

Compare roles in health

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• Ophthalmology ^[1]

Ophthalmologists are doctors who care for patients with eye conditions.

Training and qualifications required

Training usually starts with a five year first degree in medicine, MBBS. 2 years foundation doctor training, 7 years specialist training (ST1-7). This period of training will include your royal college exams. Length of training can vary according to your circumstances.

Expected working hours and salary range

Doctors may work up to 48 hours a week. The working hours may sometimes extend beyond the normal working day to include early mornings, evenings, weekends and on call. The basic salary ranges from £29,384 to £34,012. Once you start your specialty training as an ophthalmologist employed by the NHS, you can expect to earn a salary of at least £40,257, which can increase to between £84,559 and £114,003 as a consultant.

Desirable skills and values

You'll need excellent communication skills to manage a wide range of relationships with colleagues, and patients and their families. You'll be emotionally resilient, have excellent problem-solving and diagnostic skills and work well in teams and under pressure. You'll also be very organised for the benefit of patients. When performing surgery, you'll have: a high degree of manual dexterity; superb hand-eye co-ordination; excellent vision; visuospatial awareness and the physical stamina to cope with the demands of surgery.

Prospects

In 2020 there were 430 applications for 75 specialty training places (a competition ratio of 5.73). You could specialise or conduct research in areas such as eye development and diseases in children, retinal disease and its onset in patients with conditions like diabetes, or oculoplastic surgery (plastic surgery around the eye). You could teach medical or postgraduate students.

Related roles

- [Medical ophthalmology](#) [2]
- [Ophthalmic and vision science](#) [3]
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