

Doctor – GP

General practitioner doctors (GPs) work in a local surgery with residents of the local area. They identify and treat a full range of illnesses and sometimes injuries from which their patients suffer. If necessary, they refer patients to a specialist or arrange for a stay in hospital.

The Work

You could be:

- discussing all kinds of health problems with patients, and perhaps their relatives
- examining the patient and either doing or arranging tests
- identifying the cause of the problem from your own knowledge and experience or else from test results
- if you can't diagnose the illness, or if the patient needs special treatment, referring the patient to a consultant
- treating the patient – checking on the computer about the right kind of medicine, calculating the correct dosage and prescribing it
- giving vaccinations to prevent illness and taking blood samples
- consulting with other medical staff, often by letter or phone, about patients and their progress
- keeping records on computers, completing forms and reports, or signing certificates.

Pay

As of October 2024, in most junior posts (Foundation Year 1) the basic salary is £34,500 a year. This increases to £42,794 in Foundation Year 2. Salaried GPs earn between £74,192 and £110,737 a year, depending on amongst other things, length of service and experience.

Self-employed GPs can choose between two different systems of funding for their practices: the traditional General Medical Services contract or the Primary Medical Services which lets the GP adapt the practice to local needs.

Conditions

- You usually work in a consulting room in a surgery or health centre.
- You sometimes visit patients in their homes.
- You usually work in a group practice with other doctors and nurses.
- In remote areas you might work single-handed and have to arrange for a locum when you are on holiday or sick.
- Working hours can be long (50 to 60 hours a week) with some work to be done outwith surgery times.
- Part time work is common.
- You might have to work some evenings and weekends and be on call for emergencies.

Getting In

To qualify as a hospital doctor you need a degree in medicine and surgery (SCQF Level 10) which is recognised by

the General Medical Council (GMC).

- You can study the 5-year MB ChB course at the universities of Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh (6 years) and Glasgow. Entry requirements are 5 good Highers, usually at one sitting, including Chemistry and (depending on the university) 1 or 2 from Maths, Biology and Physics, with English and science subjects at National 5. Although most institutions set the minimum entry of 5 Highers at AAAAB, the majority of applicants have AAAAA.
- The 3-year BSc Hons Medicine at the University of St Andrews guarantees its graduates the chance to finish their training at one of the four Scottish medical schools or in Manchester.
- A course is available at the universities of Dundee and St Andrews for those with an arts or science degree (at least 2:1). The Scottish Graduate Entry Medicine Programme (ScotGEM) is 4 years and leads to the MB ChB. There is a focus on rural health and it offers opportunities to train in remote and rural areas.
- For all courses except ScotGEM, before applying to medical school you must sit the University Clinical Aptitude Test (UCAT). For entry in 2026 you must register and book a test before 19 September 2025 and sit the test by 26 September 2025. If you get an Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) you can apply for a bursary to cover the cost of the test. Check the [UCAT website](#) for further details.
- For the ScotGEM course you are required to sit both the UCAT Situational Judgement Test for Admission to Clinical Education (SJTace) and the [Graduate Medical School Admissions Test \(GAMSAT\)](#). Dates for the SJTace are as above and the sittings for the GAMSAT are held in March and September.
- For all courses, including ScotGEM, you must apply to UCAS by 15 October 2025 for entry in 2026.

Other requirements:

- You will require a satisfactory criminal record check from Disclosure Scotland to show that you are suitable for this type of work. Contact [Disclosure Scotland](#) for details on the type you would need.
- You must undergo screening for blood borne diseases such as Hepatitis B and C or HIV. Infection does not prevent you from qualifying or practising as a doctor, but there is a restriction on carrying out exposure-prone procedures.
- It is helpful to have a driving licence.

After your degree you do a 2-year foundation training programme, which gives you registration with the GMC, which you need to work as a doctor (see 'Training' below). Most doctors work for the National Health Service (NHS), but you might work in private practice. You could be a medical adviser to a company or the Department for Work and Pensions. You could be a medical officer for the police and prison service.

What Does It Take

You should be:

- able to communicate well with people from all backgrounds and of all ages
- patient, understanding and able to put people at ease
- able to handle and remember large amounts of information
- confident – you will have to make important decisions affecting people
- willing to take responsibility
- accurate – when prescribing medicines
- able to work alone and as part of a team.

Training

- After completing your degree, you must complete a 2-year Foundation Programme followed by a run-through Specialty and General Practice Programme. You can get details from the [Scottish Medical Training](#) website.
- You can then apply for a Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT) with entry to the Specialist or General Practice Register of the General Medical Council.
- Throughout your working life you will take courses to keep up to date through Continuing Professional Development.

Getting On

- Once you have the CCT certificate you can become a partner in a general practice, or practise on your own.
- You could become a GP with a Special Interest (GPwSI), getting involved in areas such as drugs misuse, women's health and family planning or endoscopy.
- You might combine general practice with part time work in a hospital.
- You might write on medical matters for a journal, newspaper or books.
- You might be able to work abroad.

More Information

If you want a taste of what it is like to be a doctor have a look at the Medic Insight programme. This is a week long programme aimed at fourth and fifth year pupils in Scotland who are interested in becoming doctors. It is run by Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee universities. See the university website for details.

For more information have a look at the [You can be a Doctor](#) website which will give you all sorts of information about how to get into medicine.

Contacts

British Medical Association (BMA) (Scotland)

Tel: 0131 247 3000

Email: BMAScotland@bma.org.uk

Website: www.bma.org.uk

X: @TheBMA

Facebook: www.facebook.com/TheBMA

General Medical Council (GMC)

Email: gmc@gmc-uk.org

Website: www.gmc-uk.org

X: @gmcuk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/GMCUK

Medical Schools Council

Tel: 020 7419 5494

Website: www.medschools.ac.uk

Website (2): www.medschools.ac.uk/Publications/Pages/Entry-requirements-for-UK-medical-schools.aspx

NHS Scotland Careers

Website: www.careers.nhs.scot

Website (2): jobs.scot.nhs.uk

Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP)

Tel: 020 3188 7400

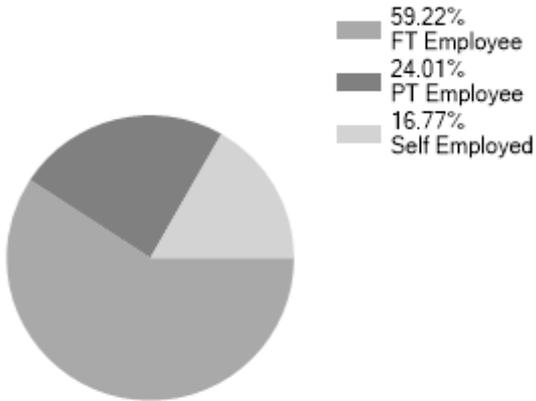
Website: www.rcgp.org.uk

X: @rcgp

Facebook: www.facebook.com/rcgp.org

Statistics

Employment Status UK %



Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

LMI data powered by [LMI for All](#)

Predicted Employment Statistics : Not available this career.