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Clinical pharmaceutical science

Clinical pharmaceutical science involves the manufacture and supply of radioactive substances used in the diagnosis and treatment of patients.

As a scientist in clinical pharmaceutical science, you'll be working directly with staff in nuclear medicine.



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Working life

You're likely to be based in the medical physics or radiology department of a hospital.

In this area of healthcare science, you'll work as a clinical scientist in four areas of technical pharmacy:

- aseptic dispensing and preparation - you'll be involved in the oversight and maintenance of the

facilities used to prepare sterile medicines

- production units - you'll be involved in the development of methods for the safe production of new medicines
- quality control - you'll undertake a range of chemical and microbiological tests on medicines to ensure that they are safe to use
- radiopharmacy - where you'll be involved in manufacturing and supplying radioactive substances used in nuclear medicine, which may be injected into the bloodstream, swallowed or breathed in. They are used to treat, diagnose and monitor the effects of therapies for cancer patients. They are also used for investigating various other medical conditions such as those affecting the heart, and kidney disease.

Working in clinical pharmaceutical science, you'll train in all four areas above, but once qualified will get a job that allows you to specialise in your area of interest.

Who will I work with?

You'll work as part of a team that will include other healthcare science staff working in medical physics [1] or cardiac sciences [2], radiologists [3], pharmacists [4], therapeutic radiographers [5] and specialist nurses [6].

Want to learn more?

- Find out more about the entry requirements, skills and interests required to enter a career in clinical pharmaceutical science [7]
- Find out more about the training you'll receive for a career in clinical pharmaceutical science [8]

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Pay and conditions

Most jobs in the NHS are covered by the Agenda for Change (AfC) [9] pay scales. This pay system covers all staff except doctors, dentists and the most senior managers. In clinical pharmaceutical science, trainee clinical scientists train at band 6 level, and qualified clinical scientists are generally appointed at band 7. With experience and further qualifications, you could apply for posts up to band 9.

Staff 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 or experience or both, you may be able to develop your career further and apply for vacancies in areas such as further specialisation, management, research, or teaching.

Healthcare science staff often work at the forefront of research and innovation, so that patients are continually receiving the very best healthcare. For example, in clinical pharmaceutical science,

healthcare science staff are involved in developing new radiopharmaceuticals in the treatment of Parkinson's disease.

Job market and vacancies

Job market

In November 2018, there were 6,123 clinical scientists registered with the Health and Care Professions Council [10].

The NHS Scientist Training Programme (STP) [11] attracts many more applicants than there are places and so there is considerable competition for places.

Finding and applying for jobs

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 STP [11], there is an annual recruitment cycle. Applications usually open in early January for the intake in the following autumn and should be made through the National School of Healthcare Science's website, [12] 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 [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 of 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 training and working in clinical pharmaceutical science, please contact:

- Academy for Healthcare Science [19]
- Health and Care Professions Council [20]
- National School of Healthcare Science [12]
- Pharmaceutical Aseptic Services Group [21]
- UK Radiopharmacy Group [22]

Other roles that may interest you

- Nuclear medicine (healthcare scientist) [23]
- Pharmacist [24]
- Diagnostic radiographer [25]
- Radiotherapy physics [26]

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Links

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/physical-sciences-and-biomechanical-engineering/clinical-technologist> [2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/physiological-sciences/cardiac-sciences> [3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/clinical-radiology> [4] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/pharmacy/pharmacist> [5] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/radiographer-therapeutic> [6] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing> [7] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/physical-sciences-and-biomechanical-engineering/clinical-pharmaceutical-science/entry> [8] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/physical-sciences-and-biomechanical-engineering/clinical-pharmaceutical-science/training> [9] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/careers-nhs/nhs-pay-and-benefits/agenda-change-pay-rates> [10] <http://www.hcpc-uk.org> [11] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/considering-or-university/not-studying-health-related-degree/nhs-scientist-training-programme> [12] <http://www.nshcs.hee.nhs.uk/> [13] <http://www.jobs.nhs.uk> [14] <http://www.lgjobs.com/> [15] <http://www.jobsgopublic.com/> [16] <https://www.gov.uk/jobsearch> [17] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/career-planning/offering-career-support/training-and-teaching-resources-young-people/application> [18] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/secondary-school-or-fe-college/gaining-experience> [19] <http://www.ahcs.ac.uk/> [20] <http://www.hcpc-uk.org/> [21] <http://www.civas.co.uk/> [22] <http://www.bnms.org.uk/ukrg/general/ukrg-homepage.html> [23] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/healthcare-science/roles-healthcare-science/physical-sciences-and-biomedical-engineering/nuclear-medicine-healthcare-scientist> [24] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/pharmacy/roles-pharmacy/pharmacist> [25] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/roles-allied-health-professions/roles-allied-health-professions/diagnostic-radiographer> [26] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/healthcare-science/roles-healthcare-science/physical-sciences-and-biomedical-engineering/radiotherapy-physics/radiotherapy-physics>