

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

APPLYING TO DENTAL SCHOOL



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

Advice to Dental School applicants to Plymouth University Peninsula School of Dentistry on access to work experience, on preparation for the UK Clinical Aptitude Test (UKCAT), the GAMSAT (UK) test, and the admissions interview

Bachelor of Dental Surgery BDS BSc Dental Therapy and Hygiene

Applying to Peninsula School of Dentistry

We recommend that you read the following guides on applying to study Dentistry or Dental Therapy and Dental Hygiene in the UK.

The General Dental Council

<http://www.gdc-uk.org/aboutus/education>

Dental Schools Council

www.dentalschoolscouncil.ac.uk

British Dental Association

www.bda.org

British Association of Therapy and Hygiene

www.badt.org.uk

Plymouth University Peninsula Dental School

www.plymouth.ac.uk/peninsula



Work experience

Overall, the advice to applicants to dental school regarding work experience is that:

- Applicants should demonstrate some understanding of what a career in dentistry 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.
- Dental 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 dental surgery but expect an element of dentistry.
- 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.

Further useful information and advice is available at:

www.thestudentroom.co.uk/wiki/dentistry_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: www.stepintothensh.nhs.uk

To find out more about volunteering opportunities in a range of settings we recommend that you visit the Do-it website at: www.do-it.org.uk

- Peninsula School of Dentistry offer a three day work experience course in June for individuals planning a career in dentistry. Individuals can meet existing students and participate in a programme of learning equivalent to a first year dental student, taking part in small group study sessions (EBL), trying out clinical skills in the Simulated Dental Learning Environment (SDLE) and observing lectures and workshops and patient treatments.
- Applicants offered a conditional place in the Peninsula School of Dentistry who are still deciding where to accept as first choice, are warmly invited to the Peninsula School of Dentistry student experience days for both BDS and BSc students where again they can experience a snap-shot of life at Plymouth University, take part in EBL and SDLE, tour the state-of-the-art facilities and meet with the current first and final year students. These days are invaluable in helping prospective students plan their future for the next five years. The course at Peninsula is established on self-directed learning and is evidence-based and the majority of clinical work is experienced in the primary dental care environment. In order to benefit from the educational experience students need to understand the differences between Peninsula and other more traditional schools when they make that all important decision.

Further information is available at: www.plymouth.ac.uk/peninsula

Preparing for the UK Clinical Aptitude Test

Plymouth University Peninsula School of Medicine and Dentistry conducted a nationwide survey of candidates who sat the 2012 UKCAT. We asked which preparation resources candidates 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 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 possible 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 (BDS only)

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 Dental School Admissions Interview

An admissions interview is part of the selection process at most UK dental schools. Strong academic ability is not the only pre-requisite for a successful career in dentistry, and other personal qualities and attributes are required. At some dental schools the interview is used only to assess whether an applicant has the personal attributes required to become an excellent dentist, therapist or hygienist. The format of the admissions interview differs among dental schools, and they vary in duration, panel composition, content and scoring methods.

Peninsula Dental School provides applicants with a scenario to read and a panel of usually three people ask questions related to the ethical dilemma in the scenario as well as questions on attitudes and behaviour. The interview is designed to assess an individual's commitment, motivation, professionalism, integrity, team working, decision making and reflective skills, insight, communication, organisation, initiative and problem solving skills.

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

- 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 dental student, and online.
- Visit the website and or, read the prospectus of each of the dental 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 dental school interview, and go to **www.thestudentroom.co.uk** where you will find information about the various styles of interview used from current and past applicants to UK schools. Survey respondents who had been advised about the various styles of dental 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 dental 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 dental school interview, especially when used in conjunction with mock interviews.
- Most importantly, you should develop the ability to clearly communicate your rationale for wanting to study dentistry, your understanding of what a career in dentistry involves and why you think you are suitable for a career in the dental profession.
- In preparation for the dental school admission interview we recommend that you read the PU PSMD information on the BDS and BSc courses and the recent General Dental Council publications which include an overview of the personal attributes and standards of professional behaviours required of undergraduate dental students and the standards expected. www.gdc-uk.org
- *Preparing for Practice 2015*
- *Standards for the Dental Team 2013*
- *Scope of Practice 2013*
- *Standards for Education 2015*

References

- Lambe P, Bristow D. **What are the most important non-academic attributes of good doctors? A Delphi survey of clinicians.** *Medical Teacher* 2010; 32(8), e347-e354
- Lambe P, Bristow D. **Predicting medical student performance from attributes at entry: a latent class analysis.** *Medical Education* 2011; 45(3), 308-316
- Lambe P, Waters C., Bristow D. **The UK Clinical Aptitude Test: Is it a fair test for selecting medical students?** *Medical Teacher* 2012; 34(8), e557-e565
- Lambe P, Waters C., Bristow D. **Do differentials in the support and advice available at UK schools and colleges influence candidate performance in the medical school admissions interview? A survey of direct school leaver applicants to a UK medical school.** *Medical Teacher* 2013; 35(9), 731-739
- Lambe P, Greatrix G., Dowell J., Heather D., Bristow D. **The Post-UKCAT Survey (report to the UKCAT Board)**, December 2013.

PLYMOUTH UNIVERSITY PENINSULA

SCHOOLS OF MEDICINE & DENTISTRY

Course Enquiries

T: +44 (0)1752 437333

F: +44 (0)1752 517842

E: meddent-admissions@plymouth.ac.uk

www.plymouth.ac.uk/peninsula

Plymouth University
Peninsula Schools of Medicine & Dentistry
The John Bull Building
Plymouth Science Park
Research Way
Plymouth
PL6 8BU



Plymouth is proud to be
a Fairtrade University

www.fairtrade.org.uk



When you have finished with
this prospectus please recycle it

