Phlebotomist

Phlebotomists are clinical support workers who take blood samples from patients, usually in a hospital or clinic setting. They send the samples to a laboratory which are used to help in the diagnosis of illness.

The Work

You would:

- check the requests for blood samples on the computer
- explain to the patient what you are going to do and reassure nervous patients
- choose the best place to take blood (usually the inner elbow) and tie a tight band (tourniquet) which will help the vein to stand out
- select the correct colour-coded bottles (that attach to the needle) according to the number and type of tests required
- insert a hypodermic syringe into the vein, attach the bottle and draw off the blood, repeating for each type of bottle required
- label the blood sample bottle with the patient's details and send the sample to the appropriate laboratory
- apply pressure and a small plaster over the puncture wound
- enter the records on the computer
- possibly help out with other laboratory assistant duties.

Pay

Under the NHS Agenda for Change pay scales salaries for phlebotomists are on Band 2, £26,658 to £28,947 a year. Senior phlebotomists are on Band 3, £29,061 to £31,364 a year. The current pay scales are from April 2026.

Conditions

- You usually work 37.5 hours a week, Monday to Friday.
- You work in outpatient clinics, wards or in health centres.
- You might work occasional weekends or holidays on a rota basis.
- Part time work is possible.
- You might have to work under pressure, dealing with a queue of patients.
- You wear a white tunic, plastic apron and plastic gloves.
- There may be a slight risk of a needlestick injury and HIV or hepatitis infection.
- You may have to be immunised against Hepatitis B.

Getting In

- There are no formal entry requirements but you may need some subjects at National 4 or 5.
- You may get in through a Modern Apprenticeship and study for SVQ Health Care Support (Clinical) at SCQF Level 6.
- There are private companies that offer training in phlebotomy.

- 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.
- Contact your local National Health Service (NHS) area Board and ask about trainee posts.
- You can find NHS job vacancies in Scotland by visiting NHS Scotland Recruitment.

What Does It Take

You should have:

- a steady hand and good dexterity
- a responsible attitude to health, safety and hygiene
- good communication skills
- good interpersonal skills to cope with nervous patients
- a careful approach to detail
- teamworking skills
- an interest in science and technology.

You should be able to:

- follow set procedures
- handle sensitive and confidential information
- work accurately even under pressure.

Training

- Training is on the job, which can take up to six months.
- It includes practical experience and training with patients including babies, children and older people.
- It includes theoretical aspects such as codes of practice.
- You might do first aid training.
- At the end you may get a Certificate of Competence.
- You could study for the Certificate in Venepuncture.

Getting On

- You would keep your knowledge and skills up to date with in house training.
- The National Association of Phlebotomists run short training courses for working phlebotomists.
- After experience you could progress to phlebotomy supervisor, senior phlebotomist, team leader, trainer or manager.

Contacts

National Association of Phlebotomists
Tel: 020 7833 8784
Email: phlebotomy@btinternet.com
Website: www.phlebotomy.org

NHS Scotland Careers

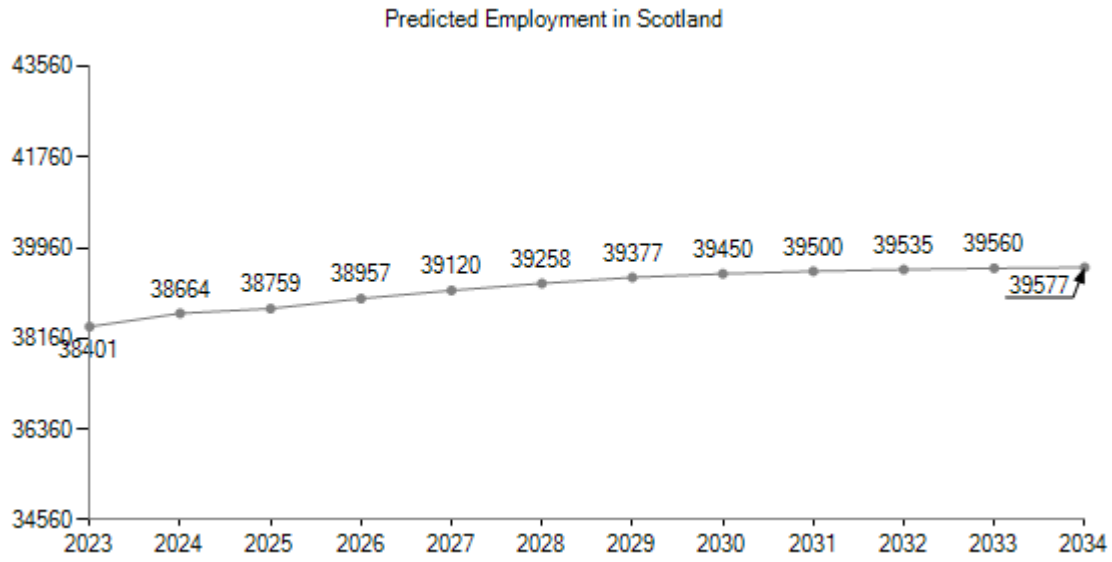
Website: www.careers.nhs.scot
Website (2): jobs.scot.nhs.uk

Statistics

Employment Status : Not available this career.

Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.



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