

Surgeon

Surgeons diagnose and treat disease or disorders in patients that need surgical treatment in hospital. They specialise in different types of surgery dealing with specific parts of the body such as the heart and lungs or the brain and nervous systems.

The Work

The main areas of surgical specialty are:

- **cardiothoracic** – heart, lungs and oesophagus, including transplantation
- **otolaryngology or ENT** – ear, nose and throat region
- **general** – one of the most common specialties, dealing mostly with the abdomen and torso regions
- **neurosurgery** – brain, skull and nervous systems
- **oral and maxillofacial** – mouth, jaws, face and neck
- **trauma and orthopaedic** – bones, joints and muscles
- **paediatric** – illness, disease and trauma in children, ranging from babies to teenagers
- **plastic and reconstructive** – restoring normal form and function in all parts of the body, including repairing damaged skin and tissue
- **urology** – kidney, bladder and urinary tracts, and the male reproductive system
- **vascular** – the veins and arteries.

You could be:

- doing rounds of the hospital wards, visiting patients before or after surgery
- assessing patients in an outpatient clinic, preparing them for surgery and explaining the surgical procedure
- arranging for tests to be carried out on patients to help diagnose any treatment
- working in an operating theatre on anaesthetised patients, carrying out a wide range of surgical procedures, from transplanting organs to removing diseased tissue
- carrying out emergency surgery, treating people brought in by ambulance or through accident and emergency
- planning or rearranging the next day's operating list and informing patients of rescheduled surgery
- doing paperwork, such as issuing discharge letters, dealing with new referrals or planning follow-up appointments
- preparing presentations and organising unit health care team meetings
- teaching medical students, either as tutorials or round-the-bed teaching.

Pay

As of October 2024, in most junior posts (Foundation Year 1) you would earn a basic salary of £34,500 a year, increasing to a basic of £42,794 a year in Foundation Year 2. In specialist training this can rise to between £45,050 and £60,199 a year (depending on the length of training).

Training salaries increase between 20% and 50% with supplements, depending on the number of extra hours and

intensity of work involved. A doctor in the new specialty doctor grade earns between £45,504 and £71,550 a year.

A consultant's salary ranges from £107,144 to £1142,369 a year.

Conditions

- Your time will be split between working in theatre, ward visits and the outpatient clinic.
- The amount of patients you see will vary according to your specialty or size of unit. Orthopaedic and trauma surgery and general surgery normally see the largest variation.
- Hours can be long, which can include weekend and evening work (usually on a rota basis). You would also be on call for emergency operations.
- You would work with a team of healthcare specialists, such as anaesthetists, radiologists, physiotherapists and pathologists.
- You might spend around 3-5 hours a day in theatre. Times vary for operations, lasting between 6-8 hours for major surgery or as little as 30 minutes for minor surgery.
- The work can be physically and mentally demanding.
- You might sometimes have to sleep at the hospital when on call.
- Part time or flexible hours are possible.
- You would usually wear a uniform consisting of a tunic and trousers (scrubs) and sometimes other protective clothing such as protective gown, a mask or gloves.

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.
- If you have 5 good Highers but not more than one science subject, the University of Dundee runs a 6-year course which includes a pre-medical year.
- 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 2025 you must register and book a test before 19 September 2024 and sit the test by 26 September 2024. 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 2024 for entry in 2025.

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 Surgeon (see 'Training' below). You can find work as a surgeon with both the National Health Service (NHS) and in private hospitals.

What Does It Take

You need to have:

- good hand to eye co-ordination and manual dexterity
- excellent communication skills – to deal with people from all backgrounds and of all ages
- the ability to work under pressure
- an empathetic and non-judgemental approach
- high professional standards.

You also need to be:

- dedicated – to put in many years of work and training
- able to take responsibility
- confident – to make decisions based on your own specialist knowledge
- able to work as part of a team
- flexible – to deal with emergencies and changing priorities.

Training

- When you complete your medical degree, you enter a 2-year Foundation Programme where you will work in a wide range of specialties. By the end of your first year you register with the GMC.
- This is followed by 2-year Core Surgical Training. This could be linked to a particular specialty or could be generic which allows you to gain the required competencies to progress onto Specialty Training.
- You would then apply for a post in Specialty Training (ST), where you will gain the necessary skills and knowledge to sit your Specialty Certificate examinations. This takes up to 6 years depending on your specialty.
- You will be assessed throughout your training, and if you meet standards, you will be awarded a Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT). This will allow you to join the GMC Specialist Register.
- Throughout your working life you will take courses to keep up to date with new developments in medical science, known as continued professional development (CPD).

Getting On

- After completing your specialty training, you would apply for consultancy posts. Entry is very competitive.
- You might manage a department or lead a team.
- It can help if you are able to move around the country or abroad.
- You might move into teaching or research.

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](https://twitter.com/TheBMA)
Facebook: www.facebook.com/TheBMA

General Medical Council (GMC)

Email: gmc@gmc-uk.org
Website: www.gmc-uk.org
X: [@gmcuk](https://twitter.com/gmcuk)
Facebook: www.facebook.com/GMCUK

Graduate Medical School Admissions Test (GAMSAT)

Email: gamsat@acer.org
Website: gamsat.acer.org
X: [@GAMSAT_ACER](https://twitter.com/GAMSAT_ACER)
Facebook: www.facebook.com/Gamsat-ACER-Graduate-Medical-School-Admissions-Test-252785548206744

NHS Scotland Careers

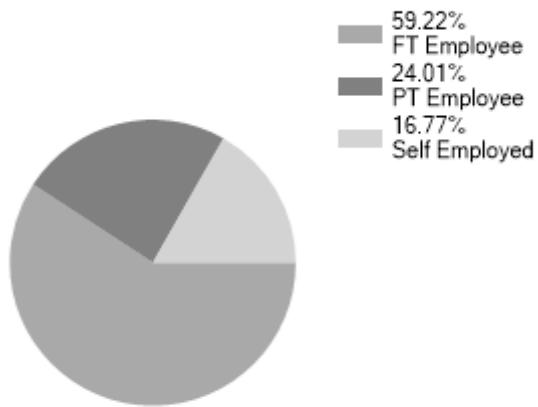
Website: www.careers.nhs.scot
Website (2): jobs.scot.nhs.uk

University Clinical Aptitude Test (UCAT)

Tel: 0161 855 7409
Website: www.ucat.ac.uk
X: [@UCATOfficial](https://twitter.com/UCATOfficial)
Facebook: www.facebook.com/UCATOfficial

Statistics

Employment Status UK %

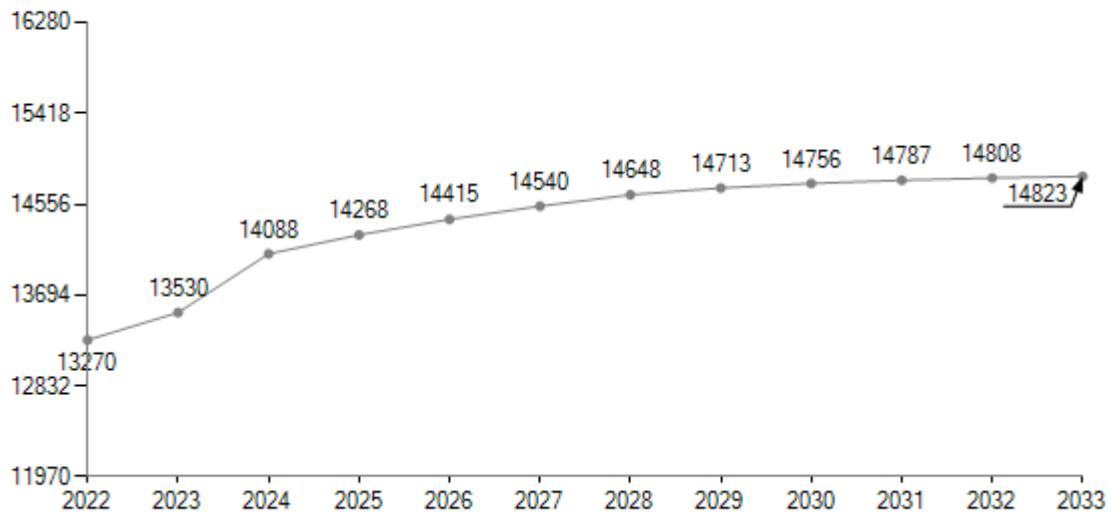


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

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

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [Lightcast](#)