

INFO FOR POTENTIAL MEDICS

HIGH GRADES NEEDED AT GCSE AS WELL AS A' LEVEL

Med school places are highly competitive so universities will look at your GCSE attainment too. A*/A grades expected across your subjects. Chemistry, Biology and either Maths or Physics will keep all the medical schools open to you. If you don't take Maths or Physics but do take Chemistry and Biology, it will keep the vast majority open.

UKCAT (UK Clinical Aptitude Test)

You register in May of Year 12 and sit it in early July – early Oct. Some universities do the BMAT (BioMedical Admissions Test) instead. There are opportunities to practice these before you take them.

www.ukcat.ac.uk <http://www.admissionstestingservice.org/for-test-takers/bmat/preparing-for-bmat/>

WORK EXPERIENCE/VOLUNTEERING

Students who want to go into medicine are advised to think about doing several types of work experience/volunteering. When you volunteer, keep a reflective diary of what you do, what you have gained from the experience, what you contributed to the organisation or patients and why the experience has made you more sure medicine is right for you. You need a range of different work experiences/voluntary activities and one has to be over a long period of time. This will be invaluable when writing your **Personal Statement**.

HOSPITALS

Usually, you can't get medical placements until you are at least 17.

Once you are 17, you can volunteer at **Royal Berks Hospital** to do either **in-patient surveys** or helping with **servicing meals/refreshments**. Both of these tasks mean you are actually on the ward so you get a good insight.

<http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/get-involved/volunteers.htm>.

Royal Berks Hospital run a Careers in Medicine Day for Year 12s (sometimes Year 11s are offered places). The school gets information on this in March and students apply with a letter of recommendation from the Head of Year including their predicted GCSE grades. The event is in July and introduces students to junior and senior medics with opportunities to make contacts and request work experience.

CARE HOMES

Sometimes care homes will let you do some work experience work with them. Call the elderly care homes nearby (look them up on Google) and ask for a named contact to email. Kennet Court in Wokingham (extra care elderly housing) is worth keeping an eye on as they often recruit sixth formers for part-time work serving refreshments/chatting to the residents – put your CV in there in the hope that you can get something in Year 12 (they don't usually take students until after they've done their GCSEs).

Reading Walk In Centre <http://readingwalkinhealthcentre.nhs.uk/get-in-touch/>

Wokingham Day Hospice (attached to Wokingham Hospital) – there is also a Dementia Café which runs there on a semi-regular basis so you could ask them about this as well. It may be something you do once you are in the Sixth Form and can identify a free period/s in your timetable.

<http://www.sueryder.org/care-centres/hospices/duchess-of-kent-hospice/wokingham-day-hospice>

GENERAL VOLUNTARY WORK

Alongside the medical/healthcare-related experience, you should look to find some voluntary work in any setting that you can do for an extended period of time, eg. Leader at Brownies/Scouts once a week for a year or so.

Me2Club is based locally and pairs you up with a young person aged 5-19 years with additional needs. You help them to participate in mainstream activities like youth clubs, sports, etc. All the info on this website:

<http://www.me2club.org.uk/>

Local charity shops may take you on for an afternoon after school but you might need to be 16 so check with Oxfam, Cancer Research, Thames Hospicecare, Blue Cross – all in Wokingham – just pop in and ask them!

Cycle Club for Young People are looking for extra young volunteers to help out. The Club is

<http://www.sprockets.club> and you can also see them on <http://www.facebook.com/sprockets.club/>. It is up to 35 youngsters, riding their bikes on a Saturday morning at Bohunt School in Arborfield Green (formerly Garrison). It doesn't matter if you are a cyclist or not, they just need personable young people who can help out either with the club admin (registration, selling refreshments) or with the coaching (usually just picking up fallen riders!) Young Vols Coordinator is Megan: megan@sprockets.club

MEDICS SOCIETY

In Year 11/12/13, you can join (or even run!) a Medics Society at school where you get to hear all the latest information and listen to visiting speakers. You can debate topics which will be good practice for interviews later.

KEEPING UP TO DATE WITH MEDICAL NEWS/DEVELOPMENT

It is essential that you are aware of what the current and future issues are in the NHS (staffing, funding, waiting lists, ageing population, keeping them mobile, dementia, cancer etc). Read online newspaper articles as well, look at the Guardian, Times, etc and BBC News etc

www.nhs.uk – **Health News** tab - the science behind the headlines. Read up about **ethical issues** as well so you can find a balance of views on things like euthanasia. www.themedicportal.com is excellent for this.

SUPPORT WITH APPLICATIONS

Heads of Sixth Form, Mrs Whitehouse (Early Entry Coordinator), Mrs Hart (Careers Lead), Mrs Nayaar (Head of Science), will all be on hand to offer advice and guidance on applications and provide mock interview practice.

To consolidate: **ADVICE FROM ADMISSIONS TUTOR FOR MEDICINE AT UCL:**

Before your application – start to compile a “portfolio” of Medical news stories and scientific issues, and keep updating it. You can then refer to this in your application and interview. They will be particularly interested if you have followed issues over a period of time.

- Work experience/shadowing. Medical schools are aware that this is difficult to get. Work with the elderly and children in other settings is also very valuable, especially over an extended period. She recommended going to an A&E waiting room on a Saturday night, and observing what goes on! It isn't just the amount of work experience that matters; it's what the applicant learns from it eg. good and bad patient experiences – what would you have done differently?
- Read Medical school websites carefully – do your research so you know exactly what they offer, and what they're looking for.
- Personal Statement – they prefer to have the names of any hospitals visited for work experience – don't just say “local”. Want to see that you're well-rounded, and quirky things can be good.

- Admissions tests – prepare well - use the UKCAT and BMAT websites. You may also find some books useful, but do *not* spend money on expensive preparation courses – it's not necessary.
- Interviews - No trick questions, but interviewers will *keep pushing* applicants, to check that they are intellectually robust. Don't over-prepare for specific questions. They will re-phrase questions if you're not clear. Will be assessing your *attitude* – inappropriate attitudes include cold, arrogant or inflexible. Will also be assessing your *communication skills* – look for clear expression and good listening skills. *Ethical questions* – they're not interested in your opinion, but how you express and defend it.

USEFUL WEBSITES – there are so many but here are a selection:

www.themedicportal.com – lots of excellent advice and guidance, esp about applications and interviews, including ethical scenarios etc.

<https://www.bma.org.uk/> - the Ethics A-Z is a good resource for discussions www.wanttobeadoctor.co.uk – hints and tips written by Leeds Medical School students and supported by doctors <http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/a-to-z/> AND www.tasteofmedicine.com – video diaries from medical students

http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/wiki/Medicine_at_University general advice including work experience/volunteering and the UKCAT/BMAT tests.