

**PLYMOUTH
UNIVERSITY
PENINSULA**
SCHOOLS OF MEDICINE & DENTISTRY

APPLYING TO MEDICAL SCHOOL



Full course details: www.plymouth.ac.uk/peninsula

Advice to Medical School applicants on access to work experience, and on preparation for the UK Clinical Aptitude Test (UKCAT), the GAMSAT (UK) test, and the admissions interview

Applying to medical school

We recommend that you read the following guides on applying to study medicine in the UK:

Becoming a doctor:

Published by the British Medical Association Science and Education Department is available at:

<https://www.bma.org.uk/advice/career/studying-medicine>



Applying to medical school

Published by the Medical Schools Council available at:

www.medschools.ac.uk/Students/howtoapply

The General Medical Council's website

www.gmc-uk.org/education

biology
psychology
Nutrition Metabolism
Human Disease
Research Science
Diagnosis
Therapeutics
Anatomy
Cellular
Molecular
Genetics
Medical
Microbiology
Immunology
Neuroscience
Psychology
Human
Metabolism
Pathology
Research
Science
Human
Disease
Diagnosis
Therapeutics
Anatomy

Work experience

The Medical Schools Council's advice to applicants to medical school regarding work experience is that:

- Applicants should demonstrate some understanding of what a career in medicine involves and their understanding of, and suitability for, a caring profession.
- To demonstrate this understanding, applicants may draw on relevant work experience, either paid or voluntary, in health or related areas.
- Medical schools recognise that practical experience in hospices and residential homes, or domestic caring responsibilities, is equally appropriate as work in a conventional health care setting such as a hospital or GP surgery.
- More important than the experience itself is the ability to demonstrate an understanding of the relevant skills and attributes the profession requires by reflecting upon and drawing on any experience you may have.

The above information and much more is available at:

[www.medschools.ac.uk/
Students/howtoapply/Pages/
Work-experience.aspx](http://www.medschools.ac.uk/Students/howtoapply/Pages/Work-experience.aspx)

Further useful information and advice is available at:

[www.thestudentroom.co.uk/wiki/
medicine_work_experience](http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/wiki/medicine_work_experience)

- To find out more about work experience in the NHS we advise you to register with the Step into the NHS. By registering with Step into the NHS, you will receive practical help and advice on how to get a head start in your future NHS career. The Step into the NHS programme is designed for people of secondary school age, who are residents of England and is available at:

<https://www.stepintothens.nhs.uk/work-experience>

Preparing for the UK Clinical Aptitude Test

Plymouth University Peninsula School of Medicine conducted a nationwide survey of candidates who sat the 2012 UKCAT. We asked which preparation resources candidate's had used, how helpful they were, how many hours they had spent in preparation, and their opinions about how best to prepare.

The following advice is based on the findings from this research.

We highly recommend reading the UKCAT Official Guide:

63% of respondents strongly agreed/agreed that doing so had increased their knowledge of how to prepare for the test, and 74% strongly agreed/agreed that it increased their knowledge about the content of the test. The guide and advice on how best to prepare are available on the UKCAT website at <http://www.ukcat.ac.uk/>

We highly recommend using the UKCAT timed on-line practice tests.

The use of the UKCAT timed on-line practice tests was associated with a higher overall test performance. It is important that you familiarise yourself with the requirements and question styles of each sub-test, and particularly the timing constraints of each sub-test. 88% of respondents who had used the UKCAT timed online practice tests strongly agreed/agreed that doing so had increased their familiarity with the types of questions asked and their ability to manage the test, and 74% that it increased their ability to manage the timing of the UKCAT.

We recommend the use of books relevant to the UKCAT to help prepare for the test.

Their use was rated as very helpful/helpful by 82% of respondents, and associated with higher overall test performance. However, do ensure that the book is recently published and relevant to the current test.

We recommend that you spend around 21-30 hours in preparation for the UKCAT.

This was the amount of preparation done by the highest scoring respondents to the survey. 75% of respondents strongly agreed/agreed that preparation had enabled them to score more highly in the UKCAT. The amount of time a respondent had spent in preparation for the test was positively associated with higher overall test performance.

We highly recommend that you revisit and practice your skills in mathematics if you have not studied mathematics beyond GCSE level (or recently).

Our research shows that this is particularly important for performance in the Quantitative Reasoning sub-test.

Get as much information, advice and guidance about preparation for the UKCAT as you possibly can!

Ask for advice from your school/ college tutors and career advisors, and particularly previous test takers.

Go to www.thestudentroom.co.uk where you will find advice from current and past candidates, and use links to free practice resources on the internet.

Preparing for the GAMSAT (UK) admissions test

The GAMSAT (UK) Examination is used as the entry requirement for all non-direct school leavers applying to medicine and dentistry at Plymouth University Peninsula Schools of Medicine and Dentistry. This entry requirement applies to you if it is more than two years since you completed your GCE A levels or equivalent qualifications, if you are a graduate, or if you enrol onto the second year of an existing degree programme in the year of application. The GAMSAT (UK) Examination is a 5½ hour written test that assesses knowledge and reasoning in the humanities, social

science, biological science, physical science, and written communication.

- We recommend that you read the on-line booklet '*What you need to know about the... GAMSAT (UK) Examination*'. The booklet (written by a Peninsula Medical School student as part of their Special Study Unit) gives useful information about the format of the test and the requirements and content of its sub-sections, how much time is needed to spend in preparation, resources available to support preparation, and student opinions on how best to prepare.

Preparing for the medical school admissions interview

An admissions interview is part of the selection process at most UK medical schools. Strong academic ability is not the only pre-requisite for a successful career in medicine, and other personal qualities and attributes are required (as described in the General Medical Council's *'Outcomes for Graduates'*, available at: http://www.gmc-uk.org/education/undergraduate/undergrad_outcomes.asp).

At some medical schools the interview is used only to assess whether an applicant has the personal attributes required to become an excellent doctor. However, some medical schools will also test the candidate's knowledge during the interview. The format of the admissions interview differs among medical schools, and they vary in duration, panel composition, content and scoring methods.

The following advice on preparation for the medical school admission interview is based on a research on previous applicants to Peninsula School of Medicine.

- Prepare for the interview!
- Seek advice and support on how to prepare and what resources are available to help you in your preparation from a tutor, teacher, career adviser, family, friend, health care professional, current medical student, and online.
- Visit the website and or, read the prospectus of each of the medical schools to which you have applied and establish what attributes and qualities they consider important in an applicant, and the format and style of the interview.
- Get to know what to expect at the medical school interview, and go to:

www.thestudentroom.co.uk/wiki/what_you_should_expect_at_a_medical_school_interview

Here you will find information about the various styles of interview used from current and past applicants to UK medical schools. Survey respondents who had been advised about the various styles of medical school interviews and who had been advised about the types of questions commonly asked were more likely to be among the highest scoring interviewees.

- Develop and practice your interview technique. Survey respondents who had practiced their interview technique were more likely to be among the highest scoring interviewees. Enlist the help of a family member, friend, tutor, teacher, career advisor, student applying to a health care profession, current medical students, and conduct mock interviews.
- We recommend a minimum of 20 hours preparation. The amount of time spent in preparation for the interview by our survey respondents was positively associated with the interview score they achieved.
- We recommend the use of books specific to preparation for the medical school interview, especially when used in conjunction with mock interviews.
- Most importantly, you should develop the ability to clearly communicate your rational for wanting to study medicine, your understanding of what a career in medicine involves and why you think you are suitable for a career in the medical profession.

In preparation for the medical school admission interview we recommend that you read the General Medical Council publication *Good Medical Practice (2013)*, which includes an overview of the personal attributes and standards of professional behaviours required of undergraduate medical students.

Available at:

http://www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/good_medical_practice.asp

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