

# Training and development (general surgery)

This page provides useful information on the training and development for this specialty and also has tips for people at all stages of their career including medical school.

## Core surgical training

Core surgical training (CT1-2) lasts two years and provides training in a hospital in a range of surgical specialties. During the first two years of your training you must take the examination to give you membership of the Royal College of Surgeons (MRCS).

## ST3 specialty general surgical training

ST3 specialty surgical training (ST3-8) lasts six years. Following successful completion of your core surgical training it is necessary to apply competitively for this next phase of your training (ST3). During higher training you must take examinations leading to fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons (FRCS).

The NHS person specification states that applicants with prior surgical experience are more likely to be offered a training place at ST3 than those applying from core training. Competition for posts at ST3 level is stiff. In 2011 there were 548 applications for 114 places, with a [competition ratio](#) <sup>[1]</sup> of 4.8:1.

The [Oriol](#) <sup>[2]</sup> website has detailed information on entry requirements, including the person specifications for ST1 in core surgical training and ST3 in general surgery. Further information on specialty training <sup>[3]</sup>.

At ST3 level you will need at least 24 months' experience in surgery (not including foundation modules). At least 12 months of this experience must have been in [elective](#) <sup>[4]</sup> general surgery and at least 12 months on-call for emergency general surgery. This experience can be gained in any country. Some candidates gain this experience by working as a Locum Appointed for Training (LAT) or Locum Appointed for Service (LAS) after their core training and before applying for ST3.

Completion of other training courses such as Advanced Trauma Life Support (ATLS), Basic Surgical Skills and Care of the Critically Ill Surgical Patient (CCrISP) is essential for your application for specialist general surgery training at ST3 level.

During your ST3-8 training you will be employed as a Specialty Trainee. At the end of this training you can then apply for consultant posts. However, before you can do this you must

pass the Intercollegiate Specialty Examination (FRCS (SN)). You also need a portfolio of experience which includes formal teaching, leadership, management, research and audit. Once you have passed this you will receive a [Certificate of Completion of Training](#) <sup>[5]</sup> (CCT <sup>[6]</sup>) and you will be eligible to be on the GMC Specialist Register.

Selection panels also look for evidence of academic and research achievements, such as degrees, prizes, awards, distinctions, publications and presentations. An understanding of research, audit and teaching is also important. Entry is highly competitive so you will need achievements that are relevant to general surgery. Completion of an [elective](#) <sup>[4]</sup> in general surgery will demonstrate your commitment to the selection panel.

## Getting in tips

It is important to develop your practical skills and interest in surgery as early as you can. This will also give you valuable experience to add to your CV.

The Oriel website <sup>[2]</sup> has detailed information on entry requirements, including the person specifications for ST3 in general surgery.

BMJ Careers website has two useful articles: “How to obtain an ST3 post in general surgery and vascular surgery <sup>[7]</sup>” and “How to succeed in ST3 general surgery national recruitment <sup>[8]</sup>”

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### Tips for medical students

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- join your university surgical society
- attend conferences on surgery for medical students – this will give you an opportunity to network and meet your future colleagues
- undertake a special study module or project in surgery/general surgery and choose an [elective](#) <sup>[4]</sup> in surgery/general surgery
- become an Affiliate of the Royal College of Surgeons <sup>[9]</sup> and the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh <sup>[10]</sup>

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### Tips for foundation trainees

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- make contact with general surgeons in your hospital - offer to help in any way, eg with research projects or audit

- attend courses such as those offered by the Royal College of Surgeons [9] and the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh [10] – topics include surgical skills, interview skills for core surgical training and career-planning
- ensure your e-portfolio has plenty of surgery evidence and that this is kept properly up-to-date
- try to gain teaching and management experience.

### **Tips for core and specialist trainees**

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- study for the examinations for the membership of your chosen Royal College
- continue to develop your practical and academic expertise
- undertake a research project
- try to get some of your work published and present at national and international meetings
- join or start a Journal Club (a group who meet to critically evaluate academic research)
- join the British Association of Surgeons of Great Britain and Ireland [11] and other general surgery specialty associations
- teach junior colleagues
- take on any management opportunities you are offered

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**Source URL:** <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/surgery/general-surgery/training-and-development>

#### **Links**

- [1] [https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Competition\\_ratio](https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Competition_ratio)
- [2] <http://www.oriel.nhs.uk>
- [3] <http://specialtytraining.hee.nhs.uk>
- [4] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Elective>
- [5] [https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Certificate\\_of\\_completion\\_of\\_training](https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Certificate_of_completion_of_training)
- [6] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#CCT>
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