

A parent's guide - Getting into medical school

How hard can it be?



Understanding the requirements

Applying to medical school - courses

A100

- ✓ A levels in Biology and/or Chemistry and a third subject (check with medical school)
- ✓ Usually AAA at A-level or above
- ✓ Resits are usually not considered – approach individual medical schools to ask if this is an issue



Applying to medical school - courses

A104

- ✓ Same level of GCSE and A levels as the A100 but **without** the necessary science A-levels
- ✓ The course adds an extra year
- ✓ Normal offer: AAA at A-level



Applying to medical school - courses

A101

- ✓ For graduates: a 4 year, intensive, course
- ✓ Science graduates with a 2:1 or postgraduate degree
- ✓ Swansea is a graduate entry-only Medical School
- ✓ Some places offered at Cardiff University School of Medicine (start in year 2).



If you only visit one website!

- ✓ All medicals school entry requirements in the UK:

<https://www.medschools.ac.uk/studying-medicine/medical-schools>

- ✓ Individual medical school webpages: course details and selection guidance.



Pre A-level application - what is needed?

- Good predicted grades
- Good science GCSEs: at least B's in English and Maths
- Personal statement and academic reference
- An understanding of the career: work experience and volunteering
- UCAT, BMAT (depends on medical school)
- Demonstrate non-academic attributes.

Top tips!



Pupils should Consider how to demonstrate the core values and attributes required to study medicine. Find out more at: medschools.ac.uk/studying-medicine/applications

What is learnt from 'work experience' is important – not how many hours have been completed.



Observe GP

Observe GP is supported by the Medical Schools Council as a suitable element of relevant experience to help prepare an application to medical school.

Observe GP

Observe GP is an alternative to work experience for aspiring medics aged 16 and over, who are living in the UK. It is a free interactive video platform providing insights into the role of a GP and the wider primary care team.



Post A-level application

- Usually AAA minimum at A level: in Biology and/or Chemistry and a third subject for nearly all A100 courses (depending on medical school)
- Most courses don't consider resits except with extenuating circumstances
- UCAT/BMAT as specified
- Personal statement
- Academic reference.

Graduate entry medicine



- 16 medical schools
- Course lasts 4 years + 3 years on first degree.
- Most courses require you to sit a competitive aptitude test: GAMSAT.

Top tips

- Pupils can apply for 4 places
- All medical schools have different entry requirements
- If pupils do very well in UCAT they may choose to apply to courses where this is 'weighted' strongly
- Applying post A-level allows pupils to earn some money, get experience and be certain it's the course they want to do.





Medical schools: the distribution

42 medical schools:

- 34 England
- 5 Scotland
- 2 Wales
- 1 Northern Ireland

8000+ places per year

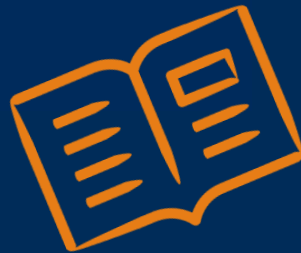
23,710 applicants for 2020 entry.

The process...



Stage 1

- Submit complete UCAS form by October 15



Stage 2

- Scored and ranked
- Shortlisted for interview.



The process continued...



Stage 3

- Interview
- Questions looking at various qualities.

Stage 4

- Decisions made
- Offers sent out.



How do medical schools select?

Personal statement used to select interview candidates.



Select interview candidates for interview based on grades THEN look at personal statement.





Multiple mini interviews

Interviews procedures vary between medical schools – check their webpages!

- Short interviews with different people, in a rotation
- Solve puzzles or mathematical problems
- Explore your thinking: ethics, empathy, coping with stress etc.
- Practice debating issues
- Utilise the GMC and MSC websites.

Why do medical schools have tariffs/cut-off scores?

1. Manageable number to interview
2. Select students able to cope with a challenging course.

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- About 100 -300 places on the A100 course, depending on size of the School.
 - 1 in 8 to 1 in 10 applicants will be successful overall.

After the interview

- Most (but not all) medical schools will make their final decision on your interview performance, although some will use your previous academic achievements as well – again – check the website
- Medical schools may make offers shortly after they interview, but often wait until the interview process is over – so you may wait weeks, sometimes months to hear. This does not mean you will not get an offer
- All medical schools make more offers than they have places as some candidates get two or more offers, some decide to refuse an offer and some candidates do not get the grades (if they are applying before their A levels/degree)
- Usually all offers are through by April – e.g. Cardiff try to get all their offers out now in February/ early March



Studying in Wales (Cardiff)



Admission process A100/A104

Pre A-level

Cardiff

- GCSE score. Minimum grade B (6) in English, Maths, Biology, Chemistry and double science
- Candidates scored on their 9 best subjects include the core subjects above. Cut off point is variable
- Most years candidates interviewed have mostly A*s in 9 subjects
- UCAT required **but no minimum score is used, but reserved right to use**
- Personal statement and reference
- Do not look at AS grades or predicted A level grades
- MMIs, about 1/3 of applicants in Dec & Jan.

Admission process A100/A104

Personal Statements

Pupils need to provide evidence of:

- Insight into a career in medicine
- Working in a caring environment
- Taking personal responsibility
- Other interests
- Self-directed learning.



Admission process A100/A104

Post A-level

Cardiff

- Minimum GCSEs: B (6) in Maths, English Language, Biology, Chemistry or double science
- Minimum AAA in 3 A levels – including Biology and Chemistry if A100 or any other A levels for A104
- Personal statement and reference
- UCAT.

But if you have at least AAA you will require lower grades at GCSE than if they are applying before A levels. If you have more than AAA in 3 A levels you will require even lower GCSEs

Offers

- If pupils already have their A levels their offer would be unconditional
- If pupils are awaiting their A level results it will be conditional.



What if your child doesn't get in?



Don't despair!

Got an interview but not got in?

In this case they were probably academically close to getting a place so:



- Concentrate on getting the right A level grades – they will need 3 As or more usually – **and apply again**
- Work hard for the UCAT/ BMAT if they reapply as the current score is likely to count
- Practice/practice interview and keep up relevant volunteering/work experience.

Didn't get an interview ?



- Check the UCAS form and that details were right
- Did they apply to right courses?
- If GCSEs satisfy minimum but not outstanding – apply with their A levels – many medical schools such as Cardiff will consider candidates with 3 As at A level or more, even if GCSEs less good – but they must be at least the minimum required by the medical school.

Studying at Swansea as a graduate entry student



Studying at Swansea

'Producing excellent, caring and inclusive clinicians, for a global society'

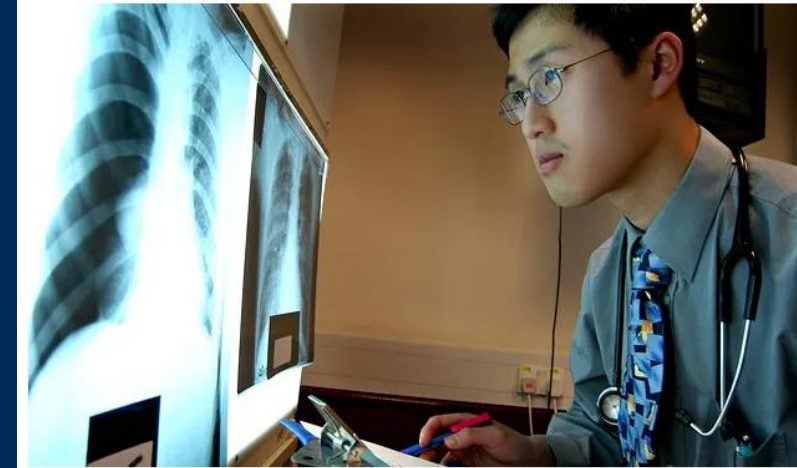
- One of the few purely Graduate Entry Medicine courses in the UK
- About 105 students/ year group
- Excellent National Student Survey satisfaction scores (91% in 2020, 4th in Medical School League Tables in the UK).
- If you put down an Applied Medical Sciences BSc degree in Swansea as your 5th (insurance) choice, you can choose to follow Swansea's 'Pathways to Medicine' module as part of your BSc, which prepares students for application to Medicine with work experience, preparation for interviews, understanding the life of a medic etc. Swansea has slightly amended entry criteria for these students.
- Early patient contact, clinical placements throughout the programme
- All medicine is taught with relevance to the clinical approach, integrated spiral curriculum
- Many 'taster' opportunities to try out short placements in a huge variety of medical/ medically related topics

Benefit of studying Medicine after graduation?

- Students are more mature – make better career decisions
- Gained life experience – make better prepared doctors
- Have University experience – higher success rate!
- Additional qualification with degree – more options
- Richness of study experience – studying with colleagues with a variety of academic backgrounds and experiences
- Best prepared medical students on completion (*Wales Denary*)

Studying medicine as a postgraduate could make you a better doctor

Postgraduate medical courses are not an easy route to take, but your experience and maturity will help make you a good doctor



▲ Doctors who've been through postgraduate medical courses are considered as more mature and committed.

What's next ?

What's after medical school

- **Foundation Training**

- 3 x 4 month jobs per year
- 2 years
- Variety of specialties

- **Speciality Training**

- Train to become a physician, surgeon, GP, psychiatrist, paediatrician, radiologist...
- 3 - 8 years

What speciality to choose ?

Consultant

A consultant is a doctor fully trained in their specific specialty, who has overall responsibility for the care of patients, most often but not always in a hospital.

13
years
minimum

Length
of training

GP

A GP is fully trained in the specialty of family medicine and complex chronic disease, and has overall responsibility for the management of patient care outside of hospitals, referring for specialist treatment if necessary.

10
years
minimum

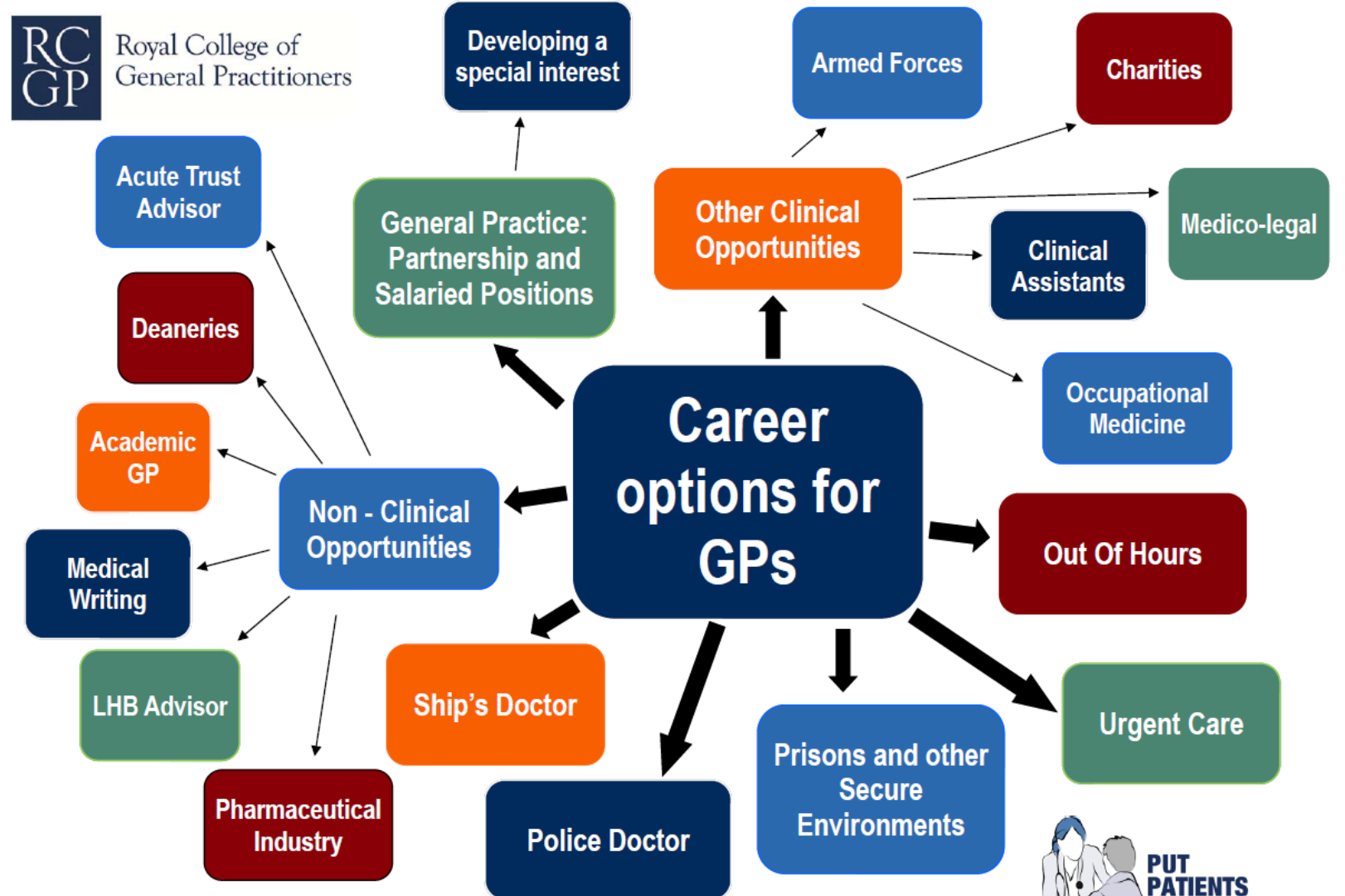
Length
of training

Specialty training for General Practice

- Variety of posts
- Work place based assessments
- Exit exam
- Clinical skills assessment / recorded consultations assessment

<http://www.rcgp.org.uk/training-exams.aspx>

Career options within GP



Patron HRH The Duke of Edinburgh Registered charity number 223106





Being a GP is a job like no other – we are often the first people our patients regularly turn to for help, often at the most difficult times of their lives, and we build trusting relationships with them over time. That privilege is almost unique to medicine.



Professor Helen Stokes-Lampard
RCGP Chair 2016 – 2019 and GP.