

Scientist Training Programme (STP)
Frequently Asked Questions for Applicants 2019

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IMPORTANT:

These FAQs are up to date from the date above. They are supplementary to the information located in the Applicant Recruitment Process Guidance document which can be found on the NSHCS website.

1 Application and eligibility

Q.1 How do I apply?

For full details on how to apply, please refer to section 2 in the Applicant Recruitment Process Guidance.

Q.2 What are the timescales for recruitment?

A full timescale for the recruitment process can be found on the NSHCS website.

We strongly encourage you to complete your application and online tests as early as possible to avoid disappointment. **No late applications will be accepted.**

Please allow for a period of time following the shortlisting window for shortlisting results to be collated and checked and interview invites to be set up. Shortlisting dates can be found on the NSHCS website.

Interview dates will vary depending on which specialism you have applied to and been short listed for.

All applicants will be notified of the outcome after all interviews have been completed. It is anticipated that most applicants should have been informed by the beginning to mid-June 2019; however this can be subject to change. An offers/allocations timetable should be available to view within the 'Offers Applicant Guidance' document published prior to interviews.

Q.3 What do I need to be eligible for the STP?

Applicants must have an honours degree (1st or 2:1) or equivalent in a pure or applied science relevant to the specialism for which they are applying

Applicants with a 2:2 honours degree or better in any subject will also be considered if they have a higher degree that is relevant to the specialism for which they are applying. Medical degrees can be accepted for Life and Physiological Science specialisms ONLY.

Applicants for STP places in reconstructive sciences (maxillofacial prosthetics) must hold current registration as a dental technician with the General Dental Council.

Undergraduates who wish to apply must provide their predicted bachelor's degree grade in their application and must go on to achieve a 1st or 2:1 in order to take up a training post. Any academic qualifications declared during application, including Master's qualifications, will need to be awarded by start date of the programme. It is a requirement of the Higher Education Institutions that applicants must not be enrolled on two academic programmes by start date of the programme.

Full eligibility requirements can be found on the NSHCS website under 'Entry Requirements'

Q.4 What is a relevant degree?

Successful applicants might have a variety of relevant qualifications and experience.

Due to the extensive variation in degrees available it is not possible to provide a definitive list of relevant degrees for entry to the STP. You must ensure you review the job description and person specification for the training (on the [National School of Healthcare Science's website](#)), and the information about your preferred healthcare science specialism on the [Health Careers website](#).

More information about relevant degrees can be found on the NSHCS website under 'Entry Requirements'.

Q.5 Are applicants who will be graduating in this academic year eligible to apply for the training posts?

Applicants are required to have obtained their degree prior to the start date of the training programme. An applicant who has an undergraduate degree classified as 2:2 and is relying on a higher degree in a relevant subject, must already have been awarded the higher degree before the start date of the STP.

Should an applicant apply based on a predicted grade and is not successful, they will no longer meet the minimum entry criteria for the programme and their offer will be withdrawn. The onus is on the applicant to notify the NSHCS of their final result by the start date of the programme by emailing hcsapplicants@hee.nhs.uk, no later than 14 days from receiving the university notification of their award.

Q.6 How many posts can applicants apply for?

Direct entry applicants can only apply for one vacancy. In service applicants are eligible to apply for both the In service and Direct Entry vacancies.

Further information about STP posts and preferences can be found in section 2.5 of the Applicant Recruitment Process Guidance.

Q.7 How can I find out more about the progress of my application?

Applicants can log into the online application system at any point of the application process to view the status of their application.

If you are invited to the next stage, you will receive your invitation via email and/or text.

Q.8 Will applicants who have already obtained an MSc in a healthcare science specialism be exempt from the MSc component of the STP?

Applicants wishing to apply for the STP in 2019 should be prepared to undertake the full academic and work based components of the scheme. However, where an applicant wishes their existing

qualifications to be considered as credit against parts of the academic STP master's degree, this process of Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) is determined on a case by case basis within universities. General information about this process is available from any university website.

Q.9 Are we looking to recruit new or more experienced graduates?

The national shortlisting panels will be judging which applicants most closely match the person specification. The focus is on whether an applicant has the required skills, knowledge and experience that could have been gained in a number of different settings. Successful applicants might have a variety of relevant qualifications, experience and potential, and in the past the cohort of successful applicants has included both new graduates and those with more experience.

Q.10 Are current healthcare employees eligible for the programme?

Yes. We are keen to attract people already working in healthcare science and/or NHS employees on to the programme. In service applicants must meet the same quality assurance criteria applied to the appointment (or admission) of direct entry applicants (including attending national interviews and completing the online tests), but are not in competition for their substantive post.

Q.11 Could applicants who have significant relevant work experience be exempt from elements of the work based learning?

All applicants wishing to apply for the STP should be prepared to undertake the full academic and work based components of the scheme.

Q.12 Will it help my application if I have some work experience in a healthcare setting?

Yes, but it is not an essential requirement. However during the interviews prior knowledge of healthcare services may be an advantage. It is advisable to demonstrate you have researched the role e.g. by attending open days and doing work experience relevant to the job description, person specification and specialism.

Q.13 Is there an age limit?

There is no age limit for applying to the STP.

Q.14 Can I attend open days to find out more about the training?

Some employers and departments will hold open days that give a good opportunity to find out more about the scientist roles you are interested in. Look out for open days in your area and/or specialism at: <http://www.nshcs.hee.nhs.uk/join-programme/nhs-scientist-training-programme>.

Q.15 How should I complete the online aptitude tests?

Full details, including how to apply for extra time for the aptitude tests, can be found in section 2.4 of the Applicant Recruitment Process Guidance.

Q.16 Do you have the right to work in the UK?

Where possible, applicants must establish their right to work in the UK before applying.

If you require a tier 2 visa to work and train in the UK as a healthcare scientist, we strongly advise you to visit <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk> for the latest information. Please note should you require a Tier 2 visa and assuming you are successful at interview stage any offer will be based on meeting the requirements of the Resident Labour Market Test (RLMT).

Applicants are advised to ensure they have a right to work in the UK for the full duration of the STP as this will be a requirement of their contract of employment.

Q.17 What level of English language competency is required?

It is essential that all applicants have the required level of communication skills to enable them to undertake the role effectively and to assure the delivery of safe services to patients.

Applicants must be able to demonstrate they are able to achieve the English language competency as outlined for clinical scientists by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). For more information you should visit: <http://www.hpc-uk.org/publications/standards/index.asp?id=42>

There are a number of ways you could meet and provide evidence for the English language requirement, for instance:

- be a national of a majority English speaking country or have worked in an organisation/institution where English was the primary language used for communication
- pursued as part of your education in the UK
- hold a degree or relevant educational qualification that was taught in English by a recognised institution abroad
- pass an English language competency test.

Applicants whose first language is not English will also be required to satisfy the Higher Education Institution (HEI) that they have the necessary knowledge of English to meet the entry requirements to enrol on the MSc course associated with the Scientist Training Programme.

Individuals from outside the European Economic Area (EEA) who make an application under Tier 2 of the points-based immigration system will be required to demonstrate their English language ability as part of the visa application process. You will therefore need to provide evidence that you have passed an appropriate test listed by the Home Office <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/>

2 The selection process

Q.18 What is the recruitment process?

All applicants (direct and In service) will answer a series of questions and complete aptitude tests that will ascertain their suitability to progress to the application stage. Those candidates who pass the online aptitude tests will progress to the next stage of the recruitment process. Direct Entry applicants will proceed to the shortlisting stage and In service applicants will proceed directly to the interview stage.

Interviews will be held on a national basis and allocations to posts will be offered as soon as possible after all interviews have been completed. Key dates will be posted on the NSCHS website as soon as they are confirmed.

Q.19 How will the shortlisting process be carried out?

Shortlisting will be carried out on a national basis by appropriately qualified professional panels who will be representative of employers, professional bodies and HEIs delivering the MSc programmes.

Panel members will shortlist against agreed criteria, based on the skills, knowledge and values required for the training scheme, and will score applications independently.

Scores will be ranked and those individuals with the highest scores will be invited to interview.

Q.20 Who will inform the applicants that they have been shortlisted?

The NSHCS will inform applicants whether they have been shortlisted and will provide the dates of the interviews for the specialism/theme.

You must be ready to respond promptly, within five working days, to invitations to interview to confirm your place. You will then be able to book your interview slots online. Please note in some cases the five working days may be reduced especially in the case of NSHCS contacting applicants on the reserve list.

If you do not confirm your interview booking via Oriel by the interview deadline, your interview slot will be offered to the next ranked individual. The onus is on the applicant to decline/confirm interview booking within the timescales provided. The NSHCS will not take responsibility for an applicant missing the window for interview booking.

You are advised that you will not be reimbursed for travel costs when attending interview.

Q.21 How many applicants will be shortlisted for each post?

Normally three times as many applicants will be shortlisted as commissioned training posts however ratios may be increased/decreased for some specialisms dependent on number of applications received in order to maximise the opportunity for all available posts to be filled to meet workforce demand or as a result of constraints of interview capacity/availability. However decreasing the ratio will be avoided where possible.

A reserve list of applicants will also be identified equal to the number of commissions agreed for that specialism or theme which will be drawn upon if first choice applicants do not confirm their interview place, or subsequently withdraw from the process.

Q.22 What is the Guaranteed Interview Scheme?

The Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS) is a commitment to guarantee an interview to anyone with a disability (as defined in the Equality Act 2010) who meets the minimum criteria for the training. All disabled applicants through NHS Jobs are offered the option to request the Guaranteed Interview Scheme and the NSHCS offers this in line with NHS Jobs / NHS employers. The scheme does not mean that all disabled applicants are automatically guaranteed an interview, they are only guaranteed an interview if they meet the minimum requirements of the training.

Q.23 How do I request the Guaranteed Interview Scheme?

Disabled applicants wishing to apply under the GIS will need to tick the 'yes' box on the online application form in answer to the GIS question and submit the appropriate evidence to the recruitment team at hcsapplicants@hee.nhs.uk.

There is no obligation for a disabled applicant to apply under the GIS if they do not wish to.

Q.24 Will there be a GIS question on the application form?

Yes. Under the registration and personal details section of the application form, applicants will be asked the following:

If you have a disability, provided you meet the minimum criteria as specified in the Person Specification, do you wish to be considered under the *Guaranteed Interview Scheme?*

 (Please refer to the **Applicant**

Guide.)

If an applicant selects 'No' no further questions appear.

If an applicant selects 'Yes' then the following questions appear:

If you have answered yes to the above question, please give details below:

If, on your application form, you have indicated that you have a disability and require any specific arrangements/adjustments to enable you to attend an interview, assessment or other selection process and/or you have indicated you would like to be considered under the Guaranteed

Interview Scheme, please ensure you contact the recruitment lead hcsapplicants@hee.nhs.uk with further information and supporting evidence by the completion of the shortlisting process.

Q.25 Where and when will the interviews be held?

Recruitment will be undertaken through a series of national interviews that will be organised by the NSHCS, who are experienced in recruiting graduate trainees through this approach. These interviews will be held in Birmingham. Key dates for recruitment will be listed on the NSHCS website once they are confirmed.

Applicants can view a video outlining how the interview process works here:

<http://www.nshcs.hee.nhs.uk/join-programme/nhs-scientist-training-programme/the-interview-process>

Q.26 If an applicant has applied to several places are they expected to return several times for different interviews?

Where applicants have applied and been successfully shortlisted for more than one specialism or theme they will be required to attend multiple interviews. Applicants who identify different preferred locations in one specialism/theme will only be brought in to interview once.

Applicants will not be reimbursed for their travel costs.

Q.27 If an applicant is not able to attend the interviews on the date they have been allocated will they be offered an alternative date?

No. Due to the large numbers of applicants who will be required to pass through the interviews, we are not able to offer any flexibility on the dates applicants are invited to attend. The dates of the interviews for each specialism or theme will be made available as early as possible in the process.

Q.28 Will In service applicants have to go through the national interviews?

Yes. In service applicants will have to attend national interviews and will also be required to pass the aptitude tests, online application form, provide evidence of their academic equivalence and demonstrate they have the support of their employer to ensure that they have the appropriate skills and experience for the training scheme. In service applicants will need to email their degree certificates by the application closing date to hcsapplicants@hee.nhs.uk.

3. General questions

Q.29 Which universities will be offering the accredited master's programme?

Following competitive tendering the following universities (as shown by accessing this link: <http://www.nshcs.hee.nhs.uk/join-programme/nhs-scientist-training-programme>) have been selected to provide the Master's in Clinical Science for the Scientist Training Programme.

Any new specialisms available will be procured during the year and so the information may not be available at the point of application.

Q.30 How much academic input will there be in the training?

The STP is approximately two thirds work based training and one third formal academic training through the Master's degree. While in the workplace it is recommended that 80% of the time is spent on work based training and 20% is spent on academic work.

Q.31 Will trainees graduating from the STP have a recognised international qualification?

Master's degrees from a Higher Education Institute are recognised academic qualifications under the European Qualifications Framework and is a component part of the award made on successful completion of STP. There is regular monitoring from the NSHCS and trainees are required to submit to the Annual Review of Progress. Failure to submit or show suitable progress may lead to removal from the programme.

Q.32 What scientific specialism should I apply for?

You will be asked to specify which specialism you want to apply for. This should be relevant to your academic qualifications and your choice of future career.

All applicants will have a maximum of two choices of specialism and can preference as many locations/employers as there are available for those specialisms.

Please note that applicants for all medical physics or clinical engineering specialisms should apply for medical physics or clinical engineering interviews. Successful applicants in these two themes will be allocated to posts which may have predetermined relevant specialisms, or in which the specialism will be decided after the first year of training.

Note that if you are applying to the In service vacancy, sponsored by your employer you will only be able to apply for a place on the training programme which corresponds to your post with your current employer.

To learn more about the individual specialisms refer to the Health Careers website: www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/stp.

The curricula is available in the Curriculum Library <https://curriculum.nshcs.org.uk/>

Q.33 If I am successful and the post has been advertised as unspecified or there is more than one training route (applicable to some Medical Physics/Clinical Engineering and Cardiac Science posts) can I choose the specialism that I would prefer to train in?

Whilst successful applicants may be consulted on their choice of specialism for these posts with the relevant employer there is no guarantee that they will be able to train in their preferred area as there may be workforce needs in a particular area and we are recruiting to fulfil the future workforce requirement.

Applicants who preference unspecified posts should be willing to train in any of the specialisms within that theme or area and should refer to the learning guides for further information on the training.

<http://www.networks.nhs.uk/nhs-networks/msc-framework-curricula/stp>

Applicants should ensure they refer to the list of posts advertised to identify which posts this may apply to and are advised to contact their preferred centre before the offers window closes to get further information on options available for the choice of specialism.

<http://www.nshcs.hee.nhs.uk/join-programme/nhs-scientist-training-programme>

Q.34 Is the training programme right for me?

You should refer to the information available on Health Careers and NSHCS website to evaluate whether you think the training programme is right for you.

www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/stp

<http://www.nshcs.hee.nhs.uk/join-programme/nhs-scientist-training-programme>

Further information may also be available by attending open days. A list of departments offering open days is online at <http://www.nshcs.hee.nhs.uk/join-programme/nhs-scientist-training-programme>.

The STP offers a fantastic opportunity for those people who are looking for a fulfilling career in healthcare science. It is important that applicants consider their application to the programme carefully. We are looking for people who are committed to a career in healthcare science and to providing high quality scientific services to patients and the public. Entry onto the programme is extremely competitive and therefore applicants should be prepared to be measured on their commitment to the programme and on their understanding of the expectations placed on Scientist trainees as part of the selection processes.

Q.35 What kinds of people get a place on the STP?

A range of people have been successful in being appointed to the STP. In addition to high standards of scientific ability, what they have in common is an enthusiasm for science, aspirations to be leaders in healthcare science and a focus on delivering high quality and compassionate care for patients.

Above all else our successful applicants demonstrate the right values and behaviours integral to providing safe and effective healthcare science services to patients and the public.

Q.36 How much will I be paid during the training?

Starting salaries will be circa £26,000 per annum.

Please note funding for any additional expenses is entirely a local decision and should be discussed and agreed with the commissioner and managed by the employer. We strongly urge that applicants contact any potential employers regarding additional expenses early on in the process to ensure that they are able to make an informed decision when choosing their choice(s) of specialism(s) and location/employer(s).

Q.37 Is the training programme very competitive?

Yes. We receive many more applications than there are places. Therefore you have to be fully committed to the STP, and persevere with a highly competitive and demanding recruitment process.

Q.38 Where will I be trained?

When you apply you can express a preference for the specialism(s) you wish to train in in rank order (up to a maximum of 2 specialisms and direct entry only). Those applicants that are invited to interview will then be asked to choose up to as many locations/employers as there are available in those specialisms in rank order. Applicants can view the locations and number of posts available for 2019 entry by visiting <http://www.nshcs.hee.nhs.uk/join-programme/nhs-scientist-training-programme>.

As far as possible, successful direct entry applicants will be matched to posts based on the choices of specialisms they identified when they completed their application form and the choices of locations/employers chosen later in the application process.

Please note that by indicating a preferred location, you are agreeing to be based anywhere in that region and the clinical rotations in the first year may not necessarily all be available in the same region that you have applied. In accepting a post you should therefore be willing and able to travel in order to undertake the training.

You should also note that in accepting an offer of training you will be committing to being based with that employer for the full 3 years.

Q.39 How much travel is involved in the STP?

You may have to travel to other training centres to fulfil parts of the programme (rotations). These could be in different parts of the country and you could have to spend weeks at a time there.

Whether you have to travel to complete your rotations would depend on the specialism and whether your host employer has the facilities to provide all the training aspects.

You will also have to travel to the University to complete the master's degree. The amount of travel involved for this will depend on the University and course you attend.

Q.40 Are there STP opportunities outside of England?

There is separate scientist training recruitment in Scotland Northern Ireland and Wales. To find out more, please go to the relevant websites.

Q.41 Am I guaranteed a job at the end of the training?

There is no guarantee of employment on completion of the programme. However, you will be eligible to apply for any suitable clinical scientist posts, once you have obtained registration with the Health and Care Professions Council [HCPC]. For In service trainees, your ongoing employment continues.

Q.42 What kind of job might I expect to have at the end of the training?

There are a wide range of clinical scientist roles to choose from within any chosen specialism.

Further information can be found at www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/stp

Your experiences on the STP will help you decide what type of scientific job you may wish to take upon completing the training.

Q.43 How long will the training programme last?

The STP is a three year, full time, work place based training programme during which participants also study part time for a master's in clinical science.

Q.44 If I have applied for the STP previously, can I apply again?

Yes you can, however if you have previously relinquished or been removed from the programme you must state this in your application which will be reviewed and a decision made on whether your application can proceed. Please note this may include discussions with other key

stakeholders for example the Higher Education Institution (HEI). Please note the applicant will be contacted for consent should further information be required.

Q.45 Will I need to contribute to the academic tuition fees?

No, tuition fees for the part-time master's degree are fully funded.

Q.46 Is there any additional financial support other than the salary available?

Funding to support travel and accommodation at university or other events may be available. However such funding is at the discretion of the employer and may be subject to local availability. Applicants should contact the relevant department or Health Education England Local Team <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/in-your-area> for further advice.

Q.47 Can I obtain professional registration by completing the STP?

Applicants will be eligible to apply for registration with the Health Care Professions Council (HCPC) on completion of the STP and on award of the Certificate of Attainment by the Academy for Healthcare Science (AHCS).

For some more recent STP specialisms, those completing the programme will be able to apply for an AHCS Certificate of Equivalence. Award of the Certificate of Equivalence will also make you eligible to apply to the HCPC for registration as a clinical scientist.

You can find out more about the Academy's certificates here:

www.academyforhealthcarescience.co.uk

Q.48 Who do I contact for further information?

Information on the Scientist Training Programme can be found on the NSHCS website:

<http://www.nshcs.hee.nhs.uk/join-programme/nhs-scientist-training-programme>

Information on careers within STP and specialism information can be found here:

www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/stp

The link to the online application portal and "to Apply" can be accessed here:

<http://www.nshcs.hee.nhs.uk/join-programme/nhs-scientist-training-programme/applying-to-the-programme>

(Please note you will not be able to apply until the vacancy opens).

In order for the NSHCS to offer optimal support to all applicants please ensure you have reviewed both this document and the applicant guidance in full prior to submitting a query.

If your question has not been answered please email hcsapplicants@hee.nhs.uk .