

What is the Scientist Training Programme?

Introduction: The Scientist Training Programme (STP) is a three-year blended academic and workplace training programme, developed by the National School of Healthcare Science (NSHCS), which is part of Health Education England (HEE) and the healthcare science community. We develop, commission, support, and assess trainees on the programme. Trainees can either be recruited as new employees (direct entry) or from the existing workforce (in-service entry).

Expressions of Interest: The portal for expressions of interest for 2023/24 will be open between 1st July and 15th Sep 2022, and we encourage you to consider applying for STP trainees to help support expansion and development of healthcare science services as part of diagnostic recovery and growth. You can do this either as an individual organisation, or as part of a consortium, e.g., pathology network. Within life sciences, there will also be Practice Educators within Pathology and Genomics to help support regional education and training.

What life science specialisms is it available in?

The STP is available in the following life science specialisms for 2023/24:

Andrology

Cancer
GenomicsClinical
BiochemistryClinical Bioinformatics
GenomicsClinical
ImmunologyClinical
Microbiology

Embryology

Genomic Counselling

Genomics

Haematology &
Transfusion ScienceHistocompatibility &
Immunogenetics

Histopathology

What are the benefits of having an STP trainee?

The STP programme is a great way to grow your workforce and develop your current workforce. Although supernumerary, as part of their training and development, STP trainees will support service delivery, and may contribute to training of other colleagues within the specialism. This can help to support trained colleagues and improve service delivery for patients. STP trainees are also able to support outreach activities to help promote your specialism, as well as contributing to research, development, leadership, innovation, and quality improvement projects.

What will be the responsibility of my department?

Each department is responsible for supporting the trainee through their training, and to facilitate rotations for trainees in the first phase of training. The recent STP curricula review has sought to address some of the challenges around the requirement for rotations in Phase 1 of the programme. Rotations have been reworked for the new curriculum to make them more relevant and easier to deliver, based upon observation of routine practice rather than achievement of practical competencies. Like any training programme, it may initially create additional work for the department and trainers - however, the benefits of having an STP trainee will soon outweigh the challenges, in terms of the support they can provide to the department. The NSHCS welcomes network/consortia approaches to training, which can also reduce the onus on any one department.

How is training delivered?

Training is delivered in the workplace, with academic component delivered by universities across the UK. Several universities provide the MSc programmes in life sciences, which are delivered via blended approaches depending on the programme. STP trainees are supernumerary and require 20% off the job study time in order to complete the academic components of the programme and workplace portfolio requirements.

How is the STP funded?

The STP is a fully funded training programme, including salary support starting at the bottom of Agenda for Change Band 6 for all three years of the programme, Trainees also benefit from a £2000 training support allowance, which can be used to support travel and accommodation costs.

How is the STP quality assured?

Accreditation: All departments hosting trainees must be accredited with the NSHCS. This is a straightforward process, and colleagues from the NSHCS are happy to advise and support you in achieving accreditation.

Recruitment: The STP is a highly competitive programme with two routes, direct or in-service entry. Recruitment for in-service applicants is managed by the host organisation, whilst recruitment for direct entry applicants follows a national recruitment process. Interviews for both recruitment pathways are currently undertaken by local employers within host departments, and all aspects of recruitment must adhere to standardised entry criteria and guidance, all of which is managed by the NSHCS.

During and after training: Trainees and training officers are supported throughout the programme by the NSHCS. STP trainees are invited to complete the annual national NETS training survey and the NSHCS exit survey at end of programme. Responses from these surveys are used to create action plans to improve the STP.

What can a trainee do after completing the programme?

On completion of the programme, STP graduates will be able to undertake complex scientific and clinical roles and are eligible to register with the HCPC as a Clinical Scientist and should be employed in substantive posts. Workforce planning to create appropriate roles for STP graduates is essential.

How can I find out more?

For more information about STP curricula and rotations, go to the [curriculum library](#)
For more information about commissioning, contact shakira.greaves@hee.nhs.uk
For more information about the STP programme, contact the STP Training Programme Director and South East Healthcare Science Dean lisa.ayers@hee.nhs.uk
For more information about accreditation, contact the NSHCS at nshcs.accreditation@hee.nhs.uk