Training and development (neurology)

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.

Download full image of neurology pathway [1]

The approved postgraduate training programme for neurology is available from the GMC. [2]

You will need to complete core training after your two-year foundation programme. Core training has a choice of two pathways:

- acute care common stem – ACCS
Programmes take a minimum of two years to complete and consist of four to six placements in medical specialties which must include direct involvement in the acute medical take. Trainees record their workplace based assessments in an ePortfolio which they continue to use in specialty training.

Applicants for specialty training should also hold the full MRCP [4] (UK). Not all applicants who meet the required standard to continue will necessarily be offered a post due to the level of competition.

Trainees can enter specialty training in neurology at ST3 level. Subsequent neurology training takes a minimum of four years, but the Specialty Advisory Committee (SAC) advises applicants that it needs five years to achieve all the competencies set out in the curriculum.

During your specialty training you must pass the RCP [5] Specialty Certificate Examination (SCE) in Neurology. Many people go on to do a research degree in neurology, usually an MD (2 to 3 years) or PhD (3 to 4 years). This may be done between CMT and specialty training or during specialty training.

Some trainees elect to undertake an additional one year training scheme in stroke medicine [6] to achieve sub-specialty recognition. Stroke medicine [6] is a sub-specialty training programme open to neurology, geriatric medicine, acute medicine, rehabilitation medicine and clinical pharmacology trainees. Trainees should express an interest in stroke [7] training before their final year so that the first year of stroke [7] training can be integrated into their main specialty training. A second year of advanced stroke [7] medicine training is required to reach the level required of consultants. Entry to stroke [7] training is by competitive interview.

Some neurology trainees also elect to undertake dual training in neurology and neurophysiology or another specialty. They are advised to apply for an advertised dual training programme before enrolment at ST3.

Detailed entry requirements and all essential and desirable criteria are listed in the person specification 2017 for neurology ST3 [8].

All 2017 person specifications [9] can be found on the NHS specialty training website. Please note that these documents are updated every year in the autumn before the recruitment round opens.

This information is correct at the time of writing. Full and accurate details of training pathways are available from medical royal colleges, local education and training boards [10] (LETBs) or the GMC [11].

**Getting in tips**

It is important to develop your practical skills and interest in neurology as early as you can. This will also give you valuable experience to add to your CV.

Whether you’re a medical student, foundation trainee or doing your core specialty training, there’s information below to help you.

- Medical students
opportunities in medical training to visit neurological departments are limited so make an effort to find out about this specialty
○ 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) [11], eg medical students can participate in quality assurance visits to different medical schools
○ consider joining the Association of British Neurologists [12] as a student member
○ consider becoming a student member of the BMA (The British Medical Association [13]) 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, eg 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

• 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 neurology so apply for a rotation in a related field
○ participate in the ABNT (Association of British Neurology [12] trainees) or RCP [5] career mentoring scheme for the chance to be mentored by a neurology 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 [14] 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 [15]
○ write case reports or make presentations (in acute medicine, for instance) with a neurological focus

• Core and specialty trainees
- ensure a good grounding in acute general medicine
- join the Association of British Neurologists and get help with navigating your way through specialty training
- 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, i.e., 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/medicine/neurology/training-and-development

Links
[1] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/resources/neurology-training-pathway
[3] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Core_medical_training
[14] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Clinical_audit