

Anatomical Pathology Technologist

An anatomical pathology technologist (APT) helps a pathologist to carry out a post-mortem examination (dissecting a body to find out the cause of death). The APT also runs the mortuary on a day to day basis. They may also be referred to as mortuary technicians.

The Work

You could be:

- receiving into the mortuary, the bodies of people who have died suddenly and placing them into cold storage units
- standing by at the post-mortem operation, and passing instruments such as scalpels to the pathologist
- weighing each organ as the pathologist removes it, and taking samples for toxicology and histopathology analysis
- afterwards, helping replace all the organs in the body and reconstructing, stitching up and cleaning the body
- ensuring a high standard of presentation of the body following a post-mortem, so that the body is suitable for viewing
- cleaning and sterilising all instruments and washing down the floors and walls
- liaising with doctors, police, the procurator fiscal and funeral director and assisting with documents for death certificates
- taking out the bodies for relatives to view and perhaps identify, and giving them information and support
- keeping accurate computer records of the identity of the body and its possessions.

Pay

A trainee anatomical pathology technologist (APT) on the NHS Agenda for Change scale usually starts on Band 3, £29,061 to £31,364 a year. Once qualified this rises to Band 4, £31,492 to £34,254 a year.

Senior APTs with additional management and training duties can earn between Band 5, £34,494 to £42,977 a year and Band 6, £43,169 to £52,603 a year.

The current pay scales are from April 2025.

Conditions

- You work 37 to 40 hours a week with occasional overtime and on call work.
- You would work alongside a pathologist.
- During the post-mortem you wear full safety clothing: visor, gown, gloves and boots.
- You should be fit, since the work can be physically and mentally demanding.

Getting In

- For entry as a trainee APT, you would require 4-5 subjects at National 5, including English, Maths and a

science subject, Biology preferred.

- Knowledge of the practices of different religions is useful.
- You should have a good level of physical fitness.
- Most jobs are in NHS hospital mortuaries and local authority public mortuaries, although some are in mortuaries attached to the procurator fiscal service.

Vacancies are advertised in local press, the [NHS Jobs \(England and Wales\)](#), [NHS Scotland Recruitment](#) and [Association of Anatomical Pathology Technology](#) websites.

What Does It Take

You need to have:

- good practical skills
- excellent hand to eye co-ordination
- an awareness of different religious beliefs
- excellent communication skills
- a good knowledge of anatomy and physiology
- an awareness of health and hygiene regulations and procedures.

You need to be:

- tactful and sensitive in dealing with grieving relatives
- able to cope with upsetting sights and smells
- able to carry out administration and computer work
- able to work under pressure and to tight deadlines
- accurate with excellent attention to detail
- able to concentrate intensely for long periods.

Training

- You would start your training on the job, observing the wide range of mortuary procedures, followed by carrying out tasks under the supervision of senior APTs or pathologists.
- You would attend mandatory training in manual handling, infection control and health and safety.
- You would be required to work towards the Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH) Level 3 Diploma in Healthcare Science (Anatomical Pathology Technology). Training is divided into taught units and workplace competency units which you can complete in eighteen months.
- The training includes anatomy, physiology, post-mortem room techniques, hygiene, hazards, precautions, law and documentation.

Getting On

- The Diploma would lead to full membership of the RSPH.
- Throughout your career you will be expected to undertake continuous professional development, keeping up to date with policies, procedures and developments in the field.
- With further experience you could progress to the RSPH Level 4 Diploma. You might gain promotion to

senior posts where you are training other APTs or managing a mortuary.

- You might train in a specialist field such as assisting forensic pathologists with murder victims.
- You can also move into a related job such as funeral director.

Contacts

Association of Anatomical Pathology Technology

Tel: 020 7278 2151

Email: mail@aaptuk.org

Website: www.aaptuk.org

X: @AAPTtweets

NHS Scotland Careers

Website: www.careers.nhs.scot

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

Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH)

Tel: 020 7265 7300

Website: www.rsph.org.uk

X: @R_S_P_H

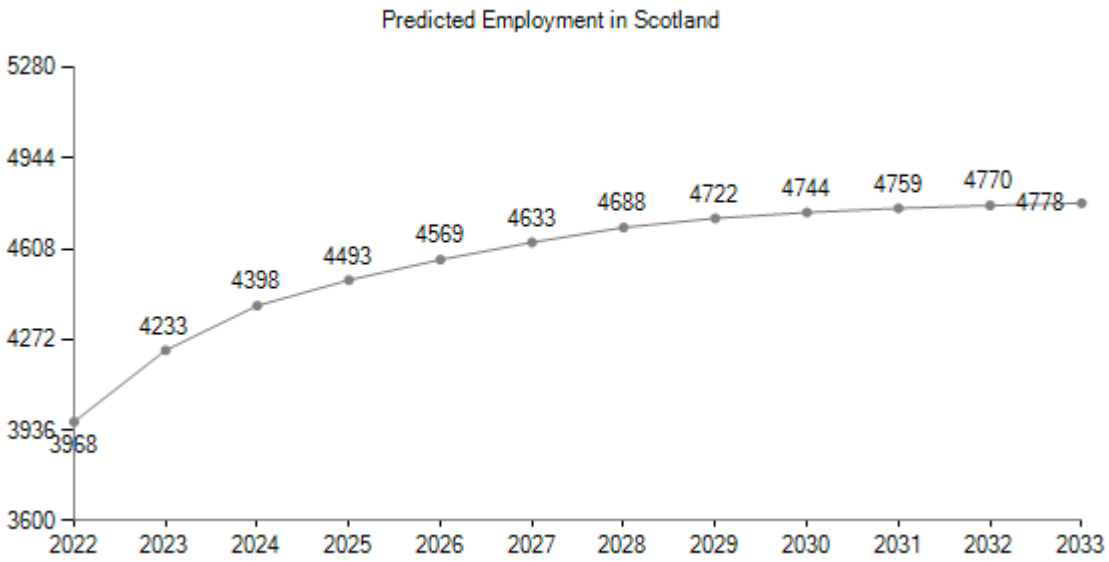
Facebook: www.facebook.com/roysocietyforpublichealth

Statistics

Employment Status : Not available this career.

Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.



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