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Clinical immunology

Immunology is the study of the immune system.

The immune system is how all animals, including humans, protect themselves against diseases.



You will help to treat diseases like AIDS and cancer, including leukaemia, as well as allergies, such as hay fever, by using complex and sophisticated molecular techniques.

Working life

Working in the healthcare science team in immunology, you'll investigate patients' immune systems and research the causes of any problems.

You'll help to treat diseases and allergies

You'll work as part of a team with immunologists [1] (medical doctors specialising in immunology), biomedical scientists [2] and other healthcare science staff working in the life sciences [3].

The healthcare science team often work at the forefront of research and innovation, so that patients are continually receiving the very best healthcare.

Want to learn more?

- Find out more about the entry requirements, skills and interests required to enter a career in clinical immunology [4]
- Find out more about the training you'll receive for a career in clinical immunology [5]

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Pay and conditions

Most jobs in the NHS are covered by the Agenda for Change (AfC) [6] pay scales. This pay system covers all staff except doctors, dentists and the most senior managers. Salaries for healthcare science staff working in clinical immunology will range from AfC [7] bands 5 to 9, depending on the role and level of responsibility. As a healthcare science practitioner, you'd usually start on band 5, with opportunities to progress to more senior positions. Trainee clinical scientists train at band 6 level, and qualified clinical scientists are generally appointed at band 7. With experience and further qualifications, including Higher Specialist Scientist Training [8], you could apply for posts up to band 9.

Staff in the NHS will usually work a standard 37.5 hours per week. They may work a shift pattern.

Terms and conditions of service can vary for employers outside the NHS.

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Where the role can lead

With further training and/or experience, you may be able to develop your career further in clinical immunology and apply for vacancies in areas such as further specialisation, management, research, or teaching.

Job market and vacancies

Job market information

The science of clinical immunology is a fast developing area of the NHS but there are only a few dedicated NHS immunology laboratories in each NHS region.

In November 2018, there were 6,123 clinical scientists registered with the Health and Care Professions Council [9].

The NHS Scientist Training Programme (STP) [10] and Higher Specialist Scientist Training (HSST) [8] attract many more applicants than there are places and so there is considerable competition for places.

Finding and applying for jobs

When you're looking for job or apprenticeship vacancies, there are a number of sources you can use, depending on the type of work you're seeking.

Check vacancies carefully to be sure you can meet the requirements of the person specification before applying and to find out what the application process is. You may need to apply online or send a CV for example.

For the NHS STP [10] and HSST [8], there is an annual recruitment cycle. Applications should be made through the National School for Healthcare Science website [11], where you can also find information about the programmes and the recruitment process.

Key sources relevant to vacancies in the health sector:

- Vacancies in organisations delivering NHS healthcare can be found on the NHS Jobs website [12]
- Opportunities in the Civil Service can be found on the Civil Service Jobs website [13]
- Vacancies in local government can be found on the Local Government Jobs website [14] and the Jobs Go Public website [15]

As well as these sources, you may find suitable vacancies in the health sector by contacting local employers directly, searching in local newspapers and by using the Universal Jobmatch tool [16].

Find out more about applications and interviews [17].

Volunteering is an excellent way of gaining experience (especially if you don't have enough for a specific paid job you're interested in) and also seeing whether you're suited to a particular type of work. It's also a great way to boost your confidence and you can give something back to the community.

Find out more about volunteering and gaining experience [18].

Further information

For further information about working and training for a career in clinical immunology, contact:

- Academy for Healthcare Science (AHCS) [19]
- The Association for Clinical Biochemistry (ACB) [20]
- Health and Care Professions Council [21]
- National School of Healthcare Science [11]
- UCAS [22]

Other roles that may interest you

- Biomedical science [23]
- Clinical biochemistry [24]
- Clinical bioinformatics health informatics [25]
- Cellular sciences [26]

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Links

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[2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/life-sciences/biomedical-science>
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[8] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/working-health/nhs-higher-specialist-scientific-training>
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