

**Scientist Training Programme (STP)**  
**Principles for in-service training routes**  
**for 2020**

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## Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance for

- current NHS employees who wish to apply for the Scientist Training Programme (STP) while retaining their substantive post
- employers wishing to put forward an existing employee for the STP
- commissioners considering applications for the STP, from existing NHS employees

## Background

'Modernising Scientific Careers: the UK Way Forward' (2010) set out the UK wide policy framework for modernising the training, education and career framework for healthcare science. The framework defined the various career levels of scientists in the health services. It also provided details on how existing staff, could gain the training needed to change from one role to another. For example, from Practitioner to Scientist, or from Scientist to Senior/Consultant Scientist.

Existing NHS employees who enter the STP on this basis, are referred to as '**in-service**' trainees. NHS employees can still apply for a '**direct entry**' training post but would need to resign from their current post if successful<sup>1</sup>.

## Principles for the in-service route

In-service candidates need the support of their employer so that current and future workforce needs are considered.

A candidate

- must hold a current contract of employment in the NHS specialism, for which they are applying
- will enter the STP through local commissioning processes, and application to the national recruitment process
- will be employed and salaried by their employer throughout the programme
- will follow the whole programme and must be released from service duties, as appropriate, to undertake their training

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<sup>1</sup> Direct entry trainees are selected through a national recruitment process led by the National School of Healthcare Science (NSHCS). Successful candidates are employed on three-year fixed term training contracts.

## Conditions

A candidate must

- be part of the planned workforce numbers required for training, and have occupied an existing NHS salaried post, within the same department as the training post, prior to training
- have permission from their employer to undertake the required academic and work-based training requirements
- apply through the same national process as the direct entry candidates; including any online tests. They will not go through a shortlisting process as they are not in competition for their current post.
- go through the same interview process as the direct entry candidates
- be trained in a department accredited by the School as an STP training provider
- be assessed using an e-portfolio and/or any other monitoring and quality assurance processes used by the School
- sit the Objective Structured Final Assessment (OSFA)
- complete the postgraduate academic programme (academic fees are paid by Health Education England)

## Considerations for the employer and the in-service candidate

The following points should be used as a checklist for Commissioners prior to agreeing in-service training places.

The employer must agree and confirm

- continued employment of the candidate during the training, still subject to NHS terms and conditions<sup>2</sup>
- awareness of the programme requirements and management of any HR, rota or staffing issues caused by the candidate's attendance at university and/or their participation in any required rotations

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<sup>2</sup> If the trainee was previously employed at a higher level than the AfC Band 6 required by the nationally recognised job description, the local employer is responsible for considering any issues of pay protection for the duration of the training

- that the candidate's assessor/supervisor/s attend an approved 'Train the Trainer' programme, that they have the capacity and time to undertake the role, and that the department has the facilities needed to deliver all the required learning outcomes; either from their own resources or in partnership with others
- release of the candidate from clinical service for study and training as appropriate, so they have the same training experience as the direct entry trainees
- that internal processes for providing access to training and development opportunities, are fair and equitable in accordance with local HR policies
- that the training forms part of their overall commissioning and workforce plans, and that the employee (candidate) is an existing member of the workforce (i.e. not employed solely to undertake the training)
- that if unsuccessful in the admissions process, the employee (candidate) will remain in their current post, or employed according to the terms of agreement made with their employer for this eventuality. If as a trainee they fail to progress successfully and have to leave the training programme early, they will return to their current post or employment, according to the terms of the agreement made with their employer in accepting the training place.
- the employer should establish an agreement with the candidate on these points before the candidate is put forward for the training programme

The in-service candidate must

- have obtained confirmation of support from their Head of Department (or responsible fund-holder) to undertake the training, including any necessary rotational placements, and to attend the academic programme
- be aware of any potential additional costs to themselves associated with undertaking the programme. For example, travel and subsistence if on placement away from their home trust

- be aware of the application and admissions criteria and processes, with which they will need to comply (including interview and online testing) and that their training place is dependent on these criteria being met
- be aware of the probable provider of the academic programme and have obtained confirmation from them, that their qualifications meet the admissions criteria of the university. If the university does not accept that the candidate's qualifications meet the entry requirements, the application cannot proceed.

Please refer to our website for up-to-date details of the minimum academic requirements for entry into the STP.