploma

In addition, trainees need to complete the respective specialty examination for the pathway:

- MCEM (parts A, B & C) for ACCS EM candidates
- Primary FRCA for CAT's or ACCS (anaesthesia) candidates
- [MRCP](#) ^[3] UK for ACCS AM or CMT candidates

A pass in one of these primary examinations confers eligibility to sit the FFICM Final examination (Fellowship of the Faculty of [Intensive Care](#) ^[1] Medicine).

Trainees can enter specialty training in ICM at ST3 level. Training takes a minimum of five years (ST3-7). During ST3&4, trainees develop the core competences that they have not covered already in their core training in addition to extending their ICM experience. This may include additional time in anaesthesia, ICM and AM.

In ST 5 & 6, trainees gain experience of sub-specialty ICM including cardiothoracic, neurosciences and paediatric ICM in addition to further general ICM experience. Their training may also include the development of a specialist skill relevant to ICM. This year is aimed at developing trainees' interest in a specific aspect of ICM work. Opportunities include academic ICM, management, pre-hospital medicine, education and echocardiography (see above –

Special Skills in ICM).

Individuals are required to pass the Final FFICM examination in order to progress to the final year (ST7). The final year is spent exclusively in ICM and is aimed at developing high-level clinical and non-clinical skills.

Some trainees may wish to undertake a dual CCT [4] programme leading to a qualification in both ICM and a partner specialty. A trainee must be appointed to a dual training programme before the end of their ST5 training year.

Depending on the individual's previous experience and chosen partner specialty, dual training will extend the training period to a minimum of 8.5 years. Recruitment is stepped, ie trainees enter the first specialty (either ICM or partner) in one recruitment episode and compete for entry to the second specialty the following year. If the trainee enters the second specialty more than 18 months after entering the first, then the GMC will award them a CESR(CP) in the second specialty, not a CCT [4]. For Dual CCT [4] trainees, training during their special skills year will be undertaken in their partner specialty.

Application to the partner specialty is through competitive national interviews. Dual programmes are available in:

- acute medicine
- anaesthesia
- emergency medicine
- renal medicine
- respiratory [5] medicine

The intensive care medicine curriculum is available from the GMC. [6]

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Tips for medical students

- join your university medical society
- attend conferences for medical students – this will give you an opportunity to network and meet your future colleagues
- get involved with the GMC (General Medical Council) [7], e.g. medical students can participate in visits to medical schools as part of the GMC's quality assurance [8] process
- consider finding out more about the training in ICM through the Faculty of Intensive Care Medicine [9] website
- consider becoming a student member of the BMA (the British Medical Association [10] is the trade union and professional association for doctors and provides careers advice)
- make your specialty decision in good time so that you can test it out before committing yourself, e.g. by using hospital visits and clinical placements arranged as part of your course to ask questions and observe people at work
- choose the topic of your supervised research project carefully to test out your thinking

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Tips for foundation trainees

- remember your first priority is to demonstrate that you have developed the personal, learning, clinical, practical and management skills needed by all doctors
- think laterally when applying for rotations – vacancies may not be available in ICM so apply for a rotation in a related field such as anaesthesia, renal medicine, [respiratory](#) ^[5] medicine, acute internal medicine or emergency medicine
- participate in the [RCP](#) ^[11] career mentoring scheme for the chance to be mentored by an ICM consultant or trainee
- talk to your clinical and educational supervisors about particular areas of interest to explore
- use full placements to experience specialties that you might be interested in or apply for taster experiences if you can't get a placement
- talk with your peers about their career ideas and experiences – you may be able to help each other
- listen to information and advice from more experienced doctors but make your own decisions
- taking part in a [clinical audit](#) ^[12] is important for your development as a doctor but you may be able to choose an audit project related to a specialty that interests you
- ensure your Foundation e-portfolio has plenty of medical evidence and that this is kept properly up-to-date
- try to gain teaching and management experience
- look at competition ratios (ie the number of applicants to places) critically. Find out what is happening this year and spot any regional differences in competition ratios
- view the careers resources on the Foundation Programme website ^[13]
- write case reports or make presentations (in acute medicine, for instance) with an ICM focus

Tips for core and specialty trainees

- ensure a good grounding in acute general medicine
- speak to consultants about what the role is like
- read as much information as you can on the websites of relevant professional bodies
- impress interviewers by showing that your interest in the specialty is intrinsically motivated, ie you are drawn to the work and not just attracted by admiration of someone you have shadowed (You will also be happier in your career in that specialty many years later!)
- be prepared to move to where the vacancies are
- continue to develop your practical and academic expertise
- undertake a research project
- try to get some of your work published and present at national and international meetings

- join or start a Journal Club (a group who meet to critically evaluate academic research)
- teach junior colleagues
- take on any management opportunities you are offered

Source URL: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/intensive-care-medicine/training-and-development>

Links

- [1] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Intensive_care
- [2] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Core_medical_training
- [3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#MRCP>
- [4] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#CCT>
- [5] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Respiratory>
- [6] http://www.gmc-uk.org/education/intensive_care_medicine.asp
- [7] <http://www.gmc-uk.org/>
- [8] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Quality_assurance
- [9] <http://www.ficm.ac.uk/>
- [10] <http://bma.org.uk/>
- [11] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#RCP>
- [12] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Clinical_audit
- [13] <http://www.foundationprogramme.nhs.uk/pages/medical-students/your-career-path/resources>