



# **Applying for Medicine or Dentistry**

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# The most highly competitive degree courses are ....

SUBJECT	AVERAGE NUMBER OF APPLICANTS PER PLACE
Medicine	11.0
Dentistry	9.7
Veterinary Science	9.2
Astronomy	7.7
Teacher Training	7.3
Economics	6.6
Mechanical Engineering, Architecture, Drama	6.2
Law	5.4



**4 October 2016:** Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt has announced today that the number of medical school places will increase by 25% from 2018. The expansion in training places will rise from 6,000 to 7,500 a year to make the NHS 'self-sufficient' in doctors by 2025.

UNDERGRADUATE MEDICAL SCHOOLS (33)			DENTAL SCHOOLS (14)
Aberdeen	Imperial	Sheffield	Barts/Queen Mary
Barts/Queen Mary	Keele	Southampton	Birmingham
Birmingham	King’s College London	St Andrews	Bristol
Brighton & Sussex	Lancaster	St George’s	Cardiff
Bristol	Leeds	UCL	Dundee
Buckingham (private)	Leicester		Glasgow
Cambridge	Liverpool		King’s College London
Cardiff	Manchester		Leeds
Dundee	Newcastle		Liverpool
Durham	Norwich (East Anglia)		Manchester
Edinburgh	Nottingham		Newcastle
Exeter	Oxford		Plymouth
Glasgow	Plymouth		Queen’s Belfast
Hull York	Queen’s Belfast		Sheffield

# What makes a good dentist?

- Good eyesight and colour vision
- Manual dexterity
- An interest in and ability to acquire scientific knowledge, particularly about human anatomy and oral disease
- Confidence in offering advice and educating patients about their oral health
- Patience and compassion



# What makes a good doctor?

- Academic excellence
- Strong scientific ability
- Commitment and tenacity
- Organisational skills
- People skills, like empathy and compassion
- Communication skills
- Ability to work in a team
- Leadership potential
- Ability to manage stress
- Desire to learn and teach



# GWIST Framework\*

**G**     Grades

**W**     Work experience

**I**     Interviews: panel or MMI

**S**     Subject

- how the subject is taught

- subject for 5<sup>th</sup> choice

**T**     Tests: BMAT or UKCAT

\* **Adapted from:** 'University Interview Guide' by Andy Gardner and Barbara Hamnett

# Grades



- Check exact minimum requirements VERY carefully
- **GCSEs**
  - Check if university requires certain grade and/or subject requirements at GCSE
  - UCL for Medicine: modern foreign language at Grade C minimum
- **A Levels**
  - Chemistry compulsory for almost all institutions; Biology often too
  - Maths/Further Maths: only one will form part of offer
  - Grades gained at one sitting
  - Encouraged to do EPQ but not usually part of offer



# Work experience



- Essential to demonstrate:
  - **realistic** appreciation of what a career in Medicine or Dentistry *really* entails – pros and cons
  - your **compassionate** nature & suitability for a **caring** career
  - your **commitment** to Medicine/Dentistry & your role in **team working**
  - your ability to **interact with the general public** – e.g. in a Pharmacy, supermarket check-out or restaurant
  - **quality reflection** more important than quantity → answer the **‘SO WHAT?’** question – i.e. **WHAT DID YOU LEARN?**
- Keep **documentary evidence** of experiences (e.g. references) & **specify location(s)** as universities may check
- **Use work experience as an opportunity to FACE YOUR PHOBIAS!**

# Work experience for Medicine



- Not necessary to “watch a surgeon”
- Admissions tutors know that finding hospital or GP experience is **becoming increasingly difficult** → “strongly advised but not required” (Cambridge)
- “Try to gain wide voluntary experience in a caring or health environment – does not have to be a hospital; consider a nursing home, hospice, shelter for the homeless, working with people with disabilities or special needs, or a youth group”. (Bristol)
- Look at:
  - Medical School’s Council Work Experience Guidelines - <http://www.medschools.ac.uk/SiteCollectionDocuments/Work-experience-guidelines-for-applicants-to-medicine.pdf>
  - St George’s Medical School Tips for Work Experience – [www.tasteofmedicine.com](http://www.tasteofmedicine.com)

# Work experience for Dentistry



- Usually a minimum of 2 weeks required
- Try to complete work experience in several of the following areas:
  - General dental practices – NHS (**ESSENTIAL**) and private
  - Hospital placement – oral and maxillofacial surgery (OMF surgeon requires Medical + Dentistry degree)
  - Orthodontics
  - Dental technician
  - Dental hygienist / dental therapist
- Look at 'Finding Work Experience in the NHS' - [www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/work-experience-in-the-nhs](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/work-experience-in-the-nhs)

# Work experience: summary



- **Where?**
  - Contact **local hospitals/GP surgeries/dental practices** – persevere and be prepared to travel
  - For Medicine, UCL prefer **UK** based experience rather than overseas
  - Find a **voluntary** placement in a hospice, residential home, day-care centre or homeless shelter ([www.do-it.org](http://www.do-it.org))
  - **Observe** a healthcare professional outside hospital or GP/dental surgery – e.g. physiotherapist, pharmacist, podiatrist
  - Work in **any customer service** setting – e.g. café, library
  - In **gap year, get paid job** as healthcare assistant; work in an undertakers
- **Who?**
  - **‘Vulnerable’** people – e.g. elderly; people with disabilities, special needs or addictions; homeless; young children
  - **General public** – get used to talking to lots of different types of people
- **Other ideas?** – complete First Aid course, give blood, do Maths/11+ tutoring, lead a summer camp

# **Interviews**



- **Panel (2-3 people)**

- Academics, current student, lay person, note-taker
- Usually around 15-20 minutes
- Content/style varies; may include short written test on ethical issue (which is developed further in interview), group task and/or 2-3 interviews
- Edinburgh: no interview currently but reviewing this

# **Interviews**



- **Multiple mini interview (MMI)**
  - Based on Objective Structured Clinical Exams (OSCE)
  - Number of stations varies from 4 to 14 + one or two assessors
  - 5-7 minutes per station
  - No ‘small talk’ from assessors
  - Test key competencies: written task/test, ethical question, role play (with actor), current NHS issue, personal statement, data analysis, problem solving, reflection on work experience + possibly manual dexterity for Dentistry

# Manual dexterity



Ideas for practising and demonstrating your manual skills:

- Model or jewellery making
- Repairing watches
- Sewing/embroidery such as cross stitch
- Painting
- Pottery
- Cake decorating
- Playing a musical instrument
- Anything you make on work experience at a dental laboratory

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Bristol	Leeds	UCL	Dundee
Buckingham?	Leicester		Glasgow
Cambridge	Liverpool		King's College London
Cardiff	Manchester		Leeds
Dundee	Newcastle (2017)		Liverpool
Durham	Norwich (East Anglia)		Manchester
Edinburgh – none*	Nottingham		Newcastle
Exeter	Oxford		Plymouth
Glasgow	Plymouth		Queen's Belfast
Hull York	Queen's Belfast		Sheffield

**Green = Multiple mini interview (MMI)**

**Brown = Panel interview**

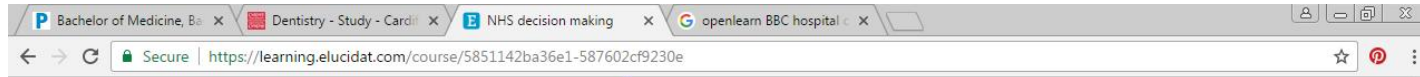


# Interviews: how to prepare



- Treat the interview like a '**speaking & listening exam**'
- Know your **personal statement**
- Set **BBC News Health, BMA** or **BDA** as home page
- Create **press file** of cuttings on current NHS and healthcare issues
- Attend medical/dental **lectures** and listen to **podcasts**
- Watch **TV documentaries** – e.g. BBC's Hospital
- Check guidance on Medical and Dental School **websites**
- **Medic Portal news summary** and **blogs**
- **Mock interviews** available from Mrs Golding or Ms Ray

# BBC's Hospital – watch on iPlayer



## Complex healthcare decisions: What will you choose?



Every day the NHS are required to make difficult decisions regarding patients' care – this can be anything from deciding who gets a bed to deciding whether to go against a patient's wishes to undergo or avoid certain treatments. These decisions are rarely clear cut...

**But who would you side with? Take a look at some complex decision making based on some key real-life cases within the NHS.**

Try our short quiz to see if you side with the establishment or the individual.



# GWIST Framework\*

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# How the subject is taught



## Three main teaching methodologies:

### 1. Traditional (e.g. Oxford, Cambridge):

- ✓ pre-clinical & clinical taught separately → strong science grounding + minimal patient contact at start

### 2. Integrated (e.g. Birmingham, Nottingham):

- ✓ holistic systems-based approach (e.g. cardiovascular, digestive); earlier clinical exposure with ward-based teaching, lectures & tutorials

### 3. PBL = Problem Based Learning (e.g. QMUL, Lancaster):

- ✓ analysis of 'trigger' case studies in small facilitated groups followed by independent, self-directed study with fewer lectures than Integrated approach; will NOT suit everybody!

# Choosing your Medical/Dental Schools: what else to consider?

- Size (Medical/Dental School cohort & university)
- Campus or city
- Location & distance/travel time from home
- Convenience to pursue hobbies
- Opportunity to intercalate (compulsory/optional?)
- Patient contact
- Use of cadavers
- League tables and student satisfaction ratings:  
[university.which.co.uk/](http://university.which.co.uk/)
- **Medic Portal medical school comparison tool:–**  
[www.themedicportal.com/application-guide/choosing-a-medical-school/comparison-tool/](http://www.themedicportal.com/application-guide/choosing-a-medical-school/comparison-tool/)



The UCAS Guide to getting into  
MEDICINE, DENTISTRY  
AND OPTOMETRY

Progression Series

Information on careers, entry routes and  
applying to university and college in 2013

UCAS

# Subject for 5<sup>th</sup> choice



- In theory, can choose **anything (or nothing)** due to ‘invisibility’ of other choices
- Only submit **one personal statement**
- **Most common** 5<sup>th</sup> choice = Biomedical Science .... but is that really what you want to do?
- Advice from King’s College admissions tutor: “Choose a science degree at a university with a Medical/Dental School”
- Don’t choose Pharmacy at UCL or Optometry anywhere!
- View applying to Medical/Dental School as a **2 year process with 8 choices in total**
- “Best medical students are those who succeed at 2<sup>nd</sup> attempt following a worthwhile gap year” (Brighton & Sussex)
- Consider **graduate** entry **BUT** even more competitive (or consider undergraduate entry as a graduate – but this does have funding implications)

# Tests: BMAT



Admissions  
Testing Service

- **Used by 7 UK Medical Schools** (Brighton & Sussex, Cambridge, Imperial, Lancaster, Leeds, Oxford & UCL) & **1 Dental School** (Leeds)
- **Two hour pen/paper exam taken in school in early November**
- **Fee = £45 (in 2016)**
- **Three sections:**
  - Aptitude & skills (60 minutes)
  - Scientific knowledge & applications (30 minutes)
  - Writing task (30 minutes): **expect to be asked about this at interview**
- **To prepare:**
  - View video, do past papers & follow up suggested reading list on BMAT website [www.admissionstestingservice.org](http://www.admissionstestingservice.org)
  - Look at GCSE/A Level Science papers on different exam boards' websites
  - Consider books (in library + Amazon) & courses on the market
- **Recommend a maximum of two BMAT choices for Medicine**

# Tests: UKCAT



- **UKCAT used by all other Medical Schools (except Buckingham)**
- No science or curriculum content
- Students **arrange own entry** for online test
- Taken at driving theory test centres; receive results immediately
- £65 minimum to register; bursaries available
- 2017/18: registration opens on 2 May – 19 Sept + testing runs from 3 July – 3 Oct
- **Five sections:**
  - Verbal Reasoning (22 minutes)
  - Quantitative Reasoning (25 minutes)
  - Abstract Reasoning (14 minutes)
  - Decision Making (32 minutes)
  - Situational Judgement Test (27 minutes)
- Practice tests and tutorials on website [www.ukcat.ac.uk](http://www.ukcat.ac.uk)
- Recommend doing UKCAT by **early September** as results can influence final shortlist



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**Red = BMAT**

**Blue = UKCAT**

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**S**     **S**ubject

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# What happens next?



- **Year 12 careers guidance interviews** with Mrs Golding available to book **NOW**
- **Year 13 students with offers** for Medicine/Dentistry/Oxbridge will run lunchtime advice sessions for Year 12s in **early May**
- **Year 12 'Towards the Future Careers & HE Conference'** on **Fri 30 June** will include seminars about:
  - Medicine & Dentistry
  - Alternatives to Dentistry & Medicine
  - Other healthcare-related careers (e.g. Nursing) & Science degrees (e.g. Natural Sciences)
- School deadline for UCAS applications for entry to Medicine/ Dentistry/Vet Science/Oxbridge in 2018 = **mid September**

# If you only remember one thing .....



[www.themedicportal.com](http://www.themedicportal.com)

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[Choosing a Medical School](#)

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[Personal Statement](#)

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