**Training to become a doctor in the UK**

Medical education **comprises** several related stages, which are:

* [**Undergraduate medical education**](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/explore-by-career/doctors/training-to-become-a-doctor/undergraduate-medical-education/) - a period of study at medical school (attached to a university) with clinical placements in hospital and community settings.
* [**Foundation programme**](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/explore-by-career/doctors/training-to-become-a-doctor/foundation-training/)- a two-year period which all UK medical graduates must undertake before moving on to further training (although there are some options after foundation training to leave training and apply for a locally recruited post, such as a trust post).
* [**Specialty,GP and run-through training**](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/explore-by-career/doctors/training-to-become-a-doctor/run-through,-specialty-and-gp-training/)- when doctors train to specialise in either general practice or a specialty. The length of and nature of the training will depend upon the career area/specialty in which the doctor wishes to work. Some specialties are "run-through" programmes, others begin with "core training".

An addition to these stages, doctors are expected to keep abreast of advances in their specialty through ongoing continuing professional development.

# Undergraduate medical education

This page outlines the courses that are available to medical school candidates.

### Introduction

There has been a considerable growth in the number of medical places available since 2001 (including the opening of additional medical schools at universities), to help meet the demands of the NHS.

### Courses offered by medical schools

Courses in medicine are offered by a number of medical schools. Please use our [coursefinder](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/courses/) to locate these.

* "Standard" five-year degree course
* Courses including the pre-medical year, for candidates with non-science subjects to offer at A level (or equivalent). The pre-medical year is a preliminary course in chemistry, physics and biology and lasts normally 30 weeks
* Accelerated courses for graduates (four years)

Some medical schools may also take graduates onto the "standard" five-year course. The British Medical Association advises graduates wishing to undertake a medical degree to contact medical schools for details of graduate entry (whether for undergraduate or accelerated courses).  
  
(Please note that accelerated courses can be found by selecting "Accelerated" from the "Type of qualification" field)  
  
[Each medical school sets it's own entry requirements](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/explore-by-career/doctors/training-to-become-a-doctor/undergraduate-medical-education/entry-requirements-for-medical-school/), and may require applicants to complete [clinical aptitude tests](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/explore-by-career/doctors/training-to-become-a-doctor/undergraduate-medical-education/entry-requirements-for-medical-school/the-uk-clinical-aptitude-test-(ukcat)/).

The NHS provides [financial support](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/explore-by-career/doctors/training-to-become-a-doctor/undergraduate-medical-education/financial-support-for-students-on-degree-courses-in-medicine/) for eligible students from part-way through their medical degree.

# How to apply for medical school

This page outlines the procedure and rules of applying to medical school.

### Introduction

Applications for first degrees in medicine are administered by the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS).  
  
The vast majority of applications are made online. If you are unable to apply online, then please contact UCAS directly.  
  
Rules of applying:

* Applications for degree programmes should be submitted the autumn of the year before the course starts. Applications for the courses should normally be forwarded to UCAS between 1 September and 15 October.
* Applications received after this time but before 30 June will be considered as late applications.
* Any application received after this period will be subject to clearing.
* For application to medical courses (A100, A101, A103, A104 and A106) a maximum of four choices is permitted.

### Further information

For further information contact:  
  
Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)  
Rosehill  
New Barn Lane  
Cheltenham  
Gloucestershire  
GL52 3LZ  
  
Tel: 01242 227788 (application package only)  
Tel: 01242 222444 - (general enquiries)  
Fax: 01242 544961  
Website: [www.ucas.ac.uk](http://www.ucas.ac.uk/)

# Entry requirements for medical school

This page describes the usual entry requirements for becoming a doctor.

### What qualifications do I need to become a doctor?

All medical students in the UK will initially take an undergraduate course leading to a Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery. Depending upon the university - this will lead to one of the following qualifications - MBBS; MBBS/BSc; MBChB; MBBCh; BMBS - all of which are normally referred to as a "first MB".  
  
Individual university medical schools set their own requirements, which vary between medical school and the course applied for. It is therefore essential that applicants consult the undergraduate prospectuses for the medical schools to which they wish to apply and/or contact the medical schools directly to seek clarification.

### Undergraduate courses

The majority of medical schools require A levels in chemistry, whilst others will accept AS level in chemistry, depending upon the other qualifications being offered. Some require biology at A' level.

### Candidates without science A Levels

For candidates without science subjects to offer at A level (or equivalent), it is possible to undertake an additional pre-medical year at some universities (see section training to be a doctor). The pre-medical year is a preliminary course in chemistry, physics and biology and lasts normally 30 weeks.

### Candidates without A' levels

A small number of access courses are offered which can lead on into a medical degree. The acceptability of access courses varies between medical schools and it is essential to check this prior to embarking on an access course.  
  
Candidates without A' levels but with considerable life experience may still need to hold academic qualifications and will need to produce evidence of their ability to cope with the demands of the course for which they are applying.

### Candidates with a degree

Medical schools increasingly welcome applications from graduates. Graduate candidates normally need a first or upper second class honours degree.  Some medical schools require the degree to be in a science-related subject, whilst others do not stipulate any discipline.

Check with each medical school individually to confirm their requirements. You can [use our coursefinder](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/courses) to search for degrees in medicine  
  
Most medical schools require applications from all applicants to be made through the [Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/explore-by-career/allied-health-professions/applying-to-university-through-ucas/), which will supply details of how and when to apply for medical school and all other university courses.  
  
It is estimated that graduates, mostly with science degrees, make up 10-15% of recent intakes to the five and six-year MB courses in Britain. Most come into the first year, but some universities accept students from bio-medical or life sciences or dentistry into the third MBBS year.

### Age limits

There are no formal set age limits for entry to medical school and selection and admission policies are matters for individual institutions to determine. However, medical schools will take account of the length of training (approximately 10 years) in relation to the length of service the candidate could provide.

### What medical schools will be looking for in candidates

The standards of entry for any medical teaching centre are exacting. Applicants called for interview will face searching questions about their motivation, their work at school, hobbies and personal interests, as well as having to produce evidence of their academic achievements. A key question will be their reasons for wanting to become a doctor. Candidates should also be able to demonstrate relevant paid or voluntary work experience e.g. work as a hospital auxiliary, in nursing or residential care. You can also find more about what it is like to be a doctor by having a formal period of work observation. BMA members can look at the BMA website for information about guidelines for work observation. The BMA does not hold information on voluntary work or arrange work observation. Students can find the addresses of local hospitals and residential homes in the telephone book. Other potential sources of advice may be available at your local Careers/Connexions Service or library.  
  
A number of medical schools use clinical aptitude tests such as [UKCAT](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/explore-by-career/doctors/training-to-become-a-doctor/undergraduate-medical-education/entry-requirements-for-medical-school/the-uk-clinical-aptitude-test-(ukcat)/). Others may use other tests, and so it is important to check with each medical school directly.

### Students with disabilities

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 requires universities and their medical schools to provide disability statements giving information about facilities available for disabled students. These should include details such as access for disabled students, availability of specialist equipment and counselling, admission arrangements, and complaints and appeals procedures for disabled students. The Act does not apply to Northern Ireland. For more information on the impact of disabilities on medical work see the British Medical Association website at [www.bma.org.uk](http://www.bma.org.uk/)