

Emergency medicine

Doctors in emergency medicine carry out the immediate assessment and treatment of patients with serious and life-threatening illnesses and injuries.

You'll work mainly in the accident and emergency departments of hospitals.

Can't see the video? You'll need to accept all [cookies](#) ^[1]. Alternatively, visit our YouTube Channel to view our [videos](#) ^[2]

Life as an emergency doctor

You could also work in other settings such as minor injuries units, at major events or in regional trauma networks. It's a 24/7 service so you'll work shifts including evenings and weekends.

There is no such thing as a typical day, which is why emergency medicine is so interesting. You'll see people of all ages and from all walks of life, including casualties from road traffic accidents, older people without support and substance abusers. You could go from treating someone with a broken bone to caring for a patient in [cardiac arrest](#) ^[3], or dealing with a person with mental health issues.

Emergency medicine allows you to use a huge range of clinical skills to assess and prioritise patients. It means you keep good knowledge of most specialities as you work with the team to plan treatment, save lives and help patients recover. About a fifth of patients are admitted to hospital so you build expert understanding of hospital emergency medical systems.

How much can I earn?

You'll first earn a salary when you start your [foundation training](#) ^[4] after medical school. Find out details of current salary ranges for foundation and specialty training, [SAS doctors](#) ^[5] and consultants on the '[Pay for doctors](#)' ^[6] page.

How about the benefits?

- make a difference
- flexible and part-time working

- high income early in your career
- work anywhere in the world
- excellent pension scheme
- good holiday entitlement
- NHS discounts in shops and restaurants

Must-have skills

- excellent communication skills to manage a wide range of relationships with colleagues, and patients and their families
- emotional resilience, a calm temperament and the ability to work well under pressure
- teamwork and the capacity to lead multidisciplinary teams
- problem-solving and diagnostic skills
- outstanding organisational ability and effective decision-making skills including prioritisation
- first-class time and resource management for the benefit of patients

Entry requirements

Your first step is medical school. Typically, you'll need excellent GCSEs and three A or A* passes at A level including chemistry for a five-year undergraduate degree in medicine. Many medical schools also ask for biology and others may require maths or physics.

If you already have a degree, you could study for a four-year postgraduate degree in medicine.

You'll need to pass an interview and admissions test. You'll be asked to show how you demonstrate the NHS values such as compassion and respect.

Some medical schools look to recruit a mix of students from different backgrounds and geographical areas, so your educational and economic background and family circumstances could be considered as part of your application.

"I love the challenge and variety of the work and being part of a high-performing team. Knowing that you can always rely on your team of nurses and doctors is very reassuring and there's a great sense of camaraderie."

[Read Clare's story](#) ^[7].

What are my chances of starting a career in emergency medicine?

In 2020 there were 863 applications for 348 emergency medicine specialty training posts.

How to become a doctor in emergency medicine

After medical school, you'll join the paid two-year [foundation programme](#) [8] where you'll work in six placements in different settings.

After your foundation programme, you can apply for paid [specialty training](#) [8] to become an emergency doctor, which will take a minimum of six years.

You may be able to train part-time, for example for health reasons or if you have family or caring responsibilities.

Where a career in emergency medicine can take you

You could:

- specialise and conduct research in areas such as paediatric emergency medicine and pre-hospital emergency medicine
- study for joint qualification with [intensive care](#) [9] medicine
- teach medical students or postgraduate students in training
- get involved in research at universities, the NHS or private sector

• Live vacancies

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• Further information

These organisations have further information about being a doctor in emergency medicine, particularly as your career progresses. Take a look.

[Royal College of Physicians](#) [10]

[Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh](#) [11]

Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow [12]

The Royal College of Emergency Medicine [13]

The Intercollegiate Board for Training in Pre-hospital Emergency Medicine (IBTPHEM) [14]

Emergency Medicine Trainees Association [15]

The Heart of England Foundation Trust's Emergency Department [16]

The Faculty of Intensive Care Medicine [17]

British Association for Immediate Care (BASICS) [18]

European Society for Emergency Medicine (EuSEM) [19]

International Federation for Emergency Medicine (IFEM) [20]

Association of Paediatric Emergency Medicine (APEM) [21]

Faculty of Pre-hospital Care, The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh [22]

The Society for Acute Medicine (SAM) [23]

Heartlands ED [24]

Other roles that may interest you

- Acute internal medicine [25]
- Intensive care medicine [26]
- General internal medicine [27]
- Anaesthesia [28]

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[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/privacy-and-cookies/#CookieDeclarationChangeConsentChange> [2] <https://www.youtube.com/NHSCareers> [3] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Cardiac_arrest [4] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Foundation_training [5] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/career-opportunities-doctors/sas-doctors> [6] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/pay-doctors> [7] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/emergency-medicine/real-life-story-dr-clare-bosanko> [8] <https://foundationprogramme.nhs.uk/> [9] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Intensive_care [10] <https://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/medical-careers> [11] <http://www.rcpe.ac.uk/> [12] <http://www.rcpsg.ac.uk> [13] <http://www.rcem.ac.uk/> [14] <http://www.ibtphem.org.uk/> [15] <http://www.emtraineesassociation.co.uk/> [16] <http://www.heftemcast.co.uk/> [17] <http://www.ficm.ac.uk/> [18] <http://www.basics.org.uk/> [19] <http://www.eusem.org/> [20] <http://www.ifem.cc/> [21] <https://www.apem.me.uk/> [22] <http://www.fphc.co.uk/content/> [23] <http://www.acutemedicine.org.uk/> [24] <http://www.heftemcast.co.uk> [25] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/medicine/acute-internal-medicine>

[26] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/intensive-care-medicine> [27]
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[28] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/anaesthesia>