

County Sixth Form



Applying for Medicine

APPLYING: Apply through UCAS in the usual way but the deadline is earlier than for most courses (deadline 15th October). There are 33 Universities offering medicine. Most medical-school course types are listed as one of three: Traditional, Integrated or Problem Based Learning – PBL. You will need to do your research to find out which type of course you prefer.

RECOMMENDED A LEVEL SUBJECTS: Chemistry and Biology (most courses require these) and a third A level subject (this doesn't have to be a particular subject).

There are other medical-related degrees without studying medicine. See

<https://targetcareers.co.uk/uni/degree-subject-guides/313967-alternatives-to-a-medicine-degree> for lots of information.

INTERVIEWS: Most medical courses require you to attend an interview but the nature of the interview can vary. For example, Oxford, Cambridge, Imperial and Bristol tend to concentrate on scientific knowledge and skills. Liverpool, Manchester and Newcastle are people-skills based (What would you be like as a Doctor?). Multiple Mini Interviews (MMIs) at institutions like Bristol, Cardiff and St George's are becoming more common and include task based activities. Some of these questions might be a little unexpected. For example, you could be asked to tell the interviewer how to unwrap a box or pour a bottle of water into a cup and you'll be expected to give precise instructions which can't be misinterpreted. E.g. if you tell them to lift up a flap on a box to open up, they might lift up the wrong flap. Other MMIs will quiz your ethical views, medical knowledge and personal life and background. Some Universities, like Queen Mary, publish their selection criteria for interview so do your research.

WORK EXPERIENCE: This is essential for anyone applying to medical courses. Shadowing a surgeon for a day may sound impressive but universities prefer to see sustained work experience. They are keen to see that you have been involved as much as possible ie handing out meals once a week in a hospital ward. This helps you to see the everyday challenges that medical staff face. Some possible areas to consider include:

- Volunteering – e.g. with the elderly, the infirm or with young children

- Hospital shadowing – observing a range of roles, make it a reflective experience (keep a diary). Could also get experience abroad (see The Medic Portal, Gap Medics and <https://www.premedprojects.co.uk/> for more information).
- General Practice – for a community context to healthcare.
- Reading and research – to explore new ideas, to extend your knowledge and reflect (to be used alongside practical WEX)
- [Jobs.nhs.uk](https://www.jobs.nhs.uk) is a good resource for finding relevant work in the local area too that isn't necessarily hospital based but still very relevant.

Work Experience in the current Covid climate is tricky, of course. Have a look at the following from the Medical Schools Council:

<https://www.medschools.ac.uk/media/2636/guidance-on-gaining-relevant-experience-for-studying-medicine-in-the-time-of-covid-19.pdf>

ENTRANCE TESTS: There are two main entrance tests for undergraduate medical admissions. Most require the UCAT (United Kingdom Clinical Aptitude Test), some the BMAT (BioMedical Admissions Test) and some have no test. The scores are important in shortlisting candidates for interview.

- For the UKCAT use www.ukcat.ac.uk to complete online tests – do not expect the first to go well!
- You may as well take the UKCAT early – it is better to know in as in advance as possible if it rules out options
- UKCAT is not used in the same way by all medical schools – some use it as a screening tool / a cut-off for interviews, others as one of many factors, some solely as a means of deciding between borderline students
- BMAT requires preparation - it is more knowledge / less aptitude based than UKCAT. Materials are available on the APS Guide to Admissions tests and on www.bmat.org.uk

ADVICE FOR PERSONAL STATEMENT: In addition to the other advice you have been given about your personal statement:

- Talk about your experiences reflectively and use them to demonstrate how you have developed your understanding of a career in medicine and your own abilities
- Medical schools want to see insight into the profession. Having wanted to be a Doctor from a young age is not important or particularly impressive
- Describe your other skills and qualities to demonstrate your wider potential and to say something about you as a person. There are a few skills you want to relate back to your work experience - motivation, mental stamina and a genuine desire to help others. The admissions team will not only want to see practical experience but also an understanding of the more emotive component of medicine - genuine care, understanding and desire to assist. A coldly written personal statement that just discusses grades and achievements doesn't read as well as a personal statement that discusses patient care.

- Make sure the statement addresses the specific requirements of the schools you have chosen
- Medical schools are looking for applicants who are - thoughtful, caring and considerate, insightful, resilient, hardworking, self-motivated, conscientious, able and academic, have good communication skills and a well-developed ability to work with others - have a realistic understanding of medicine i.e. hands on experience of caring and observing healthcare in a hospital and community setting

ONLINE AND WORK EXPERIENCE – These websites might be helpful

- The UCAT www.ucat.ac.uk
- The BMAT www.admissionstesting.org/our-services/medicine-and-healthcare/bmat/about-bmat
- Kaplan two day UCAT and BMAT courses: www.kaplan.co.uk/courses/medicine-dental
- Gap Medics (overseas work experience) www.gapmedics.co.uk
- The Medic Portal www.themedicportal.com
- ISC Medical (admissions coaching, with some free online information): www.medical-interviews.co.uk
- So you want to be a doctor? www.wanttobeadoctor.co.uk
- Med Schools Online www.medschoolsonline.co.uk
- British Medical Association www.bma.org.uk/developing-your-career/medical-student/how-to-become-a-doctor
- The General Medical Council www.gmc-uk.org
- Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital www.rnoh.nhs.uk/health-professionals/work-experience-the-rnoh
- Medical Journals – Directory of Open Access Journals www.doaj.org
- Student BMJ student.bmj.com

EXTRA SUPPORT

We have several parents who work in the medical field who would be happy to talk to you (online or via a phone call at the moment of course.) Please ask Mrs Nurton, Mrs White or Mrs Black and we will set this up for you.