

## Working life (metabolic medicine)

This page provides useful information on the working week as well as any on-call and other commitments, along with information on who you will work with. The attractions and challenges of the job are also in this section.

“I chose [Metabolic](#) <sup>[1]</sup> Medicine because it combines laboratory science and patient care. I really enjoy seeing the whole pathway from specimen collection through to the results, their interpretation and the effect on the patient and their treatment. There is excellent opportunity for life long research and multidisciplinary team working. You are involved with all the specialities in the hospital and community; no day is the same.” **ST6 in [Metabolic](#) <sup>[1]</sup> Medicine at Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust.**

### How your time is spent

[Metabolic](#) <sup>[1]</sup> medicine is primarily an outpatient specialty, and there may be several outpatients' clinics to attend each week. Patients needing [bariatric surgery](#) <sup>[2]</sup> will be seen pre and post operatively, usually in the outpatients' clinic.

However, there can also be some inpatient care, for example when treating hospital patients who need nutritional support such as [parenteral nutrition](#) <sup>[3]</sup>.

A proportion of the working week is usually spent in the biochemistry laboratory, where you will often be managing the laboratory.

You will also probably spend part of your working week undertaking research, as this is an important aspect of [metabolic](#) <sup>[1]</sup> medicine. This will include contributing to academic papers and attending conferences. Teaching medical students and doctors may also be part of the role.

### [On call](#) <sup>[4]</sup> and working hours

Doctors in [metabolic](#) <sup>[1]</sup> medicine generally work from Monday to Friday, from around 8.30 am to 5.30 pm, although these hours can vary, with earlier starts and later finishes possible.

The [on call](#) <sup>[4]</sup> requirement in [metabolic](#) <sup>[1]</sup> medicine is low. [On call](#) <sup>[4]</sup> can include weekend working, since hospital laboratories continue to work over the weekend. However most [on call](#)

enquiries can be successfully dealt with over the telephone.

## Who will you work with?

**Metabolic** [1] medicine physicians work closely as part of large multidisciplinary teams that may include:

- dietitians [5]
- GPs [6]
- general surgeons [7]
- paediatrics [8]
- pharmacists [9]
- specialist nurses [10]
- laboratory staff
- hospital managers

## Attractions and challenges of the role

The opportunity to improve the lives of patients for suffering with **metabolic** [1] disorders is extremely rewarding. In the past untreated inherited **metabolic** [1] disorders caused an array of troubling symptoms which could include learning disability, whereas today these disorders can often be successfully treated enabling patients to lead a normal life.

Helping patients with other conditions such as obesity brings great reward, as they can also be helped to live a normal life after suffering with weight problems, often for many years.

The rapid growth of new technologies within hospital biochemistry laboratories in recent years is another attraction of the role. Developing new laboratory tests to aid diagnosis is another exciting part of the job. There are also excellent opportunities for research.

**Metabolic** [1] medicine involves contact with many different people in a hospital, both clinical, laboratory and managerial staff as well as patients.

The day time pattern of working in **metabolic** [1] medicine enables doctors in this specialty to enjoy a good work life balance, and is one of the many attractions of the role.

Balancing the different roles in the laboratory and in the clinical setting, alongside research and teaching can sometimes be a challenge. Effective time management is therefore vital.

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**Source URL:** <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/medicine/metabolic-medicine/working-life>

### **Links**

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- [3] [https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Parenteral\\_nutrition](https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Parenteral_nutrition)
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