



# Medical interviews

## A guide to help you begin preparation for Medical Interviews.

If you are interested in becoming a Doctor, there are some extra steps you will have to go through when you apply for a university place. As well as completing your UCAS application like any other student, you will also have to attend an interview at the university you apply to and do some work experience to show your interest in the subject and career.

This guide will help you get ready for your application and give you some tips on how to get the most from work experience. Work through each section to find out more and get ready for your interviews.

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Higher Horizons are a partnership of universities and colleges, working together to inform young people about their educational options. We provide free, impartial information, advice and guidance on study options after sixth form and college. We put together resources like this one to give you more information about the options available.

If you have any questions about college or university, you can chat to our friendly team for free online at <https://higherhorizons.co.uk/ask/>.

**Prepared with content from Causeway Education.**



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# Important information pertaining to COVID-19 (coronavirus)

Admissions staff are aware that some applicants may currently be unable to complete work experience due to restrictions caused by the outbreak of COVID-19.

As the situation is currently evolving, please refer to the specific guidance provided at each university you are interested in applying to, and check entry requirements web pages for any updates.

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For the latest information from Higher Horizons partners who offer medicine, use the links below.



<https://www1.chester.ac.uk/departments/medical-school>

<https://www.keele.ac.uk/medicine/>



<http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/courses-listing/medicine-accelerated>





We recognize that students intending to apply to medical school this October will have had your opportunities to gain experience during the spring and summer affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

We don't expect applicants to have any experience in hospitals or other healthcare settings and would not give any credit for such experience in scoring of the roles & responsibilities (R+R) form if it involves workplace shadowing.

The kinds of things included in the R+R form can come from any kind of experience, whether that is in caring settings, support for individuals or small groups with specific needs (e.g. in school/college or in the local community through voluntary groups, faith organizations, charities, etc.), leadership/mentoring/coaching roles (e.g. in sports teams, drama/music groups, etc.), employment with specific responsibilities (e.g. lifeguard, event steward/marshal) or any kind of public-facing employment. This list is not exhaustive: we see very strong applications from students with no conventional medical "work experience".

While social distancing is in place students may be contributing to your local community through activities such as delivering groceries to vulnerable neighbours, hosting online/phone chats for fellow students who might feel isolated, supporting care providers (hospices, residential homes, etc.) by participating in online activities to raise funds for charities whose shops have had to close, etc. You really just need to think about what kinds of things you do that demonstrate a commitment to helping and supporting others, and also explain how you have worked with other people to achieve this.

All applicants will have had their opportunities to gain experience affected in a similar way. If this were to influence the marks awarded for R+R forms then the threshold score for interview would be lowered to reflect this.

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# 1. Understanding different types of Medical admissions interviews and tests

You can apply for up to 4 different medicine courses on your UCAS application. Each course will have its own course structure and admissions requirements (i.e. different types of tests and interview formats to assess each applicant.)

Before you apply, it is important to be aware of these differences.



## Questions

There are three different types of medical courses:

1. "Traditional" courses
2. Integrated courses
3. Problem-based learning courses

Read the article below to find out more about the three types of medical course

<https://www.themedicportal.com/application-guide/choosing-a-medical-school/>



### 1. What is one of the main differences between traditional and integrated courses?

- A. Traditional courses are taught at older "traditional" universities
- B. In a traditional course, you are taught in distinct scientific disciplines e.g. Biology and Anatomy.



### 2. Which is the structure employed by the largest number of UK universities?

- A. Problem-based learning
- B. Traditional courses
- C. Integrated courses



Different universities use different forms of interview and different tests when assessing potential candidates. For example, some universities assess students with the BMAT, whereas other assess students with the UKCAT. Equally, some universities use the MMI interview format, while others have 'traditional' interviews.

Before choosing your four medical schools to apply for, it is worth looking at the interview and test requirements for specific universities and looking into how each university uses each requirement.

The Medic Portal has a useful comparison tool where you can enter universities which you might be interested in and compare their entry requirements. Follow the link below and enter in a combination of universities you are interested in.

<https://www.themedicportal.com/application-guide/choosing-a-medical-school/comparisontool/>

When you know for definite which universities you are applying for, it might be useful to print off the table, so you can always refer to it.

**3. Using the Medical School comparison tool find out if you need to sit the BMAT for Lancaster University and answer below.**



- A. Yes
- B. No

**[Go to section 1 answers](#)**

## 2. Medical interview question types

Medical interviews can be daunting.

The key to performing well is to ensure that you fully understand what is expected of you and to prepare for common questions.

This does not mean learning answers line-by-line. It does mean thinking about common topics in advance and having mental “bullet points” which you can refer to or work into your answers.



Most questions asked at medical interviews fall into a few different categories.

### **Motivation and preparation**

These questions ask about your motivation for becoming a doctor and the ways you have prepared for the career. Examples:

- What do you wish to achieve from your medical career?
- Tell me about how your work experience has prepared you for studying medicine.

### **Knowledge and understanding**

These questions assess your knowledge of common conditions, treatments and processes, including the scientific principles behind them. Examples:

- You mention [a medical condition] in your personal statement. Have you done any further reading on this topic?
- Is mental health an area of concern for the NHS?

### **Professionalism and clinical skills**

These questions examine your suitability to practice as a doctor, and the non-academic skills you would require to work in a clinical setting. Examples:

- Tell me about a time when you have worked successfully in a team.
- What would you do if you saw a colleague making a mistake with a patient's medication?



## Questions



1. Which is the best approach for preparing to answer questions in a medicine interview?
  - A. Prepare an answer for every question you can think of and learn it.
  - B. Focus on your strongest areas and shift the question you're asked onto those areas.
  - C. Consider each question area and work out what experience to use as evidence, but don't prepare exact answers.

[Go to section 2 answers](#)

### 3. Motivation and preparation

Interviewers will often ask questions to try and understand your motivations for studying medicine and to see how you have prepared yourself.

When preparing for this type of question, you do not want to repeat a remembered answer, but you do want to have mental “bullet points” which you can develop in a pressurised interview situation.



#### Questions

##### Your motivation

Medicine is a hard course at university and a gruelling career choice. Some questions in this area may well concentrate on how you think you will cope with the challenges of being doctor. This will require careful thought and research.

Go to the “background and motivation” section of the Medic Portal website and have a read through the questions and the answer guides:

<https://www.themedicportal.com/e-learning/interview/background-motivation/>

You will notice that many of these questions require you to think about the negative aspects of medicine, as well as the positive aspects. Interviewers want to know if you understand what medicine is really like and that you have seriously considered the less exciting or enjoyable parts. It is good to have a clear idea of what these are before you plan your answers to the questions.

Using the worksheet below, spend some time thinking about the positive and negative aspects of being a doctor and what strategies you have to cope with or overcome these things. You should then find it easier to plan your answers to the questions on the second half of the worksheet.

If you can't print out the sheet you can draw the diagram yourself.

File: [Motivation-worksheet](#)

#### 1. Why is it important to recognise the challenges of being a doctor as well as the positive aspects?



- A. To show you have thought carefully about what the course and the career involves.
- B. To make it easier to leave if you decide you don't enjoy the course.
- C. To help the university improve the way they teach students.

## Depth and breadth of interest

It is important that you can demonstrate you have a keen interest in medicine in your interview and that you can show you have done your own research.

Go to the "depth and breadth of interest" section of the Medic Portal website. Read through the questions and answer guide: <https://www.themedicportal.com/e-learning/interview/depth-breadth-of-interest/>

You will see that most of these questions involve discussing an example of reading, research or experience. It is important that you can talk about your examples well and that you can identify specific parts you found interesting or specific things you have learnt.

Use the worksheet below to explore your examples and plan answers to the questions.

File: [Depth-and-breadth-of-interest-worksheet](#)

## Work experience

You are likely to be asked to go into more detail about important interactions or situations you experienced during your work experience. It is important that you can talk confidently and reflectively about what you have done.

Read through the questions and advice on work experience questions from the Medic Portal: <https://www.themedicportal.com/e-learning/interview/work-experience/>

If you have completed a Work Experience placement download the worksheet now and fill it.

Once you have completed your worksheet, plan an answer for each of the example questions on the Medic Portal website. Remember, you don't need to memorise an answer word for word, you should prepare bullet points in your head which you can flesh out in the interview.

File: [Reflecting-on-your-work-experience](#)

## [Go to section 3 answers](#)

## 4. Knowledge and understanding

Interviewers may ask questions which probe your knowledge and understanding of medicine and issues related to the profession. This could involve questions about your understanding of current treatments, the science behind medical conditions, or other issues related to the NHS as a service.



### Questions

#### Statistical, graphical and numerical questions

In some medical interviews, you may be given some visual or graphical data to interpret. This will test your scientific knowledge and analytical thinking and you will be asked questions on the information you have been given.

Click on the link below to find out more about what to expect and how to prepare for these questions.

<https://www.themedicportal.com/blog>

#### 1. What do you think is the most important skill to demonstrate in the interview when dealing with this type of question?



- A. Being able to get the answers right straight away.
- B. Appearing confident and not nervous.
- C. Discussing your thinking until you reach the answer, even if you get it wrong.

#### NHS current issues

The issues facing the NHS are significant and often changing. Interviewers will want to get a sense of whether you are informed about current issues and if you understand the environment in which you may find yourself working.

Read through the question and answer advice on the "NHS hot topics" section of the Medic Portal:

<https://www.themedicportal.com/e-learning/interview/nhs-hot-topics>

Using the worksheet below, research the issues outlined on the Medic Portal and bullet point what you would say.

File: [NHS-questions](#)

### [Go to section 4 answers](#)

## 5. Professionalism and clinical skills

As well as being academically strong, doctors need a wide range of non-academic skills and a good understanding of the four pillars of medical ethics. At interview, there will be questions which give you the opportunity to demonstrate these skills.



### Questions

1. Which one of the below statements relates to the 'Non-maleficence' pillar of medical ethics?



- A. If it will harm the patient.
- B. If it will benefit the patient.
- C. If the patient can make their own decision about it.
- D. If it will benefit the wider community.

Empathy is a key attribute for doctors and interviewers are interested in how you approach and apply this concept.

Go to the "empathy" section of the Medic Portal website and read the questions and answer guide: <https://www.themedicportal.com/e-learning/interview/empathy>

Plan bullet point answers for each of the questions.

File: [Ethical-questions-pillars](#)

D. Which statement is this best explanation of empathy?



- A. Feeling sorry for someone in a bad situation.
- B. Putting yourself in someone else's shoes and imagining how it feels to be them in a situation.
- C. Pretending to know what someone else is feeling in a situation.

## Teamwork

Interviewers may ask questions about how you work and respond in team situations. This can be related to your work experience (e.g. did you see a situation where teamwork was important?) or it could be more general (e.g. can you give an example of a time you worked in a team and it was successful?)

Go to the “Teamwork” section of the Medic Portal website:

<https://www.themedicportal.com/e-learning/interview/teamwork>

Read through the questions and answer advice. Now, brainstorm what your answers would be to each question.

### 3. What are common mistakes which students make when answering a teamwork question? (Pick all that apply.)



- A. Spending a long time going into describing the detail of the situation, before talking about what they did.
- B. Suggesting that not all their actions worked well or that they could have improved further.
- C. Being very self-deprecating.
- D. Suggesting that they are happy to work as a team member, rather than always leading and directing a team.

[Go to section 5 answers](#)

## 6. Unusual questions

On occasion, interviewers may ask you an unusual question for which there might not be an easy answer.

The key to these questions is to demonstrate how you would approach a complex problem not necessarily finding a “correct” answer – much like the statistical, graphical and numerical questions from section 4.

Go to the “Creativity & Imagination” section of the Medic Portal website:

<https://www.themedicportal.com/e-learning/interview/creativity-and-imagination>

Read the questions and brainstorm your answers making sure you have read the “common mistakes” section that accompanies each question.

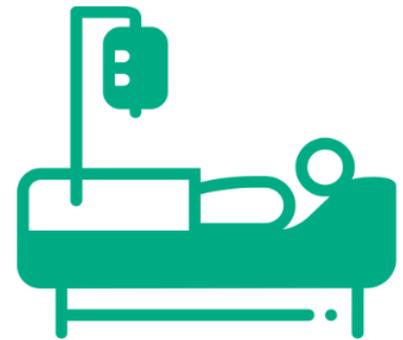
Interviewers may ask questions which require you to assess your own strengths and areas for development. With these questions, it is important that you demonstrate that you can be self-reflective.

Go to the “personal insight” section of the Medic Portal website and read the questions and answer advice:

<https://www.themedicportal.com/e-learning/interview/personal-insight>

The key to answering questions about your potential weaknesses is to identify small, precise problems and to show what steps you have taken to mitigate it. Use the worksheet below to brainstorm your strengths and weaknesses.

File: [Personal-insight-questions](#)



## 7. Introduction to Multiple Mini Interviews (MMIs)

Multiple Mini-Interviews (MMIs) are gaining in popularity in medical schools and have replaced traditional interviews at many universities.

Interviewees move around stations where different tasks will be waiting for them. The MMIs are designed to test your problem-solving and communication skills.

Go to <https://www.studentdoctor.net/2011/01/the-multiple-mini-interview-for-medical-school-admissions/> to learn more about MMIs.



There are a number of different types of questions and scenarios which you might encounter in an MMI situation.

Rather than looking for a “right answer”, interviewers are primarily interested in how you think and communicate. It is important, therefore, that you talk the interviewer through your thought processes and do not remain silent while trying to prepare a perfect response.

Go to: <https://www.themedicportal.com/application-guide/medical-school-interview/mmi-interviews>

Scroll down to the Example MMI Scenarios.

For more detailed questions go to the Medic Portal MMI interview bank: <https://www.themedicportal.com/e-learning/interview/mmi-questions>

Read the points carefully and think about how you would respond to the different situations. You could ask a friend, family member or teacher to practice the role-play situations with you.



## Questions



1. Can you be asked “standard” interview questions e.g. “Why do you want to be a doctor” in a MMI?

- A. Yes
- B. No

2. How many stations are there likely to be in total?

- A. 1-2
- B. 6-10
- C. 10-12

3. How long is a station likely to be in total?

- A. 3-4 minutes
- B. 6-7 minutes
- C. 8-10 minutes

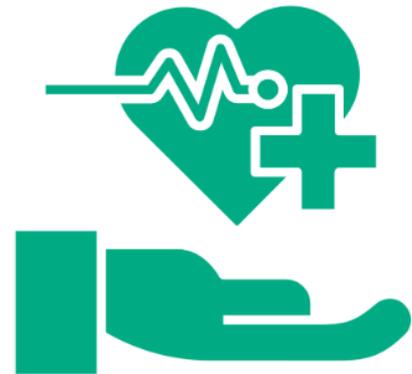
[Go to section 7 answers](#)

## 8. Reflecting on your interview

Complete this task once you have attended an interview.

Complete the worksheet below to reflect on your interview.

File: [Reflecting-on-interviews](#)



### Questions



1. Which student has offered the strongest reflection on their interview?

- A. My interview was ok, but I don't feel I performed that well. I was really nervous and this stopped me thinking carefully about answers. I think I just need to be better prepared for my next one.
- B. My interview could have gone better. My subject knowledge was good - I answered questions on scientific principles well. I think I panicked when they asked me about medical ethics because I hadn't researched them as much. To avoid this I'm going to read around the four pillars and then practice answering questions on this with my friends.

[Go to section 8 answers](#)

## 9. Researching foundation/gateway courses

If you do not have the required grades, it can be possible to study for an extra year on a "Foundation" or "Gateway" course.

Competition for these places is also intense. Some foundation courses have extra requirements which may be different to a normal medicine course. It is important to research the entry requirements to ensure you are eligible to apply.

Type "medical schools council entry requirements" into an internet search and then download the Medical Schools Council's booklet: "Entry requirements for UK Medical Schools: 2020 entry".

<https://www.medschools.ac.uk/media/2357/msc-entry-requirements-for-uk-medical-schools.pdf>

Go to the section beginning on page 67: "Medicine with a preliminary year"



### Questions

1. What are the grade requirements for Manchester Medical School?

- A. AAA
- B. AAB
- C. ABB



[Go to section 9 answers](#)



**You have now completed the booklet.**

**The answers to the questions are on the following page, but before you do that please [click here](#) to complete a short survey.**

The link will redirect you to a survey collecting feedback about the activity you have taken part in or accessed. The survey is hosted in a secure SurveyGizmo account, and is controlled by Higher Horizons, who have funded this activity. There is an opportunity to be included in a prize draw (£25 Amazon voucher) for those who complete it.



# Answers



## 1- Understanding different types of Medical admissions interviews and tests

1. B
2. C
3. A - Yes

[Go to section 2 - Medical interview question types](#)

# Answers



## 2- Preparing for Nursing and Midwifery Tests: Numeracy and literacy tests

1. C

[Go to section 3 – Motivation and preparation](#)

# Answers



## 3- Motivation and preparation

1. A

[Go to section 4 - Knowledge and understanding](#)

# Answers



## 4- Knowledge and understanding

1. C

[Go to section 5 -  
Professionalism and clinical skills](#)

# Answers



## 5- Professionalism and clinical skills

1. A
2. B
3. **Correct Answers:** A, B and C

[Go to section 6 – Unusual question](#)

# Answers



## 7- Introduction to Multiple Mini Interviews

1. A - Yes
2. B
3. C

[Go to section 8 – Reflecting on your interview](#)

# Answers



## 8- Reflecting on your interview

1. B

Go to section 9 –  
Researching foundation/gateway

# Answers



## 9- Researching foundation/gateway courses

1. A

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