

Personal statement



msc Medical
Schools
Council
Selection Alliance

Did you know?

Medical schools use personal statements in different ways.

Useful stuff

WHAT DO MEDICAL SCHOOLS WANT TO SEE?

Some medical schools do not read personal assessment at the initial assessment, instead using a combination of predicted grades, admissions tests, and/or the academic reference. Some medical schools screen the statements for any widening participation flags, while some will use the statements during interview. Some medical schools use them as a key part of the selection process.

Medical schools want to see your experience, skills and attributes relevant to medicine:

- Think about what medicine means to you and express it in your own words
- Focus on what you have learned about being a doctor and working in the healthcare profession from your work or voluntary experience
- Write about the knowledge you have gained about life as a doctor rather than the activity itself
- When talking about skills, explain why these skills are important for a doctor
- Write about any outreach that has supported your understanding of what it will be like to study medicine, or be a doctor
- Include some information on any areas of medicine that interest you
- Include some information about what you like to do in your spare time and how it has developed you.

Finally, double-check your punctuation, spelling and grammar, and avoid using clichés.

Key dates

Complete your personal statement in time for your school's or college's deadline.

This information is endorsed by all undergraduate medical schools in the UK who are members of the Medical Schools Council. The information relates to UK medical schools only. It is correct and accurate at the time of publication (July 2019), and relates to the 2020 admissions process. It will be updated annually but we advise you to check individual medical school websites.

What you should do...

Many students get very concerned about what to write in their personal statement. The most important thing is that it is written by you, it reflects you as a person, and is an honest reflection of your thoughts, skills and interests.

As you will be applying to several medical schools it is important that time and care is devoted to the personal statement. Medical schools may be looking for different things. It is a good idea to look at the information available for the different medical schools you are interested in applying to. Many medical schools offer advice on how to put together a personal statement and may give advice on what they would like to see in your personal statement.

If you are considering deferring for a year, check that the medical school accepts deferred applications. If you are going to defer (or have taken a gap year) include a short paragraph about what your plans are for the year and what you hope to learn.

Top facts

- Medical schools can check if you have plagiarised your statement - use all your own words.

Be aware

Your personal statement should be true and accurate. Medical schools take evidence of dishonesty very seriously. If there are any misleading, exaggerated or inaccurate statements you may have your offer withdrawn.

What they say...

“Your personal statement should be individual, not a series of clichés. Focus on your volunteer and work experience, explain what skills you have learned from your experiences and demonstrate them. Show an understanding of both the good and bad aspects of a career in medicine and how you are prepared to manage them. Be honest and authentic and don't write what you think they want to read.”

Farhana Patel, second year medical student at Leicester Medical School.

More help & advice

UCAS has good information on how to write a personal statement:

www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/gettingstarted/when-apply/writing-personal-statement

Test yourself

Write a list of everything you would want a medical school to know about you – your achievements, talents, experiences and personal qualities.

Allocate each element in your list to one of the following areas (this will help you to structure your personal statement):

- Introduction
- Knowledge and interest in the subject
- Work or voluntary experience
- Hobbies and interests

You should now be able to develop a first draft of your personal statement.