

Working life (chemical pathology)

This page provides useful information about the roles and responsibilities of immunologists, where they work, who they work with and what they feel about their role.

"I have always enjoyed chemistry and [physiology](#) [1], and at work I enjoy the frequent interaction across many disciplines with other consultants or health carers, explaining the likely cause for abnormal results. With my own outpatients, I can utilise knowledge of pathophysiology to diagnose rare [metabolic](#) [2] conditions and implement appropriate treatment plans. The flexibility, combined with self-motivation, allows me to be involved in many aspects of the hospital."

Chemical pathologists are often the only specialist of their kind in most district general hospitals.

The job is very varied and interesting. Outpatient clinics and ward rounds seeing patients with [metabolic](#) [2] diseases are an important part of the working week. Around 50% of the time might be spent in outpatients' clinics, where chemical pathologists might work closely with other medical specialists such as endocrinologists.

A significant part of the week is also spent in the laboratory where chemical pathologists take up a management role supervising tests and colleagues.

There are usually several meetings to attend each week – team meetings with clinical scientist colleagues to discuss results, multidisciplinary team meetings and laboratory management meetings, perhaps to decide on the purchase of new testing equipment and the development of new tests.

Teaching medical students and trainees and research are also important aspects of the working week.

Chemical pathologists also participate in on-call rotas, although the requirement for out of hours working is less than in certain other medical specialties. On-call duties are often managed from home.

The EU [Working Time Directive](#) [3] limits the working week to 48 hours. It is also possible to work part-time once you are consultant or to train on a [less than full-time basis](#). [4]

- Who you will work with?

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Who chemical pathologists work with?

Chemical pathologists work as a part of a large multidisciplinary team.

They work with:

- biomedical scientists
- clinical scientists
- clinical geneticists
- microbiologists and virologists
- GPs and other doctors
- infection control nurses
- infectious diseases doctors
- secretaries and administrative staff
- Attractions and challenges of the role

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Chemical pathologists work across the medical spectrum and disciplines, making the role extremely varied and interesting. There is also the opportunity to make a real difference to people's lives. Before the role amino acids play in the disease PKU was known, patients suffered debilitating brain damage and learning disabilities. Developments in chemical pathology have transformed this condition, meaning those affected lead a normal life, providing they are diagnosed early enough.

Although based in a laboratory chemical pathologists have direct contact with patients, and there is often the opportunity for long-term follow-up of patients in the outpatient clinic. This helps to make the job very rewarding and varied.

Chemical pathologists are often the only specialist of their kind in most district general hospitals, and whilst self-motivation is important, there are always colleagues in the hospital and beyond to liaise with

Source URL: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/pathology/chemical-pathology/working-life>

Links

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Physiology>

[2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Metabolic>

[3] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Working_Time_Directive

[4] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/working-health/information-doctors/less-full-time-training-doctors>