

Support for students applying for postgrad Medicine

Key areas:

1. Work experience/ volunteering
2. Choosing a medical school
3. UCAS application – personal statement
4. Medical school interviews

1. Work Experience and Volunteering: Medicine-related

- Needs to be recent
- Ideally, needs to show a commitment over an extended period of time
- Keep a diary to reflect on your experiences – working in a healthcare team, observations (eg. empathy, ethics, team), notable happenings!

Local opportunities in/around Brighton

Hospitals:

BSUH NHS Trust: Royal County Hospital, Brighton AND Haywards Heath Hospital

Volunteering:

- <https://www.bsuh.nhs.uk/work-and-learn/join-our-team/volunteering/>
- Good to get on waiting list as soon as possible as can take time.
- They want a commitment of a few hours a week over at least a 6-month period

Work Experience:

- <https://www.bsuh.nhs.uk/work-and-learn/join-our-team/other-ways-to-join-our-team>
- One or two weeks shadowing a team in the hospital.
- Use the work experience email to request a copy of the placement sponsor contact list so you can select your preferred area for work experience.

Sussex Community NHS Trust: Currently based in Brighton General Hospital – community based services

- Volunteering: <http://www.sussexcommunity.nhs.uk/work-with-us/volunteering/>
- Work experience: <http://www.sussexcommunity.nhs.uk/work-with-us/>

Western Sussex Hospitals, Worthing

- Work experience: <http://www.westernsussexhospitals.nhs.uk/your-trust/careers/learning-development/work-experience/>
- Volunteering: <http://www.westernsussexhospitals.nhs.uk/your-trust/volunteers/>

Hospices:

Martlets Hospice Brighton: <https://www.themartlets.org.uk/>

Care Homes:

- Lots of care homes in Brighton/Hove, and most are keen to take on volunteers – good idea to check their CQC rating online first to make sure they are of an appropriate standard to learn in.
- Also worth asking whether they have visits from health care practitioners to ensure that you meet a wider range of the health team.

- Victoria Nursing Home group, Hove - good CQC ratings and visit from range of health practitioners: <http://www.victorianursinggroup.co.uk/hove/>
- St Dunstan's (home for blind veterans), Ovingdean: <https://www.blindveterans.org.uk/what-you-can-do/volunteering/>

Supporting students with disabilities/learning difficulties:

There are several schools in Brighton area supporting students with a diverse range of needs, some with visits from health practitioners etc:

<https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/children-and-education/local-offer/special-schools>

Other sources of volunteering vacancies:

- CommunityWorks Brighton are a central source of volunteer vacancies in Brighton and advertise these through Do-it org, Facebook and Twitter: <http://www.bhcommunityworks.org.uk/volunteering/looking-volunteer/>
- Community Base also provide a list of opportunities: <http://www.communitybase.org/volunteers>

Summer opportunities

- Hospital, care homes etc near home, if leaving Brighton – work, work experience, volunteering etc
- Overseas volunteering opportunities

2. Choosing a Medical School

Key factors to consider:

- Whether to study a post-grad 4 year medical degree (highly competitive, much fewer places) or a normal 5 year option.
- Funding issues – this is for England, different in Scotland, Wales and NI:
 - 4 year course funding for graduates:
 - Years 1-4: can access up to £5785 student loan towards tuition fees
 - Year 1: have to self-fund first £3465 of their tuition fees in first year
 - Years 2-4: the NHS bursary scheme will pay £3715 towards their tuition fees. <https://warwick.ac.uk/services/academicoffice/funding/fundingyourstudies/medics2017/>
 - 5 year course funding for graduates:
 - Years 1-4: not eligible for tuition fee loan or maintenance grant. Can apply for full, income-based maintenance loan from SFE.
 - Year 5 onwards: eligible for NHS bursary scheme to cover tuition fee and maintenance costs as well as a reduced income-based maintenance loan from SFE.
- The kind of learning that would suit you best:
 - Traditional Courses
 - Integrated Courses
 - Problem-Based Learning (PBL) Courses
- Whether cadaver dissection is important to their learning – not all do this.
- Admissions tests required – could be UKCAT, BMAT or GAMSAT. Some don't require any for graduate entry courses.

Key resources:

- Info on graduate entry medicine degrees, no. places and admissions tests required: <https://www.themedicportal.com/application-guide/graduate-entry-medicine/>
- Good info on all medical schools, teaching methods, plus a medical school comparison tool: <https://www.themedicportal.com/application-guide/choosing-a-medical-school/>

- the MSAG Graduate Entry medicine UK 2017-18
- the MSAG website has full details of the different medical schools:
<https://themsag.com/medical-school-information/medical-school-uk.html>

Studying medicine overseas

Because getting in to medicine in the UK is so competitive, many students are looking overseas. There are several medicine courses being offered in Europe that are taught in English and other English-taught options are available in countries such as Ireland, Australia, USA and Hong Kong. Important issues to consider include:

- Fees and possibility of getting funding/scholarships/bursaries/loans
- Application procedure and deadlines, tests involved and entry requirements
- Can you practice in the UK after gaining an overseas medicine qualification?
- General info: <https://www.themedicportal.com/application-guide/studying-medicine-abroad/>
- European medical school comparison table:
<https://www.themedicportal.com/application-guide/studying-medicine-abroad/international-requirements/>
- Practising in the UK after a European medicine qualification:
<https://www.themedicportal.com/application-guide/studying-medicine-abroad/practising-in-the-uk-after-study/>
- Guides to studying medicine in Ireland, Australia, Hong Kong and USA – includes info on applications, tests, fees and practicing in UK afterwards:
<https://www.themedicportal.com/application-guide/>

3. Application

- UCAS Deadline: 15 October
- Can apply for 4 medical schools and 1 other option
- Personal statement:
 - 4000 characters including spaces max
 - Needs to cover your motivation and academic skills but focus on your work experience/volunteering and what you've learned about yourself, the medical profession (challenges etc) and the NHS through this.
 - Good info and advice on:
<https://www.themedicportal.com/application-guide/personal-statement/>
<https://university.which.co.uk/advice/personal-statements/personal-statement-advice-medicine-students-dos-donts>
- Admissions tests: GAMSAT, BMAT and UKCAT are all possibilities. Best to choose Unis that all use the same test to reduce stress / workload etc. Good test info and advice on:
<https://www.themedicportal.com/application-guide/graduate-entry-medicine/>

4. Medical School Interviews

Resources:

- www.themedicportal.com/application-guide/medical-school-interview/
- the MSAG Graduate Entry medicine UK 2017-18
- the MSAG website has full details of how the different medical schools assess their applicants at interview: <https://themsag.com/medical-school-information/medical-school-uk.html>

Interview formats

Traditional interviews

- Usually a panel which can be made up of a range of stake holders including admissions team member, doctor, nurse, lay person, paramedic. Can be formal or informal set up.
- For example questions and tips on how to answer them:
www.themedicportal.com/e-learning/interview/

MMI – mini multiple interview

- Several question stations, each on a different area; eg. ethics, work experience, NHS etc. Sometimes includes a role play. Each station may be 4 – 10 mins with time between each – could be as little as 1.5 mins, but usually more. BSMS has 5, 10-min stations, with 1.5 mins between each.
- The stations may be staffed by a range of stake holders including doctors, nurses, lay people, paramedics, admissions etc.
- See this [link](#) for a list of the schools that use MMI and the question stations they've used in previous years.

Interview preparation

An ability to communicate calmly, concisely and logically will be observed throughout – there may be a MMI station specifically for this.

Key areas to research so that you are prepared for a broad range of questions:

- Your own motivation to study medicine (rather than another healthcare profession); a realistic understanding of the challenges ahead of you; how you might deal with these (and with stress).
- Why this particular medical school? Training type (problem-based learning, integrated learning, systems based learning, traditional), use of cadavers?, personal reasons (eg. been at Uni of Sussex and have good knowledge of the local area, campus and BSMS)
- NHS hot topics - see medicportal website for info on a range of these including BREXIT, Charlie Gard case, mental health services etc. Other good info on the BMA and BMJ websites.
- Ethics – the four pillars. If you understand the four pillars you will be able to analyse and discuss a wide range of different ethical scenarios.
- NHS constitution and core values.
- Local NHS info – the key issues/challenges, local demographic, how that NHS trust spends its money etc.
- Team work – example from your work experience, may involve a group activity to assess how you work in, and contribute to, a group.
- Empathy – example from your work experience, but also be prepared to respond to a potential role play.

Some schools also assess:

- capacity for dealing with stress
- commitment through participation in extracurricular activities.
- evidence of working as a leader
- maturity of character
- anxiety level during interview
- ability to multi-task