Biomedical Scientist

Biomedical scientists test samples of body fluids, blood and tissue to help doctors diagnose disease and to monitor patients' treatment. They have a sound knowledge of biology, biochemistry and chemistry.

The Work

You may specialise in one of four areas:

Infection Science

- medical microbiology – the study of micro-organisms
- virology – the study of viruses.

Blood Sciences

- blood transfusion science
- clinical chemistry – the study of body fluids and the adverse effects of chemicals on the body
- immunology – the study of the immune system
- haematology – the study of blood.

Cellular Sciences

- cytology – the study of cells
- histopathology – the study of human tissue
- reproductive science.

Gene Science

- genetics
- molecular pathology.

Depending on your specialism you could be:

- working in a laboratory, in a hospital, in the pharmaceutical industry, for a private company or a government department
- using computers, microscopes and other hi-tech laboratory equipment
- identifying viruses or other organisms, causing, for example, hospital-acquired infections, cancer, HIV or food poisoning
- testing samples in emergency situations, for example to find out if a patient has had a heart attack or has overdosed
- making up slides to look at under a microscope
- growing cultures of organisms that cause diseases
- communicating test results to medical staff
- keeping accurate records and producing reports.

Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Actual pay rates may vary, depending on:

- where you work
- the size of the company or organisation you work for
- the demand for the job.

Biomedical scientists in the NHS are paid on the Agenda for Change scale. The current pay scales are from April 2025. They usually start on Band 5, £33,247 to £41,424 a year. A biomedical scientist specialist is on Band 6, £41,608 to £50,702 a year.

With further qualifications and experience this could rise to Band 7, £50,861 to £59,159 a year as an advanced biomedical scientist.

Conditions

- You would spend most of your time working in a hospital laboratory.
- Hours would normally be regular but you may have to do shifts, or be on call to give emergency cover.
- You might work close to infectious viruses or bacteria but would be protected against them.
- You would have to wear protective clothing, such as a white coat, a mask and gloves.

Getting In

- You need to have an Honours degree (SCQF Level 10) in biomedical science. You normally need 4 Highers, including science subjects, for entry to the degree. You may also need English, Maths and Biology or Chemistry at National 5.
- Five Scottish universities (Abertay, Glasgow Caledonian, Robert Gordon, Strathclyde and the West of Scotland) offer integrated degrees accredited by the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS), which also meet the registration requirements of the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). HCPC registration is essential if you want to work within the NHS.
- If you have a relevant degree which is not recognised by the IBMS, you can apply for a role as an associate practitioner, then once in the role, you can have your degree assessed by the IBMS to find out which supplementary modules are required to be taken at an accredited university. You would then complete the recommended top-up modules, and follow the HCPC registration procedure as above.

As a biomedical scientist you might work in the National Health Service (NHS), the Blood Transfusion Service, private or Medical Research Council laboratories, Food Standards Agency or in pharmaceutical manufacturing.

What Does It Take

You need to be able to:

- concentrate and record your work carefully
- work as part of a team of specialists

- organise your own workload
- work accurately under pressure
- work on your own initiative and make decisions.

You should have:

- excellent attention to detail and observation skills
- good hand skills, to use delicate equipment
- respect for patient confidentiality
- a very high level of accuracy
- strong communication skills.

Training

- Training is on the job and through courses you do while working as a trainee.
- Part of your training involves completing a portfolio with evidence of your work towards the certificate.
- Training usually takes 1-2 years, depending on your degree.
- After registering with the HCPC you can continue to complete personal development by taking the IBMS Specialist Diploma which is offered in a range of disciplines.

Getting On

- Biomedical scientists usually start by working at a laboratory bench.
- With experience, you may be able to specialise or to move to quality control.
- You might supervise other staff or manage laboratory staff and services.
- You would be expected to undertake continuing professional development (CPD) to keep up to date with the latest developments and technology and maintain HCPC registration.
- with experience and knowledge you may become a registered scientist (RSci) or chartered scientist (CSsi). Advanced biomedical scientists can also apply to the HCPC as a clinical scientist. THE IBMS provide a route following the award of the IBMS Certificate of Attainment.

Contacts

Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)
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Medical Research Council (MRC)
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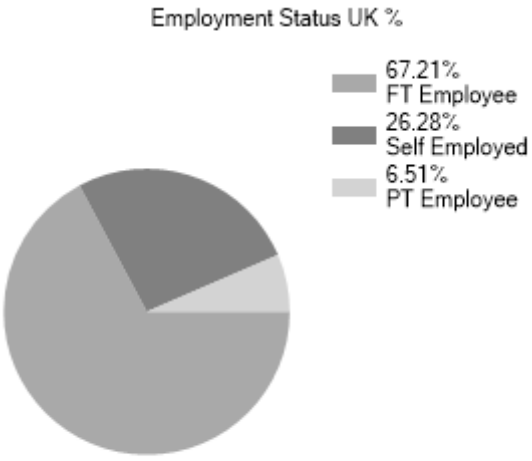
X: @The_MRC
Facebook: www.facebook.com/mrccomms

NHS Scotland Careers
Website: www.careers.nhs.scot
Website (2): jobs.scot.nhs.uk

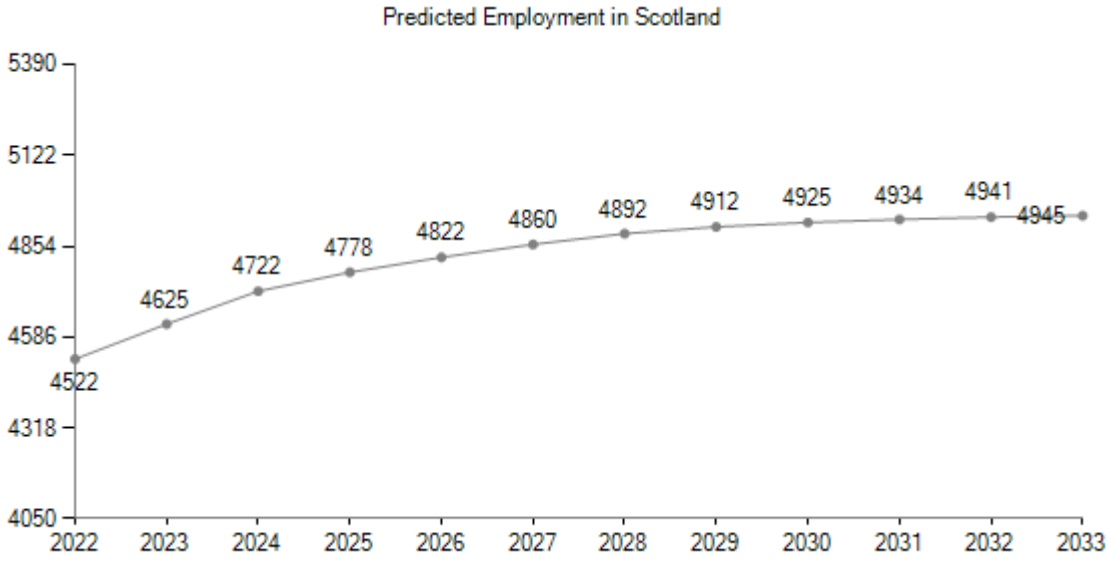
Statistics



Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

LMI data powered by LMI for All



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