

## Working life (immunology)

This page provides useful information about the roles and responsibilities of immunologists, where they work, who they work with and what they feel about their role.

I'm fascinated by immunology because inflammation and the appropriate resolution of inflammation are of enormous importance in such a wide diversity of human physiological and pathological processes, from autoimmunity and infection to development and ageing. Understanding these concepts helps us better understand clinical medicine, develop new interventions and ultimately care for patients more effectively. **Medical student.**

### How your time is spent

A typical day in the life of a clinical immunologist is likely to begin with a clinic of 5-10 patients in one of the following:

- an outpatient clinic for new and established patients with immunodeficiency
- a clinic for patients with severe allergy, possibly including desensitisation immunotherapy (involves the administration of gradually increasing doses of allergen extracts by injection, drops or tablets)
- a joint clinic with rheumatology colleagues for patients with systemic autoimmune disease [1] and vasculitis

The rest of the day is usually spent interpreting and discussing interesting laboratory results with clinical colleagues, attending clinical meetings and teaching. Clinical work is predominantly outpatient based, with a frequent need to provide opinions on inpatients.

### On call [2] and working hours

Immunologists generally work a from Monday-Friday traditional working day pattern, from 8.30 am or 9.00 am to around 5.00pm or 6 pm. At present they often provide out of hours telephone advice to doctors.

There is an increasing demand for extended out of hours support (both laboratory and clinical) and so the demands for irregular working hours could change.

- Who you will work with?

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Immunologists work alongside:

- specialist nurses
- medical secretaries and administrative staff

They also work closely with:

- GPs
  - paediatricians
  - pathologists
  - other specialists involved in multi-system disease, eg rheumatologists
  - Infectious diseases doctors
- Attractions and challenges of the role

Expand / collapse

Clinical immunology suits trainees who like the challenge of caring for patients of all ages with a variety of disorders ranging from immune system failure to an over-zealous immune system. It also appeals to those who like diagnostic challenges and using cutting-edge immunomodulatory therapies (interventions that modify the immune response as well as established therapies).

Keeping up with the fast pace of advances in immunology can be challenging but there are good opportunities in teaching and research for those who are particularly attracted to the science-based aspects of the specialty.

Immunology supports a good work-life balance, since specialists are rarely required to be in hospital out of hours and flexible working patterns are well-established in the specialty.

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**Source URL:** <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/medicine/immunology/working-life>

#### **Links**

[1] [https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Autoimmune\\_disease](https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Autoimmune_disease)

[2] [https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#On\\_call](https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#On_call)