Training and development (clinical oncology)

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.

Clinical oncology [1] specialty training

Specialty training in clinical oncology [1] starts at ST3. After foundation training [2] there are two options open to you before you can start specialist clinical oncology [1] training:

- core medical training [3] (CMT)
- acute care common stem in emergency medicine (ACCS)

There is a wide range of essential and desirable selection criteria which you need to fulfil before being accepted for specialist clinical oncology [1] ST3 training (see below for all criteria in NHS Person Specification).

Clinical oncology [1] specialty training starts at ST3 and proceeds to ST7. Training usually lasts for five years after which you to achieve a Certificate of Completion of Training [4] (CCT [5]). You are then eligible to join the specialist register and can apply for consultant posts.

Training is divided into:

- core clinical oncology [1] training ST3-4. The first Fellowship of the Royal College of Radiologists (FRCR) must be passed. This assesses the trainee?s knowledge of the sciences that underpin clinical oncology
- intermediate clinical oncology training ST4-5
- advanced clinical oncology training ST6-7. The final Fellowship of the Royal College of Radiologists (FRCR) is also taken, which assesses knowledge and skills in managing patients with cancer

It is possible to undertake an out of programme activity during training, such as gaining experience in another UK cancer centre or spending time undertaking research.

A period of research is encouraged during training ? up to six months of full-time research in clinical oncology or related sciences is allowed, which can be extended to twelve months by the Royal College of Radiologists.

- The GMC provides information on the curriculum for clinical oncology training. [6]
- Information on the curriculum is also available on the?Royal College of Radiologist?s website [7]. [8]

What you need?
You will need at least 24 months experience in medical specialties (not including foundation training) of which at least 12 months must include the care of acute medical in-patients. Experience in certain acute common stem specialties can be counted towards the 24 months in some circumstances.

It is essential that you:

- can demonstrate awareness of the basics of managing patients with cancer
- have achieved membership of the Royal College of Physicians (MRCP), part [9] 1 (or acceptable equivalent) before you apply and part 2 by the time your clinical oncology post starts.

It is desirable that you should have:

- an intercalated BSc or equivalent
- a higher degree, eg MSc, PhD, or MD (where the research thesis is not part of the first medical degree)
- experience at CT/ST levels one and two of managing patients with cancer disease and managing cancer-related emergencies before you commence ST3 training
- evidence of training and skills in the management of acute medical emergencies, (e.g. ALERT, IMPACT certification) is 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.

Entry is competitive so you will need achievements that are relevant to clinical oncology. It is desirable that your portfolio has evidence of audit/quality improvement projects, with the principles of change management. ?Evidence of exceptional achievement in medicine is also desirable.

- **Tips for medical students**
  - attend conferences on radio therapy/clinical oncology [1] for medical students ? this will give you an opportunity to network and meet your future colleagues
  - work hard to achieve a prize, eg in anatomy
  - undertake a placement in clinical oncology
  - undertake a student selected module or project in clinical oncology and choose an elective in clinical oncology
  - gain an understanding of how cancer services work in the UK
  - consider taking an intercalated degree to develop research and laboratory skills

- **Tips for foundation trainees**
  - make contact with clinical oncology [1]/radiotherapy [10] department in your hospital and ask to sit in on radiotherapy [10] planning sessions or clinics and attend multidisciplinary meetings. Also get involved in clinical oncology [1] audit/research
  - aim to get a rotation in medical or clinical oncology [1] or palliative medicine
  - ensure your e-portfolio has plenty of mainstream acute care clinical work and that this is kept properly up-to-date
  - try to gain teaching and management experience

- **Tips for core and specialist trainees**
- 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

Source URL: https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/clinical-oncology/training-and-development

Links
[1] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Oncology
[3] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Core_medical_training
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