

# 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](#) <sup>[1]</sup> 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](#) <sup>[1]</sup> units.

You can expect to work in areas such as:

- obstetric units
- critical care services for [intensive care](#) <sup>[1]</sup> and high dependency patients
- resuscitation services
- emergency departments
- chronic pain management

- acute pain teams
- dentistry
- perioperative <sup>[4]</sup> clinics
- research
- psychiatry – for patients receiving electro-convulsive therapy <sup>[5]</sup> (ECT)
- radiology – anaesthesia for CT scans <sup>[6]</sup> and MRI <sup>[7]</sup>, 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.](#) <sup>[8]</sup>

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## How much can I earn?

You'll first earn a salary when you start your foundation training <sup>[9]</sup> after medical school. Find out details of current salary ranges for foundation and specialty training, [SAS doctors](#) <sup>[10]</sup> and consultants on the '[Pay for doctors](#)' <sup>[11]</sup> page.

## 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 programme](#)<sup>[12]</sup> where you'll work in six placements in different settings.?
- After your foundation programme, you can apply for paid [specialty training](#)<sup>[13]</sup> 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?

## • Find your degree in medicine

Region

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Type of qualification

- Any - ▼

Full or part time

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## Medicine

King's College London, University of London

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- 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

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- Qualification
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- 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  
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United Kingdom

## Medicine Graduate/Professional Entry Programme

King's College London, University of London

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- Qualification  
Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery - MB BS  
Study mode  
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Duration of the course  
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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

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- 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](mailto:study@manchester.ac.uk) <sup>[18]</sup>  
+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](#) <sup>[19]</sup> 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
- Contact details  
[study@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:study@sheffield.ac.uk) <sup>[20]</sup>
- Region  
Yorkshire and The Humber
- Admissions address  
Western Bank  
Sheffield  
S10 2TN  
England
- [Load more](#) [Load more results](#) <sup>[21]</sup>

### • Live vacancies

## Find a vacancy

Enter your location or postcode

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- **Anaesthetist**

Milton Keynes, MK14 5HR

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Ramsay Health Care UK Operations Limited

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Anaesthetist job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[22]</sup>

- **Consultant Anaesthetist**

Birmingham, B152QD

Salary:

£130000.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Practice Plus Group

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

<sup>[23]</sup>

- **Consultant Anaesthetist**

Whitehaven, CA28 8JG

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

North Cumbria Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust

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

<sup>[24]</sup>

- **Consultant Anaesthetist**

Chesterfield, S43 4XE

Salary:

£118668.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Practice Plus Group

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

<sup>[25]</sup>

- **Consultant Anaesthetist**

Chichester, PO19 6SE

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust (279)

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[26]

- **Consultant Anaesthetist**

Sheffield, S11 8UX

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

One Health Group

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[27]

- **Consultant Anaesthetist**

Shepton Mallet, BA4 4LP

Salary:

£99275.00 to £147700.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Practice Plus Group

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[28]

- **Consultant Anaesthetist**

Whitehaven, CA28 8JG

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

North Cumbria Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust



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[29]

- **Consultant Anaesthetist**

Exeter, EX2 5DW

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

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[30]

- **Consultant Regional Anaesthetist**

Wolverhampton, WV10 0QP

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust

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

- **Paediatric Consultant Anaesthetist**

Plymouth, PL6 8DH

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust

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

- **Locum Consultant Anaesthetist**

Manchester, M20 4BX

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

The Christie NHS FT

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant Anaesthetist job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[33]</sup>

- **Consultant Regional Anaesthetist**

Wolverhampton, WV10 0QP

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Regional Anaesthetist job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[34]</sup>

- **Consultant Obstetric Anaesthetist**

Wolverhampton, WV10 0QP

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Obstetric Anaesthetist job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[35]</sup>

- **Consultant Paediatric Anaesthetist**

Nottingham, NG7 2UH

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trusts

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Paediatric Anaesthetist job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[36]</sup>

- **Part Time Consultant Anaesthetist**

Birmingham, B152QD

Salary:

£130000.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Practice Plus Group

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Part Time Consultant Anaesthetist job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[37]</sup>

- **Consultant Anaesthetist and ICM**

Wolverhampton, WV10 0QP

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Anaesthetist and ICM job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[38]</sup>

- **Consultant Anaesthetist (Major General)**

Portsmouth, PO6 3LY

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Portsmouth Hospitals University NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Anaesthetist \(Major General\) job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[39]</sup>

- **Trust Locum Consultant Anaesthetist**

Eastbourne, BN21 2UD

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Trust Locum Consultant Anaesthetist job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[40]</sup>

- **Consultant Anaesthetist (Regional and Ortho)**

Portsmouth, PO6 3LY

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Portsmouth Hospitals University NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Anaesthetist \(Regional and Ortho\) job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[41]</sup>

- **Consultant Anaesthetist - Peri-op Generalist**

Portsmouth, PO6 3LY

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Portsmouth Hospitals University NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Anaesthetist - Peri-op Generalist job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[42]</sup>

- **Locum Consultant Anaesthetist in Paediatric Anaesthesia**

London, E1 1FR

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Locum

Employer:

Barts Health NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant Anaesthetist in Paediatric Anaesthesia job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[43]</sup>

- **Consultant Anaesthetist with interest in Critical Care Medicine**

Northampton, NN1 5BD

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Northampton General Hospital

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Anaesthetist with interest in Critical Care Medicine job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[44]</sup>

- **Consultant Anaesthetist with an Interest in Obstetric Anaesthesia**

Telford, TF1 6TF

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Anaesthetist with an Interest in Obstetric Anaesthesia job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[45]</sup>

## • Further information

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

[The Royal College of Anaesthetists](#) <sup>[46]</sup>

[The Association of Anaesthetists of Great Britain and Ireland](#) <sup>[47]</sup>

[Association of Cardiothoracic Anaesthetists](#) <sup>[48]</sup>

[The National Institute of Academic Anaesthesia](#) <sup>[49]</sup>

And hear from people already working as an anaesthetist:

[Starting in anaesthetics \(BMJ\)](#) <sup>[50]</sup>

[The secret life of an anaesthetist \(The Guardian\)](#) <sup>[51]</sup>

[About anaesthesia \(HEWM\)](#) <sup>[52]</sup>

[Dr Zulfi Sadiq, anaesthesia \(HEEM\)](#) <sup>[53]</sup>

## Other roles that may interest you

- [Emergency medicine](#) <sup>[54]</sup>
- [Acute internal medicine](#) <sup>[55]</sup>
- [General surgery](#) <sup>[56]</sup>
- [General practitioner](#) <sup>[57]</sup>

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### Links

<sup>[1]</sup> [https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Intensive\\_care](https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Intensive_care) <sup>[2]</sup>

<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/privacy-and-cookies/#CookieDeclarationChangeConsentChange> <sup>[3]</sup>

<https://www.youtube.com/NHSCareers> <sup>[4]</sup> <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Perioperative> <sup>[5]</sup>

[https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Electro-convulsive\\_therapy](https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Electro-convulsive_therapy) <sup>[6]</sup>

[https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#CT\\_scans](https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#CT_scans) [7] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#MRI> [8] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/anaesthesia/real-life-story-dr-sarah-plummer/real-life-story-dr-sarah-plummer> [9] [https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Foundation\\_training](https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Foundation_training) [10] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/career-opportunities-doctors/sas-doctors> [11] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/pay-doctors> [12] <https://foundationprogramme.nhs.uk/> [13] <https://specialtytraining.hee.nhs.uk/> [14] <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/courses/medicine-mbbs.aspx> [15] <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/courses/extended-medical-degree-programme-mbbs.aspx> [16] <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/courses/medicine-graduate-professional-entry-mbbs.aspx> [17] <https://www.manchester.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/courses/2022/01428/mbchb-medicine/#course-profile> [18] [mailto: study@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:study@manchester.ac.uk) [19] <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/undergraduate/courses/2024/graduate-entry-medicine-mbchb> [20] [mailto: study@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:study@sheffield.ac.uk) [21] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/printpdf/756?page=3> [22] <https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/E0365-25-0391> [23] <https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/E0314-24-4831> [24] <https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9262-25-0569> [25] <https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/E0314-25-2583> [26] <https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9279-25-1169> [27] <https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/B0103-25-0030> [28] <https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/E0314-25-2218> [29] <https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9262-25-0825> [30] <https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C0023-25-1210> [31] <https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9225-25-0272> [32] <https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9216-25-0757> [33] <https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9413-25-0418> [34] <https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9225-25-0270> [35] <https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9225-25-0273> [36] <https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9164-25-1329> [37] <https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/E0314-25-2395> [38] <https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9225-25-0285> [39] <https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C8192-25-0359> [40] <https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9374-25-0651> [41] <https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C8192-25-0358> [42] <https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C8192-25-0356> [43] <https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9259-25-1538> [44] <https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9265-25-0288> [45] <https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9223-25-0547> [46] <http://www.rcoa.ac.uk/careers-training> [47] <http://www.aagbi.org/> [48] <http://www.acta.org.uk/home/welcome.asp> [49] <http://www.niaa.org.uk/> [50] <http://careers.bmj.com/careers/advice/view-article.html?id=2239> [51] [https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/sep/12/secret-life-anaesthetist-surgery-doctor?CMP=tw\\_t\\_gu](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/sep/12/secret-life-anaesthetist-surgery-doctor?CMP=tw_t_gu) [52] <http://www.westmidlandsdeanery.nhs.uk/SpecialtySchools/PostgraduateSchoolofACE/Anaesthesia.aspx> [53] [https://www.eastmidlandsdeanery.nhs.uk/video\\_popup.php?videoUrl=media/webcasts\\_nov09/anaesth&autoPlay](https://www.eastmidlandsdeanery.nhs.uk/video_popup.php?videoUrl=media/webcasts_nov09/anaesth&autoPlay) [54] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/emergency-medicine> [55] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/medicine/acute-internal-medicine> [56] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/surgery/general-surgery> [57] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/general-practitioner>