



Medicine

Voluntary work/Work Shadowing/Work Experience

It is far easier to find voluntary work than to get a work shadowing placement!

- **It is essential that anyone who is considering a career in Medicine gets relevant experience before they apply**
- Universities know how difficult it is to get actual work experience, so they don't insist or expect it. They *do* expect that applicants will have done as much **relevant voluntary work** as possible
- It can take a while to find a suitable placement, especially as everyone has to have background checks before they start.
- It is best to start doing voluntary work before you go into 6th Form – perhaps in the summer after GCSE's. You can start volunteering when you are 14. Some people find suitable placements through the Duke of Edinburgh scheme.
- ***Voluntary & work shadowing placements in medical settings can be hard to find, but universities understand this, & do not insist on it.***
- The ideal is to find something in a **“caring” environment**. Examples of this are Nursing/Care homes with the elderly; hospices; homeless shelters; work with people with disabilities or youth groups, such as Scouts, Brownies etc.
- Getting a First Aid qualification or joining St John's Ambulance is very useful.
- Try to do something which will challenge you.
- *Anything which includes interacting with people is useful.* If it's impossible to find anything in a caring environment, it's essential to get something which involves interacting with people e.g. working in supermarket or catering.

Why is it important?

- It helps give you a taste of Medicine, to help you decide if it's the right career for you.
- It is expected for your medical school application and interview.
- What you have learned from the experience can make you stand out from the crowd.

How much is enough?

- There is no definitive answer and you could even say that you can never have enough. The competition into Medicine is very high and so someone will always have more than you.
- Try to get as much experience as you feasibly can, without jeopardising your academic work. Start gaining it as early as you can.
- What you want to make sure of is that you have something that you can talk about on your UCAS personal statement and at interview.

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Finding out about Medicine as a Career –

Considerable research & preparation is needed if you are considering Medicine.

- <https://www.themedicportal.com/> is a great source of detailed information. Lots of free resources – how to choose a Medical school; free interview guides; free interview questions with model answers.
- <https://www.rsm.ac.uk/about-us/public-information/careers-in-medicine.aspx>
Website of Royal Society of Medicine. Resources for applicants and advisers
- <http://medicmentor.co.uk/>
- <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/considering-or-university/studying-be-doctor/applying-medical-school/choosing-your-medical-school>
- <http://www.medschools.ac.uk/Students/Pages/default.aspx>

Another insight into Medicine – this is from the Admissions tutor for Medicine at UCL - Go to the waiting room of a busy A & E Department on a Friday or Saturday night (take someone with you), and just observe what goes on.

How to find Voluntary Work

Some voluntary opportunities are available for those aged **14+**. For example, at some **hospitals** including Wexham Park in Slough, anyone aged **14+** can volunteer with the charity **Royal Voluntary Service (RVS)** – opportunities include the hospital café & shop.

Especially useful is being a **Hospital Trolley Service** volunteer, which means going round the wards bringing refreshments & a friendly face to older patients not able to go to the shop. See <http://www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk/volunteer>

Volunteering at Wexham Park Hospital, Slough

All volunteers must be **16+**.

The procedure for volunteering at Wexham Park Hospital (which is now part of the Frimley Health Foundation Trust) has changed. Voluntary opportunities are available at Wexham Park and Frimley hospital in Surrey.

Volunteers must now commit to **3 hours a week** (of their choice) for a **whole year**. This type of long-term commitment is exactly what Medical Schools are looking for.

<https://www.fhft.nhs.uk/careers/volunteering/>

There is now a specific programme for all prospective volunteers to follow, so it takes time to be accepted. To express an interest in attending an information session, email volunteers@fhft.nhs.uk

Volunteer roles include Patient Companion, which the hospital say is perfect for 6th formers hoping to study Medicine –

Patient Companions

“Patient companions play an important role in working with nurses to create a calm, caring and comfortable ward environment. Offering companionship and comfort to patients. Patient companions listen to a patient talk about hopes, fears and concerns. Their presence and empathy can counteract such negative emotions as loneliness,

sadness and despair, which can hinder effective treatment. Instead, their sympathy encourages positive emotions such as happiness and relief, which can speed up the healing process.”

St John's Ambulance Cadets

People under 18 who want to join St John's Ambulance can join the Cadets & do First Aid Training

“Young people aged 10–17 can join one of our Cadet units, which operate throughout England. These are a great way for teens and young people to take part in volunteer work and learn valuable life skills”.

<http://www.sja.org.uk/sja/young-people/cadets-ages-10-17.aspx>

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| South East | Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Kent, Oxfordshire, Surrey, Sussex | south-east-volunteering@sja.org.uk | 030 3003 0101 (option 4) |
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Volunteering websites

National database of volunteering opportunities - www.do-it.org.uk search for local opportunities in your area

Local volunteering organisations

The best way is by searching on www.do-it.org.uk, or you can contact your nearest volunteering organisation -

Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead,

<http://rbwm.communitydatabase.co.uk>

Work shadowing/work experience in hospitals

Some hospitals do run work experience & work shadowing, but can be difficult to get a place on them. Remember that universities are aware how difficult it is, so do not insist on it. You will have more chance of success in the 6th form.

Hospitals usually only accept applications from people who live locally to them.

At the time of writing, Wexham Park is not accepting any applications for its work shadowing & work experience schemes.

Two local hospital trusts which often accept applications are

Ashford and St Peter's Hospitals <http://www.ashfordstpeters.nhs.uk/work-experience>

Hillingdon and Mount Vernon <http://www.thh.nhs.uk/jobs/workexperience.php>