

## Working life (dermatology)

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

“Dermatology is a fascinating specialty which offers an interesting and varied clinical career in combination with a balanced and flexible working life, traits difficult to match in other medical specialties. One of the major plus points of the specialty for me is that I get to do some skin surgery which satisfies the practical and artistic sides of my personality.” **Specialty Registrar.**

### How your time is spent

A typical day would involve outpatient clinic, followed by ward visits, further outpatient clinics or surgical list. Every clinic is different, and the many different types of skin disease ensure a diverse working life! Dermatology is predominantly an outpatient specialty but includes inpatient work for patients with severe inflammatory disorders. A typical day starts with an outpatient clinic, followed by ward visits and further outpatient clinics or surgical list. Most dermatologists have at least one theatre list per week.

Less than whole-time working is common in this specialty with just over a half of women consultants in dermatology doing so.

Around 15% of consultants say they are routinely on call [1] at weekends.

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Who you will work with?

Dermatologists work alongside:

- other dermatologist colleagues
- specialist dermatology nurses (see the website of The British Dermatological Nursing Group [2])
- medical secretaries and administrative staff

They also work closely with:

- other specialists whose patients have skin disease and sometimes manage those patients jointly, eg for patients with skin cancer, they work closely with colleagues in plastic, ENT and maxillofacial surgery and clinical and medical oncology [3]

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Attractions and challenges of the role

Dermatology is a unique specialty, as the skin is an organ system which not only plays a critical functional role in physical health, but also has a significant social and psychological impact. It is on view and plays a large part in how one is perceived by others. It is therefore intricately linked to self-esteem, emotional well-being and social interaction.

Dermatologists have a varied working life, and although specialists see much chronic disease, many conditions are curable and most are at least treatable. Being a medium-sized specialty, it encourages a friendly community who meet regularly at educational events. Dermatology outpatient clinics are typically very busy with a fast pace of work which requires quick decision-making skills and the ability to perform under pressure. The relationship with patients is immensely rewarding especially when treatments have a significant positive impact on life-impacting chronic diseases and make a difference to their quality of life. Breaking bad news can be challenging but is a learned skill which can also be very rewarding when done well.

It can be challenging to raise the profile of dermatology in the hospital environment and to have to stay within budget.

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**Source URL:** <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/medicine/dermatology/working-life>

#### **Links**

[1] [https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#On\\_call](https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#On_call)

[2] <http://www.bdng.org.uk/about/>

[3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Oncology>