**Applying to Medicine**

**Entry requirements**

You will need good GSCE grades in maths, science and English. You will also need chemistry at A-level and often A-level biology. One other science subject is often required, for example, physics or mathematics. Some medical schools will accept a good A-level grade in an arts subject such as history or a modern language as your third A-level.

Most Medical courses ask for AAA or above at A level but a small number state AAB as entry requirements, but could still make an offer of AAA. If you are predicted less than AAA look carefully for a course which might accept candidates with your predicted grades.

A number of universities offer graduate entry in to Medicine normally for students who have a good degree in a science subject. These are normally four years. If you don’t get offered a place on an undergraduate Medicine degree but you still want to pursue Medicine, then this is worth exploring.

Some universities also offer foundation/pre-clinical courses. These allow students with good grades at A level, or students who are graduates in a non-science subject, the opportunity to study basic science, providing a route into studying for an undergraduate medical degree. You might be eligible if you didn’t take sciences at A-Level, you don’t get top grades at A-Level or you don’t get into medical school the first time around. You meet some of the other specific eligibility criteria (for example, the contextual criteria for Widening Participation schemes).

**Applying**

You can only apply to four Medicine courses so it’s advisable to use your fifth choice for a related subject for example Biomedical Science. You also need to apply by 15 October.

**Aptitude tests**

To be successful in gaining a place on a Medicine degree you will need to sit an aptitude test. This is normally the UCAT (University clinical aptitude test https://www.ucat.ac.uk/) or BMAT (Biomedical Admissions Test https://www.admissionstesting.org/for-test-takers/bmat/). Make sure you know which test your universities ask for, when you have to sit the test and details of test location.

**The course**

Medicine courses differ in the way they are taught. Make sure you’re aware of how your choices teach – problem-based learning, case-based learning and enquiry-based learning are all different teaching methods. Visit <https://www.bma.org.uk/advice-and-support/studying-medicine/becoming-a-doctor/courses-at-medical-school> for more information.

Cambridge and Oxford offer traditional medicine degrees. This means two or three years of pre-clinical study, followed by three clinical years. In the pre-clinical years, you’ll focus on learning the scientific theory of Medicine and cover things like Physiology, Biochemistry and Anatomy. The rest of the Course teaching takes place in clinical settings, such as ward rounds or GP placements.

Other things to think about include:

* Whether the course is dissection (such as at Cardiff, Dundee, Leicester) or prosection (Birmingham, Bristol and Imperial.) In dissection the students themselves carry out the dissection work whereas in prosection a demonstrator carries out the dissection and students are then able to observe all relevant anatomical details. Some universities use a mixture depending on the year of study or part of body.
* How far away the hospitals are in which you’ll have your placements. Some of these could be a fair distance from the university although students will have a mixture of placements during the course of their degree, varying in location and type. For example, at Southampton University some placements take place on the Isle of Wight and Jersey.
* Size of year groups. Birmingham, Manchester and Kings have the largest intake with over 350 students per year whereas HYMS, East Anglia and Exeter have around 200 places.
* Where you’ll study. For example, at HYMS, students are allocated to either Hull or York for the first two years of the course. In years three to five your placements could be anywhere in the region. At St Andrews, if you apply for the English route, your final three years will mean your training is at the University of Manchester or Queen Mary University of London.
* Do your choices offer intercalation? As part of your medical studies, you may have the option to do an intercalating degree, which is time out of your regular medical degree to study a specific area of interest. Many medical schools in the UK offer full intercalated degrees, where it is part of the degree for all medical students to take a year off to study a different field. Others require you to apply for the year off, which usually occurs during your third or fourth year. You can do this at your university or apply to do your intercalated year elsewhere.

**Work experience**

Most medical schools recommend a variety of different routes when approaching work experience. Some medical schools, for example HYMS, offer some limited GP work experience opportunities through the RCGP that will be advertised on their website. These are generally prioritised for students that meet Widening Participation criteria.

Clinical experience is always useful when it comes to making a medicine application, so it is best to try and get some experience in a GP surgery or hospital environment. However often because of age limitations, these placements are hard to get and students may spend the majority of their time observing rather than interacting. This is great for being able to talk about what you’ve seen in a medical school interview, but not for talking about what you’ve done. Therefore, medical schools also recommend that voluntary work in care environments (working with the elderly, disabled, young children etc) can be really valuable work experience. Also, any extra-curricular activities you do can also be utilised, and part time jobs.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, Medical schools are aware that it will be very difficult to gain clinical work experience. Therefore, think of other ways to demonstrate that you understand what a career in medicine involves. Demonstrate that you know what it is like to work in a responsible role, particularly with the public. How have you cared for, supported or helped others? When have you demonstrated the behaviours and attitudes required of a doctor. Do you understand the demands of a medical career? Do you understand how doctors work alongside other healthcare professionals?

**Preparing for interview**

Familiarise yourself with the NHS constitution, particularly the NHS values. If you can make any experience you have had relate to these values, that’s a good start for both your application and interview. Make sure you’ve researched the course and know what to expect from the interview in terms of style. Know your personal statement really well so you can expand on the content and answer questions about what you’ve written. Be aware of hot topics in the news. Remember to read a quality British newspaper and other online resources. Practice talking about yourself, your experience, your studies. Practice engaging in some ethical debates or talking through some theoretical situations. You might be asked about some of the things covered in your aptitude test. You’ll need to talk fluently about why you want to be a doctor- your motivation, awareness and understanding.