

Career opportunities for doctors

Being a doctor offers a lifelong and rewarding career with varied opportunities along the way.

As well as [the many specialties](#) ^[1] to choose from, there are other exciting career options open to you too.

You'll have opportunities as part of your specialty training programme, as a consultant, or outside of your training programme or clinical practice altogether.

Ciara Deall

Core surgery trainee

The idea of experiencing a novel healthcare system elsewhere in the world appealed to me.

[Read Ciara's story](#) ^[2]

Having flexibility and support during your working life is essential to all doctors at one stage or another, so take a look at the boxes below for ideas.

- **Clinical academic careers**

Clinical academics are doctors who combine working as a specialist doctor with research and/or teaching responsibilities.

Your role may be split 50/50 meaning half the week practising as a doctor and the other half carrying out research and lecturing. A clinical academic career can also provide flexibility and variety and will suit you if you have a passion for innovation, developing the future workforce and strengthening evidence-based practice.

Clinical academics exist in all medical specialities from anaesthetics to [epidemiology](#) [3], and from surgery to public health.

If you choose a clinical academic career, you'll make a vital contribution at every research stage - from early biomedical research understanding disease pathways, through to drug development and personalised medicine.

The [Clinical Academic Training and Career Hub \(CATCH\)](#) [4] website showcases and promotes options, as well as providing practical advice on starting a career in clinical academia.

- **Locum work**

Locum work may be for you if you want some temporary work for a period of time or a very flexible work pattern.

The main ways of finding locum work are via the [NHS Jobs website](#) [5], [NHS Professionals](#) [6] (staff bank) or through locum agencies.

- **SAS doctors**

If you have at least four years of experience in a specialty but don't feel the the role of consultant is for you then you may want to explore the SAS doctor career pathway. We have lots of [information](#) [7] about how to become a SAS doctor and the career progression opportunities available.

- **Locally employed doctors (LEDs)**

If you are new to the NHS or want a more flexible pathway while still being a valued member of the NHS workforce, you may want to consider becoming a locally employed doctor (LED). As an LED you'd be employed by an NHS trust on a locally agreed contract.

LEDs are employed in many different specialties. Job titles used for these posts include trust grade, trust doctor, clinical fellow, research fellow and FY3. You can read more on the [NHS Employers](#) [8] website and find vacancies on [NHS Jobs](#) [9].

- **Less than full time training**

You may want to consider completing your training on a less than full time (LTFT) basis to give you more flexibility. You no longer need to meet specific criteria (such as caring responsibilities) to be able to train LTFT.

Find out more ^[10] about this and videos and information about the LTFT application process.

You can also find information about LTFT on the BMA website ^[11].

• **Where your career in medicine could take you**

There are many jobs where a medical degree and clinical training or experience are valued.

Your skills will be highly transferrable to a variety of professions/sectors including:

- the civil service
- the Defence Medical Services
- law
- expedition medicine
- medical communications and journalism
- management
- pharmaceutical medicine
- medical politics and ethics
- prison health service

• **Medical experience abroad**

If you want to take your skills abroad, either in a voluntary or paid capacity, there are many options open to you both during and after training. Depending on when you are planning to go, you will need to discuss your plans with one or more of the following:

- your foundation school programme director
- your clinical tutor or director of medical education
- your head of school
- an appropriate royal college
- the GMC

Further information, advice and guidance is available from the BMA ^[12] and GMC ^[13] and in The Gold Guide ^[14].

Links

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors> [2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/career-opportunities-doctors/real-life-story-f2-australia> [3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Epidemiology> [4] <https://www.catch.ac.uk/> [5] <https://www.jobs.nhs.uk/> [6] <https://www.nhsprofessionals.nhs.uk/> [7] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/career-opportunities-doctors/sas-doctors/sas-doctors> [8] <https://www.nhsemployers.org/articles/locally-employed-doctors-leds> [9] <https://www.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate> [10] <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/doctors-training/delivering-greater-flexibility> [11] <https://www.bma.org.uk/advice-and-support/career-progression/training/flexible-training> [12] <https://www.bma.org.uk/advice-and-support/career-progression/working-abroad/working-abroad-as-a-doctor> [13] <https://www.gmc-uk.org/registration-and-licensing/managing-your-registration/information-for-doctors-on-the-register> [14] <https://www.copmed.org.uk/gold-guide/gold-guide-9th-edition>