

# Anaesthesia

Anaesthetists are the largest group of hospital-based specialists and give anaesthetics for surgical, medical and psychiatric procedures.

They facilitate pain-free childbirth, resuscitate acutely unwell patients, run chronic pain services and lead intensive care [1] units.

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## Life as an anaesthetist

It's your responsibility to choose the appropriate anaesthetic for your patient. Typically, you'll offer four stages of patient care for a routine anaesthetic:

- preparation – you'll assess your patient's fitness for anaesthesia and agree on an anaesthetic plan
- induction – you'll initiate the anaesthesia
- maintenance – you'll continue the anaesthesia while monitoring your patient's condition, including checking the activity of the heart, blood pressure, oxygen and carbon dioxide levels, breathing, body temperature, depth of anaesthesia and the body fluid balance
- recovery – you'll reverse the anaesthesia and support the patient's recovery

Most of your time will be spent in operating theatres, but anaesthetists perform numerous roles in many different areas of a hospital. On any given day, you'll facilitate pain free childbirth, resuscitate acutely unwell patients, run chronic pain services and lead intensive care [1] units.

You can expect to work in areas such as:

- obstetric units
- critical care services for intensive care [1] and high dependency patients
- resuscitation services
- emergency departments
- chronic pain management
- acute pain teams
- dentistry
- perioperative [4] clinics
- research
- psychiatry – for patients receiving electro-convulsive therapy [5] (ECT)

- radiology – anaesthesia for CT scans [6] and MRI [7], especially in children
- inter-hospital transfers of critically ill patients

You'll also work closely with patients, understanding their condition and treatment. It's your responsibility to care for a patient for the duration of their operation. Being prepared for the unexpected can be exciting but also challenging at times.

## **Dr Sarah Plummer**

### **Consultant anaesthetist**

Seeing patients wake up safely and with good pain relief after any surgery always makes my job worthwhile.

Read Sarah's story. [8]

## **How much can I earn?**

You'll first earn a salary when you start your foundation training [9] after medical school. The basic salary ranges from £32,398 to £37,303. Once you start your specialty training in the NHS, you can expect to earn a salary of at least £43,923, which can increase to between £93,666 and £126,281 as a consultant.

## **How about the benefits?**

- make a difference
- flexible and part-time working
- high income early in your career
- work anywhere in the world
- excellent pension scheme
- good holiday entitlement
- NHS discounts in shops and restaurants

## **Must-have skills**

- excellent communication skills to manage a wide range of relationships with colleagues, and patients and their families
- emotional resilience, a calm temperament and the ability to work well under pressure
- teamwork and the capacity to lead multidisciplinary teams
- problem-solving and diagnostic skills
- outstanding organisational ability and effective decision-making skills
- first-class time and resource management for the benefit of patients

## **Entry requirements**

Your first step is medical school. Typically, you'll need excellent GCSEs and three A or A\* passes at A level including chemistry for a five-year undergraduate degree in medicine. Many medical schools also ask for biology and others may require maths or physics.

If you already have a degree, you could study for a four-year postgraduate degree in medicine.

You'll need to pass an interview and admissions test. You'll be asked to show how you demonstrate the NHS values such as compassion and respect.

Some medical schools look to recruit a mix of students from different backgrounds and geographical areas, so your educational and economic background and family circumstances could be considered as part of your application.

## What are my chances of starting a career as an anaesthetist?

In 2020, there were 1,479 applications for 569 places for anaesthetic specialty training.

## How to become an anaesthetist

- After medical school, you'll join the paid two-year foundation [10] programme [10] where you'll work in six placements in different settings.?
- After your foundation programme, you can apply for paid specialty training [11] to become an anaesthetist which will take a minimum of 7 or 8 years.
- You may be able to train part time, for example for health reasons or if you have family or caring responsibilities.

## Where a career as an anaesthetist can take you

You could:

- specialise or conduct research in areas such as pain medicine
- teach medical students or postgraduate students in training
- get involved in research at universities, the NHS or private sector?

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## Medicine

King's College London, University of London

View course [12] Opens in a new window

- Qualification
  - Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery - MB BS
- Study mode
  - Full-time
- Duration of the course
  - 5 Years
- Leading to a career in
  - Medicine
- Contact details
  - +44 (0) 207 848 7000
- Region
  - London
- Admissions address
  - Strand
  - London
  - WC2R 2LS
  - United Kingdom

## Extended Medical Degree Programme

King's College London, University of London

View course [13] Opens in a new window

- Qualification
  - Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery - MB BS
- Study mode
  - Full-time
- Duration of the course
  - 6 Years
- Leading to a career in
  - Medicine
- Contact details
  - +44 (0) 207 848 7000
- Region
  - London
- Admissions address
  - Strand
  - London
  - WC2R 2LS

United Kingdom

## Medicine Graduate/Professional Entry Programme

King's College London, University of London

View course [14] Opens in a new window

- Qualification
  - Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery - MB BS
- Study mode
  - Full-time
- Duration of the course
  - 4 Years
- Leading to a career in
  - Medicine
- Contact details
  - +44 (0) 207 848 7000
- Region
  - London
- Admissions address
  - Strand
  - London
  - WC2R 2LS
  - United Kingdom

## Medicine

University of Manchester

View course [15] Opens in a new window

- Qualification
  - Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery - MB ChB
- Study mode
  - Full-time
- Duration of the course
  - 5 Years
- Leading to a career in
  - Medicine
- Contact details
  - study@manchester.ac.uk [16]
  - +44 (0)161 275 2077
- Region
  - North West
- Admissions address
  - University Recruitment And Adm
  - Oxford Road
  - Manchester
  - M13 9PL
  - United Kingdom

# Graduate Entry Medicine

University of Sheffield

View course [17] Opens in a new window

- Qualification
  - Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery - MB ChB
- Study mode
  - Full-time
- Duration of the course
  - 4 Years
- Leading to a career in
  - Medicine
- Region
  - Yorkshire and The Humber
- Admissions address
  - Western Bank
  - Sheffield
  - S10 2TN
  - England
- Load more Load more results [18]

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### Anaesthetist

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Leeds, LS7 4AB  
Hove, BN3 3LN  
Maidstone, ME14 1RU  
Oxford, OX3 8RZ  
London, W1T 5BE  
London, W5 5BJ  
London, SW2 1AB  
Buckhurst Hill, IG9 5QB  
Sheffield, S2 3TA

Salary:

£1250.00

Type:

Bank  
Employer:  
MSI Reproductive Choices  
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Anaesthetist job (opens in a new window) [19]

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### **Anaesthetist**

Middlesbrough, TS5 7DX

Salary:  
£100000.00 to £110000.00

Type:  
Permanent

Employer:  
Ramsay Health Care UK Operations Limited  
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Anaesthetist job (opens in a new window) [20]

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### **Consultant Anaesthetist**

Whitehaven, CA28 8JG

Salary:  
£93666.00 to £126281.00

Type:  
Permanent

Employer:  
North Cumbria Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust  
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Anaesthetist job (opens in a new window) [21]

○

### **Consultant Anaesthetist**

Kingston-upon-Thames, KT2 7QB

Salary:  
£93666.00 to £126281.00

Type:  
Permanent

Employer:  
Kingston Hospital NHS Foundation Trust  
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Anaesthetist job (opens in a new window) [22]

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### **Anaesthetist - Consultant**

Great Yarmouth, Cambridge, Norfolk, NR31 6RT

Salary:  
£1650.00

Type:  
Locum

Employer:  
Partnering Health Ltd  
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Anaesthetist - Consultant job (opens in a new window) [23]

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### **Consultant Anaesthetist**

Ormskirk, L39 2AZ

Salary:

£93666.00 to £126281.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Mersey and West Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Anaesthetist job \(opens in a new window\)](#) [24]

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### **Consultant Anaesthetist**

Huddersfield, HD3 3EA

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Anaesthetist job \(opens in a new window\)](#) [25]

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### **Consultant Anaesthetist**

Southampton, SO16 6YD

Salary:

£93666.00 to £126281.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

University Hospital Southampton NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Anaesthetist job \(opens in a new window\)](#) [26]

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### **Consultant Anaesthetist**

East Grinstead, RH19 3DZ

Salary:

£93666.00 to £126281.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Queen Victoria Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Anaesthetist job \(opens in a new window\)](#) [27]

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### **Consultant Anaesthetist**

Gillingham, ME5 5NY

Salary:

£93666.00 to £126281.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Medway NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Anaesthetist job (opens in a new window) [28]

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### **Consultant Anaesthetist**

Nottingham, NG7 2UH

Salary:

£93666.00 to £126281.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trusts

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Anaesthetist job (opens in a new window) [29]

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### **Consultant Anaesthetist**

Crewe, CW1 4QJ

Salary:

£93666.00 to £126281.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Anaesthetist job (opens in a new window) [30]

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### **Consultant General Anaesthetist**

Stockton-on-Tees, TS19 8PE

Salary:

£93666.00 to £126281.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

North Tees & Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant General Anaesthetist job (opens in a new window) [31]

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### **Consultant General Anaesthetist**

Barnstaple, EX31 4JB

Salary:

£93666.00 to £126281.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant General Anaesthetist job (opens in a new window) [32]

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### **Locum Consultant Anaesthetist**

London, E1 1FR

Salary:

£93666.00 to £126281.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Barts Health NHS Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant Anaesthetist job (opens in a new window) [33]

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### **Consultant General Anaesthetist**

Great Yarmouth, NR31 6LA

Salary:

£93666.00 to £126281.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

James Paget University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant General Anaesthetist job (opens in a new window) [34]

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### **Consultant Paediatric Anaesthetist**

Brighton, BN2 5BE

Salary:

£93666.00 to £126281.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust (279)

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Paediatric Anaesthetist job (opens in a new window) [35]

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### **Consultant Anaesthetist – Obstetric Anaesthesia**

Nottingham, NG7 2UH

Salary:

£93666.00 to £126281.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trusts

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Anaesthetist – Obstetric Anaesthesia job (opens in a new window) [36]

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### **Substantive Consultant Anaesthetist WM site**

Isleworth, TW7 6AF

Salary:

£93666.00 to £126281.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Chelsea and Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Substantive Consultant Anaesthetist WM site job (opens in a new window) [37]

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### **Locum Consultant Anaesthetist in Neuro ICU**

Southampton, SO16 6YD

Salary:

£93666.00 to £126281.00

Type:

Locum

Employer:

University Hospital Southampton NHS Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant Anaesthetist in Neuro ICU job (opens in a new window) [38]

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### **Consultant Anaesthetist with interest in Paediatrics**

Plymouth, PL6 8DH

Salary:

£99532.00 to £131964.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Anaesthetist with interest in Paediatrics job (opens in a new window) [39]

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### **Consultant Anaesthetist with special interest in Liver Transplant**

London, SE5 9RS

Salary:

£93666.00 to £126281.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Anaesthetist with special interest in Liver Transplant job (opens in a new window) [40]

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### **Consultant Anaesthetist with an interest in Robotic General Surgery**

Wolverhampton, WV10 0QP

Salary:

£93666.00 to £126281.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Anaesthetist with an interest in Robotic General Surgery job (opens in a new window) [41]

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### **Consultant Anaesthetist with a Special Interest in Pain Management**

Stockton-on-Tees, TS19 8PE

Salary:

£93666.00 to £126281.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

North Tees & Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Anaesthetist with a Special Interest in Pain Management job (opens in a new window) [42]

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## **Further information**

These organisations have further information about being an anaesthetist, particularly as your career progresses. Take a look.

The Royal College of Anaesthetists [43]

The Association of Anaesthetists of Great Britain and Ireland [44]

Association of Cardiothoracic Anaesthetists [45]

The National Institute of Academic Anaesthesia [46]

And hear from people already working as an anaesthetist:

Starting in anaesthetics (BMJ) [47]

The secret life of an anaesthetist (The Guardian) [48]

About anaesthesia (HEWM) [49]

Dr Zulfi Sadiq, anaesthesia (HEEM) [50]

## Other roles that may interest you

- Emergency medicine [51]
- Acute internal medicine [52]
- General surgery [53]
- General practitioner [54]

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**Source URL:**<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/anaesthesia?page=2>

### Links

- [1] [https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Intensive\\_care](https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Intensive_care)  
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[3] <https://www.youtube.com/NHSCareers> [4] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Perioperative>  
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[49] <http://www.westmidlandsdeanery.nhs.uk/SpecialtySchools/PostgraduateSchoolofACE/Anaesthesia.aspx>  
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