

MSC and DSC Summer Schools

Eligibility and Weighting

2026

Eligibility

Due to the way the programme is funded, students living outside of England are not eligible for the programme.

To be eligible for the programme the students must be currently studying at a state school¹ in England and either be:

- In, or been in local authority care²
- An estranged student who is studying without the support and approval of a family network.
- An asylum seeker or refugee

Or hold a minimum of two of the following:

- Studying in a state school that achieved below the national average Attainment 8 score³ at GCSE or Progress 8 score⁴. If this is not available for applicants previous school information can be used where they had attended to the age of 16
- From a school with a high percentage of students receiving free school meals⁵. If this information is not available for their current school, for example they are now attending a college, we will accept the school the free school meal data for the school attended at age 16

¹ We would expect that students who attend selective state schools are not eligible for the programme. This is because we have adopted the principle of focussing on students who have experienced social and educational disadvantage. We recognise that there may be exceptions to this case.

² Experience of local authority care is defined as being looked after by a local authority, foster parents/other family members, at home with their parents under the supervision of social services, in a residential children's home or in another residential setting such as school or secure unit, or someone who has experienced a period of three months in the care of the local authority within the last ten years.

³ We will use the England average score of Attainment 8 to be 45.9 out of 90. This is the latest statistic for 2023-24 the average score for 'Attainment 8' (which measures pupils' performance in 8 GCSE-level qualifications). Available at (explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/key-stage-4-performance-revised) and used in [Compare the performance of schools and colleges in England - GOV.UK](https://gov.uk/compare-the-performance-of-schools-and-colleges-in-england)

⁴ This will be any school that gets below 0 (zero) as its Progress 8 score.

⁵ The percentage of students' eligible for free school meals is 25.7.% or above. [Schools, pupils and their characteristics, Academic year 2024/25 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](https://gov.uk/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics/academic-year-2024-25)

- Living in a geographical area with low levels of progression onto higher education⁶
- Are a young carer aged under 18 who helps to look after someone in their family, or a friend, who is ill, disabled or misuses drugs or alcohol. To qualify as a young carer they must be caring above and beyond what is normally expected, there is no time limit on the amount of care they provide for their dependents
- From a family where the parents do not have a university degree from the UK or abroad
- In receipt of or eligible for free school meals or the 16-19 Bursary Fund or Discretionary Learner Support or Means Tested Benefit or Pupil Premium

For those students that meet the eligibility criteria **we will prioritise those that are in our target areas** - living in a geographical area with low levels of progression to medicine or dentistry. These are identified as our **cold spots**. This is identified as areas in which there are low levels of application per 1,000 of the population. A list is included in Annex A.

Medical Programmes

The specification also expects participants on the programme to have:

- The potential to study medicine and be capable of achieving the minimum grades required for entry (whether that is for standard entry programmes or programmes with a gateway year)
 - (Predicted) A-level grades BBC (or equivalent) and
 - GCSE grades 5 or above in English and Mathematics (or equivalent)
- An interest in STEM subjects and be considering studying science in their post-16 studies and medicine/dentistry post-18

Dental Programmes

The specification also expects participants on the programme to have:

- The potential to study medicine and be capable of achieving the minimum grades required for entry (whether that is for standard entry programmes or programmes with a gateway year)
 - (Predicted) A-level grades ABB (or equivalent) and
 - GCSE grades 6 or above in English and Mathematics (or equivalent)
- An interest in STEM subjects and be considering studying science in their post-16 studies and medicine/dentistry post-18

⁶ We will also accept data using TUNDRA LSOA or POLAR4 and both with students in quintiles 1 and 2. This is available at <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/young-participation-by-area/search-by-postcode/>.

For students that studied outside the UK (and took their GCSEs/equivalent overseas) or are completing their A-levels online they would still need to meet two of the eligibility criteria.

For students attending colleges and sixth forms where there is no FSM data, we will accept their previous school (in which they took their GCSEs).

If students have moved school at Year 12 then it is acceptable to use the applicants':

- School where they took their GCSEs, or
- Current school.

This is because their schooling up to the age of 16 is likely to have greater impact on their educational background. This does not apply if the current or previous school is an independent school. All students must be within a state school or college.

In exceptional circumstances students are able to join if they are in Year 13 or who are taking resits. They would be exceptions and their context is important. Attendance would be at the discretion of the host summer school. In all cases, we would require the students to meet the eligibility criteria.

Annex A

Cold spots – Medicine

Local authority districts with low levels of progression to medicine and workforce shortages (tier 1)

Blackpool
Broxbourne
Burnley
Cannock Chase
Cumberland
East Staffordshire
Gloucester
Harlow
Ipswich
Isles of Scilly
Kingston upon Hull, City of
Lancaster
Lincoln
North East Lincolnshire
North Kesteven
Redditch
South Holland
South Kesteven
Stevenage

Stoke-on-Trent
Tamworth
Telford and Wrekin
Tendring
West Suffolk
Worcester
York

Local authority districts with low levels of progression to medicine (tier 2)

Ashfield
Barnsley
Bath and North East Somerset
Bolsover
Braintree
Breckland
Brighton and Hove
Canterbury
Castle Point
Chesterfield
County Durham
Coventry
Crawley
Darlington
Derby
Doncaster
East Cambridgeshire
Eastbourne
Exeter
Fareham
Fenland
Gateshead
Gosport
Great Yarmouth
Halton
Hastings
Havant
High Peak
Isle of Wight
King's Lynn and West Norfolk
Leicester
Mansfield
Medway
North Norfolk
Norwich
Oxford
Plymouth
Portsmouth
Rushmoor
Rutland
Sefton

South Tyneside
Southampton
Swindon
Torbay
Warrington
Wigan
Worthing

Cold Spots - Dentistry

Postcode areas with low levels of progression to dentistry

BA Bath
FY Blackpool
BR Bromley
CT Canterbury
CA Carlisle
CO Colchester
DL Darlington
DT Dorchester
DY Dudley
DH Durham
CB Cambridge
EX Exeter
HR Hereford
HU Hull
IP Ipswich
LA Lancaster
NR Norwich
PO Portsmouth
SP Salisbury
SS Southend
SG Stevenage
TA Taunton
YO York

