



LIFE AND HEALTH SCIENCES

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Welcome

This factsheet, published by the DfE Careers Occupational Information Unit (COIU), summarises the key points from the **Life and Health Sciences careers bulletin**.



Life and Health Sciences is the fastest growing sector in our economy, and a significant provider of highly productive, good jobs across the region.

**Source: DfE Life and Health Sciences Sectoral Action Plan*

Could a career in Life and Health Sciences be for me?

Transferable Skills and Qualities

TRANSFERABLE SKILLS



Analytical Thinking



Communication Skills



Project and
Time Management



Problem-Solving



Adaptability



Scientific and
Clinical Knowledge



Teamwork



IT and Digital Skills



Research and
Analytical Skills



Attention to Detail

TRANSFERABLE QUALITIES



Curious



Passionate
about helping
others



Inquisitive



Open-minded



Resilient



Eager to learn
and committed
to continuous
learning



Objective



Ethically
responsible



Persistent



Logical



Strong integrity



Empathetic

The graphic on this page was created with help from the contributors to this guide. It gives a quick overview of important skills and qualities for working in this industry. It's not a complete list, but a helpful starting point.



Did you know?

- ▶ Life and Health Sciences careers use science, technology and healthcare skills to **improve people's lives**. Roles can include working in hospitals, laboratories or clinical research settings, using computers and digital technology in healthcare, working in regulatory or quality roles, as well as positions focused on bringing new products and research to market.
- ▶ Life and Health Sciences is the fastest growing sector in our economy. It accounts for more than **2.5%** of our economic output and generates a Gross Value Add (GVA) of approximately **£1.2 billion per annum***.
- ▶ **79.7%** of jobs in the Life and Health Science Priority Sector are classified as Good Jobs. This is above the Northern Ireland average for all jobs (**69.0%**)*.

*Source: [DfE Life and Health Sciences Sectoral Action Plan](#)

**Source: [Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency \(NISRA\) – Good Jobs by Priority Sectors 2025](#). For this analysis a 'good job' is defined as a job that meets all three of the following criteria: 1. A permanent contract 2. Is not a zero hour contract 3. Earns at least the Real Living Wage (RLW) (£12.60 for 2025).

Advice for those considering a career in Life and Health Sciences

General Advice

Find your 'Why?'. Whether it's a passion for helping patients, a love of discovery, or an interest in improving public health, **knowing why you want to work in this field** will keep you motivated through challenges.

Stay curious and keep learning. This is a sector where knowledge evolves rapidly – from new medical technologies to breakthroughs in genetics and AI. A mindset of lifelong learning will carry you further than any single qualification.

Advice to school/ college students and apprentices

If you're interested in a career in this sector, it's a great idea to **explore the subjects and qualifications needed for roles that appeal to you**. If you're still deciding, choosing a range of STEM subjects at GCSE can help keep your options open and give you flexibility as your interests change and develop.

Keep developing your transferable skills, such as **problem-solving and teamwork, through your hobbies, interests and extracurricular activities**. These skills are valuable now and will continue to support you in the future, in any Life and Health Sciences career.

Advice to higher education students/ graduates

Research employers directly. Many Life and Health Sciences employers advertise vacancies on their own company websites alongside using job boards and recruiters, so it's worth checking company careers pages regularly.

Build practical experience. Internships, research projects or volunteering in healthcare or laboratory settings can strengthen your skills, build confidence and enhance your employability.

Consider alternative routes. Careers in areas such as regulatory affairs, medical communications, medical sales or bioinformatics can offer rewarding options for those who want to use their scientific knowledge without working in a laboratory.

Advice to career changers

Changing careers is a **significant step**, so it's important to make well informed decisions. Consider arranging informational conversations with people working in Life and Health Sciences—many are happy to share honest insights about their roles, including what they enjoy and the challenges they face, which are a normal part of any job.

Carry out **research into the range of programmes** and support available, including DfE initiatives such as **Skill Up**, which offers free accredited courses for eligible adults. Exploring different programmes can help you identify options that best support your skills development and career goals.

The above infographic is a shortened version of the 'Advice for those Considering a Career in Life and Health Sciences' infographic in the [Life and Health Sciences careers bulletin](#).