

Welcome to postgraduate scientist training in Scotland



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Welcome

Welcome to postgraduate scientist training in NHS Scotland. Whether you are a clinical scientist trainee, a bursary-holder, or independently progressing through a programme of development, you are all stepping into specialist scientific roles that are essential to our service. This short guide is designed to help you understand and navigate postgraduate scientist training, the role of NHS Education for Scotland (NES) and the possibilities for you as a postgraduate Healthcare Scientist in NHS Scotland.

Your contribution to our NHS as a member of the Healthcare Science workforce is both essential and ubiquitous. You are joining a community of postgraduate scientist trainees that spans the laboratory sciences, clinical physiology and the physical sciences.

The Healthcare Science workforce does fantastic innovative work - daily. Patients and service users entering the healthcare system have the anxiety of “waiting for tests” - their fortune hangs entirely on your ability to contribute to their pathway safely and accurately. Irrespective of whether you have a patient-facing role or work with samples and specimens, your work informs and helps steer medical and surgical decision making for patients; outcomes in modern medicine rest on safe, accurate tests and measurements.

Imagine... without your contribution to the wider multi-disciplinary clinical team, now and in future, there would be no 24/7 diagnostics, no hot-lab or on call pathology to support theatres, there would be severely impaired acuity in the cause or progression of disease, there would be no advanced treatment planning or interventions, no investigations or no medical device management; there would be less innovation, and NHS research would be severely impacted. You are and will become an expert resource as part of the NHS team - vital to its success.

In Scotland, we are a total healthcare science workforce of around 5500 staff, with approximately 170 postgraduate scientists in training. Regardless of discipline, we encourage you as a postgraduate trainee to acquire key attributes that will prepare you for more senior roles. These attributes are outlined in our framework - the [Common Core List](#) which challenges you to go beyond scientific specialist training. Think about areas such as leadership, business skills and research. Think about your senior mentors now and the roles and duties they have...ask them about their journey and how their knowledge and skills developed as they moved into more senior roles.

Above all, be open to challenge, be ready to follow your innate scientific curiosity and to enquire as to how, in whatever discipline you work, things can be made better. Welcome.

Postgraduate Scientist trainees

Postgraduate scientist training comprises several pathways. This diversity in training pathways is a strength, it ensures as wide a workforce supply pipeline as possible - and reflects the broader approach of science. The pathways are:

1. Clinical Scientist STP training
2. Clinical Scientist non-STP training
3. Independent equivalence portfolio development towards Clinical Scientist registration or Higher Specialist Scientific registration (HSSR)
4. Bursary-supported postgraduate training (for example specialist portfolios and MScs)

Types 1-3 all require adherence to the [Academy for Healthcare Science](#) (AHCS) document [Good Scientific Practice](#), or to very similar competencies defined by the [Association of Clinical Scientists](#). For STP training, Good Scientific Practice is built into training curricula.

1 Clinical Scientist STP trainees

These are enrolled on the UK [Scientist Training Programme](#) (STP). Our STPs are linked to a UK university for the academic component of training and to Health Education England's [National School for Healthcare Science](#). The School acts as a UK hub for STP training, but does not recruit for, nor directly monitor workplace training in, Scotland.

The National School tracks all STP trainee's progression via its OLAT (on-line learning and assessment tool). It also runs STP exit examinations via its OSFAs (observed structured final assessment). The National School provides induction for new STP trainees and a range of trainer opportunities specific to the STP format of training. Pass lists are shared with the statutory regulator- the [Health and Care Professions Council](#).

The school publishes an annual trainee handbook that describes the training process, responsibilities and a trainee-school agreement. The agreement relates to expectations of professional behaviour and to information sharing regarding progress, with commissioners such as NES.

2 and 3 Clinical Scientist non-STP trainees and independent equivalence candidates

These follow a locally determined training pathway and do not involve the National School, its OLAT or OSFA systems. Instead trainees must demonstrate learning outcomes equivalent to STP or meet similar competences laid out by the [Association of](#)

[Clinical Scientists](#) (ACS). Such trainees are effectively 'equivalence' type candidates who must submit a portfolio and undergo a viva either with the [ACS](#) or [AHCS](#).

4 Bursary supported postgraduates

These have engaged with a discipline specific programme, perhaps a masters-level degree, and are not necessarily intending further registration as a clinical scientist. They may be HCPC registered as a Biomedical Scientist, or as a Clinical Physiologist. Whilst Good Scientific Practice is not mandatory for this type of trainee, NES support recommends adherence to it. Our [Common Core List](#) describes the framework against which such trainees can develop, to foster consistency across all types of postgraduate scientist.

Our role at NHS Education for Scotland in supporting in postgraduate scientist training.

NHS Education for Scotland has three strands of work for Healthcare Science, which includes our interest in your postgraduate scientist development. The strands are:

- Commissioning training (either through supernumerary posts or competitive bursary support)
- Providing CPD via courses and national events
- Training programme management and quality monitoring of departments

In addition, NES Healthcare Science links with UK agencies, Scottish Government and other stakeholders to represent NHS Scotland best interests.

Training Programme Management and Quality Monitoring

NES Healthcare Science monitors workplace training via departmental self-assessment, training group reviews and progression monitoring of individual trainees. Training group reviews are conducted by an independent panel and include a lay representative. For clinical scientist training these panels are conducted with the National School for Healthcare Science to ensure parity with training governance arrangements elsewhere in the UK.

More information about our standards and the state of quality monitoring is on the Knowledge Network site: [HCS trainees and supervisors](#)

For directly commissioned training, annual scheme reports are sent to NES to give us an overview of how the specialty is progressing. We are introducing an **annual monitoring of progression check** in 2017. Individual postgraduate scientist trainees are also invited to respond to our annual surveys – again summarised on the Knowledge Network.

Our purpose in undertaking quality monitoring is, ultimately, to provide assurance to the Regulator that postgraduate training is secure and safe – and that it will produce the right calibre of scientists.

National Training Numbers and TURAS

All postgraduate trainees in our community are issued with a unique National Training Number (NTN). You should receive your NTN shortly after your bursary award, admission into NHS employment or recognition by NES of your postgraduate training plan. Information about obtaining a National Training Number for trainees not funded in some way by NES is on the Knowledge Network site: [HCS trainees and supervisors](#)

We track your training using our TURAS system, that you will eventually have some access to. This is a workforce modelling tool and helps inform the wider NHS of those postgraduate trainees “in the pipeline”. TURAS records your training journey, if applicable the expected rotations, progression and exit. It associates those trainers and supervisors supporting your postgraduate training and the locations of training.

TURAS is used by other clinical groups in Scotland and is currently being extended to Healthcare Science training.

Short Courses and additional learning

Both our [Common Core List](#) and the needs of STP or equivalence applicants can be fulfilled using NES short courses for generic learning.

The NES [Portal](#) allows users to sign-up for face-to-face courses such as Early Career Leadership, Train-the-trainer and Human Factors. By registering with NES Portal, you can view learning specifically tailored for the Healthcare Science workforce.

[TURAS Learn](#) is a component of the TURAS system. It holds a range of on-line learning resources for NHS staff covering patient safety, risk, human factors, HAI and other more generic themes. Portal is being incorporated into TURAS.

The NES [Knowledge Network](#) hosts communities of practice with helpful information. To register with the Knowledge Network, you will need an Athens log-in; the site explains how to go about this. Specifically, for Healthcare Science we run:

For [HCS trainees and supervisors](#), this Knowledge Network site includes content about postgraduate training and NES quality monitoring of that training.

For [HCS in Scotland](#), this Knowledge Network site contains information relating to local Healthcare science activity, National Leads meetings and events. Trainees are strongly encouraged to become involved in local HCS committees; several Boards operate Healthcare Science trainee networks, which are a good platform to learn about the work of other scientific staff, and to broker rotations, shadowing or collaborate on projects.

Our annual event for postgraduate scientist trainees and supervisors is an opportunity to learn more about and help shape our role, and to participate in a national poster competition. The [NES Events](#) will hold details of upcoming engagements. Past poster winners are on our [HCS trainees and supervisors](#) Knowledge Network site.

Join a professional body! Whether it is ARTP or BAA, IPEM or IBMS, ACB or ACGS to name but a few, these are all vital in supporting and nurturing your postgraduate development. The [Academy for Healthcare Science](#) is the “One Voice” agency and has a comprehensive list professional bodies.

Trainee responsibilities

- Irrespective of training pathway, postgraduate scientist training demands a strong element of self-direction.
- Professionalism, such as that described in [Good Scientific Practice](#), and high standards of behaviour towards colleagues and service users.
- Communication with training officers and supervisors
- A willingness to question current practise and raise a concern.

Supervisor responsibilities

- A willingness to give broad direction to the trainee, including agreeing a training plan.
- Meet and monitor regularly.
- Try to attend a train-the-trainer programme
- Plan requisite assessments and monitoring of progression
- Give constructive feedback.

Our NES Portal offers a range of trainer development courses specifically for the Healthcare science community; trainers are encouraged to sign up.

What happens when things don't go to plan

Our Knowledge Network outlines [NES Special Measures Principles](#) alongside other Standards of Education and Training standards relating to admission and practice placement.

For trainees-in-difficulty, NES will only intervene where local resolution is not effective; our Special Measures Principles are predicated on identifying the root-cause of a problem, not ascribing blame, and then seeking a constructive, fair resolution. Whether a trainee or supervisor, please read our Special Measures Principles.

Regulator standards

The [Health and Care Professions Council](#) is the principal regulator of Clinical Scientists and Biomedical Scientists. The generic standards of education and training, as they apply to postgraduate training. Admissions and Placement in Scotland, are interpreted at our [Knowledge Network](#)

Advice and support for your training – NES Specialty Leads

The NES Specialty Leads are available to help trainers and trainees with our quality monitoring standards and requirements. They can offer advice on training pathways and are also the first line of intervention when NES needs to become more closely involved in trainee's progression. Specialty Leads may be trainers themselves but generally cover a wider range of disciplines when dealing with generic issues. The Specialty Leads are an impartial contact and can be approached by trainers and trainees at any time. Contacts for the Leads are on the Healthcare Science home page of the [NES website](#).

Progression monitoring

We are interested in your progression as a postgraduate scientist and, annually will ask you and your immediate supervisor for a simple progression check for those at least a year into training. This is a minimum 'light-touch' standard and not intended to replace other training scheme or departmental arrangements. Specialties may also have a range of monitoring arrangements in place to ensure that you as trainee remains on-track, either a specific scheme-led process or as part of the NHS PDP mechanism.

Information about the Annual Review of Progression Check (ARPC) is on the [Knowledge Network](#) Healthcare Science postgraduates site. Our ARPC process includes a confidential return from the trainee to give direct feedback on their training experience. The use of this confidential return is entirely voluntary.

Summary

Enjoy your journey as a postgraduate scientist trainee. Should you at any point require further assistance, please don't hesitate to get in touch using the contacts listed on the [NES website](#) or email us at HCS@nes.scot.nhs.uk

Some key links

[NES Healthcare Science website](#)

[NES Healthcare Science Postgraduates Knowledge Network](#)

[NES Special Measures Principles](#)

[Academy for Healthcare Science](#)

[National School for Healthcare Science](#)

[Good Scientific Practice](#)

[Common Core List](#)

[NES Portal – face-to-face courses](#)

[TURAS Learn](#) – online learning resources. (Portal is being merged with TURAS)