

Understanding medicine



MSC Medical Schools Council
Selection Alliance



Did you know?

All medical schools provide events and activities to help you learn more about medicine.

Useful stuff

WHAT DO MEDICAL SCHOOLS WANT TO SEE?

The desire to study medicine is often judged by your interest in the subject. Alongside your academic ability, medical schools will want you to demonstrate an understanding of what a career in medicine involves and that you are suitable for working in a caring profession.

Most medical schools will also expect you to show that you have interests outside of studying. These interests can provide evidence of skills and attributes, such as working with others, good time management, and being able to relax away from study.

What you should do...

Work experience is valuable, see our separate work and voluntary experience information sheet.

You should also build your knowledge of medicine by talking to people involved in healthcare or undertaking research. Practising healthcare professionals, such as nurses or healthcare assistants, and current medical students can give invaluable insight into life as a doctor. Speak to people who are involved in health across a range of settings such as the community, in laboratories, hospitals and hospices. Understand and think about the differences, and how these different settings change the delivery of healthcare.

Find out about and attend higher education outreach activities and open days. Look at medical schools' resources on their websites.

You should read up on the subject and look at relevant medical and scientific news articles, research publications and websites.

There are many freely available podcasts and films available online.

Key dates

From the start of your post-16 studies seek out experiences and develop your interests and skills.

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Top facts

- TED talks have over 2000 videos delivered by patients, carers and professional about medicine and healthcare in general.
- Medical schools understand that you will attend outreach activities at universities other than where you finally apply.

Be aware

Admissions processes and practice change every year. Advice on admissions from medical students or healthcare professionals may be out of date. Make sure you refer to the information from the Medical Schools Council or from individual medical schools for accurate and up to date advice.

What they say...

“Ensure you have a realistic insight into the profession. A career in medicine is very challenging. Make sure you know what you are signing up for.”

Samantha Mills, Year 0 medical student, Southampton Medical School.

More help & advice

The Guardian’s science pages: www.theguardian.com/science

The Telegraph’s health pages: www.telegraph.co.uk/health

The British Medical Journal’s open access information: bmjopen.bmj.com

TED talks can provide useful background and information: www.ted.com/talks

Test yourself

There is so much information available to you, how do you work out which will be the most useful?

In order to focus your time we suggest you:

- List all the sources of information about medicine you can think of
- Work out which are the three most important sources of information from this list
- Decide how you will access and use this information