

Real-life story - Rachel Hadley

Rachel is passionate about science and has always wanted to be part of the NHS team.



Rachel Hadley Trainee vascular scientist

Employer or university Taunton and Somerset NHS Foundation Trust

Salary range ?25k-?35k

How I got into the role

I did a biomedical science (anatomy) degree at Cardiff University and then applied to do the three-year NHS Scientist Training [Master's] Programme. I was attracted to being able to apply my passion for learning and science, and working directly with patients rather than being shut away in a lab!

My degree was anatomy-based which is great because this job involves human anatomy.?

What I do

I'm currently in my first year and rotating around different departments - vascular, cardiology and respiratory. Every day is different and I'm learning so much. I'm currently based in the vascular department where I observe and help other vascular scientists to scan patients with ultrasound, helping to diagnose diseases that affect arteries and veins.

We can see on the screen exactly what's happening in the patient's artery or vein.

The best bits and challenges

The best bit of the job is working closely with patients and helping to solve part of the 'puzzle'. I also like it that the ultrasound scan results are instant. There's no waiting around to analyse blood samples; we can see on the screen exactly what's happening in the patient's artery or vein at that moment!

I'm quite shy so am proud of myself for stepping out of my comfort zone to do this role. I know it will stretch me and improve my communication and organisational skills, professionalism and understanding.

We see lots of elderly patients who are very unwell which can be difficult. This first year of the programme is demanding too because I have such a lot to learn and there are lots of exams.?

Life outside work

I enjoying running and recently completed the Cardiff half marathon. Focusing on the training gave me goals to focus on outside work which in turn helped me at work too.

Having supportive friends and family for visits at the weekends helps me keep a work-life balance which is really important.?

Career plans and top tips for others

If you're interested in this type of role, you need to be really passionate about science because it's all about continuous learning. I'd suggest trying to get work experience in a hospital before you decide whether or not you want to work in one. It can be a challenging environment, but also very satisfying and pleasant.

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