

MEDICINE RESOURCES

It can be difficult to know where to start when thinking about studying medicine and the various stages of the application process. That's why, along some of our current medical students, we have compiled a list of online resources to help get you started on your journey into medicine.

The reviews quoted have been shared by some of our current medical students. Please note, the opinions expressed are their own and do not represent the views of St George's, University of London as an institution.

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WHERE TO START? INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE (OFFICIAL RESOURCES)

Medical Schools Council (MSC) and Studying Healthcare

The MSC is the representative body for all UK Medical schools. Made up of the heads of UK medical schools, the council meets to shape the future of medical education in the UK alongside providing up-to-date advice and guidance for aspiring medics. It has lots of great webpages and insight about key values and attributes needed to study medicine, entry requirements and key components of the application process, such as admissions tests, personal statements, and interviews.

- You can visit the MSC website here: www.medschools.ac.uk

The MSC also have another website, Studying Healthcare, which also provides support and up-to-date information about applying to medicine, including signposting for university outreach programmes and opportunities for prospective applicants. You can visit the Studying Healthcare website here: studyinghealthcare.ac.uk

NHS Health Careers

The NHS Health Careers website provides insight into the huge range of careers available in the NHS. It has a variety of resources available, including real life stories, a career quiz and an outline of the training pathway to becoming a doctor. It also allows you to find out about other careers in the NHS, which can be helpful for confirming your decision to become a doctor whilst also learning about key members of the Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT).

- You can visit the NHS Health Careers website here: www.healthcareers.nhs.uk

“The NHS website showed me what the process of becoming a doctor in the UK is like in the simplest terms and made me understand more about what would be required from me if I wanted to become a doctor.”

“This resource is good because it details what it’s like to study medicine from an objective perspective and other similar, but variably challenging, career pathways within healthcare, science and the NHS which is a good way to gain perspective of the multitude of opportunities that exist within medicine. I found this resource to be useful for considering my options and reaffirming my decision to go into medicine compared to other healthcare pathways.”

The British Medical Association (BMA)

The BMA is the trade union which represents all UK doctors and medical students. They have also produced some guidance about becoming a doctor, including applying for medical school, gaining work experience and the financial support available for studying medicine. You can access these over on their website here:

- BMA Becoming a Doctor – www.bma.org.uk/advice-and-support/studying-medicine

General Medical Council (GMC)

The GMC are a public body that maintain the official register of doctors in the UK. Their role is to protect patients and improve medical education and practice in the UK. They also have produced guidance on becoming a doctor in the UK, which you can access on their website here:

- BMC Becoming a Doctor – www.gmc-uk.org/education/becoming-a-doctor-in-the-uk

“It is a great resource for understanding what it takes to be a doctor and to practice medicine, and the important qualities to consider when deciding to study medicine.”

“This website is a useful official resource with a variety of information about what being a doctor and medical student involves, as well as information about entry requirements and the standards and values that those training to be in the medical profession need to demonstrate. It was useful for finding out about the skills I needed to develop in order to apply to medicine and helped me to fully research what studying and practicing medicine involves.”

WHERE TO START? INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE (THIRD PARTY RESOURCES)

The Medic Portal

The Medic Portal is a commercial organisation with a large array of free guides on various areas of the application process, including admissions test question banks, interview insight and how to choose a medical school. You can find the Medic Portal's free guides on their website here: <https://www.themedicportal.com/application-guide/>

"I have found the Medic Portal quite informative. It has concise information about each university, especially for the UCAT and the entry requirements needed. I find this an essential resource of reference when considering between multiple universities."

"This resource is really user-friendly and accessible and provides guidelines for many important considerations when making the decision to study medicine."

Please note, we do not endorse using paid-for or commercial resources.

Medify

Medify is a commercial organisation with a large array of free guides on various areas of the application process, including example personal statements, support for admission tests and examples of interview questions.

- You can find the Medify's free guides on their website here: www.medify.co.uk/admissions-guide/interviews/medical-school-interview-questions

"A good website for preparing for UCAT."

Please note, we do not endorse using paid-for or commercial resources.

Medmentor

MedMentor is a social enterprise which aims to share as many freely available resources as possible to support aspiring medics with their journeys into medicine. Amongst these are their application tracker, NHS Hot Topics section and signposting to events which may be of interest. Many resources they share are free, with the website being maintained by current medical students from a variety of universities across the UK.

- You can visit their SuperHub to get started: medmentor.co.uk/superhub

“A fantastic hub for finding various application events including those which help with personal statements as well as those aiding in medical school interview.”

“An application tracker is present in order prospective students can keep updated with the application process and its key dates.”

Please note, we do not endorse using paid-for or commercial resources.

The Aspiring Medics

The Aspiring Medics is a social enterprise which, alongside paid for courses, does have free resources and guides on their website. They do also share a variety of different medical podcasts covering areas of medicine from Covid-19 to hot topics in the NHS and scientific developments.

- You can view these suggestions here: www.theaspiringmedics.co.uk/podcasts-medicine

“This has lots of podcasts from those focussing on scientific hot topics and NHS political hot topics which I found really useful when preparing for medical interviews.”

Please note, we do not endorse using paid-for or commercial resources.

The Student Room

The Student Room is an online community which has a huge number of different forums and threads where students ask and answer each other's questions. It's a great way to gain insight and advice from current students, although it's important to bear in mind that answers provided will be subjective and based on individual's experiences.

“This website is very good at capturing the student perspective of what it's like to study medicine, subjective discussions about the pros and cons of studying medicine and also includes further signposting to valuable resources to use whilst making this decision, and once you have decided to study medicine (e.g., next steps and advice). I found this resource to be useful for gaining a variety of balanced, real-life perspectives of what it's like to study medicine, to see if it seemed right for me.”

- You can visit the Student Room here: www.thestudentroom.co.uk



WORK EXPERIENCE

MSC Guidance on Work Experience during Covid-19

It can be challenging to find work experience, especially following the Covid-19 pandemic. Whilst in-person work experience is starting again, it can remain challenging to find. The MSC released a statement and some guidance to support prospective students and reassure them about alternative ways to gain insight, which you can access here:

- MSC Guidance on experience during Covid-19 www.medschools.ac.uk

BSMS Virtual Work Experience

The Brighton and Sussex Medical School (BSMS) Virtual Work Experience Platform hosts an online course giving prospective medicine applicants the chance to gain further insight into the roles of different medical specialists. It provides an opportunity to learn more about the medical profession and a useful way to prepare for a medicine application or interview.

- BSMS Virtual Work Experience - bsmsoutreach.thinkific.com/courses/VWE

Royal College of General Practitioners Observe GP

RCGP has a virtual work experience website called Observe GP, which enables prospective medicine applicants to watch videos of GPs and Primary Care teams in action. It is designed to give students an insight into the role of the General Practitioner and the attributes and values needed to successfully study medicine. It takes about 1.5-2 hours to complete.

- Observe GP - www.rcgp.org.uk/training-exams/discover-general-practice/observe-gp

You Can Be a Doctor Online Work Experience

A widening participation initiative, YCBAD have created an interactive online work experience programme to give pupils the opportunity to learn about the day-to-day role of a doctor. It includes a variety of videos with accompanying worksheets to find out more about what you've seen and heard in the videos.

- You Can Be a Doctor - <https://www.youcanbeadoctor.co.uk/virtual-work-experience>

Springpod Courses

Springpod have a variety of different online courses and virtual work experience offerings hosted by different providers which allow you to gain insight into medicine and healthcare.

- Springpod: www.springpod.com

WORK EXPERIENCE ADVICE

Remember, the most important part of work experience is reflection. We recommend keeping a reflective diary where you can record your experiences and reflect on what you've taken and learnt throughout. Work experience is not a tick box exercise, it is about what you have gained and how you, and your skillset, has grown. This is what medical schools want to know about relative to your work experience.

At St Georges, we do not request a specific number of hours of work experience to be undertaken, rather that candidates "have an understanding of the realities of working as a healthcare professional and to show they have the necessary skills and attributes for their chosen career." However, some medical schools may outline more specific requirements, therefore ensure you check and do your research when applying.

ADMISSIONS TESTS

All medical schools require you to sit one of two tests for undergraduate medicine, the BMAT or the UCAT. If you are applying for graduate entry medicine, then you will be required to sit the GAMSAT.

We do not endorse or advise paying for admission test courses. We do advise practicing using the freely available question banks on each testing website and doing so under timed conditions.

- BioMedical Admissions Test (BMAT) - www.admissionstesting.org/for-test-takers/bmat/

- University Clinical Aptitude Test (UCAT) - www.ucat.ac.uk
- Graduate Medical School Admissions Test (GAMSAT) - gamsat.acer.org

It is important to note that you do need to pay to sit each admission test. Both the UCAT and BMAT do offer financial support for eligible applicants, which you can respectively find out more about using the following links:

- BMAT Voucher - www.admissionstesting.org/for-test-takers/bmat/bmat-october/dates-and-costs/
- UCAT Bursary Scheme - www.ucat.ac.uk/register/bursary-scheme
At present, GAMSAT do not provide financial support for the cost of sitting the test.

Make sure you research which university you would like to apply for, and whether they require the BMAT or the UCAT. This way you will avoid sitting both if you don't need to or trying to apply having sat the wrong admissions test. Remember that the GAMSAT is only required if you are applying for graduate entry medicine courses.

PERSONAL STATEMENTS

Your personal statement is your opportunity to share your passion for studying medicine alongside demonstrating why you are the right candidate to become a medical student.

The MSC have produced a personal statement info sheet which you can access here:

- MSC Personal Statement Info Sheet
www.medschools.ac.uk/media/2766/personal-statement.pdf

UCAS has produced some advice about how to write your personal statement, which you can access here:

- UCAS Personal Statement Guidance – www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/writing-personal-statement/how-write-personal-statement

Another helpful document to refer to is the MSC Core Values and Attributes document, as the skills and qualities outlined are those which you should look to demonstrate using your experiences and understanding of medicine in your personal statement:

- MSC Core Values and Attributes –www.medschools.ac.uk/media/2542/statement-on-core-values-to-study-medicine.pdf

Medify have some examples of personal statements, alongside some critique and pointers, to help you gain an understanding of what to include, and what to avoid, in your writing:

- Medify Personal Statement Examples - www.medify.co.uk/admissions-guide/personal-statement/personal-statement-examples-medicine

The Medic Portal have pulled together a checklist for you to review when you've drafted your personal statement:

- Medic Portal Medicine Personal Statement Checklist - www.themedicportal.com/blog/checklist-for-your-medicine-personal-statement/

INTERVIEWS

There are different types of interviews for medicine. Therefore, it is important to check each university's website to find out which style interview they use.

The Medic Portal have put together an interview guide, including a bank of interview questions categorised into the different types of questions:

- Medicine Interview Questions- www.themedicportal.com/application-guide/medical-school-interview/medicine-interview-questions/

The MSC also have an interview info sheet to help you consider what medical schools are looking for in candidates during interviews.

- MSC Interview Infosheet - www.medschools.ac.uk/media/2773/interviews.pdf

Practice really does help to alleviate those nerves that can come with interviews. If you can, ask a friend, a parent/carer or a teacher if they can ask you some questions to help you practice and become more confident in structuring your answers. Another great tip is to record yourself answering questions and watch them back to analyse your responses, review your body language and your presentation.

SCIENCE

Having a grasp and an interest in science is something most universities will look for in prospective medical students. As such, it's important to be engaged and stay up to date with health and medical related news. What's key here is using reputable sources that publish reliable information and reference their evidence.

The following websites, resources and journals are good examples of these:

- BBC News – www.bbc.co.uk/news/health
- The Guardian – www.theguardian.com/society/health
- NHS Behind the Headlines – www.nhs.uk/%2FNews%2FPages%2FNewsIndex.aspx
- New Scientist – www.newscientist.com
- The Lancet – www.thelancet.com

WIDENING PARTICIPATION

Universities will often have a dedicated widening participation team who aim to support students who are typically underrepresented in higher education through running various sessions and activities, whilst being on hand to answer questions. There are also various organisations with similar widening participation goals who provide support to

students. Due to the nature of widening participation, programmes will likely have specific criteria you need to meet. It is worth researching what universities and organisations might have available.

In 2 Med School

A widening participation initiative made up of volunteer medical students and doctor volunteers who want to support students from underrepresented backgrounds. The initiative aims to support Year 12 and Year 13 students on their journey to medicine by pairing prospective students with a mentor and is completely free.

- You can find out more about In 2 Med School here: www.in2medschool.com

St Georges, University of London

At St George's we run a variety of information sessions, webinars, and virtual work experience programmes for eligible students. The best way to find out more about what we have available is by visiting our widening participation (WP) webpages and signing up to receive pre-application support.

- St George's, University of London WP - www.sgul.ac.uk/study/widening-participation
- Pre-application support at St George's* - forms.office.com/r/y8yPLAuPfr

*Please note, you need to meet certain eligibility criteria to be eligible to receive pre-application support. This is further detailed on our website and in the pre-application support form.

UniBuddy

We know that sometimes the best person to answer your question is a current student. That's why you can chat to some of our current students at St George's to ask them questions directly via Unibuddy here:

- Chat to our students – www.sgul.ac.uk/study/chat-to-our-students

Please note, you need to be aged 16 or over to use this chat function.