

Medicine entry requirements - five things you need to know

http://university.which.co.uk/advice/entry-requirements-for-medicine?utm_source=april_teacher_newsletter%20&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=dates2

Getting a place to study medicine is tough. Generally each UK medical school receives more than 10 times the number of undergraduate applications than there are places.

However, by ensuring that you tailor your application to address the specific selection criteria of each of your FOUR medicine choices on the Ucas form, getting your tactics right about pre admission tests and preparing for interview you can give yourself the best chance of success. It all boils down to five key issues.

1. Grades

Firstly, your **GCSE grades matter**. So will your AS-level grades for most medical schools at present. They will assess how you did in key GCSEs such as English, maths and sciences (double science or the single sciences) and whether your AS grades, predictions and A2 subject choices match up to their minimum entry criteria.

Check each university website carefully including the FAQs and admissions policy documents. Don't waste a choice if your grades don't match up. At A2 you must have done chemistry and usually one other science at least. Some places welcome contrasting subjects - these are things like English, history or a language.

COMPARE MEDICINE COURSES: including the % of last year's applicants receiving offers

2. Tests

Almost all medical schools require you to take a **pre-admissions test**: either BMAT or, more commonly, UKCAT. Download past papers there to practice.

- BMAT is taken at your school or college, though you need to make sure you get yourself entered for it. You will sit this in November of Year 13. If you're applying post A-levels, you will need to find a school or college to enter you for it.
- UKCAT is done in testing centres. Again, it's up to you to register yourself for this.

TIP: Aim to do UKCAT by mid-September as you receive your score immediately and that will enable you to decide, tactically, if you should apply for more UKCAT institutions or go for one or two BMAT universities. Remember: each medical school uses the test scores for BMAT or UKCAT in slightly different ways.

3. Work experience

Medical schools accept that getting work experience in an NHS hospital is not easy to obtain and none insist that this is a requirement. However, they all expect you to have gained an understanding of what a career in a caring profession involves. You can get such experience, either paid or voluntary, through work in a care home, working with young children or gaining a first aid qualification and using this in a practical setting.

The main thing is to ensure you reflect on what you learnt from your experience in your [medicine UCAS personal statement](#).

4. Personal statement

This is where you need to demonstrate your suitability for the course and stand out from the crowd - see our [top dos and don'ts for medicine personal statements](#). How medical schools use personal statements (and references) also varies considerably. For the majority, it remains an important element in your application so make sure you get it right.

- Write about any care-related experiences and what you learnt from them.
- Reflect on your reading / research about current medical or ethical issues (look at the BBC website, newspapers, BMJ website and so on).
- Outline experiences which have involved teamwork, creativity, leadership, responsibility, problem solving etc and again say what you learnt about yourself and these qualities.
- Emphasise your commitment to and interest in medicine and caring for people - evidence this through your reading, passion for science and relevant work experiences.

MEDICINE PERSONAL STATEMENTS: medical schools reveal what they're looking for

5. Interviews

If you receive an interview you need to prepare well for this final challenge. Many interviews are in multiple–mini interview (MMI) style. In these, you face several different 'stations', at which you will face a new scenario or topic, which may only last five minutes. There might be an ethical issue to discuss, a problem to solve, some data to interpret or a real life situation to simulate. You'll be assessed at each station.

A small number of medical schools still use the more traditional interview but the message regarding your preparation is the same - know your personal statement well, read up on current NHS and ethical issues and research on student forums and relevant medical school websites the kinds of questions or scenarios which come up.

Medicine course structure and teaching style

One final consideration - there are significant differences between medical schools in how you are taught and assessed.

There are three main approaches: traditional, integrated and problem-based learning. Check out which approach your preferred choices use and consider if this suits the way you enjoy learning.