

RUSSELL GROUP

Education for a healthy future

Working with partners across the UK, Russell Group universities are helping build the NHS workforce to protect the health of individuals, families and communities

Russell Group universities train the nurses, doctors, dentists, technicians and other professionals the NHS needs to cut waiting lists and bring advanced technologies and treatments into everyday use. Our healthcare programmes are gateways to a career of public service, unlocking opportunity for the individual and levelling up healthcare access in communities. We also offer courses to new and existing staff in areas such as digital healthcare and innovation, helping to develop leaders who can realise opportunities to transform their organisations.

Dedicated people are at the heart of the NHS. Increasing our workforce in line with the ambitions set out in the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan, and equivalent long-term strategies in the devolved administrations, will be crucial for the future of our health services. But growing the UK's health workforce cannot be achieved by continuing to do health education in the same way – education and training must evolve to meet the challenges ahead. **Our universities are working to develop creative and innovative solutions to overcome barriers to expansion and stand ready to work with government, the NHS and other partners to help deliver these ambitions.**

A new medical training taskforce could bring universities, NHS trusts, relevant professional bodies and local and central government together in workforce planning and implementation to ensure a strategic, collaborative and coordinated approach.



Training 3
out of 4
doctors &
dentists



Educating
17,000
nurses &
midwives



Employing
4,200
clinical
academics

Healthcare training

Russell Group universities represent 22 of the 46 medical schools in the UK and collectively train 3 out of 4 medicine and dentistry students.¹ Three of our universities are also partnering with other universities to deliver programmes in areas with fewer doctors.

Our medical schools are delivering innovative programmes informed by cutting-edge research and in state-of-the-art facilities. University-wide faculty share ideas and expertise with students to find answers to scientific questions and tackle societal health challenges. Students learn in practice-based environments that unlock successful careers in the public sector.

It takes hard work and resilience to prepare for a career in a healthcare profession. Our courses deliver a diverse range of skills which can lead to long-term success as part of a dedicated healthcare team, crucial for increasing the resilience of our healthcare workforce in line with the ambitions set out in the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan (LTWP).

Trainee doctors can enrol onto a five or six-year undergraduate, or four-year graduate entry programme at our universities. Some six-year courses allow students to incorporate a year of research into their programme, while others are specifically designed for students from under-represented backgrounds or those who didn't quite meet the requirements for direct entry into medicine and require additional support in their first two years.

More than 4,200 clinical academics are employed at our universities, working across healthcare providers in a variety of specialisms.² These individuals balance their time between treating patients, conducting research that contributes to medical breakthroughs, and training the next generation of clinicians. Growing this workforce will be crucial for the success of the NHS LTWP.

Our universities also teach around 17,000 nurses and midwives. A further 40,000 students are enrolled on courses to become healthcare technicians, pharmacists, pathologists, and other professions in allied health subjects.³

There are many routes into healthcare service and pathways to specialise in different aspects of care. As an alternative to a traditional degree pathway, **our universities also deliver apprenticeships and CPD/short courses which provide the opportunity for healthcare professionals to re-train or upskill.**

- 17 Russell Group universities deliver degree apprenticeships and 16% of students on these courses are on specialised health degree apprenticeships.⁴
- In England, 61% of senior leader apprentices are in the public sector, including the NHS.⁵ These courses are helping senior leaders develop the skills needed to transform our public services.

At the **University of Sheffield** students can find routes into nursing with both a Nursing Associate programme and an 18-month Nursing top-up programme, the latter offering specialist knowledge and clinical skills for healthcare professionals wanting to embark on a career as an adult nurse. These apprenticeships are accredited by the Nursing and Midwifery Council with teaching split into work-based learning, university days and alternative placements giving students the opportunity to learn while they earn.



Expansion through partnerships

Universities looking to increase the number of students they train can be limited by physical teaching space and placement capacity. That is why some Russell Group universities have established innovative new partnerships in under-doctored areas, including:

Lincoln Medical School

The Lincoln Medical School is a partnership between the **University of Nottingham** and the University of Lincoln, which currently delivers Nottingham's Medicine and Medicine with Foundation Year degree programmes to a cohort of around 400 undergraduate students. The partnership with Lincoln looks to address future shortages of doctors by offering training that will encourage graduates to complete their junior doctor training locally and apply for jobs in the region. Lincolnshire's hospitals serve one of England's largest and most dispersed rural populations of more than 730,000 people, and the establishment of a medical school in the area will benefit generations to come.

The Pears Cumbria School of Medicine

Imperial has undertaken a philanthropic collaboration with the University of Cumbria to establish the Pears Cumbria School of Medicine. The four-year graduate entry programme with a bespoke curriculum informed by research programmes is aimed at addressing many of the county's unique health challenges. The region has notably low recruitment rates, with the local trust experiencing 42% consultancy vacancy rates, 80% vacancy rates for GPs, and one doctor to every 8,000 patients. With the University of Cumbria already having well-established programmes for nursing, midwifery and paramedics, the new partnership opens up more opportunities to study medicine in the North West, where there is a greater capacity for placements, and provide a steady stream of trained doctors for the area.

Innovation in education

Russell Group universities increasingly use innovative technology and practice to enhance the efficiency of course delivery to overcome barriers like limited placement capacity and physical space for teaching. Our education offer must also reflect the evolving demands of employers and the workplace, which is why our universities embed innovative teaching methods across healthcare programmes and work closely with the NHS to transform the way medicine is taught and delivered, such as:

Baines Family Tree at the University of Leeds

Baines Family Tree is an award-winning innovative teaching resource within healthcare programmes delivered at the **University of Leeds**. Developed by nursing specialists at the university, this interactive eLearning resource enables students to apply theory to practice more easily. Using scenario-based information for 40 members of a four-generation multi-cultural family, students can interact with an authentic virtual family in real-time to critically think about preventative and long-term healthcare planning.

The Florence Nightingale and Rose Thompson Simulation Suites at the University of Liverpool

The **University of Liverpool** has invested more than £1 million in new state-of-the-art teaching facilities in the School of Allied Health Professions and Nursing. Named after influential women from the field of healthcare, who also have links to the university, the new facilities represent a significant milestone in the university's commitment to excellence in clinical education and student experience. Highlights include a ward space for students to practice clinical skills in a simulated learning environment, sophisticated training mannequins, an interactive digital anatomy table, an X-Ray and CT-scanner room that replicates the ones health professionals use in hospitals and a model flat to simulate home visits and community assessments.

HoloScenarios at the University of Cambridge

Using life-like holographic patients, this innovative training application was developed by Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, in partnership with the **University of Cambridge** and LA-based tech company GigXR. Mixed reality is an increasingly recognised and useful method of simulator training which gives trainees the opportunity to learn in a unique environment, able to practice real-time decision making and treatment choices. By embracing new technology, universities can provide more flexible, scalable and cost-effective training without heavy resource demands of more traditional simulation which can make immersive training financially prohibitive.

Healthcare in the community

Russell Group universities share an ambition to work with and for their local people, communities and partners to improve the health and well-being of residents in their region. They are working to address local health and social care needs and inequalities through initiatives such as:

Cynon Valley Primary Care Dental Unit

An estimated 10,000 individuals do not have access to a dentist in Cynon Valley in south Wales, which is why in 2012 the Primary Care Dental Unit was established to provide a wide range of free dental care. The Unit facilitates high-quality, on-the-job training for final year students at **Cardiff University** under the supervision of educators at the state-of-the-art facility based in Mountain Ash in the Cynon Valley. The initiative not only brings community dental services to patients in an area of high need, it also gives students the critical practical experience of key clinical and softer patient-facing skills needed before they qualify and go on to positions in practices.

WAVE Trauma Centre at Queen's University Belfast

Widows Against Violence Empower (WAVE) is the largest cross-community victims' group in Northern Ireland, a beacon of light for many people coping with the aftermath of traumatic bereavement and/or injury as a result of conflict. The School of Nursing and Midwifery at **Queen's University Belfast** and the WAVE trauma centre collaborate to deliver an undergraduate degree programme in Psychological Trauma. Together, they also deliver an array of community education training courses including in the fields of trauma, loss and growth, which have had great success with first responders working in the community. Courses are led by a group of educational specialists with a combined background in community education, trauma and addiction, and community relations training and research.

¹ Qualifiers, [HESA Student data](#), 2022/23 (2024)

² This figure is for FTE staff. Data from [Clinical Academic survey](#), Medical Schools Council (2024)

³ [Higher Education Student Statistics](#), HESA (2024)

⁴ This was the proportion of new entrants enrolling on these programmes. [Apprenticeships 2023/24](#), DfE (2024)

⁵ [Management Apprenticeships briefing](#), UVAC (2023)