

Medical Microbiology

Why choose Medical Microbiology?

Unlike many other countries, where practice is entirely laboratory-based, Medical Microbiology in the UK is the specialty that bridges and encompasses the clinical management of infection and the intelligent application of scientific analysis. Consultant medical microbiologists work in teams involving all aspects of the investigation, management and prevention of infection. Every day is different and full of variety – with urgent clinical problems in an individual, concerns about infection control or potential outbreaks and discussions about the best application of new techniques in the laboratory. Microbiologists are a resource for other specialties that play a proactive role in the management of infected patients which could be very challenging but is always satisfying. Job opportunities for qualified microbiologists exceed demand at present and the UK supply will not meet the growing demand for microbiologists as infection continues to play such a major part in modern healthcare.

As a trainee what can I expect from my training programme?

From August 2015 a new four year curriculum replaced the previous curriculum, with entry at ST3 level for which Core Medical Training (CMT with MRCP) will be essential entry criteria. There are also joint training posts in Medical Microbiology with Infectious Diseases (ID) over five years. There are two stages in the new MM or MMID Curriculum. Trainees in Years 1 (ST3) and 2 (ST4) will undertake 'Combined Infection Training (CIT)' Curriculum and in the following two or three years 'Higher Specialty Training (HST)' Curriculum. CIT is now delivered in the North East through integrated placements in MM, ID and Medical Virology. The CIT Curriculum has been designed to reflect the modernisation of UK Microbiology and Virology Laboratory Services and the need to train infection specialists with a sound knowledge of both clinical and laboratory practice. Currently the Royal Victoria Infirmary and James Cook University Hospital are the approved ID training sites.

You will gain a breadth of experience in selected and supervised hospital posts throughout the area in large university acute hospitals, community hospitals and district general hospitals to ensure you get the training you need to give you a rewarding future career. The college examination success rates in Medical Microbiology have been excellent. All our trainees over the last several years consistently achieved their CCT time to secure a consultant job, many within the region itself.

What our trainees say:

I love training in Microbiology in this region. It's a fascinating and varied specialty where you can feel like your advice really makes a difference to patients. There are so many specialties in the Newcastle hospitals, so there's lots of opportunity to get involved in complex and unusual cases, including cardiothoracic transplants and severely immunocompromised children. We work closely with the consultants here, who are approachable and supportive. The non-residential on-calls can be quite busy though. Thanks to the input of my educational supervisor I've become much more organised, which has really helped when preparing for exams and fitting in extra projects like audits and conference presentations around day to day service provision. I moved to the north for my training, and I enjoy working and living here so much that I'm aiming to stay in the region as a consultant after my CCT.

I have found the consultants in microbiology friendly and very approachable at all times (even 2.00 a.m. when I've been stuck on call!). I have a fantastic, very supportive and passionate educational supervisor who has been a great help in my development within the specialty and with future career planning.