

Entry requirements for medical school

What qualifications do I need to become a doctor?

All medical students in the UK will initially take an undergraduate course leading to a Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery. Depending upon the university - this will lead to one of the following qualifications - MBBS; MBBS/BSc; MBChB; MBBCh; BMBS - all of which are normally referred to as a "first MB".

Individual university medical schools set their own requirements, which vary between medical school and the course applied for. It is therefore essential that applicants consult the undergraduate prospectuses for the medical schools to which they wish to apply and/or contact the medical schools directly to seek clarification.

Undergraduate courses

The majority of medical schools require A levels in chemistry, whilst others will accept AS level in chemistry, depending upon the other qualifications being offered. Some require biology at A' level.

Candidates without science A Levels

For candidates without science subjects to offer at A level (or equivalent), it is possible to undertake an additional pre-medical year at some universities (see section training to be a doctor). The pre-medical year is a preliminary course in chemistry, physics and biology and lasts normally 30 weeks.

Candidates without A' levels

A small number of access courses are offered which can lead on into a medical degree. The acceptability of access courses varies between medical schools and it is essential to check this prior to embarking on an access course.

Candidates without A' levels but with considerable life experience may still need to hold academic qualifications and will need to produce evidence of their ability to cope with the demands of the course for which they are applying.

Candidates with a degree

Medical schools increasingly welcome applications from graduates. Graduate candidates normally need a first or upper second class honours degree. Some medical schools require the degree to be in a science-related subject, whilst others do not stipulate any discipline.

Check with each medical school individually to confirm their requirements. You can use our coursefinder to search for degrees in medicine

Most medical schools require applications from all applicants to be made through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS), which will supply details of how and when to apply for medical school and all other university courses.

It is estimated that graduates, mostly with science degrees, make up 10-15% of recent intakes to the five and six-year MB courses in Britain. Most come into the first year, but some universities accept students from bio-medical or life sciences or dentistry into the third MBBS year.

Age limits

There are no formal set age limits for entry to medical school and selection and admission policies are matters for individual institutions to determine. However, medical schools will take account of the length of training (approximately 10 years) in relation to the length of service the candidate could provide.

What medical schools will be looking for in candidates

The standards of entry for any medical teaching centre are exacting. Applicants called for interview will face searching questions about their motivation, their work at school, hobbies and personal interests, as well as having to produce evidence of their academic achievements. A key question will be their reasons for wanting to

become a doctor. Candidates should also be able to demonstrate relevant paid or voluntary work experience e.g. work as a hospital auxiliary, in nursing or residential care. You can also find more about what it is like to be a doctor by having a formal period of work observation. BMA members can look at the BMA website for information about guidelines for work observation. The BMA does not hold information on voluntary work or arrange work observation. Students can find the addresses of local hospitals and residential homes in the telephone book. Other potential sources of advice may be available at your local Careers/Connexions Service or library.

A number of medical schools use clinical aptitude tests such as UKCAT. Others may use other tests, and so it is important to check with each medical school directly.

<http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/explore-by-career/doctors/>