NHS Careers

Renal technology

Join the team and make a difference

Dialysis machines are key to the survival of patients with kidney disease. Healthcare scientists working in renal science ensure that vital renal dialysis equipment works efficiently and safely.

What will you do?

As a renal technologist, you will have a great deal of contact with patients based in hospital and at home – they will rely on you to identify and understand their needs.

This is a role with much variety, and offers elements of routine and non-routine work. For instance, you will carry out maintenance, calibration, repairs and modifications on complex dialysis equipment, as well as checking water purity by testing its microbiology and chemistry.

Your role will involve the use of specialised tools and computer-based diagnostic techniques, which are constantly evolving.

You'll need to keep up to date on any developments as you will be training patients, carers, medical and nursing staff in how to use dialysis equipment.

Additionally, it will be up to you to carry out inspections, risk assessments and audits, and keep details of your findings.

Some of your work, however, won't be routine, and will require you to deal with problems that arise at unexpected times, possibly in pressurised situations.

What entry routes are available?

You will need to have a BTEC Higher National Certificate/Diploma or NVQ Level 4 in an appropriate physical, engineering or related science subject. To qualify as a renal technologist, you need to undertake a vocational BSc degree in clinical technology, which includes an element of on-the-job training. On completion of your training you will be eligible to join the Voluntary Register of Clinical Technologists.

Where will you work?	What skills and qualities will you need?
You will be based in the renal units of the hospital and may visit patients at home. Out-of-hours support is provided to all inpatients and those at home through a 24-hour on-call rota.	• excellent oral and written communication skills – you will need to train and support patients and staff in complex procedures
	• a professional, sympathetic approach to patients who may be distressed or confused
	• good teamworking skills
	• awareness and understanding of health and safety issues
	• initiative and the ability to work without supervision
	• IT skills

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, usually leading to an MSc or specialist postgraduate diploma and registration with the Health Professions Council.

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 apprenticeships in engineering and science, enabling you to gain experience and qualifications in a particular role.

For more information on the range of opportunities available in healthcare science, please visit **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**

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, where 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 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**

To find out more about careers in healthcare science, please visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/working

For contact details, including professional bodies, please visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/contacts