

Medical illustration

Join the team and
make a difference

Medical illustrators use their specialist skills to produce material such as photographs and other graphical images for use in patient care, education and research. They work mainly in hospitals, medical schools and universities.

What will you do?

As a medical illustrator, you will work as a medical photographer, video producer, graphic designer or medical artist. Medical photographers and video producers are responsible for the clinical recording of patients, using still and moving pictures, working in a studio, operating theatre, ward and clinic. Medical artists and graphic designers specialise in the design and production of artwork, scientific posters, brochures and other visual material. However, in some smaller departments it is possible for an individual to combine many of these aspects.

Working as part of the healthcare team, you'll spend plenty of time with patients, doctors, nurses, scientists and other professionals involved in delivering care. Your images, taken with consent from the patient, relative or carer, are likely to be used during diagnosis and will also be valuable when doctors are determining the effectiveness of treatments.

Some of your work could involve the use of specialised equipment and techniques. On occasion, you might be asked to do sensitive work, such as forensic photography (taking pictures of non-accidental injuries) or bereavement photography (for example, for relatives of babies who have died).

In larger departments there is often a dedicated graphic design team providing audiovisual teaching materials, scientific posters, brochures, artwork, websites, patient information, annual reports or corporate material.

This is a diverse role that involves much contact with patients and the healthcare team as well as offering technical and creative elements, plus high levels of responsibility.

What entry routes are available?

To qualify as a medical illustrator, you will need a degree in medical illustration that is approved by the Institute of Medical Illustrators.

You can also join the NHS with a BTEC HND media qualification in photography, graphic design or video. You will then need to undertake an approved degree in clinical photography or graphic design. You will normally take this course on a distance learning basis, while working in a post as a trainee medical illustrator. On completion of your training you will be eligible to join the voluntary register of the Committee for the Accreditation of Medical Illustration Practitioners.

For more information on what qualifications you'll need to work in healthcare science, please visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/qualifications. You can also find further details of job descriptions and current vacancies at www.jobs.nhs.uk

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Where will you work?	What skills and qualities will you need?
Medical illustrators normally work office hours, with a possibility of on-call duties and overtime. Part-time work or job sharing may be possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• an interest in multimedia, especially digital photography
You are likely to spend your working day in hospital wards, clinics, operating theatres, laboratories, studios or offices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• an interest in desktop publishing and graphic design
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• an interest in physiology and anatomy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• strong communication and people skills
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• willingness to accept high levels of responsibility
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• a professional, friendly manner
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ability to work in a team

How can you develop your career?

This is a career with excellent prospects, and includes openings for research, management and education. You will be expected to continually expand your knowledge as advances are made and you may 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

As well as moving to 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 staff except doctors, dentists and very 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-9).

For more information, visit

www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/payandbenefits

To find out more about this area of healthcare science, please visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/working

For more information on the professional bodies relevant to healthcare science, please visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/contacts