

ENGAGING WITH SCHOOLS



Find out More about a career in general practice at rcgp.org.uk/discovergp

Foreword

RCGP Wales is proactive in forging links with schools and colleges across Wales to encourage school pupils to consider general practice as a future career choice. The schools' engagement project has initiatives including:



- staging and supporting interactive workshops promoting general practice to schoo pupils in Wales
- engagement in schools' careers fair across Wales
- broadcasting of bilingual webinars, promoting general practice to schools across Wales
- a database, linking GPs with Careers Wales advisors in their localities
- production of a resource guide to aid GPs in interacting with and supporting students locally.

This guide will aid GPs engaging or thinking of engaging with schools and school pupils. For some members it may have been a while since undergraduate study and aspects of the admissions processes have changed. This guide provides background detail and links to resources which will prove invaluable in disseminating information, to school pupils and will give GPs confidence to promote a consistent message across Wales. The guide is for use in schools in Wales and promotes Cardiff University School of Medicine and Swansea medical school. The guide also gives access to various online resources that pupils can use to find additional information for themselves.

The RCGP is proactive in school and student engagement and provides a wealth of supporting material which can be accessed here: rcgp.org.uk/discovergp



Foreword from Cardiff University Dean

It is really important that the NHS is able to recruit clinicians that can deliver the highest level of care for patients, with the skills to adapt and apply new thinking to solve the issues experienced by the people under its care. These skills can be learnt and the key step is to inspire young people to consider a career in medicine at an early stage and prepare them for the admissions process.

Admission to medical school can seem daunting but this step-by-step guide walks GPs through the process so that we can attract more students from different backgrounds to apply to study medicine. Helping students to develop the confidence and self-belief to apply to University is the start of training doctors, this is built on in medical school and then in the NHS, where these attributes are added to with the essential skills to practice medicine.

General practice forms the backbone of the provision of care for patients in the NHS and plans to develop this essential service are being implemented. This document highlights the wide range of career options open to graduates who decide on becoming a GP. It serves as a road map to stimulate thoughts and plans to achieve a career in this exciting NHS.

Professor Stephen Riley MD, FRCP, FAcadMed Dean of Medical Education Director, Centre for Medical Education

Why engage with schools?

It is now widely agreed that activities to widen participation to higher education need to start early and young people need to be engaged with future career opportunities at different stages throughout their educational journey. We need to encourage pupils to think of studying medicine and hopefully choosing a Welsh university, to encourage them to stay and practice where they are taught.

How to use the guide

Sections have been developed as a result of speaking to pupils at school fairs and responding to the questions they have about getting into medical school and subsequently working as a GP.

Each section has hyperlinks to resources that you may find useful in your discussions with pupils. FAQs exist regardless of the locality of the school and have been used to inform the structure of the guide and the development of handouts which can be found in the appendices.

PowerPoint slides have also been developed to be used as a basis for a talk or any interaction you may have with school pupils.

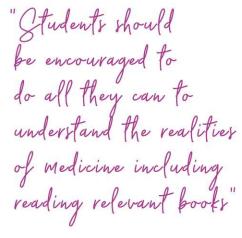


The core aim of RCGP
members when talking to
school pupils is the promotion
of general practice. This guide is
designed to complement this work
by providing information about
the application process to UK
medical schools, with the two
medical schools in Wales
used as examples.

Available PowerPoints

So you want to be a GP?
English and Welsh versions
Please email welshc@rcgp.org.uk

Applying to Medical School? English Version. Please email welshc@rcgp.org.uk





Getting into medical school

Whilst much has changed over the years entry is still competitive and pupils need to get good grades both at GCSE and A-level. Here is a reminder of information you are likely to be asked about:

General medical school requirements

Most medical schools require high grades in A-level Chemistry, whilst others will accept AS level in Chemistry (this is only true for exam boards such as WJEC that continue with AS, most others have gone to linear A-levels, depending upon the other qualifications being offered, but the emphasis is still on the "core" sciences with Chemistry being the most important).

For candidates who do not have science subjects to offer at A-level (or equivalent), it is possible to undertake a preliminary year at a few universities (Cardiff is one). This course provides science teaching in areas not offered by the candidate. On completion of this year, the candidates will then enter year 1 of a standard 5-year course.

Graduate candidates normally need a first or upper secondclass honours degree. Some medical schools require the degree to be in a science-related subject, whilst Swansea currently does not. Please see relevant appendix for details.

Top tips!

 The most crucial advice you can offer any candidate is to visit the Medical Schools Council website where they will be able to find all the entry requirements of every medical school in the UK.

> www.medschools.ac.uk/ media/2032/msc-entryrequirements-for-ukmedical-schools.pdf

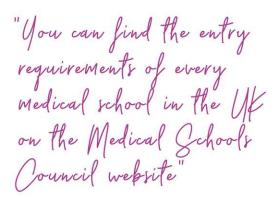
Encourage pupils to go on as many open days as possible.

 For some candidates who don't achieve their expected grades at GCSE, it may be worth them waiting a year to apply for medical school because they can apply with their actual A-level grades and not predicted grades. This may maximise their chance of getting an interview.

> If they want to get in, encourage them to keep applying.

Resits

Some universities (Cardiff for example) do not accept A-level resits if you repeat year 13 unless there have been exceptional circumstances. **Advise students to check university webpages.**







Studying in Wales

Cardiff University School of Medicine provides both undergraduate and postgraduate application routes and has approximately 300 places, mostly filled by 18 year old candidates who have just completed their A-levels. There are four feeder streams for the Graduate Entry to Medicine, two offered by Cardiff University (Medical Pharmacology and Biomedical Science) one offered by the University of South Wales (Medical Sciences) and one offered by Bangor University (Biomedical Sciences). There are up to 10 places available for graduates from each of these feeder courses. Cardiff is supporting students who want to increase their exposure to community medicine and general practice with a number of options they can choose, including Student Selected Components (SSCs) in primary care and studying one of the third year modules, Chronic Disease in primary care, as well as a new initiative that is currently being developed for some interested students to spend the whole of year 3 learning their medicine based in general practice in other parts of Wales.

Swansea University currently has 100 places, all for students who have already completed a university degree.

All school pupils will need to sit the University Clinical Aptitude Test (UCAT) in the summer before they apply to a medical school in Wales. Graduates will need to sit the Graduate Medical School Admissions Test (GAMSAT) before their UCAS forms are scrutinised by the universities (check individual universities admission policies).



Did you know..

- Cardiff University School of Medicine has 300 places, mostly filled by candidates who have just completed their A-levels.
- Swansea University has 100 places for students who have already completed a university degree.

Useful links!





Course requirements/terminology



Cardiff University has a number of courses:

- **A104** six-year course for applicants who do not have sciences at A-level but other subjects, or only one of Biology and Chemistry.
- **A100** five-year course, requiring Biology and Chemistry at A-level.
- A101 four-year GEM course which is only for applicants from the four feeder courses.

 In total about 300 places are available each year to study medicine, most in the A100 course. The number of applicants varies from year to year but is often about 3000.

 Remember, virtually all applicants are applying to four different universities, so the ratio of applicants to medical school places across the UK is difficult to estimate.

Swansea University runs a 4-year graduate entry course. Pupils do not always know that they can apply to medicine after they have done another degree.

Personal statements

Although all students are expected to provide personal statements they are not as influential as good academic qualifications in securing an interview at some universities. Pupils will tend to use a number of resources to assist them in writing their personal statements but discourage them from 'lifting' from websites.

You could perhaps promote the Medical Schools Councils 'Statement on the core values and attributes needed to study medicine' and their subsequent guidance on personal statements.

Work experience

Work experience in general practice is not easy to come by for school pupils.

The RCGP Wales Schools Engagement Database has identified a number of practices that could offer work experience. Over the past three years both Cardiff and Swansea have worked together with funding from Welsh Government to facilitate GP-based work experience for pupils who come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

What is work experience?

Work experience is any activity or life experience that helps you prepare for medical school. This can include: volunteering in a care home, shadowing at a GP practice or hospital, suitable part time work, attending a summer school or activity provided by a medical school.

This means any activity that allows you to demonstrate:



That you have had people-focused experience of providing a service, care or help to others and that applicants understand the realities of working in a caring profession.



That you have developed some of the values, attitudes and behaviours essential to be a doctor such as conscientiousness, good communication skills, and the ability to interact with a wide variety of people.

Source: MSC (2017) Guidance on relevant experience for applying to medical school.





Help in writing personal statements: www.medschools.ac.uk/studyingmedicine/applications

GPs often have concerns about work experience, but the GMC and BMA offers reassuring guidance on this.

Search for: 'BMA Work experience - advice for students'

Search for: 'GMC Confidentiality: disclosing information for education and training purposes'

Top tips!

For personal statements...

- Candidates should show that they have hobbies/interests outside of their academic work
- Be honest with their experiences
- They should state what they have gained or learnt from their experiences, not just list them.

For work experience...

- Work experience does not have to be in a GP surgery or clinical setting, so pupils should not be discouraged if they cannot find this experience
- Encourage students to keep a diary to reflect on their experiences, considering how this might relate to their role in medicine. This will be helpful in their interview. If you would like to access a diary email us at welshc@rcgp.org.uk

C

Offer work experience

If you would like to consider offering work experience in Wales, please email: welshc@rcgp.org uk. We can send you some resources and notify you of any initiatives around Wales. If you are considering offering work experience elsewhere in the UK contact schools@rcgp.org.uk and guidance can be provided. If you would like to read more then follow this link to an evaluation of work experience in general practice produced by RCGP: rcgp.org.uk/discovergp

The interview

Pupils need to know that significant time is required to prepare for interview, they should be practicing and preparing their answers over a number of weeks to perfect their articulation skills.

Candidates should read some practice questions and there are banks of these online and in print. Again, the most useful resource is the Medical Schools Council website (see relevant appendix).

Candidates should always check with each medical school to identify the format of the interview.

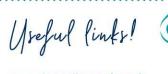
Cardiff interviews

Cardiff has approximately 300 places available and receives approximately 3000 applications. Remember, virtually all applicants are applying to four different universities, so the ratio of applicants to medical school places across the UK is difficult to estimate.

Cardiff now adopts an MMI (multiple medical interviews) style process whereby applicants will rotate round 9 stations: each one is six minutes with two questions exploring the personal qualities and attributes important in developing good doctors for the future. Candidates are given 2 minutes to read the station questions before they start each station. Interviews will test the applicant's ability to think on their feet, interpret information and communicate ideas.

Swansea interviews

Swansea has 100 places and interviews around 300 applicants from a pool of 1000 applications. The interview is broken down into two, 20-minute interviews, with two examiners at a time focusing questions on areas such as problem solving, insight and integrity and passion for medicine. Scores are combined with those from a situational judgement test sat earlier on the day of the interview.



www.themedicportal.com/e-learning/interview/

Further reading!

Medical School Interviews: A Practical Guide to Help You Get That Place at Medical School: Over 150 Questions Analysed (Book)





Being a Student

It may be a long time since some of us have been undergraduates and things may have changed. Encourage pupils to speak to their peers and go on as many open days as possible. Both Swansea and Cardiff have widening participation initiatives that offer pupils advice on study at these institutions. There are also many student-led resources which pupils may find useful. Both Cardiff and Swansea have student GP Societies, supported by local RCGP faculties, and these have been proactive in promoting general practice to their peers and young people over recent years. When giving talks to students, you will also want to draw on your own experiences.

Becoming a GP

Some pupils are not aware of the length of time it takes, nor the career pathway involved, in becoming a GP and may seem daunted when they realise how long that is. Reassurance that they are earning whilst training often assuages their concerns.

In Wales only 25% of foundation doctors get exposure to a four-month GP practice experience as one of their rotations, but many pupils do not realise this is an option, so it is worth highlighting this early as a consideration when they start working.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to all those who contributed to the contents of this guide. Contributors include Cardiff and Swansea Universities and GPs working with schools and school pupils proactive promoting general practice as a career. Further reading!

See infographic "My route to becoming a GP?" in appendix





Draw upon your own experiences and those of your colleagues!

Contact Details

For more information on any aspect of this guide please contact welshc@rcgp.org.uk





Appendices

Medical Schools Council

The 5 brochures (Journey to Medicine) produced by the MSC

www.medschools.ac.uk/news/a-journey-tomedicine-new-resources-for-teachers-andcareers-advisers

Applications (including personal statements, admissions tests and course types) www.medschools.ac.uk/studying-medicine/

Interviews

www.mscinterviewprep.co.uk/

Entry requirements

Search: 'Medical schools council entry requirements for UK medical schools'.

Work experience

Search: 'Medical schools council guidance on relevant experience for applying to medical school'

Core values and attributes needed to study medicine

Search to: 'Medical schools council statement on the core values and attributes needed to study medicine'

Library of acronyms

UCAT

UK Clinical Aptitude Test

GAMSAT

Graduate Medical School Aptitude Test

BMAT

Biomedical Aptitude Test

UCAS

Universities and Colleges Admissions Service

GMC

General Medical Council

BMA

British Medical Association

RCGP

Royal College of General Practitioners

MANA

Mini Medical Interview (Used by Cardiff University)

MBBS

Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery

DMO

Primary Medical Qualification

NHS

National Health Service

Links used in this guide

- Royal College of General Practitioners rcgp.org.uk/discovergp
- Studying in Wales UCAT www.ucat.ac.uk
- Studying in wales GAMSAT gamsat.acer.org/
- Work Experience Guide RCGP rcgp.org.uk/discovergp
- Work Experience Guide BMA Search for: 'BMA Work experience advice for students'
- Work Experience Guide GMC Search for: 'GMC Confidentiality: disclosing information for education and training purposes'
- The Interview www.themedicportal.com/e-learning/ interview/





Getting into medical school

To qualify as a doctor, you need to secure a place to train at a medical school where you will undertake a four to six year degree in medicine, depending on your qualifications when you apply. Three main entry routes are available:

A100

This is the most common course and lasts five to six years. To be eligible you need science A-levels (or equivalent), usually Biology, Chemistry and a third A-level (which often does not usually need to be a science). The Welsh Baccalaureate is accepted by some medical schools as the third A-level (eg. Cardiff) For more information please check individual university websites. All medical schools will expect you to have/or be going to obtain at least AAA at A-level. Some courses ask for A*s at A Level You may apply for up to four medical courses via UCAS.

On average there are three times as many applicants as medical school places, so if you are applying pre-A-level you will normally be expected to achieve certain GCSEs which vary between medical schools and most also use a cut-off point in an aptitude test; either the UCAT university clinical aptitude test or the BMAT (Biomedical Aptitude Test). You will need to have registered for this test by the time your application is made - check university and test websites for details. Medical schools usually also look at your personal statement for various attributes, including evidence that you have thought about why you wish to apply for medicine. Medical schools use this evidence to select which candidates they wish to interview, and most interviews occur between November and March and offers are made at this stage. If you apply having already achieved good A-levels, some medical schools have lower requirements

A101

This is an accelerated four-year course offered by many medical schools intended for graduates (who often but not always have a science degree). Graduates usually require a good degree (at least a 2:1) and need to have taken the GAMSAT (Graduate Medical School Aptitude Test).

A104

This course is still offered by some medical schools and is designed for students with mainly non-science A-levels or equivalent. It involves a preliminary year where relevant science subjects are taught and examined. Candidates usually need GCSE and A-level qualifications similar to those for A100 and need to take the UCAT/BMAT. Some medical schools also offer specific widening access courses to applicants from disadvantaged backgrounds. Details are on university websites.

So, if you want to be a doctor there are many routes into medicine at all stages.







Handout Getting into Cardiff/Swansea

Cardiff

Typical A-level offer - AAA grades at A2 level. Students must offer three A2 level subjects which should normally include Chemistry and Biology. For students taking a Welsh Bacc, Grade A in the Core of the Advanced Diploma, plus Grades AA in Chemistry and Biology A-levels.

Undergraduate applicants should sit the UCAT and graduate applicants should sit the GAMSAT. Applications from those offering alternative qualifications are welcome.

Swansea Cardiff

Swansea

Candidates must have achieved, or be predicted to achieve, the following (or equivalent):

- an upper second (2:1) or first-class degree in any subject or
- a merit or distinction (equivalent to 2:1 or first) in an integrated undergraduate master's degree or
- a lower second (2:2) PLUS a postgraduate masters or PhD.

All candidates must sit the GAMSAT prior to applying. GAMSAT is a professionally designed selection test for medical schools offering graduate entry programmes. Candidates must achieve a minimum overall GAMSAT score of 50, together with a minimum of 50 in paper three (Reasoning in Biological and Physical Sciences) in order to be considered.

Swansea does not look at GCSEs currently apart from requiring a grade C in maths and English or equivalent.

Interviews will be offered to candidates who meet an overall cut-off score in the GAMSAT, which is determined annually once all scores have been received. As an example, for entry in 2015, the overall cut-off score was 58.







What's the medical course like?

Cardiff

Cardiff University's Medicine Course, called "C21", is divided into three distinct phases. By the time you graduate you will have experienced Medicine in different communities across Wales.

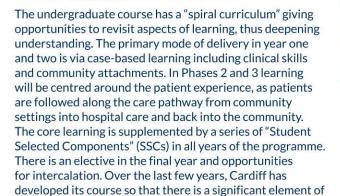
Years 1 and 2

Core science and clinical practice, case-based learning. After Year 1, some students may opt to spend the rest of their course learning in North Wales. (Called "C21 North".)

Years 3 and 4

Clinical learning in GP practices and hospitals around Wales, including Cardiff. Some students may opt to spend their third year in North or Mid Wales. (Called "CARER".)

Clinical practice



community based learning, particularly in the latter years.

Did you know...

Approximately two-thirds of this course is available through the medium of Welsh.

Swansea

Swansea University Medical School's Graduate Entry Medicine Programme is a four-year medical degree open to any graduate. There are 100 places.

The course has an integrated medical curriculum and the programme consists of:

Phase I – Years 1 and 2

Phase II - Years 3 and 4

Each year is mapped onto the GMC's Outcomes for Graduates (2015) where 3 Modules reflect the outcome areas: scholar and scientist, practitioner, professional.

The programme follows a spiral, integrated curriculum designed to reflect the way in which clinicians approach patients and how patients present to doctors. There is a high level of clinical contact which is possible from the start of the course.

Swansea is a 4 year fast track course and also has the opportunity of a Primary Care Academy option for its third year, in which students will study the majority of their clinical medicine from first principles through a primary care lens based in general practice.







What's after medical school?

At the end of the undergraduate programme you will receive your MBBCh (or equivalent) degree, which is a primary medical qualification (PMQ). Holding a PMQ entitles you to provisional registration with the General Medical Council. Provisional registration is time limited to a maximum of three years and 30 days (1125 days in total). After this time, your provisional registration will normally expire.

Provisionally registered doctors can only practise in approved Foundation Year 1 posts: the law does not allow provisionally registered doctors to undertake any other type of work. To obtain a Foundation Year 1 post you will need to apply during the final year of your undergraduate programme through the UK Foundation Programme Office selection scheme, which allocates these posts to graduates on a competitive basis. It cannot be guaranteed that all suitably qualified UK graduates will find a place on the Foundation Year 1 programme, if for instance there were to be an increased number of competitive applications from non-UK graduates.

Successful completion of the Foundation Year 1 programme is normally achieved within 12 months and is marked by the award of a Certificate of Experience. You will then be eligible to apply for full registration with the General Medical Council. You need full registration with a licence to practise for unsupervised medical practice in the NHS or private practice in the UK.







Handout Not just a GP

Being a GP offers the opportunity to take up many varied roles that utilise skills as a Doctor and allow the development of a special interest.

Clinical opportunities

Armed forces

The armed forces offer experience and training in specialist military disciplines as well as general medicine.

Charities

Charities working overseas employ GPs in a variety of roles, from triage to treatment and usually for period of a couple of months at a time.

Clinical Assistants

Working in a hospital can give GPs the chance to develop an interest in a specialty under the support of a consultant.

Medico-legal

GPs often develop an interest in medico-legal matters which allows them to work in an advisory capacity to other GPs, or as advisers to insurance companies in insurance claims.

Occupational medicine

Some GPs gain qualifications in occupational medicine and work with employers, employees and third parties such as government agencies or insurance firms, in order to offer advice on work related health issues.

Out-of-hours

Many GPs specialise in out of hours work, working for large co-operatives of likeminded GPs.

Forensic work

Working with the police is another possibility for some GPs who find that they like being part of team, participating on a duty rota and dealing with a very varied and interesting range of cases.

Prisons and other secure environments

Providing primary care in a prison can be challenging and rewarding.

Ship's Doctor

Large ships have their own medical teams and GPs are often an integral part of this and treat both crew and passengers.

Urgent care

Some hospitals employ GPs in their emergency care departments where they deal with cases that would generally be seen in a primary care setting.

Non-clinical opportunities

LHB Medical Advisors

Most local health boards in Wales will employ GPs in an advisory capacity.

Medico-political roles

Some GPs develop an interest in improving the working conditions of their colleagues and take up roles at a local and national level where they may become involved in negotiations with the government.

Medical education

GPs with an interest in education will often have roles in undergraduate and postgraduate education and engage in the training of foundation doctors, GPs in training and in appraising their peers through their annual appraisal.

Medical writing

You don't have to be a literary genius or have a background in journalism to write and many GPs contribute to articles in the medical press or online.

Pharmaceutical industry

There are roles in the pharmaceutical industry for advisors and researchers. Some GPs carry out research in their own practices.

Other roles

Because of the generalist nature of general practice and the flexibility of the work on offer, GPs can often develop interests in other roles such as looking after asylum seekers or travellers.





MY ROUTE TO BECOMING A GP...

Where do I start?





- Standard Entry Medicine (5 or 6 years)
- Graduate Entry Medicine (4 or 5 years)
- Medicine with a Preliminary Year (6 years)
 - Medicine with a Gateway Year (6 years)

medschools.ac.uk/studying-medicine For more information visit

A-level / Further Education / Scottish Highers

- medschools.ac.uk/studying-medicine/applications/entry-requirements



applicants who have the correct Medical schools are looking for

Applying to Medical School





What next?

Progressing to...

University Degree

- Study for between 5-6 years depending on your and choose from 40 medical schools in the UK!
- sciences and practical clinical tasks.
- ervision, spending time in GP practices, hospitals

Foundation Programme

- enable you to gain valuable experience and become



minimum of three years (full time hospital posts and 18-months typically spend 18-months in **GP Specialty Training** you will need to complete a

- carry out a series of assessments. which once passed - allow you to
- gprecruitment.hee.nhs.uk

join the GMC's GP Register.

and how can it help you? What is the RCGP

body for GPs and is here to help you explore The RCGP is the professional membership general practice has to offer. Becoming a GP and discover the endless opportunities it is a career that is diverse and fulfiling, is incredibly enriching and rewarding.

endless opportunities at Discover a career with











Remember, it is what you have learnt from these experiences that is important gained from your work experience, caring activities and voluntary experience. Most medical schools will ask you to demonstrate what you have learnt and not how many hours you have completed. To find out more about work experience visit medschools.ac.uk/studying-medicine/applications