

## Briefing Paper: Confirmed places for undergraduate medicine courses on A Level results day 2021

### Background

The number of places available to study medicine is regulated by the different UK governments and controlled through intake targets. There are usually around 9,500 places to study medicine in the UK each year. In 2021 there will be over recruitment in medical schools as a result of grade inflation in school leaver assessments. In response, the Government has temporarily adjusted the cap on medical and dentistry places in England in order to accommodate those applicants which have met the terms of their offers after achieving the required grades.

### Headlines

#### More people want to study medicine than ever before

In total, **28,690** people applied to study medicine for entry in 2021, an **increase of 21%** compared to applications for entry in 2020. This number is made up of increases in both students applying for the first time (24,220) and those who are reapplying (4,470).

#### Offers for medicine down by 14%, rejections up 41% compared to 2019

Every year medical schools must judge whether the number of offers they make to applicants will allow them to meet their recruitment targets. When considering the number of offers they make there are two considerations medical schools need to bear in mind:

- How many applicants will achieve the grades they were predicted when the medical schools made their offers.
- How many applicants will accept their offer as opposed to one from another of the three schools from which they might hold offers (four choices in all permitted).

A level (and equivalent) exams have been cancelled in 2021 and replaced by teacher assessed grades, meaning data from previous years cannot be used to predict how many applicants might meet the terms of their offers. Many medical schools used the conversion rate of offers to acceptances from the 2020 admissions cycle to estimate how many offers to make. However, if the relationship between predicted grades and achieved grades is stronger than it was in the 2020 admissions cycle, then over recruitment to medical schools will occur.

In total, there were **21,577** offers made by medical schools in 2021, a **reduction of 14.4%** compared to 2019. Rejections to medical schools have **risen by 41.2%** compared to 2019. While more medical schools have been conservative in making offers, this has led to fewer students receiving more than one offer meaning that many have accepted their only offer. The increased number of applicants may also have reduced the number of students receiving multiple offers.

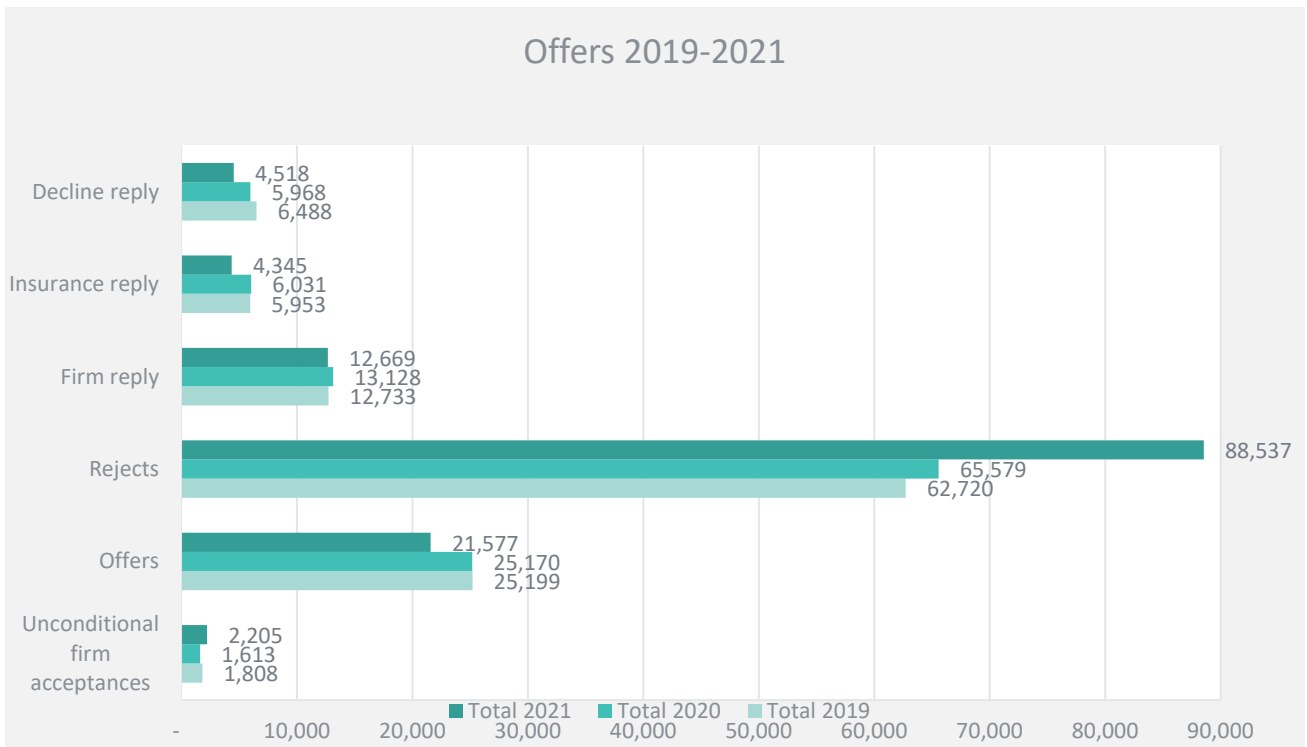
## Implications of over recruitment

Medical education and training is delivered by medical schools in collaboration with the NHS which provides clinical training to students throughout the course. One challenge posed by an increase in student numbers concerns the medical schools and hospitals' ability to provide clinical placement opportunities for such students as well as to ensure there are appropriate facilities and resources to support their learning. While some medical schools may be able to take a modest increase in numbers, their ability to do so will be limited by specialist facilities and clinical placement opportunities. With the physical constraints on placement capacity some students may choose to move to a different medical school or to defer their place until 2022, and all medical schools will support them in these moves. Medical schools are committed to maintaining high standards of education and training and are working with the Government to ensure applicants who have successfully achieved their conditional offer to study medicine are able to take up their place at medical school.

## Figures

	Total 2019	Total 2020	Total 2021	Change (2019-21)	Change % (2019-21)
Unconditional firm acceptances	1,808	1,613	2,205	397	22.0%
Offers	25,199	25,170	21,577	-3,622	-14.4%
Rejects	62,720	65,579	88,537	25,817	41.2%
Firm reply	12,733	13,128	12,669	-64	-0.5%
Insurance reply	5,953	6,031	4,345	-1,608	-27.0%
Decline reply	6,488	5,968	4,518	-1,970	-30.4%

**Figure 1: Offers for medicine courses, 2019-2021. [Data from UCAS 2021 cycle applicant figures - 30 June Deadline.](#)**



**Figure 2: Offers for medicine courses, 2019-2021. [Data from UCAS 2021 cycle applicant figures - 30 June Deadline.](#)**