

APPLYING TO MEDICINE



Application deadline – In October each year, check the date for your year of entry.

Subjects - For students from England, UK medical schools look for applications that demonstrate the following (source - British Medical Association):

- good GCSE grades in maths, science and english
- chemistry at A-level and often A-level biology
- one other science subject is often required, for example, physics (or physical science), or mathematics. A good A-level grade in an arts subject such as history or a modern language will usually be accepted as a third A-level.

** Check directly if you are applying with other qualifications*

TIPS FROM LEAH – Who has been through the process

Hello, my name is **Leah**, a final year medical student at the University of Sheffield. I applied to medical school feeling uncertain, anxious and overwhelmed (with the excitement of it all bubbling underneath).

Applying to medical school is confusing and daunting and can certainly feel like a step into the unknown. It is normal to feel out of your depth - I spent hours on google trying to wrap my head around it all - and with that in mind I want to share my top tips for thriving through the medical school application process and getting into med school.



TOP TIP 1:

Planning is KEY – from your UCAT prep to your nights with friends

There is a lot to juggle when applying for medical school. Entrance exams, interviews, open days, attending school and college and revising for your A-Levels, as well as trying to juggle a social life and give your brain valuable switch off time. It is important that all these aspects are taken into account and planning and organisation can allow for a healthy balance in these areas.

I would suggest having an annual “to do” list. Writing down all the key dates and deadlines you have upcoming. Then when you sit down to plan your week you can adjust it accordingly to your deadline. It is really important to set boundaries in your revision to avoid burnout, and therefore I’d suggest choosing a set ‘stopping time’. This will be the time in the day that the books close and you have free time, which I would fill with time with family/friends, extra-curricular, or soaking in a bath! Time to rest is just as valuable as time to revise.

Example timetable for a student applying to medical school:

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
9:00am - 4:00pm	School	School	School	School	School	Free	Free
4:00pm - 5:00pm	UCAT prep	Interview prep	A-Level study	Interview prep	A-Level study	Free	Free
5:00pm - 6:00pm	Home-work	After School Club	UCAT / BMAT prep	Catch-up time	Relax	Free	Free
6:00pm onwards	Meet with friend	Self-care	Movie night	Reading	X's Birthday	Free	Plan for next week

TOP TIP 2:

Learn the essentials for interviews, there is such a thing as being over-prepared

The interview process is perhaps the most daunting aspect of the med school application, but actually the best part. You can finally introduce the medical school to who YOU are, outside of your academics and grades. They want to know more about you, the person, and why you want to be a doctor. They want to assess if you have the natural qualities to be a good doctor and that you are aware of the current environment for doctors and the NHS.

With that in mind, they are also aware you are a school student and would not be expected to have all the traits of a good doctor (no one has them all no matter what stage of training!) but they want to see you are eager and willing to learn and have a good understanding of yourself, the career, and the university.

I would recommend researching:

- the university as an institution and the city itself, why do you want to be at that uni and in that city, and what is it about that medical school that makes you want to go there?
- The life of an NHS doctor, what are the current struggles, the positives of the career, and the ways to cope with the negatives?
- Why do YOU want to study medicine? How will you cope with the stress and what excites you about the degree.

Overall, there is such thing as being over-prepared and authenticity is vital in interviews, as long as you are yourself, you should find the interviews will flow naturally.

TOP TIP 3:

Volunteering is just as valuable as work experience

Work experience can be really tough to get, and opportunities slim. However Medical schools are mindful of this and really appreciate hearing about volunteering opportunities you do and part time jobs you may have. For example, I worked part-time at a coffee shop and spent ample time at interviews discussing how I would apply the skills I learnt there to succeed at med school. Any opportunities you have, or work you do, will develop skills you can discuss at interview. So I suggest it would be good to make a written log of all the work/volunteering/clubs you've been a part of, so you remember the skills you can discuss at your interview.