



# Teacher Champions

2025-2026



# Pathways to Medicine

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# What we will cover

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- **Misconceptions**
- **Pre-application support**
  - Work experience
  - Entry requirements
  - WP programmes
- **Application support**
  - UCAS application
  - Personal statements
  - Interview preparation
- **Teacher and adviser support**
- **Additional resources**
- **Questions?**



# Common Misconceptions

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**True or False?**

# Pre-application support

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# Things to consider before applying

Love of science

Family Support (or pressure...?)

Suitable personal qualities – resilience, organised, personable etc

Committed to a challenging work-life balance

Want to make an impact in healthcare

Passion for helping other people

Excited by range of career pathways

Did work experience and enjoyed it

Predicted grades required for medicine

Good at science and not sure what else to do

Why do you want to be a doctor?



**Students need to demonstrate a strong personal motivation and commitment to studying Medicine and becoming a doctor in the NHS**

# Work Experience

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## Examples

- Shadowing GPs or other healthcare professionals
- Public health volunteering
- Working with charities focused on medical issues e.g. mental health or chronic illnesses
- ✓ Online experiences – E.g. Observe GP, Brighton and Sussex Medical School Work Experience.
- ✓ Volunteering with vulnerable members of society e.g. care homes, nurseries, adults with learning difficulties, community groups.
- ✓ Customer service roles, leadership roles
- ✓ Personal experiences

## Tips

- Start early – it's never too early to get experience to inform decision making
- Don't just do a one off day! - Looking for long-term commitment.
- Keep a reflective diary – record what has been learnt and how it has deepened interest in medicine and developed skills
- Don't just list it – use the experiences to talk in depth in the personal statement or interview, and to develop skills and qualities that will be useful in the profession

# Russel Group Entry Requirements



From the  
**RUSSELL  
GROUP**

	Range offered by Russel Group Medical Schools	Additional notes
<b>A-level requirements</b>	<b>A*AA-AAA</b> (incl. Chemistry & Biology, or Chemistry and a second science)	
<b>IB requirements</b>	<b>32-40 IB Points</b> (666+Higher Level, incl. Chemistry & Biology, or Chemistry and a second science)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standard Level requirements too</li> </ul>
<b>Scottish Highers</b>	<b>AAAAA-AAAAB</b> by end of S5 <b>AA-BB</b> at Advanced Higher in S6 (Chemistry & Biology, or Chemistry and a second science)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National 5 requirements too</li> </ul>
<b>Minimum GCSE requirements</b>	<b>Minimum of grade 6</b> in Eng lang, Maths, and at least two science subjects (Bio, Chem, or Phys)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Often scored as part of selection for interview</li> </ul>
<b>Contextual offers</b>	<b>AAA-ABB (A-level)</b> <b>AAABB by end of S5 and CC at Advanced Higher in S6</b> <b>34 points with 655 at HL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not all universities offer grade reductions</li> <li>Different criteria used to determine eligibility</li> <li>Some offers linked to Access programmes</li> <li>Not always listed for alt. qualifications</li> </ul>



Medical  
Schools  
Council

[UK medical school entry requirements tool](#)



# Alternative Routes to Medicine

## Gap Year/Deferred Entry

- Save money
- Build experience
- Applying with achieved grades

## Graduate Entry Medicine

- Partial funding as it's your second degree
- Generally, need a 2:1 and work experience
- Competitive

## Foundation years and Gateway courses

- BTEC entry options
- Often have widening participation requirements
- An extra year

## Options to transfer mid-degree?

- Unlikely option
- Biomed to Medicine transfers – highly competitive



# Widening Access Programmes

- **What?**

- Programmes to support students from backgrounds under-represented within higher education/in Medicine

- **Who?**

- Students will need to meet specific (university-dependent) eligibility criteria including postcode measures, free school meals, school performance measures, first in family, care experienced, young carer, household income etc

- **Benefits?**

- Access to academic taster sessions, work experience, mentoring, UCAT support etc
- Alternative offers, enhanced funding, on-course support

- **How?**

- Look for programmes at universities students are interested in applying for
- Most will run in Year 12
- Applications will generally need to be made directly to the university
- There may be specific requirements for students to receive the benefits e.g. attendance at on-campus events



# Applying to Medicine

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# Breakdown of Application Process

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- **(Predicted) Exam Results** ✓
- **Universities Clinical Aptitude Test (UCAT)**
- **Personal Statement**
- **References**
- **Interviews**

Encourage pupils to break the process down into smaller, manageable chunks to avoid becoming overwhelmed.

# UCAT (Universities Clinical Aptitude Test)

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ADVANCING  
ACCESS

From the  
**RUSSELL  
GROUP**

- Admissions test used in selection process by all UK medical schools
- Assesses range of key mental abilities identified by medical schools
- Sit the test in same year that student applies through UCAS (can only sit the test once per test cycle - no resits)
- Sat at nearest Pearson VUE test centre
- £70 to sit test, but [bursaries available to cover cost of test](#)
- Lots of FREE preparation resources on UCAT website and elsewhere



# UCAS Personal Statement

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**Format changed for 2026 entry – framed around 3 questions, not free text:**

**1. Why do you want to study this course or subject?**

- Motivation for choosing this course / knowledge of subject area

**2. How have your qualifications and studies helped you to prepare for this course or subject?**

- How are your current and previous studies relevant to your chosen course?
- What transferable/core skills do you have?

**3. What else have you done to prepare outside of education, and why are these experiences useful?**

- Work experience/volunteering/ employment plus personal experiences/achievements

# Medicine Personal Statements

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What are medical schools looking to see in a personal statement?

## Personal Qualities/Attributes

- Informed & motivated
- Empathetic
- Organised
- Interested in others
- Communication skills
- Team work
- Leadership

## Examples to demonstrate:

- Motivation for Medicine
- Key qualities/attributes
- Career exploration
- Extra curricular achievements
- Understanding of career

## Reflection:

- **WHY** attributes/qualities are important
- **HOW** skills/qualities have been developed
- **WHAT** did they gain from experiences?

**Quality over Quantity:** Less examples but more in depth reflection of what they've taken from experiences and why they'll help them as a medical student and/or doctor

# Personal Statement vs. Reference

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- Applicants' Personal Statements should be purely focussed on applying for medicine
- Any extenuating circumstances should be outlined in supporting reference to avoid using unnecessary characters in personal statement
- In some cases, applicants may want to draw upon extenuating circumstances in their personal statement. For example:
  - Applicant spent periods of time in hospital setting which has motivated them to pursue a career in medicine
  - Applicant has significant caring responsibilities at home and has been able to effectively manage their time to do study on top of these responsibilities

# Reference

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References are used to help admissions teams:

- Understand the context of students' attainment and qualifications – systematic, and individual
- Understand applicants' attributes and readiness for university study
- Understand how applicants have demonstrated their interest in a subject, or their chosen profession
- Understand an applicant's achievements beyond the academic

**Predicted grades really important** – if it is not possible to add these in the “predicted grades” section, they **MUST** be included in the reference.

# Extenuating Circumstances

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Provide as much information as possible about the circumstance/situation to allow admissions teams to review and apply flexibility/levers where they can

For example:

- **Caring responsibilities** - Who they are caring for? What type of responsibilities they have for this/these person(s)? The frequency of their responsibilities? The impact this has on them and their daily life
- **Illness or disability** - impact on attendance, the number of subjects taken in a sitting, amount of time able to study outside of school

# Extenuating Circumstances

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## Example 1:

*‘Joshua helps to care for his younger siblings as his Mum suffers from a long term health condition’*

## Example 2:

*‘Joshua helps to care for his younger siblings. His Mum, who is a single parent, has a long term health condition which means she often struggles to do basic things like getting out of bed, dressing, cooking and cleaning. Joshua therefore often has to help get his younger siblings up and organised each morning and fix their breakfast. He also helps with their homework and often either cooks a meal for everyone himself or helps his Mum with this. This means he has limited time to dedicate to his studies outside of school time. He shows incredible resilience and a maturity beyond his years.’*

# Interview Types

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## Multiple-Mini Interview (MMI)

- Number of short stations with different examiners
- Anywhere between 5-12 mins per station
- Focused encounters
- Different topics at each
- Minimises effect of chance and bias
- Number of stations varies

## Panel Interview

- Similar to a traditional job interview
- 2-3 interviewers on panel
- Could be 2 different panel interview
- Will cover multiple topics
- May also include a task or scenario to discuss

## Assessment Day

- Mixture of group task and MMI-style stations
- Assessing ability to work as part of a team
- Individual stations assessing different topics
- Different examiners at each station and group task



# Interview Topics

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## Interviews may include, but are not limited to:

- Role play scenarios
  - Not necessarily medical related
  - Assess communication and interpersonal skills
- Motivation for studying medicine
- Completing a task individually or as a group
- Ethical Scenarios/Medical Ethics
  - Autonomy, Beneficence, Non-Maleficence, Justice
- Current affairs in medicine
- Discussing examples of specific skills

Autonomy

Beneficence

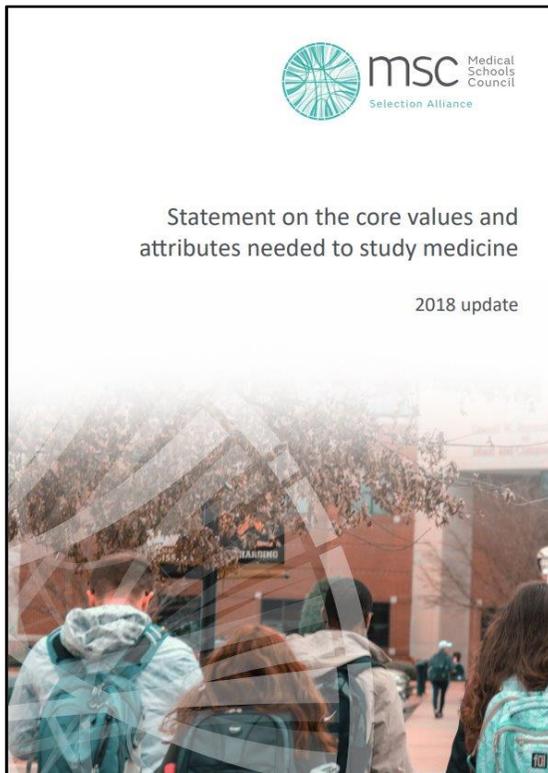
Non-Maleficence

Justice

**4 Pillars of Medical Ethics:** Useful for pupils to research before interviews

# What are interviewers looking for?

- [MSC Statement on the core values and attributes needed to study medicine](#)
- [General Medical Council \(GMC\) Good Medical Practice](#)



Links above to resources that outline key skills and attributes needed to study medicine.

For example (not exhaustive list!):

- Insight into your own strengths and weaknesses
- Problem solving
- Dealing with uncertainty
- Ability to take responsibility for your own actions
- Effective communication, including reading, writing, listening and speaking
- Teamwork
- Ability to treat people with respect
- Resilience and the ability to deal with difficult situations
- Empathy and the ability to care for others

# Supporting your Students

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# Key messages

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- **Identify** potential early deadline applicants before summer (including Dentistry, Vet and Oxbridge!)
- **Leave enough time** before 15<sup>th</sup> October deadline to check personal statements and prepare references
- **Be mindful of added pressures** of applying for medicine: UCAT, early deadline and interviews on top of coursework/exams
- Encourage students to **focus on one aspect of the process at a time** (i.e. UCAT then Personal Statement then Interviews)
- Can you or colleagues help with **interview prep** (i.e. mock interviews)?
- Students can reapply if unsuccessful first time (depending on feedback). Some students apply 2-3 times before getting in!



# Additional resources

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# Checklist

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- Callout to new Y13 group to identify early applicants
- Sense check if they're aware of application process and what's needed
- Encourage them to sign up with any local programmes or summer schools that can support them



Before Summer Break

- Have they sat UCAT or will they be sitting it before testing closes?
- Checking drafts of personal statement
- Have they checked all the entry requirements (including UCAT requirements) for choices of university?



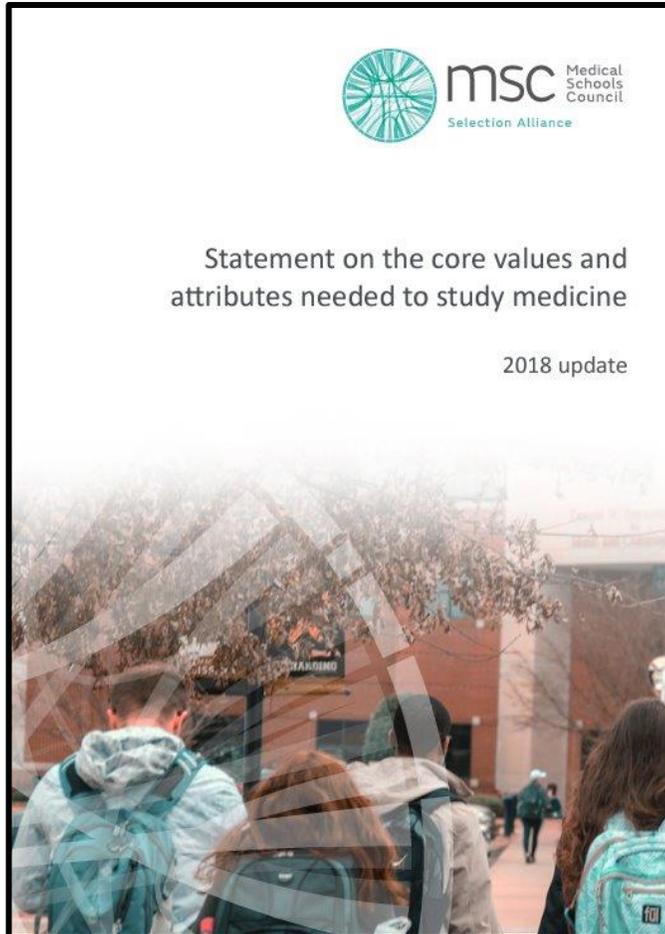
Before 15<sup>th</sup> October deadline

- Encourage to take a bit of a break after deadline before preparing for any interviews
- Support with interview preparation, if possible
- Encourage to attend offer holder information days before making Firm/Insurance choice



After 15<sup>th</sup> October Deadline

# Key Values and Attributes for Medicine



- Medical Schools Council **Statement on Core Values and Attributes Needed to Study Medicine**
- Good starting point for applicants to identify key skills that medical schools are looking for
- Also useful when preparing for interviews



# Interview Resources

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[Medical Schools Council Interview Preparation](#)



[The Medic Portal – Free Interview Questions](#)



[Medify – Free Interview Questions](#)

# Questions?

Email: [e.p.birkett@bham.ac.uk](mailto:e.p.birkett@bham.ac.uk) / [claire.forsman@ed.ac.uk](mailto:claire.forsman@ed.ac.uk)

