

Training and development (medical psychotherapy)

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 comprises two main stages:

- **core psychiatry training**, CT1-3, lasting three years
- **specialty training in medical psychotherapy**, ST4-6, lasting three years and leading to membership of the Royal College of Psychiatrists (MRCPsych). You may also train at this stage for a specialist qualification in psychotherapy, such as accreditation as a cognitive behavioural psychotherapist with BABCP (British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies).

The length of training can vary, for example it is possible to train flexibly if you fulfil the criteria for Less than Full Time Training ^[1] (LTFT).

Dual training is occasionally available, for example in both general adult psychiatry and medical psychotherapy or in forensic and medical psychotherapy.

Core psychiatry training provides experience in the different areas of psychiatric practice through four to six month training posts.

Specialty training comprises three blocks of 12 months each, in areas that are relevant to medical psychotherapy. During higher training you will usually also need to undertake individual personal psychotherapy to help develop your own self-awareness and understanding.

You need at least 36 months' whole time experience in psychiatry (not including foundation modules) or 36 months' whole time training in psychiatry posts in an EU country before being accepted for ST4 training. Additional qualifications such as an intercalated degree are desirable.

An interest and realistic insight into psychiatry and mental health is essential and you will also need to demonstrate basic psychotherapeutic skills. Experience of extra-curricular activities, achievements and interests relevant to the specialty are also desirable.

Selection panels also look for evidence of academic and research achievements, which as well as additional academic qualifications include prizes, awards, distinctions, publications and presentations. An understanding of research, audit and teaching is also important as is

evidence of the ability to work in a multidisciplinary team. Good leadership and organisational skills are also important.

The GMC provides information on the curriculum for medical psychotherapy training [2].

Getting in tips

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

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Tips for medical students

Expand / collapse

- attend conferences on psychiatry – this will give you an opportunity to network and meet your future colleagues
- undertake a placement in psychiatry/start to develop an interest in psychotherapy
- undertake a student selected module or project in psychiatry and choose an [elective](#) [3] in this area
- join the Royal College of Psychiatrists (RCPsych) as a Student Associate member – this will enable you to attend events such as the International Congress of the Royal College of Psychiatrists and summer schools. You will also have free electronic access to their journals
- join or start a university psychiatry interest group

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Tips for foundation trainees

Expand / collapse

- make contact with the psychiatric department in your hospital and find out how you can get involved
- aim to get a rotation in psychiatry/medical psychotherapy (very desirable)
- try to ensure your e-portfolio has relevant experience with psychiatry and that this is kept properly up-to-date
- continue to develop your interest in psychotherapy by reading and attending conferences
- try to gain teaching and management experience
- join the RCPsych as a student member as above

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Tips for core and specialty trainees

Expand / collapse

- undertake a relevant research project
- try to get some of your work published and present at national and international meetings
- teach junior colleagues
- take on any management opportunities you are offered
- join the RCPsych at the pre-membership psychiatric trainee grade

Source URL: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/psychiatry/medical-psychotherapy/training-and-development>

Links

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/working-health/information-doctors/less-full-time-training-doctors>

[2] <http://www.gmc-uk.org/education/psychotherapy.asp>

[3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Elective>