



Thinking about applying to Medicine?

Resources for prospective students

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An introduction

We understand that traditional forms of work experience such as observing a healthcare professional at work are not equally accessible to all prospective applicants. There are lots of other ways you can gain an insight into a career in medicine. Similarly we are aware that access to support and guidance regarding how to make a strong application or prepare for interview is not equally accessible to all prospective candidates. This resource contains information and signposts to resources that will help all prospective applicants and we hope will go some small way to redress this imbalance.

Part-time jobs, volunteering especially in a caring or service role, online videos, podcasts and other without financial cost material can help you to develop your interest and understanding of healthcare as a profession especially if you learn to reflect on what you see, hear and learn. The value of any activity you undertake including work experience is in thinking about what you have learned from it – how that has helped you to decide that a career in medicine is right for you (and that you are right for it) or how what you have learned will help you and thereby your future patients and colleagues in your intended career path.

How do you reflect?

Before we suggest resources that may help you gain an understanding of a career in medicine, you will need to learn how to reflect.

When we reflect, we consider deeply something that we might not otherwise have given much thought to. This helps us to learn. Reflection is concerned with consciously looking at and thinking about our experiences, actions, feelings, and responses, and then interpreting or analysing them in order to learn from them. Typically, we do this by asking ourselves questions about what we did, saw, heard and how we did it and what we learnt from doing it.

One way of reflecting well is to keep a journal. This could include asking yourself questions such as 'what did I learn?' 'what went well?' 'what could have been done better?' and 'what will I do next?'

During or after undertaking any of the suggested activities you may wish to consider:

1. Summarise your interpretation of what you have just heard/seen/read/done.
2. What did you learn?
3. What did you get out of it? Was it what you expected?
4. What impact has it had on you and your thoughts?
5. Has it changed your way of thinking about things or has it changed your views?
6. Is there anything else you will now do as a result of this activity and associated reflection?

There is a detailed booklet all about reflection in the Royal College of General Practitioners booklet [RCGP-reflective-diary.pdf](https://www.rcgp.org.uk/education-and-training/reflective-diary)

The following suggestions and resources may give you some ideas about things you might find interesting and enjoyable and which may help to support your decision making regarding your future career choice and subsequent university application. These are largely aimed at those intending to apply for medicine but some may also be of interest and relevance to those considering Dentistry, Biomedical Science, Pharmacology and other healthcare professions or science disciplines.

Work experience

Think about why medical schools want applicants to have undertaken work experience or volunteering. Is it simply to list it on your UCAS application? Instead consider what are we hoping that it has shown you or has allowed you to show. What understanding do we hope you have gained and what core attributes or attitudes are we looking for you to develop and demonstrate?

There are some useful resources you could look at as alternatives to traditional in person work experience. None have any financial cost.

- The RCGP (Royal College of General Practitioners) has a free online resource [GP work experience](#) which provides an insight into General Practice and also contains a resource to help you reflect on your learning.
- The Medical Schools Council has produced a [useful guide](#).
- Brighton and Sussex Medical School also have a free [virtual medical work experience opportunity](#).
- [E-learning resources - GMC](#)
- [MSC summer schools](#) (free) for students from widening participation backgrounds in England.
- [Sutton Trust programmes](#) (free) for students from widening participation backgrounds.
- King's College London offer [this programme](#) for pupils from non-selective UK state schools.
- The British Medical Association has information about medicine and medical schools and their [Aspiring Doctors Programme](#), which connects schools with a network of doctors and medical students (widening participation initiative).
- The University of Southampton and University Hospital Southampton have this [medical work experience](#) on-line opportunity open to students across the UK.
- Health Education England supports this [virtual work experience opportunity](#) for pupils in SE England.

Most medical schools will also offer programmes for pupils in their locality – for example ours are [here](#).

And specifically [Step Up](#).

Check your local medical school to see what they have available (eligibility criteria may apply), putting outreach medicine then name of local medical school or widening

participation medicine then name of your local medical school into your preferred search engine should help you find what is available.

Volunteering and Part-time Work

Volunteering in care settings such as residential homes or hospices as well as other volunteering opportunities such as supporting other pupils/participants in school, sport or other recreational activities, assisting in food banks or taking part in activities to support members of your local community can all demonstrate important attributes and transferrable skills which may be sought by medical schools in their applicants, such as commitment, organisational skills, resilience, and empathy.

We also understand that many prospective applicants want or need to work alongside their studies. Part-time jobs, especially those that are public facing are a good way to develop and demonstrate core attributes sought in medical school applicants, such as communication skills, leadership, teamworking, initiative and problem solving, resilience and the ability to balance multiple commitments

You can search for volunteering opportunities local to you on:

- [Do IT](#)
- [Next Door](#).

[Zooniverse](#) offers opportunities for volunteers to contribute to academic research in a range of fields including medicine and biology.

The [British Red Cross](#) has a range of volunteering opportunities, as do [St John Ambulance](#).

[Kissing it Better](#) and [Age UK](#) both have volunteer opportunities with older people across the UK.

Volunteering opportunities in Wales can be found [here](#).

NHS volunteering opportunities in England can be found [here](#) (over 18's).

Life as a medical student

The GMC document [Outcomes for Graduates](#) will show you the expectations for graduating medical students.

There are many YouTube videos illustrating a day or week in the life of undergraduate medical students in a range of medical schools. These may help you to both understand what being a medical student is really like and may also help you to decide which type of course/school you are best suited to.

In Wales, the Cardiff University student WAMMS group ([Widening Access to Medicine Mentoring Scheme](#)) offers support and guidance to state school pupils, including discussions about life as a Cardiff medical student.

Here is a [blog post](#) which explains what it's really like to study medicine at Cardiff from a group of Cardiff medical students.



Life as a doctor

Medical schools are likely to wish to assess your understanding of the reality of working as an NHS doctor as well as your motivation to study medicine.



As well as work experience and volunteering activities, there are other ways in which you can explore this.

- Some schools will have connections with local healthcare professionals or former pupils who have studied medicine.
- In Wales, groups such as RCGP Wales have [variety of resources](#). (Click on RCGP Wales Schools Resources towards the bottom of the webpage and a drop down tab will appear.)
- This YouTube video from the Cardiff University Science in Health public lecture series will take you on an [ITU night shift](#) with one of our local ITU consultants Dr Matt Morgan.
- Many Welsh pupils targeting medicine will be involved with the Seren Network, who organise a range of supportive activities and opportunities.
- In North Wales [Dr Dylan Parry](#) runs an extensive range of activities, as does Dr Carol Amos in mid Wales - [Applying to Medical School](#).



Many of these groups and activities will offer talks by current doctors, with opportunities for Q&A from participants.

The [NHS Health Careers website](#) has lots of useful information both about medicine as a career and about other allied healthcare professions and [real life stories](#) from doctors at different stages of their career and training.

For anyone accessing this resource pack from outside Wales, it is likely that there are similar activities and programmes in other areas often organised by local clinicians with an interest in school engagement and widening access. Following your local medical school(s) on social media may help you access these. (Please exercise your usual safe online behaviour caution.)

Books, podcasts, television programmes (see below) can also be useful in describing or showing life as a clinician.

Outreach programmes

All medical schools have outreach programmes designed to support under-represented groups. [Find information about ours](#) and learn more about our specific [post-16 programmes](#) including Step-Up and Access to Professions.

We strongly encourage all those eligible to participate.

A group of Cardiff University medical students run WAMMS (Widening Access to Medicine Mentoring Scheme) for school students in Wales. Their [Twitter](#) account is active and full of excellent advice and information. They are also on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

For eligible students, the Sutton Trust sponsors [summer schools](#) in various subjects including medicine. These are organised through universities around the UK including here at Cardiff University. There are eligibility criteria which can be found on their website.



Core values

These will help you to understand both the expectations and duties of medical students and doctors and the frameworks which guide us and how we practise. Understanding and thinking about these will help you to decide if medicine is the right choice for you and will be valuable in preparation for any interviews you may be invited to.

National Health Service (NHS)

It would be useful to understand the core [NHS values](#) and [constitution](#) and how they guide all of us working within the NHS every day.

And also the [challenges](#) facing the NHS and those working within it and [potential solutions](#).



General Medical Council (GMC)

The GMC website contains a number of important guides that you should be aware of.

These are free and publicly accessible and include:

- [Achieving good medical practice.](#)
- [Duties of a doctor](#)
- [Good medical practice.](#)
- [Confidentiality.](#)
- [Ethical Guidance.](#)

Ethics

The four core ethical pillars in medicine are

- Autonomy
- Beneficence
- Non-maleficence
- Justice

You should understand what these terms mean but also how we apply them in practice. You may be asked an ethics type question in an MMI where rather than simply stating what the principles are, you may also be asked to apply them in an ethics-based scenario. The resources below may help you with this.

- The [GMC Ethical Hub](#) and the [GMC Ethical Guidance Learning Materials](#) have resources and guidance illustrating the application of the core ethical principles in practice.
- You may enjoy working through this [ethics tool kit](#) from the BMA and their [guide](#) to approaching an ethical question.
- Your school or local library may stock, or be able to access for you, a short book that you may also find useful: Medical Ethics: A Very Short Introduction – Tony Hope.
- Once you have read and reflected on these sources of ethical guidance, you may enjoy applying your knowledge in these [interactive scenarios](#) where you choose what the doctor should do.

Medical Schools Council (MSC)

This [guide from the MSC \(Medical Schools Council\)](#) will provide useful insight into the core values and personal attributes expected of medical students in the UK. Understanding what we expect and seek may help you to reflect on your own experiences and learning and how they may help you to demonstrate your suitability for medical training. This might be particularly useful when preparing for interview as well as when writing your personal statement. Try to think of examples when you have used or developed particular skills or traits or conversely recognised that you needed to learn or develop these skills and how you did so.

Online courses (MOOCs)

For any courses that have an interactive element with other learners, participants particularly those under 18 should get consent from their parent/guardian/carer before enrolling and exercise their usual caution for safe online behaviour.

- The [Open University](#) has lots of free online courses and is open to learners 13+.
- [Coursera](#) offers hundreds of short (and some longer) online modules from universities around the world. You need to register (free) then browse – there are lots related to science and healthcare. Some of the courses are free to enrol on and complete but may have a fee to receive a certificate – remember that the value is in the learning and reflection rather than the certificate. Some courses have a fee for any participation but plenty don't.
- Similarly, [Futurelearn](#) also has lots to choose from, of variable length. Many are free to complete but again may have a fee for a certificate – the comment above about the value being in the learning holds true.
- This [free course](#) from the University of Glasgow may be of interest.



Learning a new skill, like:

- [British Sign Language](#) (free resources)
- [First Aid](#)
- [CPR](#) (free online training)

may be of direct relevance to your intended career path and demonstrates independent/self-directed learning.

Online lectures

The Cardiff University [Science in Health Public Lecture Series](#) offers a range of interesting lectures which include discussions around current important or topical healthcare issues. The series has resumed in remote format.

[Back catalogue of recorded lectures.](#)

This [lecture by Professor Sir Michael Marmot](#) provides a topical discussion regarding health inequalities and the impact of Covid.

Several other universities have similar banks of recorded public lectures or podcasts e.g.

- [University of Oxford.](#)

- Gresham College has been providing free public lectures since 1597. [Current ones](#) are now available online for anyone to access with a [back catalogue](#).



The poster features a dark blue background with white vertical stripes. At the top left, the Cardiff University logo is displayed in red and white, with the Welsh name 'PRIFYSGOL CAERDYDD' below it. To the right, the text 'School of Medicine' and 'Ysgol Meddygaeth' is written in white. The central illustration shows several hands holding various medical and scientific symbols: a pill tray, a flask with red liquid, a hand holding a blue and white circular object with red dots, and a syringe. Below this, the title 'SCIENCE in health' is written in large white and red letters, with a red heart icon. To the right, a red box contains the text 'PUBLIC LECTURE SERIES' and an illustration of a hand holding a microphone. Below the title, the dates 'OCTOBER 2024 - APRIL 2025' are listed. A white box contains the text 'A series of FREE public lectures with two main aims:' followed by two bullet points: '• To open up areas of concern in health care' and '• To present new research on health issues to the public'. At the bottom, the website 'www.cardiff.ac.uk/scienceinhealth' is written in white on a blue background.

CARDIFF UNIVERSITY
PRIFYSGOL CAERDYDD

School of Medicine
Ysgol Meddygaeth

SCIENCE
in health

OCTOBER 2024 - APRIL 2025

PUBLIC LECTURE SERIES

A series of FREE public lectures with two main aims:

- To open up areas of concern in health care
- To present new research on health issues to the public

www.cardiff.ac.uk/scienceinhealth

Books

This is just a small selection of the many books you might enjoy and find useful learning from. Your local or school library may stock some of these or be able to request books for you or arrange an inter-library loan.

- The Soul of Medicine: Tales from the Bedside – Sherwin Nuland
- The Emperor of all Maladies: A Biography of Cancer – Siddhartha Mukherjee
- The House of God – Samuel Shem
- When Breath Becomes Air – Paul Kalanithi
- The Man Who Mistook his Wife for a Hat – Oliver Sacks
- Being Mortal – Atul Gawande
- Complications – Atul Gawande
- In Shock: How Nearly Dying Made Me a Better Intensive Care Doctor – Rana Awdish
- Also Human: The Inner Lives of Doctors – Caroline Elton
- Your Life in My Hands - a Junior Doctors Story – Rachel Clark
- Life Support: Diary of an ICU Doctor on the Frontline of the Covid Crisis – Jim Down
- The Citadel – A.J. Cronin
- The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks – Rebecca Skloot
- Do No Harm – Henry Marsh
- The Language of Kindness – Christie Watson
- Medical Ethics – a very short introduction – Michael Dunn and Tony Hope
- Hippocratic Oaths: Medicine and its Discontents – Raymond Tallis
- War Doctor: Surgery on the Frontline – David Nott, who also has an interesting [Desert Island Discs](#) discussion.



Current events and medical and scientific developments

It would be worthwhile considering current topical issues and health concerns and how they may impact on the health service and those working within it.

- Your school or local library may have subscriptions to New Scientist/Nature, which will keep you well informed about current scientific discussions and areas of development. You can [sign up for Nature's free daily e-mail update](#), which brings together global scientific breaking news and up-to-date developments.
- [Richard Lehman's BMJ weekly medical journal round up](#) is free and publicly accessible. The back issues are also available.
- The BMJ also has weekly [podcasts](#).
- This [historic diary by Alex Paxton](#) who went to assist in Belsen in 1945, whilst still a medical student, may allow you to consider the role and expectations of medical students (and how that may differ from other students).
- You will be able to draw parallels with undergraduate medical students, many of whom volunteered in clinical settings during the pandemic, on [news stories](#) and [social media](#).
- [The Guardian's science pages](#) contain useful information from a reputable source.
- [Wales-specific health news](#) and developments are updated regularly.
- The [British Medical Journal has open access information](#).
- [The Lancet](#) voice is interesting. The "Story of 2020 in 5 COVID-19 papers" offers a thought-provoking discussion and reflection.
- [Bright Knowledge](#) has a bank of resources and news articles.
- [The Health Foundation](#) is an independent charity committed to bringing about better health and healthcare for people in the UK. They regularly publish findings and reports that you may find interesting and informative, such as this [report showing the differences in life expectancy](#) and healthy life expectancy between those living in more deprived and less deprived areas.
- The [British Student Doctor Journal](#) contains articles written by, and for, medical students.



Podcasts

- The BMJ has [links to regularly updated medical podcasts](#).
- [Bedside Tales](#) is an interesting collection of podcasts discussing the human stories that have shaped modern medicine.
- [Behind the Health Statistic](#) explores the human and personal perspectives of health and illness.
- [Everyday Emergency from Médecins Sans Frontieres](#) discusses and gives insight into providing healthcare in some of the most challenging global situations.
- [Inside the Ethics Committee](#) discusses ethical issues arising from real life patient cases.
- [The King's Fund monthly podcast](#) discusses important and topical issues related to the NHS, social and healthcare. [Their website](#) is a useful and interesting source of information and discussion on these themes that you may enjoy.
- The BMJ brings together medical students, junior doctors and expert guests to discuss [things you need to know to be a good doctor](#) on top of your medical school curriculum.
- Regular [updates](#) from NHS England.

You might also enjoy listening to:

- [Health Check](#).
- [Inside Health](#).
- [Inside Science](#) gives a broader update on scientific developments.
- [Analysis](#) and [File on Four](#) discuss topical and current events.
- [Health Matters](#), from the Royal Society of Medicine.
- [Science Weekly](#) provides regular update and discussion on scientific advances which you may find interesting.
- [New Scientist weekly](#).
- [The Royal College of Physicians](#).
- [The Reith Lecture series](#) on Radio 4. You may find many of this back catalogue interesting but particularly the 2014 Future of Medicine Series by Dr Atul Gawande
 - [Why do Doctors Fail?](#)
 - [The Century of the System](#).
 - [The Problem of Hubris](#).
 - [The Idea of Wellbeing](#).

As with all the resources, don't just listen to the podcasts, reflect on them. Ask yourself questions and try to understand the views of others as they may be different to yours.

TV programmes/documentaries

- The [Horizon archive](#) is well worth a browse.
- [Louis Theroux](#) has made some interesting documentaries several of which look at health topics. [This one exploring brain injury](#) might encourage you to think about the effects of health not only on the individual but also on those around them.
- You might enjoy Michael Mosley's recent [Diagnosis Detectives](#) series.
- The recent BBC series [Best Interests](#) provides a valuable insight into life for the family of a child with progressive disability, the healthcare team caring for them over many years and the ethical issues that may arise.
- This series shows life as a Junior Doctor – [Real Stories: Junior Doctor Diaries](#).

TED talks

- There are [Ted talks](#) to cover any area of health and healthcare.
- You might enjoy this one about [health behaviour and behaviour change](#).
- Another discusses [compassion in healthcare](#); a US-based clinician talking but the lessons are relevant in the UK also.



Empathy

What is empathy?

Watch this [GMC video](#) and then consider the patient perspective and how we can be alert and responsive to this. What might the patient be thinking about while waiting for their consultation? What might the patient want from their consultation?

More information on studying medicine

[Bright Knowledge](#) provides useful information, including personal statements, how to apply and many other topics.

Preparing for interviews

The competition for a place at medical school is fierce. Due to the high numbers of applicants, many excellently qualified candidates who would make good doctors are not short-listed for interview, please try not to be disappointed if you are rejected before this stage. Many candidates who make a second application are successful in securing interviews the following year.

All medical schools across the UK run interviews in slightly different ways and use the interview in different ways as part of their selection process.

The traditional way of interviewing was the Single Panel Interview. You would be interviewed by several interviewers at the same time, with each interviewer asking you questions in turn. You can find out more about these types of interviews on the [Medical Schools Council website](#).

Most medical schools now run Multiple Mini Interviews (MMI). As the name suggests, you have several short “interviews” or stations that you rotate around. Each medical school has a different number of stations and the timings are different for each medical school (check on the admission page for each medical school you are thinking of applying to for more details). Some medical school interviews will remain online, some are switching back to being in person, meaning you have to travel to the interview.

For MMIs, the types of stations varies between medical schools too – there can be written stations, observational stations, numeracy stations, role-play stations or stations asking you questions that you need to think about and answer which may cover anything from your knowledge and understanding of the NHS and its challenges through to ethical dilemmas.

The Medical Schools Council has produced this [free resource](#) to help you prepare for interview.

Here at Cardiff University we ask questions to cover a number of “domains” that we think are important for future doctors – these are: about our curriculum (C21), self-directedness, the NHS, an insight into medicine as a career, ethics, empathy, resilience, team-working, professionalism, reasoning and numeracy. Communication skills are assessed throughout. Often there is not a “correct” single answer, we are looking at how you are able to structure and communicate your reasoning for your answers and the ability to consider multiple perspectives. You rotate from one station to the next. The advantage of these types of interviews is that you are interviewed by several different experienced interviewers from a range of backgrounds (doctors, clinical and non-clinical academic staff, students and

professional support staff) and each station is marked independently, i.e. if you don't do so well on one station, you can make it up on another.

There are a host of videos available on You Tube regarding MMI stations and how to approach them (remember medical school admission teams are also aware of these videos - avoid overly rehearsed responses and use examples from your own real life experience!).

Something to remember is that often the interviewer will not have your application in front of them, so will not know what you have written in your personal statement, or anything about you, so it is really important to use examples to illustrate your points and also to let the interviewer know a little about you.

At Cardiff University you will have 7 six-minute stations (2 three-minute questions per station) with time between each station to read and think about how to answer the next station's questions. Interviews for home applicants take place in December and are in-person. Interviews for overseas applicants take place in January and are on-line. Offers are usually made in February.

Interviews can seem a daunting prospect. However, you should view them as a chance to demonstrate the best of you. One of the top tips is to practice timing yourself answering questions with friends or teachers or family members, to get an idea of the length of time you will be talking (3 minutes can either seem very long or very short!) There are lots of practice questions on the Medical Schools Council website and online.

You do not need to pay for an expensive course. The [Widening Access Mentoring for Medicine \(WAMMS\) student-led mentoring scheme](#) is open to pupils from a Welsh state-school background and they run sessions online or in person through schools, including a practice MMI session.

The more natural you sound, the better, very well-rehearsed candidates do not come across well, and sometimes fail to answer the question asked, as they are used to answering set questions they have practised. Remember almost all candidates will be feeling anxious and nervous and your interviewers understand this. There are lots of [tips about how to prepare](#) including how to deal with nerves.

Unless you have already achieved the required full entry requirements, it would be very unusual to receive an unconditional offer of a place after an interview.



Preparing for UCAT

This information was correct when we wrote this guide for you but you should always check the most up-to-date [UCAT guidance](#).

The UCAT (previously UKCAT) University Clinical Aptitude Test is one of the tests used by UK medical and dental schools as part of the assessment of your UCAS application. The other is the [GAMSAT \(Graduate Medical Schools Admissions Test\)](#).

If you are applying to medical school straight from sixth form, most UK medical schools will ask you to sit the UCAT.

You may have heard of the BMAT. This was another admissions test that is no longer used.

If you are applying to Cardiff University School of Medicine, you will be asked to take UCAT.

Check the specific requirements of the medical schools you are interested in. The Medical Schools Council Guide to applying to UK medical schools is updated annually and contains information regarding (minimum) entry requirements for each of the UK medical schools.

[Cardiff University admissions information](#) can be found in more detail on our website.

Admissions requirements can and do change and admissions policies are updated annually – please check the requirements for your intended year of application.

Some schools require their applicants to take the appropriate admissions test at a particular sitting. Again, check the Medical Schools Council guide and the specific admissions page on the individual medical school's website.

The admissions teams for each medical school will also be available to answer queries. They will be friendly and approachable, so do not be afraid to contact them.

More advice on UCAT

- The [UCAT website](#).
- UCAT also have Twitter, Facebook and Instagram pages and the links are on their homepage.
- Bright Knowledge provides advice on [UCAT](#).

The official UCAT website and social media account are regularly updated.

The UCAT website contains clear information about the tests and lots of free materials you can (and should) use in preparation.

UCAT is usually taken between July and October.

This document will focus on UCAT as that is the admissions test used here at Cardiff University School of Medicine.

UCAT is a two-hour online test which assesses potential rather than knowledge – that said, good preparation can and is likely to make a big difference to your score. You can only take the test once in each admissions cycle and you will get your result the same day when you leave the test centre. You can therefore use this knowledge to help decide which medical schools you will apply to. Check how different schools weight the UCAT score using the Medical Schools Council guide. You do not need to know or tell UCAT which medical schools you will be applying to when you register for or take the test. UCAT communicate directly with the Central University Application organiser (UCAS) to transfer your result directly to the medical schools once you have applied.

[Key dates](#) can be found on UCAT's website.

The test is taken at a Pearson Vue centre.

You have to [register in advance](#). It might be sensible to book in plenty of time once bookings open, as sessions may fill up especially towards the end of the test period.

[Access arrangements](#) can be made for the UCAT (UCATSEN).

There is a fee payable for the test. [Financial support](#) is available – do not be afraid to ask – and this should not be a barrier to applying. You can apply for the bursary in advance of booking your test so you have the bursary voucher code ready when you book but, if you didn't, you can still get the bursary retrospectively, it covers the full cost of the test.

Register using your legal name which matches that on your photographic ID.

On the day of the test arrive in plenty of time to allow for getting lost, finding parking, delayed bus and so on. You will need to take a printed or electronic copy of your appointment confirmation e-mail AND photographic ID. [Details on what can be accepted](#) can be found on their website. Don't forget to take these with you as they have to turn you away without them.

This short video shows you [what to expect on the test day](#) and there is [more detailed information on their website](#).

The test is broken down into 5 sub-sections, each with different numbers of questions and time allocated. Use the (free) practice materials to get familiar with this. The UCAT needs good time management to maximise your chances of a high score. The questions are presented as multiple choice and there is no negative marking. Once the test starts it cannot be paused.

Information regarding the [breakdown of the subtests](#) is available online.

The subtests are summarised below – please note the timings are for standard UCAT and may differ where specific access arrangements are in place. Candidates for whom this applies should check their timings for each section before taking the test

- Verbal Reasoning – 44 questions, 22 minutes test time
- Decision Making – 35 questions, 37 minutes test time
- Quantitative Reasoning – 36 questions, 26 minutes test time
- Situational Judgement – 69 questions, 26 minutes test time

It would be well worthwhile revising some GCSE level maths if you are not doing maths A level – the quantitative reasoning section of UCAT will be around the level of a good GCSE pass and many medical schools will also include a numeracy station in an MMI circuit.

Practise using the onscreen calculator with the [practice materials](#). Refreshing your quick mental maths is also likely to be helpful.

Your score for the SJT section will place you in one of four bands. Check the MSC guide for the medical schools you are interested in applying to, as some may not progress applications where the SJT score falls into band 4. Using information from

- the [GMC website](#).
- the [NHS England constitution](#) and
- [the core principles of NHS Wales](#)

may help you prepare for this section as well as interview.

The UCAT website includes a [tour tutorial](#) which demonstrates the onscreen functions, how to navigate the test, how to check how much time you have remaining and how to use the flag and review functions.

It also has [guidance on how to approach the test and each subsection](#) and a large bank of [free practice materials](#).

[UCAT's YouTube channel](#) has additional free resources.

Studying medicine at Cardiff University

If you are interested in learning more about medicine at Cardiff University, the links below will provide further information.

Our C21 course

- [Studying medicine at Cardiff University](#), including our Medicine brochure.

Admissions information

Please ensure you check our [website](#) or [the Medicine brochure on this page](#). We also recommend that you take a look at our [Medicine admissions policy](#) for your year of entry too, especially if anything in your educational background is a little unusual. All medical schools have admissions policies and these are updated annually.

Routes into Medicine

There are different ways to get into our medicine programme, depending on your grades, whether you have a gap year and whether you want to do another subject on the way. Take a look at our flyer, [Routes into Medicine](#), to find out more.

Good luck

Getting an offer for medical school is challenging but you can help your application to stand out through good planning and thorough research. Start early, make good notes and reflect regularly on how your new knowledge and experiences could help you as a doctor.

We hope that these suggested resources are helpful to you in doing this. The internet changes quickly so if any of the links don't work for you, remember that these resources can all be found with a search engine.

Our friendly admissions team is always happy to help with your queries too:

medadmissions@cardiff.ac.uk.

