**Training to Become A Doctor in the UK. Part 2**

The UK clinical aptitude test (UKCAT)

This page introduces and describes the UK Clinical Aptitude Test (UKCAT).

Introduction

The UK Clinical Aptitude Test (UKCAT) is used in the selection process by a consortium of UK university medical and dental schools.  
  
The test helps universities to make more informed choices from amongst the many highly qualified applicants who apply for their medical and dental degree programmes. The test does not contain any curriculum nor any science content; nor can it be revised for. It focuses on exploring the cognitive powers of candidates and other attributes considered to be valuable for health care professionals. It ensures that the candidates selected have the most appropriate mental abilities, attitudes and professional behaviours required for new doctors and dentists to be successful in their careers. The test has been developed in partnership with Pearson VUE, a global leader in computer based training and part of Pearson plc. It is delivered on computer on a worldwide basis through Pearson VUE's high street test centres.  
  
The UKCAT is designed to be a test of aptitude rather than strictly academic achievement, as evidenced by GCSE's, A levels, Scottish Highers, or undergraduate degrees. The test will assess a wide range of mental abilities and behavioural attributes identified by university medical and dental schools as important.

Who must take the UKCAT?

The UKCAT must be taken by all applicants applying to study medicine or dentistry, at most university medical and dental schools. Candidates will need to refer to university websites, Prospectuses and the UCAS handbook for the specific entry requirements of each university and course.

What does the UKCAT consist of?

For candidates sitting the examination, the UKCAT will consist of four subtests:

* Verbal reasoning- assesses candidates' ability to think logically about written information and arrive at a reasoned conclusion.
* Quantitative reasoning- assesses candidates' ability to to solve numerical problems.
* Abstract reasoning - assesses candidates' ability to infer relationships from information by convergent and divergent thinking.
* Problem solving - assesses candidates' ability to deal with various forms of information, to infer relationships, to make informed judgements, and decide upon an appropriate response.

Computer based testing

The UKCAT is delivered by computer. There are many advantages in delivering tests via a computer. Tests can be delivered on demand at a time convenient to the candidate. The ability to create a bank of questions which can be developed into different tests cuts out the need to test all candidates on the same day, at the same time, and it eliminates the complex logistics of distributing, storing and tracking test papers and answer scripts. All the questions can be marked automatically so it improves accuracy and reduces the time consuming process of scoring results.

Registering for the UKCAT

Registering to take the UKCAT does not constitute an application for admission to any of the participating universities. In addition to registering to take the UKCAT candidates will need to submit an application to  UCAS in the normal manner.

Registration and test dates

Registration for the UKCAT is only available online, via the [UKCAT website](http://www.ukcat.ac.uk/), where further details are available.

Registration fees

There is a cost to sit the UKCAT. Details can be found on the [UKCAT website](http://www.ukcat.ac.uk/) The registration fee is payable online at the time of booking by using a major credit card.

Bursaries

It is intended to provide bursaries under which the UKCAT test fee is waived for cases of real hardship. Candidates will need to apply online for a bursary before registering for the UKCAT. Further information will be available on the UKCAT website.

Preparing to take the UKCAT

The university medical and dental schools participating in UKCAT do not endorse any commercially available preparation for the UKCAT. Preparation is neither necessary nor desirable.  
  
The test is designed to be a test of aptitude rather than academic achievement, therefore the test does not draw on any particular body of knowledge nor curriculum, which a candidate can learn in advance.  
  
However candidates should practice answering the types of questions that will be presented in the UKCAT, to familiarise themselves with question styles, multiple choice format and varying requirements of each subset.  
  
Candidates are advised that a range of practice questions will be available on the [UKCAT website](http://www.ukcat.ac.uk/)

Sitting the UKCAT

UK candidates will be able to choose a location to sit the exam from a choice over over 150 test centres near their home, school or college. During the registration process candidates will be able to find their nearest test centre and book a test sitting at a date and time of their choice.

Where do I go for more information?

Further information about the UKCAT is available on the [UKCAT website](http://www.ukcat.ac.uk/) Candidates will need to refer to university websites and prospectuses for the specific entry requirements of each university and course.

# Foundation training

Students must have first completed undergraduate medical school before embarking on the two-year Foundation training.  
  
Foundation schools manage Foundation training, bringing together medical schools, postgraduate deaneries and healthcare providers.  
  
Doctors are known as foundation doctors while on the training programme. Depending on the year of the programme they are on, they are known as foundation year 1 doctors (F1) and foundation year 2 doctors (F2).

### Applications

There is a national application process for the two-year Foundation Programme. The process is mainly electronic, with medical school graduates applying through a system of open and fair competition.  
  
Upon successful completion of the F1 year, doctors will move into F2 without having to compete again.

### Structure and content

Foundation training is made up of F1 (foundation year one) and F2 (foundation year two). These two years effectively replace what was formerly known as the Pre-registration House Officer (PRHO) year and the first year of Senior House Officer (SHO) training.  
  
Foundation doctors are trained and assessed against specific outcomes set out in the curriculum agreed with the General Medical Council (GMC).  
  
Training takes place in a range of settings including acute, community, mental health and general practice.  
  
The F1 year aims to provide experience in a broad range of settings prior to full GMC registration. Regular work based assessments take place, and trainees must maintain a national learning portfolio in order to progress.  
  
The F2 year usually consists of four varied three-month placements. Many programmes include at least one placement in a "shortage specialty", academic medicine or general practice, giving trainees the opportunity to try a number of different specialities before making a decision about which specialty training programme they would like to pursue. Again, there are regular work-based assessments against standards of competence.  
  
By the end of the Foundation Programme, all doctors will have achieved the same generic clinical and non-clinical competencies defined in the national curriculum, irrespective of the precise nature of their placements over the two years.

# Run-through, specialty and GP training

Run-through, specialty and GP training is when doctors specialise in either general practice or a specialty. It follows on from the [Foundation Programme](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/explore-by-career/doctors/training-to-become-a-doctor/foundation-training/) and lasts several years.

### Structure

Training programmes begin with a competitive entry process.

Specialty training programmes are now in a variety of models, depending on the specialty.

Many specialties offer run-through programmes where you will be recruited for the full duration of your specialty programme.

Others, such as [medicine](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/explore-by-career/doctors/careers-in-medicine/medicine/) or [surgery](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/explore-by-career/doctors/careers-in-medicine/surgery/), will begin with core training lasting for two years and three years in[emergency medicine](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/explore-by-career/doctors/careers-in-medicine/emergency-medicine/), [paediatrics](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/explore-by-career/doctors/careers-in-medicine/paediatrics/) and [psychiatry](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/explore-by-career/doctors/careers-in-medicine/psychiatry/).

Successful completion of core training can contribute, but will not lead directly, to the award of a Certificate of Completion Training (CCT).

### Progression

Progression through this kind of training is based on the achievement of competencies and will, on average, take approximately three years of training for general practice, and five to seven years for other specialties.  
  
The exact length of training therefore depends upon the career area/specialty in which the doctor wishes to work and the rate of achievement of competencies.

### Delivery

Specialist and GP training programmes will be delivered through a range of organisations, overseen and supported by postgraduate deans.

# Registration for doctors

This page describes the procedure for registration as a doctor.

### Introduction

The General Medical Council (GMC) licences doctors to practice in the UK under the provisions of the Medical Act 1983. Its purpose is to make sure that the public is served by doctors who have the qualities it expects, and to protect the public from doctors whose conduct, professional performance or health places patients at risk.  
  
The GMC maintains a register of doctors with full, provisional and specialist registration, and makes them available to the public to enable them to identify those who are qualified medical practitioners. Anyone can consult the registers over the telephone using the Registration Inquiry Service (see below) or on the GMC website.  
  
The General Medical Council can be contacted as follows:  
  
Website: [www.gmc-uk.org](http://www.gmc-uk.org/)  
Registration Inquiry Service: 0845 357 3456 (Outside the UK, dial 44 (0) 161 923 6602)  
Email (For all General Enquiries): [registrationhelp@gmc-uk.org](mailto:registrationhelp@gmc-uk.org)   
  
The GMC has offices in London, Manchester, Scotland and Wales.  Please visit their website for more details.  
  
There are three main types of registration:\*\*

* Provisional registration\*\* - allows a newly qualified doctor to complete the general clinical training needed for full registration. A doctor who is provisionally registered is entitled to work only in junior house officer posts in hospitals or institutions which are approved for the purpose of pre-registration service.
* Full registration\*\* - doctors need full registration for unsupervised medical practice in the NHS or private practice in the UK.
* Specialist Registration\*\* - Since 1 January 1997, it has been a legal requirement that, in order to take up a consultant post (other than a locum appointment) in the NHS, a doctors name must be included in the specialist register. The GMC advises doctors on how to gain inclusion on the Specialist register.

The GMC is also responsible for overseeing and promoting the development of postgraduate medical education and training for all specialties, including general practice, across the UK. Up until 31st March 2010 this was the responsibility of the Postgraduate Medical Education and Training Board (PMETB). PMETB merged with the GMC on 1st April 2010.

\*\* Rules governing registration are complex and for this reason, details are not replicated here. For details about registration, please contact the General Medical Council (details above