

Do You Want to Become a Doctor/Dentist?

Do you have the right personal qualities?

- Interpersonal communication
- Energy and determination
- Honesty and integrity
- Ability to deal with stress
- Good knowledge of health issues
- Open mindedness, adaptability
- Ability to reflect
- Good time management
- Cultural awareness
- Willingness to collaborate/team work
- Responsibility/leadership

Are you prepared for a long period of training?

The initial degree courses at University for either Medicine or Dentistry last for at least five years. Trainee Doctors must follow this with a two year Foundation Programme working in hospitals, before they can even begin to specialise. Both professions have continuous further training throughout their working lives

Will you achieve the grades required?

Competition for both these courses is intense.

GCSEs are very important – you should have **mostly A*/A** grades.

At **A2** level, offers tend to be **A*AA – AAA**.

All Universities for Medicine, and some for Dentistry, ask you to take an additional **Selection Test** – UKCAT & also possibly BMAT.

Consider also:

Are you a hard-working student? (Be honest!)

How well do you cope under pressure, and in stressful situations?

Are you prepared for a lot of hard work and exams?

Are you squeamish?

Do you like working with people; could you show evidence of this?

Have you done any work shadowing, or relevant voluntary work?

Dentists also need excellent manual dexterity.

Applying Through UCAS

You must apply early – by Mid October.

You can only apply for a maximum of **4 courses** for Medicine or Dentistry. You can leave the 5th choice blank, or put a suitable alternative course.

Look carefully at the courses offered. Consider the full range of Medical Schools, not just the London ones.

Be prepared to only get 1 University offer – this often happens. If you really want to be a Doctor or Dentist, you'll go anywhere.

The BMAT and UK CAT

Tests designed to be fairer than A levels, testing aptitude rather than knowledge to try to find the best potential doctors.

UK CAT is used by the majority of university medical schools.

BMAT is used by Oxford, Cambridge, UCL and Imperial although more are moving towards this – Bristol and Warwick will be using it from 2013.

Different universities use it in different ways. Some look at overall scores, some at subsections, some only interview those who have got over a certain mark, others just use it as a guide. Best advice is to do both test and then apply according to results – can use scores to own advantage.

www.ukcat.ac.uk

How to maximise your chances of getting a place?

- Relevant work experience is essential
 - demonstrates commitment to medicine
 - helps to appreciate what the job involves
 - gives insight into practicalities of doing medicine
 - teaches valuable communication and interpersonal skills
 - demonstrates the pros and cons of the job
- Work experience needs to involve helping others/work with people. **Ideal places include hospitals, GP surgeries, nursing homes, schools (especially those with special needs units.) Hospices may be a possibility.** Placements within the NHS even if they are only admin roles are relevant as they help give an understanding of how the NHS runs. Anything which involves talking to patients / helping people is very valuable.
- Be as flexible as possible and start as early as possible to look for placements.
- To get the most out of it work hard, be punctual and polite, take advantage of every opportunity, take notes and reflect on experience.
- Get involved in extracurricular activities – youth clubs, charity shops, mentoring/tutoring, Duke of Edinburgh, St Johns Ambulance, clubs, teams etc. But need to explain how and why these things are relevant to medicine application – relate to entry requirements.
- For Dentistry - shadow at least one dentist over a period of time (preferably both NHS & private) and observe a range of procedures.
- For dentistry, you will need evidence of manual dexterity: e.g. playing musical instrument, craft work, needlework.

At school:

- Form a medical society – ethical discussions, research sessions, meet previous applicants, practice UK CAT, interview practice
- Work experience – to be arranged by student, important to keep a log book and reflections on learning
- Research courses thoroughly – check admissions interview style, AS module scores needed
- Taster courses – Royal Society of Medicine, EPOC, Medlink
- Keep interests broad – attend school science society lectures and other science related activities

- Keep yourself informed – www.bbc.co.uk/news/health
<http://bma.org.uk/news-views-analysis>

Volunteering

You'll need to show commitment by volunteering on a regular basis / over a substantial period of time.

Useful Contacts

Volunteer Centres. All towns & London Boroughs have these, & they're always looking for volunteers to work with Charities, etc.. They have a wide range of opportunities, and no experience is needed.

For details look on www.do-it.org.uk

Slough Volunteer Centre 01753 528632 <http://volunteerslough.org.uk>

Hospitals - Wexham Park & Heatherwood offer work experience, have a Doctor Shadowing scheme, and need volunteers. www.heatherwoodandwexham.nhs.uk/work-us

Work Experience is offered in a range of departments – apply to hr.operations@hwph-tr.nhs.uk
as far in advance as possible.

Work Observer (Doctor Shadowing) scheme – For Year 12/13 students who require some work experience as part of their application for Medicine. **Highly oversubscribed.** Apply via the above website, as far in advance as possible.

Volunteers in hospitals are usually 16 plus, preferably with previous voluntary experience elsewhere. Contact Tricia Wright, Voluntary Services Co-ordinator 01753 634398

Tricia.Wright@hwph-tr.nhs.uk

www.heatherwoodandwexham.nhs.uk/info/volunteering

Contact other hospitals directly, to find out what they can offer.

Useful Websites

www.bma.org.uk/developing-your-career/becoming-a-doctor

www.bda.org/students/careers-education/becoming-a-dentist

www.nhscareers.nhs.uk

www.medlink-uk.net (Workshops for those considering e.g. medicine, veterinary medicine, dentistry, physiotherapy and others.)