

# Haematology & haemostasis and blood transfusion

Join the team and  
make a difference

**Haematology is the area of pathology that investigates disorders of blood and blood-forming tissues. It is divided into three main sections: haematology, haemostasis and blood transfusion.**

## What will you do?

As a healthcare scientist in **haematology**, you will study blood samples to identify any abnormalities. Accuracy in your work is vital as lives depend on your skills. You will report on your findings to help doctors diagnose and effectively manage conditions. First, you will screen the blood to determine if there are abnormalities of the blood cells. Then, depending on the results, you might need to analyse specifics. For example, if the initial test confirmed a patient had anaemia then you would need to confirm the type and cause of the anaemia, or if the screening revealed leukaemia you would need to pinpoint which type of blood cell is abnormal. Your test results will help doctors select and target treatment.

**Haemostasis** focuses on the investigation of patients who bleed or bruise easily or who are at risk of blood clots (thrombosis) and the monitoring of their treatment. Again, the blood is screened for abnormalities, then specifically analysed to identify cause and type of disorder, for example, in the case of bleeding, the presence of haemophilia.

Another area you can specialise in is **blood transfusion**. Accident and emergency departments and operating theatres rely on healthcare scientists to accurately test and select the right blood for patients. Blood



may be needed at very short notice if a patient is admitted with a serious injury and has lost a lot of blood. You might also need to be on hand if an inpatient suddenly needs an operation.

Within all areas of haematology, sophisticated automated analytical equipment is used, although it is still vital to understand the science behind the techniques and why they are being used. Your work will also involve some manual testing – for example, using microscopes to examine samples.

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Although you can work across all these areas, most healthcare scientists will specialise in one of the areas once they've completed their initial training.

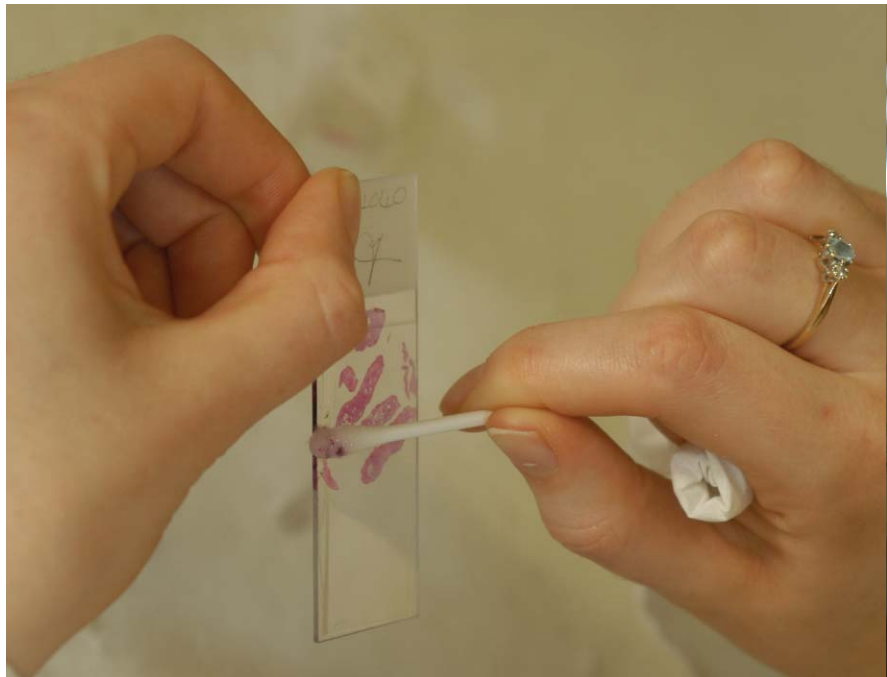
These areas of healthcare science require great flexibility and you would do shift work rather than regular hours, including night work.

Far from being an isolated role, you will form part of a large healthcare team all working together to provide the best care for the patient. As well as your colleagues in the laboratory, you'll have regular contact with doctors and nurses, porters, clerks and receptionists. Direct contact with patients will be limited, but may involve taking blood specimens, performing tests directly with the patient or sitting in when doctors and consultants meet with their patients.

### What entry routes are available?

To work as a biomedical scientist in haematology, you'll need a biomedical science degree approved by the Health Professions Council before applying for a post as a trainee biomedical scientist. After joining the NHS, you will receive training in all areas of haematology. The training will take up to two years and will enable you to register with the Health Professions Council.

If you have a first-class or upper second-class degree in a relevant subject, you may be eligible to join the NHS Clinical Scientists Training Scheme. This is a four-year programme of in-depth training in a specialist area, during which you will be paid whilst undertaking the clinical elements of your training. Some employers may also pay your tuition fees and offer financial support while you undertake theoretical academic elements of your training. This will usually lead to an MSc or specialist postgraduate diploma and give you the opportunity to work at the forefront of research and



knowledge as a clinical scientist registered with the Health Professions Council. For more information, visit

[www.nhscinicalscientists.info](http://www.nhscinicalscientists.info)

With GCSEs or an equivalent NVQ and/or previous work experience, it is often possible to start work as a trainee or assistant in healthcare science, combining on-the-job training with study so that you learn as you earn. For more information, see the *Clinical support worker* factsheet.

Some employers also offer cadet schemes, which involve a two-year training programme that gives you experience of different jobs within healthcare science.

For more information on the range of opportunities available in healthcare science, please visit [www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/qualifications](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/qualifications). This gives more specific details about what qualifications are necessary for each role.

You can search for current vacancies and download job descriptions at [www.jobs.nhs.uk](http://www.jobs.nhs.uk)



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Where will you work?	What skills and qualities will you need?
<p>You will work in a haematology laboratory. This might be within a district general hospital or it could be in a centralised setting, serving a whole community.</p> <p>Some larger hospitals will have separate laboratories within outpatient clinics.</p> <p>If you do need to take samples directly from patients, you may do this on the ward or in an outpatient area. However, very little of your time will be spent here.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a strong desire to help people and provide a good service</li> <li>• attention to detail – this is especially crucial for the manual tests, such as microscope work</li> <li>• good communication skills – you must be able to clearly interpret and report on the results of your tests</li> <li>• flexibility – as well as working shifts, you'll need to adapt to new, improved techniques and ways of working</li> <li>• excellent hand-eye co-ordination – every test must be carried out exactly as it should be</li> <li>• good concentration – you will spend long periods examining samples, and it's vital you miss nothing</li> <li>• IT skills – so much of the work is now automated, that it's vital to have a working knowledge of computers</li> <li>• speed and accuracy – in blood transfusion, in particular, you will need to respond quickly to requests</li> </ul>

### How can you develop your career?

There are excellent career prospects that include openings for research, management and education – in fact, you will be encouraged to study, perhaps for an MSc or PhD. You will be encouraged to continually expand your knowledge as advances are made, contributing to the growth of the role and you may even carry out related specialised work.

With training, responsibility and experience, you could reach the highest level in the profession, attaining consultant status, at which level you are likely to be in charge of a large department or making a significant contribution to your area of expertise.

Find out more about what training is open to you and how you can develop your career, at [www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/training](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/training)

As well as moving into more senior and specialised roles within this area, you will also have the chance to take on additional responsibilities and progress within the organisation as part of the Career Framework. For more information about this initiative, please see the *Careers in healthcare science* booklet.

### Pay

The national pay system in the NHS is called Agenda for Change (AfC). This applies to all healthcare science staff except the most senior managers. These are examples of roles and the AfC bands at which they may be paid: healthcare science support worker (Band 2); healthcare science assistant (Band 4); healthcare science practitioner (Band 5); healthcare science specialist (Band 6); healthcare science advanced (Band 7); healthcare science consultant (Band 8a-c).



For more information, visit [www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/payandbenefits](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/payandbenefits)

**To find out more about careers in this area of healthcare science, please go to [www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/working](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/working)**

**For more information on the professional bodies relevant to healthcare science, visit [www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/contacts](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/contacts)**