

Schools Webinar FAQs

These questions have been answered post-webinar and were taken from the chat function taking place during the live webinar.

Q. Is there any difference between BMAT and UCAT in terms of content? What is the standard of difficulty of the UCAT compared to the BMAT?

A. BMAT is more scientifically focussed than UCAT which is mainly about situational judgements and general decision-making skills sets. One cannot be swapped for the other - so need correct one for medical school with results by October 15th of application year. Both are mainly used to reduce the number of applications with good qualifications to a reasonable number for interview. As BMAT is more scientific sciences would need to be stronger for this than for UCAT.

Q. Is maths considered as a science? If you have done maths and further maths at A-level, would you put both down on your application for medicine? What do I need at GCSE for maths?

A. Maths is of course a science. If you are offering (usually) biology and chemistry, plus have done maths and further maths at A-level, do declare both. Only one is used by most medical schools - but in general if you do better on one than the other at A-level, we will take the higher grade. Maths at GCSE is required by all medical schools for the 5-year A100 course. Cardiff asks for a minimum of grade B, (6) and allows resits within 12 months. Different medical schools have different requirements so check individual websites. In practice very few students at Cardiff have less than grade A (7).

Q. Can universities see the other courses you apply for?

A. We can only see other course you have applied to at Cardiff University on UCAS and ignore which position you appear to have put us down.

Q. Does Cardiff offer years abroad to study, if so where?

A. You cannot study for a whole year abroad in medicine in the Cardiff course owing to the integrated nature of the course and assessments. Previously students have regularly undertaken an exchange module abroad under the Erasmus scheme, but this was linked to EU membership and currently it is not clear about the future. There may be other opportunities to exchange, and usually most students go abroad for up to 7-8 weeks in Year 5 in their elective period.

Q. I really enjoy French and hope to do medicine in France in the future. Is there are way that I can further my French skills whilst studying Medicine? Would languages boost your application (German, French etc)?

A. Cardiff University has had a language scheme open to all students to improve/learn one of a number of mainly European languages, in their free time. Having GCSEs or A-levels in a foreign

language does not convey an advantage to your application for medicine at Cardiff, but historically some universities do like this, so worth looking at individual websites.

Q. What happens if there are more people that have accepted the offer than that you have places what will happen, will offers be retracted?

A. Medical schools always make more offers than places as candidates who are successful with one may also have other offers from which to choose. The process is very complex as we aim to get exactly the right number of candidates in each year, using a combination of offers, and waiting list. Cardiff has not had to withdraw offers. This year owing to the late change in A-level grades awarded, all medical schools had an excess of offers met, and funding bodies supported this one-off expansion.

Q. Does being part of the Seren Project have an advantage for preparation over those that are not part of it?

A. Being part of Seren itself does not in itself confer any specific advantage - there are many ways to gain insight into the admissions process and how best to prepare, including events like this RCGP event.

Q. After university / medical school are you restricted to carrying on to training or can you travel abroad for a couple of years?

Many Doctors, once they finish their foundation training or specialty training, consider going abroad for a year or two before they settle down to their chosen career path.

Q. What is the best way to revise for exams?

This is very much dependant on the individual but ensuring that you work through the year and keep up to date is more likely to bring you success than trying to cram everything at the end.

Q. What advice would you give to someone to improve their confidence and communication skills?

A. Throw yourself into things, volunteer to take a turn and try to speak to as many patients / clients as possible.

Q. Can you choose where you do your foundation years?

A. Anywhere in the UK. Not limited to where you went to medical school. The application process is competitive.

Q. What is the ratio of practical to non-practical work in a medical degree?

A. This depends on the medical school itself but also the type of course they run. Normally there is a very good mix between practical and non-practical where non-practice may be lab work, clinical skills, communication skills, anatomy. But this will differ between institutions so please contact the university of your choice.

Q. How can students get work experience and volunteer in the current situation?

A. If students can find experiences that enable them to reflect on generic experiences - e.g. working in a care home, food banks, 3rd sector organisations, that will all help immensely and the amount of time spent in medicine doesn't matter so much. It's about thinking what attributes of being a Doctor are being shown in the work experience not where it is happening.

Q. In terms of referees, who would be a good referee?

A. It can vary but should of course be someone who knows the student well, and what he/she is capable of. It is often a senior teacher in the school, or the head teacher/ deputy head teacher.