

## Clinical Photographer

Clinical photographers work closely with doctors and other health care professionals. They produce photographs, videos and other graphical images for use in patient care, medical education and research. They are sometimes known as medical illustrators or medical photographers.

### The Work

You could be:

- in the ward, using a digital camera to take photographs of a patient's condition to help doctors diagnose treatment
- taking a series of photographs of a patient's progress after treatment over a period of time
- in the operating theatre, recording surgical procedures during an operation using a video or digital camera
- taking photographs of non-accidental injuries (forensics) or recording post-mortem examinations in the mortuary
- using specialist equipment and techniques, for example 3-dimensional imaging, to record the structures of body parts such as the eye (ophthalmic imaging)
- using graphics or video editing software to produce presentation slides and animations for teaching and educational material
- making videos to show problems with patients' mobility or to demonstrate surgical techniques
- creating posters or leaflets for patient health information using graphic design software
- keeping up to date with new technology and trends.

### Pay

Clinical photographers who work in the NHS are called healthcare scientists, and are on the Agenda for Change salary scales. They generally start on Band 5, £34,494 to £42,977 a year. With experience this rises to Band 6, £43,169 to £52,603 a year. The current pay scales are from April 2025.

### Conditions

- You work mostly in hospital wards, operating theatres and clinics and in labs, offices or a studio.
- Working in a clinical setting you would have to wear protective clothing and follow strict hygiene rules.
- You would work around 37 hours a week Monday to Friday, with possible overtime and on call time.
- You normally work as part of a team, working closely with doctors, nurses and scientists or other healthcare professionals.
- You may sometimes work with patients who have distressing conditions or be faced with upsetting situations.
- You might have to carry around heavy photographic and lighting equipment between different departments in the hospital.

### Getting In

- You first need to study for a degree (SCQF Level 9-10) in photography, recognised by the British Institute

of Professional Photography, and then apply for a trainee post.

- Entry requirements for a degree course in photography usually require 4 Highers plus National 5 English, or an HND in Photography. Check individual institutions for entry requirements.
- Studying for a Foundation Apprenticeship Creative and Digital Media in S5 and S6, can provide work experience and may be accepted in place of a non-essential Higher for entry to a degree course. Entry requirements vary between colleges, but you usually require some subjects at National 5 including English and Maths.
- For some posts you might need a driving licence, to travel between hospitals.
- 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.

As well as the NHS, you might also find jobs with publishing companies of medical textbooks or DVDs, or the departments of medical illustration in medical schools.

## What Does It Take

You should have:

- an interest in and knowledge of anatomy and physiology
- good observational skills
- an eye for detail and accuracy
- good IT skills and basic knowledge of computer graphics software
- a keen interest in photography
- a strong stomach – not be squeamish
- a good understanding of health and safety procedures and legislation.

You also need:

- good written and spoken communication skills
- tact and empathy for dealing with patients
- to be able to work well under pressure
- the ability to work well as part of a team.

## Training

- Once in post you would study towards a postgraduate qualification (SCQF Level 11) in clinical photography on a distance learning basis.
- Staffordshire University offers the Postgraduate Certificate in Clinical Photography by distance learning.
- Once qualified, you gain professional membership of the [Institute of Medical Illustrators \(IMI\)](#) and can apply for entry onto the register run by the [Academy for Healthcare Science \(AHCS\)](#). This is necessary for some employers including the NHS.
- You will be able to keep your skills and knowledge up to date by taking training courses through the IMI's Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programme.
- You could specialise in areas such as ophthalmic, surgical or pathological photography.

## Getting On

- You could get promotion to senior photographer.
- With further experience, you could move onto managing a department.
- You could teach the subject or be involved in staff training.

## Contacts

### **Institute of Medical Illustrators**

Website: [www.imi.org.uk](http://www.imi.org.uk)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/amidotorg](https://www.facebook.com/amidotorg)

### **NHS Scotland Careers**

Website: [www.careers.nhs.scot](http://www.careers.nhs.scot)

Website (2): [jobs.scot.nhs.uk](http://jobs.scot.nhs.uk)

## Statistics

Employment Status : Not available this career.

### Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

Predicted Employment Statistics : Not available this career.