Medical Affairs Development Programme

An overview of possible topics for a tailored, à la carte programme

Developing within Medical Affairs

The role of Medical Affairs is changing rapidly. Medical professionals are evolving from scientific experts into strategic partners: within the brand team, towards hospitals and in collaboration with stakeholders. Our programme helps you translate that strategy into impact in daily practice.

Below you will find an overview of possible topics. Choose what fits your learning needs; every topic can be taken on its own and freely combined into a personal programme. The scope of the programme is tailored to the participant's choices and wishes, prior knowledge and experience.

Questions this programme answers

- What is the role of Medical Affairs today and tomorrow, and how do I position myself within it?
- How do I make a difference as a medical professional within the brand team, and how do I translate medical insights into the brand plan?
- How is healthcare financed and reimbursed, and where can Medical Affairs contribute to market access?
- How is a hospital organised, who is involved in decision-making, and where does my contribution add the most value?
- How do I build lasting, valuable relationships with experts and KOLs?
- How do I make the value of a treatment for the patient visible and measurable?
- Which medical activities can I initiate, how do I support them with a business case, and how do I measure success?
- How do I lead medical projects from idea to result, even without formal authority?
- How do I adapt my communication to different conversation partners, internally and externally?
- How do I make sure that what I have learned takes root in my daily practice?

Strategic Medical Affairs knowledge

These themes give you an in-depth understanding of the evolving role of Medical Affairs and help you translate strategy into effective action in practice.

The role of Medical Affairs and its strategic contribution

- Medical Affairs and the MSL role: trends, transitions and responsibilities
- Connecting the medical plan to the brand strategy
- Internal stakeholders and cross-functional collaboration

Creating value for the physician: brand plan, key account plan and medical plan

How do you create value for the physician from a medical perspective, in line with the brand strategy?

- Introduction to the brand plan

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- Shaping the brand strategy
- The strategic key account plan
- The connection between the brand plan, medical plan and account plan
- How Medical Affairs contributes to optimising the brand plan: medical insights

Healthcare financing and reimbursement

- A holistic view of healthcare financing in the Netherlands: funding flows and allocation
- Key stakeholders and their influence
- Reimbursement processes and dossiers
- The contribution of Medical Affairs to market access and medical strategy
- Hospital funding: how is a hospital financed, and what role do health insurers and healthcare procurement play?
- DBC care products (the Dutch DRG system): structure and registration, and the impact of your product: how does it fit within the DBC and what does it mean for the hospital's funding and budget?
- Add-ons and the financing of (expensive) medicines within the hospital budget

Hospitals, experts and DMU collaboration

- Hospital structure, functions and decision-making
- Stakeholder mapping and DMU analysis
- Building partnerships and strategic alignment
- Patient focus and collaboration with clinical experts
- How financial considerations and budgets influence decision-making within the hospital

Value-Based Healthcare

- VBHC principles and their application in practice
- Embedding VBHC in the medical strategy
- Measuring and demonstrating value

Data, medical tactics and project management

- Data-driven insights, KPIs and outcomes
- Planning and executing medical projects
- Risk analysis, role clarity and team development
- Translating strategy into daily practice

The medical business case

- Building a medical business case
- Anticipating the information needed
- Managing expectations
- How does the project fit the customer and the internal organisation?
- Coherence with other projects, internally and externally
- Presenting the business case convincingly to the management team

Managing medical tactics

From medical plan to concrete, measurable activities in the field.

- Translating medical strategy into tactics and activities
- Prioritising: which tactics deliver the most value for physician and patient?
- Planning, budgeting and alignment with the brand team and key account team
- Execution and collaboration with internal and external stakeholders
- Measuring impact with KPIs and adjusting based on medical insights

Medical Affairs and MSL competencies

The core professional competencies of the MSL and medical advisor: the skills that make the difference as a scientific conversation partner.

Discussing scientific data

- Critically reading and appraising a publication or study
- Translating the key message into the physician's clinical practice
- Structuring a scientific conversation: from question to dialogue
- Handling critical questions and conflicting data
- Working within the boundaries of laws, regulations and applicable codes of conduct

Getting the most out of a congress

- Preparation: programme analysis, prioritising and planning meetings with experts
- During the congress: attending sessions with focus, gathering insights and building contacts
- After the congress: reporting, sharing insights with the team and following up with experts
- Using the congress as part of your medical plan

Organising advisory boards

- Defining objectives and questions in line with the medical plan
- Selecting participants and composing the advisory board
- Preparation, agenda and moderation
- Compliance, contracting and transparency
- Translating outcomes into insights and concrete actions

Managing Investigator Initiated Trials (IITs)

- What is an IIT, and how does it differ from a company-sponsored study?
- The process: from application and review to approval
- Support during the study: roles, responsibilities and points of contact
- Laws, regulations and compliance
- Rights and obligations of the sponsor, and the role of the company supporting the study
- Do's and don'ts for the sponsor and for Medical Affairs: where is the line between supporting and steering?
- Publication and making use of the results

Introduction to medical statistics

- Basic concepts: p-value, confidence interval and power
- Study designs and their level of evidence
- Effect measures: relative and absolute risk, NNT and hazard ratio
- Pitfalls in interpreting study results
- Explaining statistics clearly in conversations with physicians

Personal effectiveness

Alongside professional knowledge and competencies, personal effectiveness largely determines your impact: how you communicate, lead projects and collaborate.

Communication skills

Effective communication is the foundation of every role in Medical Affairs: with physicians, with experts and with your own colleagues.

Core communication skills

- A conversation model: opening, discussing the objective and closing
- Asking questions, listening, summarising and probing further
- Handling objections and resistance
- Follow-up and arranging next meetings
- Communicating by phone and in writing
- Recognising body language and the power of mirroring

Communicating effectively with your target audience

- Who am I, and how do I relate to my target audience?
- Insight into personality styles based on a recognisable model
- Agile communication: adapting your style to your conversation partner
- Practising difficult conversations: making and holding people to agreements, delivering bad news, asking for a favour

Access and visibility

- How do I get an appointment with an expert or KOL?
- Reflection and translation to your own practice

Practical medical project management

Leading medical projects from idea to result, with attention to both the hard skills and the interpersonal side of project work. Following the **bring your own project** principle, you work on a project of your own and apply what you learn straight away. You develop your skills, and your project gets an immediate boost.

- General principles of project management and the specific characteristics of medical projects
- Project planning, roles, tasks and responsibilities
- Project leadership
- Risk analysis, monitoring and adjusting
- Stakeholder analysis and communication plan

- Influencing without authority
- Personal action plan

Lean Six Sigma for Medical Affairs

Organising processes more smartly and efficiently, creating more value for physician, patient and organisation.

- The principles of Lean and Six Sigma: value, waste and variation
- The DMAIC improvement cycle: define, measure, analyse, improve and control
- Mapping processes and identifying bottlenecks, within Medical Affairs and in collaboration with the hospital
- Using data to support and measure improvements
- Lean thinking in healthcare: the patient journey as the starting point
- Embedding improvements sustainably in the team and organisation

Strategic key account management – Medical Affairs included

- What role does Medical Affairs play in cross-functional key account management?
- How do you align internally, and what does this mean for internal and external collaboration?
- The key to success lies in execution

Personal guidance and embedding

Learning only truly sticks when it lands in practice. That is why every programme can be complemented with:

- **Field coaching:** a coach joins you in practice and gives direct feedback.
- **Individual coaching sessions:** deepening your personal learning goals or an ongoing project.
- **Personality assessment:** insight into your own style and that of your conversation partners.
- **Embedding with your manager:** anchoring learning goals in your development plan together, so that what you have learned is applied for the long term.

Which topic matches your learning needs?

Your learning need	Good fit
I want to understand the role of Medical Affairs and how I contribute strategically	The role of Medical Affairs and its strategic contribution
I want to increase my contribution to the brand team	Brand plan, key account plan and medical plan
I want to understand how healthcare is financed and reimbursed	Healthcare financing and reimbursement
I want to collaborate more effectively with hospitals and the DMU	Hospitals, experts and DMU · Strategic key account management
I want to make value for the patient measurable	Value-Based Healthcare
I want to get well-founded support from management for my ideas	The medical business case

Your learning need	Good fit
I want to discuss scientific data convincingly and correctly	Discussing scientific data · Introduction to medical statistics
I want to get more out of congresses and advisory boards	Getting the most out of a congress · Organising advisory boards
I want to manage IITs well, from application to publication	Managing Investigator Initiated Trials (IITs)
I want to be stronger in conversations with physicians and experts	Communication skills
I want to lead my projects better and with more impact	Practical medical project management
I want to organise processes more efficiently and make improvements measurable	Lean Six Sigma for Medical Affairs
I want to truly apply what I have learned in practice	Field coaching and personal guidance

Our approach and next steps

1. **Exploratory conversation** – we discuss the participant's role, experience, ambitions and goals.
2. **Sharpening the learning needs** – together with the manager where relevant.
3. **Tailored proposal** – a concrete programme proposal, including planning and investment.
4. **Start and embedding** – training, coaching and feedback, so that the learning takes root in daily work.

Smelt Academy carefully selects its trainers and coaches based on their experience in the pharmaceutical industry, client feedback and the unique situation of each participant.

We would be happy to talk with you. Contact Smelt Academy at training@smelt.nl or +31 35 543 00 21, or visit smelt.nl/learning-development.