Medic Mind UCAS Pack

UCAS Guidance Book

UCAS Guidance

Personal Statement

UKCAT and BMAT

Choosing Universities

Motivate. Mentor. Maximise.

UCAS Mind

Applying for Medicine

UCAS Application

UKCAT

Medic Mind

Introduction

Welcome to Medic Mind!

We would like to warmly welcome you on the Medic Mind Journey to becoming a doctor. Getting into medical school is the first step, and the UKCAT is the best place to start.

We can assure you that you are in great hands - we have a team of experts to give you the head start you need to clinch those limited places in the UK's finest medical schools. Medic Mind Students have an exceptional record, with over 96% of them achieving an offer for medicine.

The UKCAT is a challenging proposition. It is designed to put students out of their comfort zone, and at first can seem hugely intimidating. You should see the UKCAT as an opportunity to showcase your talent and boost your application, and with our specialist techniques it will become exactly that.

Medic Mind and the UKCAT

This UKCAT Course has been designed by experts, and involves the fusion of:

Statistical Analysis

We have employed a team of data analysts and used the latest technology to study the UKCAT for the past 7 years. In this time, we have developed a set of Medic Mind Strategies which we believe are the best techniques available for the UKCAT to guarantee you a brilliant score.

Expert Tutors

We promise the highest standards, and therefore the course will be taught by the most experienced tutors available, our two co-founders: Kunal Dasani and Mohil Shah. With over 1000 hours of tuition experience between them, they have taught the UKCAT across the world from the UK to Singapore.

Personal Care

If you are a Medic Mind Student you are much more than a customer. You are part of the family. With our huge network of support, we will look after you from your application until you qualify as a doctor. Never hesitate to pick up the phone and speak to us, we will always be here to listen.

Is Medicine Right For You?

Factors to consider

First of all, you should decide whether medicine is the correct career path for you. Advice from others is a brilliant tool to gain information and help build a picture, but ultimately the decision should be yours not someone else's. Here are several factors to consider:

Job Satisfaction - how much do you enjoy your job?

Job satisfaction tends to be one of the primary reasons that people choose Medicine as a career path. Every day you are helping people and making a difference. You are spending the majority of the day talking to people, whether it be patients or colleagues, whereas in an office job much of your time is spent in front of a computer.

Scope to Travel - would you like to work abroad?

Medicine is a respected degree around the world, so as a doctor you have huge flexibility to work in different countries. These days, we are seeing a trend of doctors moving to countries such as Australia and America. Such destinations provide an alternative experience, often with better pay than the UK.

Academic Challenge - are you ready for the challenge?

Studying medicine at university is very difficult, and you need to be very focused and disciplined in planning your work throughout the year. It is very different to school where teachers guide you, and specifications tell you exactly what you need to know. At university, you will often have 50 different lecturers each telling you everything they know about a specific topic, and it can be overwhelming to pick out exactly what you need to learn. However, you should not dread or fear the degree - instead be excited at the prospect of an academic challenge! But be aware and ready for it.

What skills does a doctor have?

- Passion for medicine
- Academic ability
- Communication skills
- Teamwork and leadership skills
- Organisation
- Ability to work under pressure

How to Apply to Medical School

Lower 6th → Summer → Upper 6th

1. **Decide if you want to do medicine-** think carefully about this, and use advice, work experience and research to help you.

2. **Volunteering and work experience-** this will help you decide if medicine is right for you, and will also give you something to talk about in your personal statement and interview.

3. **Choose appropriate subjects-** most medical schools require you to do Chemistry, but some also specify Biology, which is recommended and useful to do even if not compulsory. Aside from that, Maths is popular and a good choice, but it is dependent on you based on your interests and strengths.

4. **UKCAT Test**- you need at least 5 weeks to prepare for the test. Sign up for it on the Official UKCAT Website and choose a date between 3rd July - 3rd October. The best time to do it is the week before school re-starts in September. Registration fee is £65 (or £85 post September).

5. **Choose Universities-** have a rough guide of universities so you can attend open days and write your personal statement accordingly. You can finalise this after you get your UKCAT score, and then decide if you will take the BMAT.

6. **Personal Statement-** over the summer holidays perfect your personal statement and tailor it to the universities you apply to.

7. **BMAT Test-** if you would like to apply to BMAT universities, then sign up for the test which takes place on 2nd November.

8. **Interviews-** Interviews can come at any time, so preparation is a continuing and ongoing process.

9. **Exams and success-** as long as you meet your grades, you are ready to begin the road to becoming a doctor!

How to Choose a Medical School

Researching a medical school

To research a medical school, you should follow these steps:

1. **Open Days**- go to open days and speak to current students and staff
2. **Prospectus**- read the university prospectus, which you can usually find on their website
3. **Website-** look at the website of the medical school, which will have videos and information to guide you
4. **Entry criteria**- find out exactly what the entry criteria is
5. **Course type**- is it traditional or integrated?
6. **Teaching method**- is it lecture based or problem based?
7. **Admission tests-** find out if you need to take the UKCAT or BMAT

Factors to consider

This table summarises the factors you should consider:

Factor	Importance
UKCAT and BMAT	The BMAT is sat after the admissions deadline, so if you apply for 2 BMAT universities and score poorly, then it can leave you in a difficult situation. Therefore we advise that you apply to no more than two BMAT universities. **UK BMAT Universities:** Oxford, Cambridge, UCL, Imperial, Brighton and Sussex, Leeds, Lancaster.

Grades	The standard medical offer has started to lean towards A*AA, although you can till get AAA offers. Check out our University by University Guide for more information.
Location	Leaving home for 6 years can be difficult, and there are several benefits in staying close by, especially given the length of the medicine course. If you are considering universities far away, you should definitely go visit to gauge the atmosphere in the city or town.
Oxbridge	The classic question of 'Should I apply to Oxbridge for medicine?'. Medicine is different to other subjects because the university you go to is not as important for job applications. A medical degree is essentially the same from anywhere. So do not choose Oxbridge expecting huge benefits for the prestige of the university. However, some of the best professors and facilities are concentrated there, so the quality of education may push you to become a better doctor. The traditional nature of the course is a consideration - see our comparison of Traditional vs. Integrated courses for more information.
Intercalated Medical Schools	**5 year course -** many universities offer a 5 year MBBS option. Often, it is split into 2 years of preclinical theory (hospital-based), followed by 3 years of clinical hospital experiences (shadowing doctors in hospitals). **6 year iBSc course-** many universities also offer a 6 year course, which gives you the opportunity to essentially get two degrees in one by doing an iBSc for one year. This is a chance to do some research in a particular field, or work in a lab if you choose to. For example, at UCL they offer Cardiology, Physiology, Neurology, Global Health, Paediatrics, Primary Health Care and much more. This is a compulsory year at UCL (3rd year) and Imperial (4th year).
Course structure	Courses can be **integrated** or **traditional**, or may involve **lecture-based** teaching or **problem-based** learning. See the next section on Course Types for more information on this.

Course and Teaching Styles

You should consider **course type** (traditional vs. integrated) and **teaching structure** (lecture vs. problem based learning) as two separate considerations.

These two factors can be combined in different ways to form different course types.

Course Types

Traditional Courses

- Distinct pre-clinical and clinical split
- Normally a *subject-based* approach

Traditional courses consist of two separate parts: pre-clinical training (2-3) and clinical training (3).

St Andrews, Cambridge and Oxford are 3 of the most traditional pre-clinical medical schools.

Subject-based

The traditional course focuses first on teaching you the pure theory of medicine, consisting of anatomy, physiology, ethics, psychology and biochemistry. This is often called a 'subject-based approach'.

Integrated Course

- Pre-clinical and clinical medicine have more overlap
- Normally a *system-based* approach

Integrated courses tend to introduce clinical medicine earlier, linking it in with medical theory. The course is still split into pre-clinical and clinical years, but there is much more overlap, with early patient contact in your first few years and theory-based lectures in your clinical years.

System-based

Integrated courses also tend to lean towards being systems-based. Teaching is based on body systems such as the digestive system, learning all of the anatomy, physiology, pharmacology, pathology, biochemistry, genetics and clinical sciences relevant to that system.

Systems-based learning can be helpful because you can link anatomy to the physiology of a given system, although a disadvantage is that the links between the systems are normally left to the student to make, and therefore the relevance of one system to another can be missed.

Overview

All courses have some level of patient contact early on, so there is sometimes some blurring between the two course types. Oxford and Cambridge are most famously traditional, and the initial years can be very theory heavy, almost feeling like a pure science degree. At UCL, an example of an integrated course, every Thursday (in 1st year) is dedicated to clinical medicine, with sessions being held in selected hospitals.

Teaching Method

Lecture-based teaching

Lecture-based learning involves having teaching in lecture theatres, often with hundreds of students. Lecturers can be university professors or guest doctors coming in to speak. Lectures are complemented with clinical work, dissection sessions, labs and self-learning tasks.

Problem-based learning

PBL Universities: Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow, Barts and The London, Peninsula, Keele, Hull-York, and East Anglia.

Teaching is done via PBL tutorials, which involve small groups of 8-10 people with a tutor.

1. The problem or scenario is identified

2. The key terms and concepts are defined

3. The group brainstorm and discuss solutions to the problem

4. The group decides on learning objectives to achieve by the next tutorial

5. They research and collect information (via lectures, teaching sessions, clinics and books) to meet the learning objectives

6. At the next session the students share the information they have learnt.

The tutor is there to guide the group and ensure that the students stay on track.

What does research show?

Research has shown that even though students from lecture-based courses have a greater knowledge span at the time of graduation, students from problem-based courses become better doctors due to their ability to work in teams and approach clinical problems.

Career as a Doctor

Medical School

Medical School can range from 4 to 6 years:

- 4 years for post-graduates
- 5 years for non-iBSc
- 6 years for BSc

Foundation Years

- During your two foundation years, FY1 and FY2, you will start to get paid and work as a junior doctor in the hospital.
- You apply for hospital positions through a national programme.
- It includes 6 to 8 rotations in medical or surgical specialities.
- You would expect to obtain full GMC registration at the end of FY1

Speciality training

Training programmes differ in length and structure according to specialty.

- General practice lasts three years.
- Other specialties can last 5-8 years.

Run-through training and coupled training

Run-through training

Entry to some specialities is very competitive. *Competition ratios* show numbers of applications received against posts available.

For some specialties training is through a run-through programme. You only have to apply once, at the beginning of the programme, and are recruited for the full duration of the specialty training.

Uncoupled training

Other specialties consist of core training and then competitive entry into higher specialty training.

The length of core training can differ:

- Core training for two years - e.g. Core Medical Training and Core Surgical Training
- Core training for three years - e.g. emergency medicine and psychiatry
- The length of higher specialty training will also differ per specialty.

Locum work for doctors

There are various stages of your medical career where you may wish to consider working as a locum. For example:

- After Foundation you may decide you need more time before deciding which specialty path to take
- Specialty trainees may want a break between core and higher specialty training in uncoupled programmes
- Consultants, specialty doctors and GPs may prefer the flexibility of this type of work or may enjoy the benefits of being self-employed

Benefits of locum work

- You get diversity by working in a variety of hospitals
- Can be part-time / combined with another interest
- Higher rate of pay
- Can be temporary work whilst you look for a permanent job

Disadvantages of locum work

- Irregular (possible periods without work)
- Isolation and lack of stability
- May not get pension or maternity rights

Studying Medicine Abroad

Medic Mind Steps: Medicine Abroad

1. **Decide on studying abroad-** factors to consider include living away from home, tuition fees, course structure, compatibility with the UK, and entrance requirements.

2. **Choose your university**- look at our guide of European Medical Schools to help you.

3. **Sit required entrance exams-** most of these are in London, but you may have to visit the university

4. **Go see the university-** it is best to visit an open day, because having the right university environment is even more important if you are leaving your home country.

There has been a recent rise in the number of medical applicants who are applying abroad, especially due to the high competitiveness for UK places. Students study and qualify abroad, and then often return to the UK to work in the NHS like UK students.

Why would you study abroad?

- **Different experience-** you get to see medicine in a different country, and this can really broaden your view on the field. Additionally, if you would like to work abroad this can give you a taste.

- **Securing a place at medical school-** there are far more applicants than UK places, so applying abroad is a way to secure your place in a medical school. It tends to be easier to get into foreign medical schools, but often it is more difficult to stay in, with stringent and regular testing.

What are tuition fees like?

Tuition fees tend to be slightly lower than the £9,000 fees at UK Schools. A full comparison can be found in our table of European Medical Schools.

Another factor to bear in mind is that you will not be able to get a student loan to fund your education.

Can I return to the UK?

All qualifications within the European Union will be acknowledged by the General Medicine Council (GMC) in the UK. Certain qualifications from outside Europe may also be recognised, but students have to take professional examinations before they can work in the UK.

When do I return to the UK?

You can apply for FY1 places in the UK, but it is often difficult to secure these. Therefore most students complete their FY1 year abroad, thus obtaining a full registration with a license to practice, and then apply for FY2 posts in the UK.

Do I need a private company to get a place abroad?

Several education agents offer help to students seeking to study abroad. It can be useful to use one for advice and even the services they offer, but often it is unnecessary to use an agent.

You should not need to pay an agent simply to put an application forward, though they might charge a small fee which they will refund if you take up the offer at the university.

Studying medicine in the USA

In the USA, the route is much longer. Normally, students do a general science or pre-medical undergraduate degree, followed by post-graduate medicine. However, the combination of the long course length and high US tuition fees makes this a very expensive pathway.

European Medical Schools

It is becoming more and more common to see students go to medical schools in Europe. They are very compatible with the UK, so it is an option which you should definitely consider if you wish to either study abroad or are unable to get a place in the UK.

Comparison of European Medical Schools

University	Country	Y	Annual Fee (£)	Entry Requirements	Admission exam
Debrecen University	Hungary	6	£13,100	3 A levels including Biology + one of Chemistry / Physics	Admissions examination in London
Poznan University of Medical Science	Poland	6	£11,570	3 A-levels including Biology, Chemistry + one of Maths / Physics (need 2 subjects, including Biology)	Admissions examination in London
Lithuanian University of Health Sciences	Lithuania	6	£8,400	3 A-levels including Biology and Chemistry with minimum grade of B.	Admissions examination in London or Dublin
Zagreb University	Croatia	6	£5,900	A-levels. They recommend Biology, Chemistry and Physics.	Admissions examination in Croatia
Riga Stradins University	Latvia	6	£10,100	A-levels. They recommend Biology, Chemistry and Physics.	No admissions exam
Masaryk University	Czech Republic	6	£8,700	A-levels in Chemistry, Biology, Maths or Physics	Admissions examination in London
Palacky University in Olomouc	Czech Republic	6	£8,500	A-levels in Chemistry, Biology, Biology, Maths or Physics	Admissions examination in London
Charles University in Prague	Czech Republic	6	£11,250	A-levels in Chemistry, Biology, Maths or Physics	Admissions examination in London
Plovdiv Medical University	Bulgaria	6	£6,750	A-levels in Biology and Chemistry, with minimum grade of B	Admissions examination
Pleven Medical University	Bulgaria	6	£5,900	A-levels in Biology and Chemistry, with minimum grade of B	No admissions exam

Work Experience

The best way to get a sample of medicine is by undertaking work experience. There is a wide range of specialities and sectors, so try to get a taste of GP, A&E, Surgery and Hospital Medicine.

What are the benefits of work experience?

1. **Deciding on medicine**- work experience is the best way to see truly what the profession involves, and can help you decide whether medicine is the right path for you

2. **Showing commitment**- universities will at minimum expect you to have done some work experience, if not several placements. By going out there and getting tastes of each sector, you show yourself to be enthusiastic, involved and well-informed.

3. **Deciding on speciality**- if you know you want to do medicine, then work experience can still help you realise which speciality you may be interested in. You have a long time to decide, but if you develop a keen interest for a certain field it can help you target your activities toward it (e.g. in the societies you join at university, or iBSc you may choose).

How to get the most out of work experience

To get the most out of your work experience, follow these steps:

1. **Ask questions-** doctors are often very busy, so may not go out of their way to explain things to you unless you ask. Be a sponge and absorb as much information as possible

2. **Come prepared-** if you know you are seeing a Cardiac Bypass Operation the next day, do a quick google search to find out about the specific disease and operation.

3. **Reflective diary-** after each day, write a log of what you saw and learned using our template diary here. Focus on showing what you learned and observed, not just writing a factual list of what you saw. This diary will be very useful when writing your personal statement, or when preparing for interviews.

Work experience Reflective Diary

Here is an example of a good reflective diary:

Day	What did I do?	What did I learn?	Notes
Day 1 Morning	Shadowed the surgeon on wards	Saw how he managed time efficiently to see many patients in a short time, whilst still giving them his full attention	Research on osteoarthririts, which several patients had in the hospital
Day 1 Afternoon	Sat with the consultant in appointments	Interesting to see the continuity of care that exists between the surgeon and his patients, many of whom are coming several months after their operation for post-operative check-ups.	Spent 2h at the clinic, and also 1h with the radiologist

How can you get work experience?

1. School- ask your careers advisor or head teacher for links
2. NHS Trusts- contact your local NHS trust to help you
3. Apply- write letters and emails to apply

Different types of work experience

Hospital

How do you get it?

Hospital placements can be hard to get, and competition can be tough because hospitals do not have the staff to look after many medical students.

You need to apply early, several months before the date you hope to work there. Contact the 'Voluntary Services' department of each hospital. If you have any contacts, via school or friends, then this can be a much easier route to securing work experience.

What do you do?

You can work in different departments:

- Haematology

- Cardiology
- A&E
- General Surgery
- Intensive Care Unit
- Anaesthesia
- Dermatology
- ENT
- Radiology

Hospitals are very busy places, and you mind find yourself in different situations:

- Ward rounds- shadowing doctors on wards when they are meeting patients
- Surgery- shadowing surgeons in operations or clinics
- Consultations- sitting in on consultations and check-ups
- Multidisciplinary meetings- seeing planning meetings between different hospital staff
- Management- gaining an insight into the management of a hospital

General Practice

How do you get it?

Due to confidentiality reasons, you cannot undertake work experience in your local community, but you should still contact them as they can put you in touch with other doctors who can help.

GP placements tend to be easier to get than hospital ones, and you are again best served by contacting practices via emails and letters, as well as via your school.

What do you do?

General practice will give you a brilliant insight into the way the NHS works, as they are the first port-of-call for patients. You will see how GPs have to be time efficient (they normally have 10 minutes per consultation), whilst maintaining continuity of care with patients.

The GP will ask each patient if you can sit in on the consultation, and most should happily agree.

You can find yourself in various sections of a GP practice:

- **Same day appointments-** these are for patients that have sudden problems which need to be seen urgently.

- **Pre-booked appointments-** these tend to be booked weeks in advance, and can sometimes be check-ups for chronic disease patients (e.g. diabetes)

- **Telephone consultations-** you may see first-hand the doctor conducting telephone consultations to assessing patients

- **Nurse appointments-** you may find yourself shadowing the nurse

- **Reception-** you might sit in with the receptionist, where you can gain an insight into the management of the practice, including how they handle the huge demand for appointments

Other work experience types

- **Volunteering day-** helping out at a hospice, disability centre or care home is a great way to get some medical work experience. It is relatively easy to get, and enables you to learn about interacting with patients, especially important given the increasingly ageing population.

- **Long-term volunteering-** you should also try to get a placement with a volunteering organisation on a regular basis, either weekly or monthly. This shows true commitment, and will give you the best insight into a career in care.

- **Pharmacy-** getting work experience in a pharmacy will tend to be easier because you do not have to get a CRB check. Working in a pharmacy can be very insightful, as you can learn further about the role a GP has and the link to prescriptions and drugs.

Links for Getting Work Experience

Gap Medics
https://www.gapmedics.com/uk/placements/medicine-work-experience/

Medical Projects
http://www.medicalprojects.co.uk/

St John Ambulance (volunteering)
http://www.sja.org.uk/sja/volunteer.aspx

Youth Action Network (volunteering)
http://www.youthactionnet.org/

Writing a Work Experience Application

You first need to write a letter or email, including the following:

- Who you are
- What you are writing about
- Show yourself to be keen and willing to take any opportunity

Example:

Dear General Practice,

I am writing to enquire about the possibility of shadowing a doctor or undertaking work experience at the practice.

I am currently applying to study medicine at university, and am in Year 13 at schoolI have a keen interest in medicine, and potentially working in General Practice in the future. I am very keen to gain any type of experience, which will help me decide on my career path and ensure that I am well-informed, so I am happy to work in any area of the practice to suit you.

My available dates are July 10th to September 1st 2017. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Best wishes,

Thomas Smith,
Year 13 Student,
Mountwood College

International Work Experience

Some students have the opportunity of doing work experience in a different country. This can be a fantastic experience, and give you a broad view of medicine beyond the UK and the NHS.

This may seem ambitious, but if you are on a family trip to Europe for example, then you can ask your local family there if they can arrange for you to sit in with the local GP for one afternoon. For the sake of one afternoon, you can write about international work experience in your personal statement.

If you have the chance to travel to a country solely for work experience, then even better! You will be shocked at the differences between healthcare in different countries. For example, the private system in America is a stark contrast to the public NHS we have here in the UK.

UCAS Application

To apply for medicine you have to go through UCAS, which is the worldwide portal for UK applications.

The deadline for medical and veterinary medicine applications are the same as the Oxbridge deadline: **15th October 2017**.

For non-medical courses the deadline is later: 15th January 2018.

Grades and Tests Required

- 3 full A levels, or equivalent, is the minimum requirement. Chemistry is nearly always essential, and Biology is often a specific requirement.

- UK medical schools normally accept International Baccalaureate (IB) and European Baccalaureate (EB) qualifications.

- Some medical schools require that you take additional tests such as the UK Clinical Aptitude Test (UKCAT), the BioMedical Admissions Test (BMAT) and the Graduate Medical School Admissions Test GAMSAT.

Application Process

You can apply to any medical course that interests you, up to a maximum of four, but the requirements at each medical school do vary so you will need to look at these before applying.

You have a fifth option to apply for a difference course, such as Biomedical Sciences or Pharmacy. Several degrees enable you to do post-graduate medicine for 4 years, making the whole process 7 years. Certain universities give the best performing students the opportunity to convert to medicine after the 1st year, but this process is very competitive.

How do I Apply?

Your school will help you with your UCAS application, giving you teacher references and guiding you on important deadlines. You will have your own UCAS log in online where you can track your offers.

Teacher Reference

Your UCAS advisor at school will write a reference for you. Normally they should be willing to send this to you, and you can request to have an input. If you have something you could not fit into your personal statement, ask them to include it.

Scored 90+ UMS at AS level? Ask them to mention it.
Scored very poorly in exams? Ask them to exclude it.

Personal Statement

Your personal statement is an opportunity to demonstrate to the course providers why you want to study medicine and why you'd make a brilliant student.

You need to make the personal statement interesting, showing enthusiasm and passion. You need to talk about your work experience, volunteering, extracurricular activities, reasons for choosing medicine and more.

1. **Before Summer -** try to do your 1st draft before you break up for summer, so your teacher can guide you and check it.

2. **Summer Holidays-** work on developing your personal statement, and sent it around to people to check

3. **September**- finalise your personal statement so it is finished and ready to be submitted for the UCAS deadline.

4. **15th October-** UCAS deadline for applications

How competitive is the UCAS process?

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Applications	83,000	80,000	81,000	93,000	96,000	94,000	95,000	98,000	88,000
Successful	9,065	9,260	9,235	9,245	9,065	9,080	8,765	8,915	8,965
Success Rate (%)	10.9	11.6	11.4	10.0	9.9	9.7	9.2	9.1	10.2

Personal Statement

Medic Mind's Word of Advice

The personal statement is your opportunity to show the admissions tutors why they should give you a place.

In a perfect world, each personal statement would be read, analysed and re-read by universities. But this is simply not feasible. Therefore you have to stand out and make your personal statement interesting. Of course you should cover all the important points, and keep it formal and to the point, but you should aim to add a 'wow' factor whilst still keeping it academic.

Online you will find many overused guides to write a generic personal statement. If an admissions tutor is reading 500 in a day, having an average, standard personal statement is not beneficial. Medic Mind has studied personal statements of 100s of candidates, and formulated what we believe is the best guide available for writing the perfect personal statement. It is available for just £10 (www.medicmind.co.uk/ucas), but below we will cover the main points.

INTRODUCTION

1. What to include?

• Origin of interest for medicine or science

2. Medic Mind Advice

This introduction should focus on Medicine as a degree or profession. It should not be about your skills or activities, but instead focus on what bring you and medicine together.

3. Writing Style

Captivating, engaging - you want to grip the reader immediately.

4. Examples

"From an early age I have been fascinated by the workings of life. The human body is a remarkable machine with many diverse systems producing an organism that could never be artificially reproduced"

WORK EXPERIENCE

1. What to include?

- Where you did it?
- What you saw?
- Reflection - what did it tell you about medicine

2. Medic Mind Advice

- You want to reference at least 2 experiences out of Hospital, GP, and volunteering placements.
- If you did something interesting in a GP for 1 day, and spent the other 4 days doing menial tasks, focus on the 1 day and make the whole experience about that.
- Explain how your experience showed you: i) about the role ii) why medicine is right for you iii) interesting things

3. Writing Style

Reflective - do not just state what you did, show what you learned about a doctors role.

Positive and Realistic- you have to show that you understand the pressures of a role in medicine. However, you want to keep a positive tone. For example, both of the following statements say the same point, but in a very different way.

NO e.g. “I saw how the GP was always rushed due to the number of patients he had to see, and how stressful and challenging a job medicine is”

YES e.g. “I appreciated the GP’s skill in time efficiency and management, which enabled him to see so many patients in a day”

4. Examples

GP Practice

- ‘I saw how the GP struck a balance between quality care and time efficiency’
- ‘I was fascinated by the role of the GP as the first port of call in the NHS’
- ‘The continuity of care between patient and doctor became apparent’

- ‘I observed the different elements of a practice, ranging from bookings at reception, triage by the nurse on calls, and emergency appointments by GPs’.

- ‘I gained an insight into the management of the practice, ranging from the seasonal variation in healthcare to the co-ordination of booking systems’

Hospital

- ‘I observed the efficient, yet meticulous, manner of the consultant in his ward rounds’

- ‘Attending a multidisciplinary meeting showed me the variation in hospital care, ranging from the nurse’s day-to-day role, to the consultant’s weekly check up’.

Surgery

- ‘Viewing an operation I learned to appreciate the intricacies and precision in surgery of the human body’

- “Shadowing a vascular consultant highlighted the clinical and scientific breadth in the role of a surgeon, ranging from ward rounds, check-up appointments, team meetings, operations and management,’

- “I appreciated the importance of a multidisciplinary operative team, ranging from anaesthetists, to nurses, and to the surgeon.’

WHY MEDICINE?

1. What to include?

Note: This can be part of the introduction, or explored further in more detail in its own paragraph.

- Science- why do you like the academic side?
- Caring- why do you want to do a job where you care for people?
- Experiences- have you had a certain experience which inspired you to do medicine?

2. Medic Mind Advice

- The three options on the left are very generic ways of tackling the question. However, if you add depth and personality then you will be able to stand out.
- You can indeed mention that you have doctors in your family, but you have to show the value. Perhaps your uncle helped you see the day-to-day role of a doctor. For example "By living with my uncle, who is a doctor, I have seen first hand how a doctor manages their work life balance."

3. Writing Style

- Avoid using cliches such as 'I wanted to be a doctor since I was four
- Be honest about your motivation. You do not want to come across as dishonest and hyperbolic

4. Examples

- "The fusion of science and society in medicine appeals to me, as the vocation combines the stimulating study of human anatomy with the practical application of this science in a clinical environment, with an altruistic objective."

Reasons for medicine:
- Interest in human body
- Work experience
- Scientific news and journals
- Caring and helping others

EXTRACURRICULAR

1. What to include?

- Volunteering- mention any experiences in care homes or with charities
- Schemes - e.g. Young Enterprise
- Hobbies- e.g. sport, music

2. Medic Mind Advice

- Universities want to see that there is more to you than just medicine, so you should show personality and variety
- Certain universities, such as Oxbridge, are likely to ignore references to extra-curricular. This does not mean you leave it out, because the other choices will penalise you for having nothing in this category.

3. Writing Style

- Enthusiastic but academic - don't talk about how much you like to watch TV. Instead focus on a sport or passion of yours which you have developed into a skill
- It is always good to link the activities you do to skills you have learnt, and then on to why this can ultimately help you with medicine.

4. Examples

Do not say:

"I have grade 2 piano, and I like to play football every week"

Instead, pick one and focus on it:

"I have a passion for creative projects, so being part of a Young Enterprise company enabled me to nurture my skills and explore into the world of business. I learned invaluable lessons on teamwork and leadership, and it has also helped complement my role as Captain of the School Football Team." "From an early age I have been fascinated by the workings of life. The human body is a remarkable machine with many diverse systems producing an organism that could never be artificially reproduced"

ACADEMIA

1. What to include?

- **Journals and Books**- reference any literature which you have read
- **Why Science?**- explain what you like about science. Is it studying the human body? Is it learning about disease and treatment?

2. Medic Mind Advice

This paragraph is to show that you have academic passion for science, beyond just your regular GCSE and A-level sciences.

If you don't read any scientific journals or magazines, pick one up and start. Read a book to talk about. Attend lectures. It all counts.

3. Writing Style

- Do not just list what you have done - show excitement and passion
- Show that you have gone beyond your initial encounter. If you attended a lecture on chemotherapy, try to do some independent research and do a talk yourself. This shows that you are proactive, keen and intellectual.

4. Examples

Do not say:

"I have read seven medical journals, set up my school medical society and have attended many debates on scientific advancements".

Instead:

"Setting up our school medical society has given me a platform to debate and research a diverse range of topics, such as the implications of the development of resistance in cancer cells on chemotherapy.

CONCLUSION

1. What to include?

- Re-emphasise your passion for medicine
- Summarise your skill sets

2. Medic Mind Advice

Like the introduction, you want to end by showing why medicine is right for you.

3. Writing Style

• Captivating- you want to finish strongly, leaving a lasting impression

4. Examples

You may focus on personal motivation:

Working in the medical profession will provide me with life-long personal and intellectual challenges and I believe that I can draw upon my experiences, skills and attributes to pursue this career successfully.

Alternatively, you could focus on the medical world and science:

In the technological society of today, social trends such as ageing population, increased mobility and the modern pace of life have created a new dimension in demand for the doctor; I am excited by the intense challenges, both mental and physical, that this provides.3

UKCAT

The UK Clinical Aptitude Test (UKCAT) is an admissions test used by a consortium of UK Universities for their medical and dental degree programmes.

Key dates 2017

Registration opens	**2 May**
Bursary applications open	**2 May**
Testing begins	**3 July**
Registration deadline	**19 September**
Bursary applications close	**19 September**
Booking/rescheduling deadline	**2 October**
Last testing date	**3 October**
UCAS application deadline 1	**5 October**

Test fees

Tests taken in the EU between 3 July and 31 August	**£65**
Tests taken in the EU between 1 September and 3 October	**£85**
Tests taken outside the EU	**£115**

Section by Section Breakdown

Section	Time	Items
Verbal Reasoning	21 minutes	44 items
Quantitative Reasoning	24 minutes	36 items
Abstract Reasoning	14 minutes	55 items
Situational Judgement	27 minutes	68 items

Verbal Reasoning

Number of scenarios: 11
Number of Qs per scenario: 4
Total number of Qs: 44
Total time: 21 minutes

What is Verbal Reasoning?

Verbal Reasoning asseses your ability to read passages and deduce information very quickly. The section is very time pressurised, so you have to develop a specialist set of techniques to manage the passages.

In essence, you have 30 seconds per question, without any passage reading time allocated. This means that you do not have time to read the passage, but instead have to look for **keywords** via the Medic Mind Keyword Approach.

There are many other techniques you can look out for. For example, you can look out for the use of certain types of **extreme words** and phrases to help guide you towards the right answer. The Medic Mind **Extreme Language** approach is our most famous unique technique - we introduced it last year and it has helped our students drastically!

As with all sections of the UKCAT, there will be tricks and traps set up for you to fall in to. For example, some of the Type 2 questions with several statement options can take 2-3 minutes to answer, so you need to recognise these traps and flag them to avoid running out of time. Also, often statements will have slight adjustments to trick you into thinking they match the passage - see the Medic Mind **Passage Adjustment** techniques.

Our top Verbal Reasoning tips:

- Do not read the whole passage - look for keywords instead and scan the text

- Understand the different question types possible
  - True, False, Can't Tell
  - Author
  - Type 1 General
  - Type 2 General
  - Reverse
  - Scientific Passages

- Do not become overwhelmed when you first begin - you will develop the techniques slowly, and your score will drastically improve with practice

- Use the Extreme Language technique to help you guess questions

Quantitative Reasoning

Number of scenarios: 9
Number of Qs per scenario: 4
Total number of Qs: 36
Total time: 24 minutes

What is Quantitative Reasoning?

Quantitative Reasoning subtest assesses your ability to use numerical skills to solve problems. Data is presented in various forms, such as graphs, charts, text or diagrams.

Why do they test it?

Doctors and dentists are constantly required to review data and apply it to their own practice. On a practical level drug calculations based on patient weight, age and other factors have to be correct. At a more advanced level, clinical research requires an ability to interpret, critique and apply results presented in the form of complex statistics. Universities considering applicants need to know they have the aptitude to cope in these situations.

What are the most common topics tested?

- **Percentage Change-** there are three types of percentage change question, and it is a question type that tricks many students out
- **Areas and Ratios-** the UKCAT often has area and ratio questions with unit conversion tricks that many candidates lose marks on.
- **Reading Graphs-** you will get tested on your ability to read data of graphs and spot trends
- **Weighted Means-** many students have forgotten how to do this since GCSE, so we will revisit the algebraic techniques.
- **Triangle Formulae-** application of formulae such as Speed, Distance, Time.

General Information

Again, this section is time pressurised, and often people struggle with the mathematical intricacies of the questions.

The level of maths will be relatively simple to do, but under time pressure it can be daunting to answer certain questions.

For certain topics, you need to adapt your usual methods to improve your timing. For example, for **Percentages** our method is completely different to the national method commonly used for GCSE syllabuses. We have developed this method specifically for the UKCAT.

You will be able to use the official UKCAT calculator. Here are some tips:

No Answer Button
There is no ANS button, so for multi step calculations you should write down you calculations.

No Power Function
To do 8 cubed you should do 64 x 8 (provided you know 8 squared!)

Navigating
You can navigate using the mouse or alternatively by typing numbers into the keypad

Takes Time to Use
Calculating is slow, so try to estimate or use mental maths wherever possible.

UKCAT Website
The calculator is available on the UKCAT Website- use it and practice! Do not practice with a scientific handheld calculator. Occasionally an iPhone calculator can suffice.

Abstract Reasoning

Total number of questions: 55 **Total time:** 13 minutes

What is Abstract Reasoning?

Abstract Reasoning assesses your ability to identify patterns amongst abstract shapes. The key is to focus on the patterns and similarities between shapes, ignoring the relevant and distracting material which may lead to incorrect conclusions.

Why do they test it?

When considering possible diagnoses, medical practitioners may be presented with a set of symptoms and/or results. Some information may be more reliable, more relevant and clearer than other information. Doctors and Dentists need to make judgements about such information, identifying the information which will help them reach conclusions. Carrying out research involving data often involves identifying patterns in results in order to generate further hypotheses.

What are the triggers for Abstract Reasoning?

- If you see big and small shapes in the same box, consider **SIZE** as the pattern.
- If you see grey, spotted or dotted shapes, consider **COLOUR** as the pattern.
- If you see lots of similar shapes in every box, think of **ARRANGEMENT**. There may be subtle differences in arrangement ‘e.g. in Set A the triangle is always above the square, and vice versa in Set B’.
- If you see lots of triangles, think about **DIRECTION** as triangles can point, and also about **ANGLES** as some may be right angled and some isosceles.
- If you see arrows, think about **DIRECTION** as they are often pointing in a direction or at a particular shape (e.g. in Set A the arrow always points to a right angled shape).
- If you see clocks, don’t read them as telling the time. They are just shapes- instead think about the **ANGLES** between the clock hands.
- If you see very few shapes, think of **NUMBER**.
- If you see peculiar shapes, such as the crescent moon, think of the **SHAPE** pattern of ‘Curved vs. Straight’. This is because to represent curved shapes they cannot always use a circle, so then start to make new curved shapes such as the crescent moon.

Situational Judgement

Number of scenarios: 19
Number of Qs per scenario: 2 to 5
Total number of Qs: 68
Total time: 26 minutes

What is Situational Judgement?

The situational judgement test (SJT) measures your ability to assess real-life scenarios and choose the correct response to the situation.

Why Situational Judgement?

SJTs are used widely in medical selection, including selection of Foundation Doctors, GPs and other medical specialties. The test helps to assess your decision making and knowledge of ethics.

Appropriate Questions

For the first set you will be asked to rate the appropriateness of a series of options in response to the scenario. When considering how to respond to the scenario, an option is:

- A very appropriate thing to do if it will address at least one aspect (not necessarily all aspects) of the situation
- Appropriate, but not ideal if it could be done, but is not necessarily a very good thing to do
- Inappropriate, but not awful if it should not really be done, but would not be terrible
- A very inappropriate thing to do if it should definitely not be done and would make the situation worse

A response should not be judged as if it is the only thing that is done. For example, if the wrong medication is provided to a patient, there are a number of steps that should be taken, including checking the patient is ok and assessing the patient medically. The response ‘ask the patient if they are ok’ should still be judged as appropriate. It should not be judged as if this is the only action that will be taken.

Importance Questions

For the second set you will be asked to rate the importance of a series of options in response to the scenario. When considering how to respond to the scenario, an option is:

- Very important if this is something that is vital to take into account
- Important if this is something that is important but not vital to take into account
- Of minor importance if this is something that could be taken into account, but it does not matter if it is considered or not
- Not important at all if this is something that should definitely not be taken into account

Decision Making

Total number of items: 29 items – based on text, charts, tables, graphs or diagrams
Total time: 31 minutes

What is Decision Making?

The Decision Making subtest assesses your ability to apply logic to reach a decision or conclusion, evaluate arguments and analyse statistical information.

Why Decision Making?

Doctors and dentists are often required to make decisions in situations that may be complex. This requires high-level problem solving skills and the ability to assess and manage risk and deal with uncertainty.

Decision Making Items

You will be presented with 29 items that may refer to text, charts, tables, graphs or diagrams. Additional information may be presented within the question itself. You will have 31 minutes to answer the items in this subtest.

All questions are standalone and do not share data. Some questions will have four answer options but only one correct answer; others will require you to respond to five statements by placing a 'yes' or 'no' answer next to each statement.

A simple on-screen calculator is available for use in this section. You may also need to use your booklet and pen.

Contact Us

Feel free to ask any questions - we are more than happy to answer them.

Kunal Dasani + 447838391792

Mohil Shah + 447443022232

General: **info@medicmind.co.uk**

Medic Mind Offices
105 Endsleigh Court,
Upper Woburn Place
Euston, WC1H 0HB