Graduate entry into medicine

In this leaflet we look at graduate entry into medicine including the courses available, how to apply, the selection process and cost.

Introduction
In this leaflet we look at entry into medicine through the fast track Graduate and Professional Entry Programme which is also referred to as Graduate Entry Medicine (GEM). Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the information is accurate you are advised to check the information for yourself. Most of the medical school websites have a good deal of useful advice which cannot be replicated here.

Please note it is also possible for a graduate to apply to an undergraduate course in medicine.

Before applying
Medicine offers a wide range of opportunities both within the National Health Service, the private health services and outside. Most doctors work within hospitals or general practice but others will find work in industry, the armed forces, academic medicine or research. The NHS website has useful information and advice about becoming a doctor (www.nhscareers.nhs.uk).

At all times a doctor's job is very demanding and requires you to be able to cope with pressure every day. The training is intellectually and emotionally demanding. It is a vocation and it is important at the outset to consider what you are letting yourself in for. You should take advantage of talking to medical students and doctors before making your decision.

Things to remember
At all times a doctor's job is very demanding and requires you to be able to cope with pressure every day. The training is intellectually and emotionally demanding. In the end it is a vocation and it is important at the outset to consider what you are letting yourself in for.

Where to study
For a full list of graduate entry schemes for medicine see the list at the end of the leaflet.

Admission requirements
GEM courses vary in their entrance requirements and the number of places for graduates. Typical criteria include:

• Minimum 2:1 honours degree with good academic references
• Relevant personal qualities and skills (see below)
• Evidence of motivation
• Relevant work experience
• Knowledge of important issues in medicine
• An understanding of the demands of the course

The personal qualities and skills required to be a doctor include:

• Caring and committed attitude towards people
• Excellent communication skills
• Ability to accept responsibility
• Evidence of team working and a broad range of personal interests and extra curricular activities
Some GEM courses are restricted to health, life and biological science graduates. The rest do not specify degree discipline but often require post GCSE science. You may find it helpful to obtain a chemistry A-level, if you do not have one.

In addition, there is likely to be an expectation that you will have some experience of working in a caring role in either the social or health care sector. This could be voluntary or paid work experience. In some cases the requirement can be in the region of a full year duration.

**Application method**

Applications are made through UCAS and the closing date is 15th October each year for the courses beginning the following autumn. You choose no more than four courses. The course code for most of the GEM courses is A101. It is possible to mix undergraduate and GEM courses within your choices. However, look carefully at the advice contained on institutions’ websites in case you are wasting a choice by choosing both the graduate and undergraduate courses at the same institution.

Apply online at [www.ucas.ac.uk](http://www.ucas.ac.uk) as an ‘Individual’. Make sure you allow sufficient time (at least two weeks) for your references to be submitted by the deadline. You may have to change your referees by briefing them as recommended by UCAS.

**BMAT, GAMSAT and UKCAT tests**

Courses may require you to take a standardised test before considering your application. These are used to create a level playing field, especially where candidates come from varied backgrounds. They are designed to test aptitude rather than educational achievement. Please note deadlines for making applications to these courses can be earlier than the UCAS deadline. Unfortunately not all courses may use the same test.

The 3 key tests used are the GAMSAT, UKCAT and BMAT. You will need to check with each medical school as to which test they require you to sit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Application</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Validity</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UKCAT</td>
<td>Usually 3rd week in September</td>
<td>A variety of dates between July and October</td>
<td>For 1 application cycle</td>
<td>Between £65–£100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAMSAT</td>
<td>Usually end of July</td>
<td>One date: Early September</td>
<td>For 2 application cycles</td>
<td>Approx. £240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMAT</td>
<td>Usually 2nd week in October</td>
<td>One date: Early November</td>
<td>For 1 application cycle</td>
<td>Between £44–£80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Practice tests are available on each of the tests’ official websites.

**Selection**

This is usually by interview and sometimes a test. There is a range of interview procedures, often including role plays, from brief 15/20-minute interviews with a number of different people, to a longer panel interview. However formal or informal, see it as an opportunity to convince your interviewer that you would make a good doctor. Expect to prove your motivation for and commitment to becoming a doctor. Demonstrate your communication, organisational and stress management skills through situations you have been in. Be prepared to form, express or defend your opinion on ethical issues or current topics in health.

A good candidate is someone who can present himself or herself as a well-rounded, caring person. You will have to present yourself as highly motivated for a career as a doctor and aware of the rigours of a medicine degree.

**Structure and teaching style**

Structure of the courses varies. For example, the GEM course may have a condensed year one at which point you join the third year undergraduates for the remaining three years. Other courses may remain separate throughout. All courses, however, are very intensive.

Teaching style varies especially in the first year. GEM courses range from a series of lectures, tutorials and practicals to case-based, problem-solving and patient contact learning in small groups with the emphasis on self-directed learning known as problem-based learning or PBL. Clinical demonstrations and laboratory practicals will always support any learning along with working alongside other health professionals. All clinical learning on GEM courses takes place in hospitals, community trusts and general practices. Think about the way you like to learn so that you choose the right course.

**Things to remember**

However formal or informal the interview, see it as an opportunity to convince your interviewer that you would make a good doctor. Expect to prove your motivation for and commitment to becoming a doctor.
Costs
Your GEM course first year tuition fees have to be met by yourself up front. You are eligible for a student loan for other expenses. In years 2, 3 and 4 most English and Welsh domiciled students will be eligible for an NHS bursary to cover tuition fees and some living expenses. The latter is means tested so either your parents’ or spouse’s income may be taken into account. A smaller student loan is also available.

The NHS careers site gives a good overview of financial help available.
www.nhscareers.nhs.uk

If you are from Northern Ireland, or Scotland you should contact your local education authority or equivalent body for advice before applying.

You should check this information out with the medical schools, your local education authority and the Student Loan Company. Remember the demands of this course are similar to a full-time job so part-time work will be difficult to fit in.

At the time of writing, some graduate entry courses are not admitting international students because they are not eligible for funding. You are strongly advised to contact courses directly to confirm this.

You may also find the Prospects’ Funding Guide’ useful
www.prospects.ac.uk/funding.

Further information
Our website provides access to resources for further research into medical careers www.nottingham.ac.uk/careers/students

The Medical School application Guide is available to purchase at:
www.themsag.com/guidebooks

The following books are available from the various libraries around campus:
- How to Pass the UKCAT (UK Clinical Aptitude Test)
- Passing the UK Clinical Aptitude Test and BMAT (BioMedical Admissions Test)
- Master the GMAT
- A Career in Medicine: Do you have what it takes

Prospects website – click on ‘Jobs and Work Experience’ and then ‘Types of jobs’ to read profiles for different medical roles
www.prospects.ac.uk

Other useful websites
www.nhscareers.nhs.uk – financial support for students on degree courses.
www.gamsat.org – for information on the GAMSAT
www.bmat.org.uk – BMAT test information
www.ukcat.ac.uk – for UK Clinical Aptitude Test information
www.acer.edu.au/msat – for MSAT information
www.ucas.com – Universities and Colleges Admissions Service

www.bma.org.uk/careers/becoming_doctor/index.jsp – information from the British Medical Association
www.newmediamedicine.com – good discussion forum

For information regarding NHS bursaries in England, please contact:
The Customer Services Team
The NHS Student Bursaries
Telephone: 0300 330 1345
www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/Students
Email: eligibility@nhspa.gov.uk

For information regarding NHS bursaries in Wales, please contact:
NHS Wales Student Awards Unit
www.nwsspstudentfinance.wales.nhs.uk/home
Telephone: 02920 376854

For information regarding NHS bursaries in Scotland, please contact:
The Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS)
Telephone: 0300 055 0505
www.saas.gov.uk

For information regarding NHS bursaries in Northern Ireland, please contact:
The Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety
Telephone: 028 9052 0500
www.nidirect.gov.uk/nhs-and-social-work-students
www.studentfinanceni.co.uk – for information on finance
Where to study – graduate entry schemes
Queen Mary’s, University of London
www.qmul.ac.uk

University of Birmingham
www.birmingham.ac.uk

University of Bristol
www.bris.ac.uk

Cardiff University
www.cardiff.ac.uk

University of Cambridge
www.cam.ac.uk

Imperial College London
www3.imperial.ac.uk

King’s College London (UCAS code A102)
www.kcl.ac.uk/medicine

University of Liverpool
www.liv.ac.uk/

Newcastle University
www.ncl.ac.uk/

University of Nottingham
www.nottingham.ac.uk/

University of Oxford
www.ox.ac.uk

University of Southampton
www.southampton.ac.uk/medicine

St George’s Hospital Medical School
www.sgul.ac.uk

University of Wales Swansea
www.swan.ac.uk/medicine

University of Warwick (for biological science graduates only)
www2.warwick.ac.uk

We're here to help, get in touch:

Careers and Employability Service
The University of Nottingham
Portland Building, Level D West
University Park
Nottingham NG7 2RD
United Kingdom

t: 0115 951 3680
e: careers-team@nottingham.ac.uk
www.nottingham.ac.uk/careers

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