



Contextual information

Did you know?

Most medical schools use contextual information to help understand an applicant's potential.

Useful stuff

WHAT DO MEDICAL SCHOOLS LOOK FOR?

Many medical schools use contextual information in order to understand a student's social or education background. It enables them to gauge an applicant's academic potential. There are many contextual factors that may be used by the medical school.

The two main factors used by medical schools are consideration of the:

- **Educational background of the student**

There are a range of factors that can be used such as school achievement data (for example, the average GCSE (or equivalent) performance of students at the school or the number of students progressing to higher education) or the composition of the school (for example, the percentage receiving free school meals).

- **Socio-economic background of the student**

This may include an assessment of the level of disadvantage a student may have faced (using the index of multiple deprivation) or their family background (using income or socio-economic assessments).

Medical schools often use different contextual factors together. The contextual information is then used in many different ways, it can be used to:

- Consider if a student should be invited to interview
- Consider the test or interview scores within the student's educational or social context
- Provide an offer for an access route or alternative pathway to medicine
- Give further consideration to the application if the student just misses the grades they were predicted.

Top facts

- Over three quarters of medical students come from state schools. Medical schools are trying to increase the number of people coming from under-represented communities and backgrounds.

Key dates

Ensure you are aware of any contextual admissions by October.

Contextual information

What you should do...

The majority of the contextual factors used by the medical schools will be identified automatically, using publicly available information provided by the Department for Education (or others) about the school, or information based on where you live.

Some medical schools may ask for additional information, for example, if you have been in local authority care. Check individual medical school websites to see what additional information they may consider and how you should provide the information (for example, within your UCAS application).

Be aware

Some medical schools will screen the personal statement and/or the academic reference for any contextual information. Make sure information on your education or home background is included, particularly if it has impacted your academic performance.

More help & advice

Entry Requirements for UK Medical Schools has more information about the contextual admissions process operated at individual medical schools: www.medschools.ac.uk/studying-medicine/applications/entry-requirements

Test yourself

Look at the four medical schools you are interested in. Think about:

- Do they have contextual admissions? If so, what are the criteria?
- Do you meet any of the criteria?
- Do you need to include any information within your application?