Medicine

For those of you who are thinking about studying Medicine at Cambridge, we know that this is a big choice, and it is important that the decision is made carefully. The course at Cambridge is renowned for the quality of its science, but there are many other aspects of life in Cambridge to consider – be they sporting, cultural, aesthetic or just related to the attractions of a collegiate University.

Further information can be found on the University Undergraduate Admissions website, as well as the School of Clinical Medicine website.

Medicine at Peterhouse

We have two Fellows in Medicine: Prof Andrew Lever, Professor of Infectious Diseases and Consultant Physician at Addenbrookes Hospital and Dr Rob Ross Russell, our Director of Studies. He is a Consultant in Paediatric Respiratory Medicine also at Addenbrookes Hospital.

Peterhouse has also created a number of vlogs about undergraduate life as a medic – search Asclepium on YouTube. Specific links to some mock interviews can be found on:

- Background: https://youtu.be/Uu4uDBah2gY
- Link 1: https://youtu.be/LaGnIJzpWOQ
- Link 2: https://youtu.be/I44rE02W0m0

Many thanks to the two students Jade Stevenson and Quebekani Moyo who have created these.

Students’ views

‘Personally, I have really enjoyed reading medicine at Peterhouse. It is a lot of work but the small group supervisions are really useful to make sure you understand the content, and often it gives you time with clinicians and older students which is very helpful. One of the advantages of Peterhouse being an old college is that there are alumni in many branches of medicine and I have been to many interesting talks from a wide range of retired and practising clinicians, and scientists. The annual Peterhouse medics dinner is also one of the best in Cambridge which is in Lent Term and a highlight of my year!’

Leah, second year Medicine student
Course requirements

Prospective medical students must have studied Medicine to A Level, accompanied by one, or more commonly two, other science and mathematics subjects. Students without a third science or mathematics subject are less likely to be competitive applicants for Medicine.

Getting a place needs hard work and planning. Good grades are an expected (and essential!) aspect of your application, but we are also looking for other evidence that you understand the expectations of a career in Medicine. This usually involves experience of working in the health sector – either in General Practice or within a hospital. Alternatively, time spent helping in a Care Home or with other groups of patients (such as cancer support) or with drug or alcohol programs is fine – the list is very long! Different people have different access to such experience, and it is not the detail of what you do that is important but the demonstration that you have tried to find out a bit more about Medicine as a career.

Your Personal Statement is important (but not critical). It should allow us to get a sense of what motivates you, and what excites you. It is more important that you are able to get a sense of that personal aspect in the statement than putting a long list of achievements just to impress. By all means include such things but keep it pertinent. Frequent reviews and iterations by anxious parents or overzealous teachers rarely add much value.

The application process

All candidates applying to Cambridge for Medicine take the Bio-Medical Admissions Test (BMAT) at their school, college or local testing centre on 4th November. is marked independently of the Colleges and is designed to give an additional University-wide comparison of candidates. The BMAT is a fairly important part of our assessment process – a good score won’t guarantee you a place but a bad score will make it very hard to justify taking you. Please note that we do use BMAT scores in making decisions about who to invite for interview.

Typical conditional offers

Our typical conditional offer for Medicine is A*A*A at A level. IB offers are usually for a minimum of 40-42 points, to include 776 or 777 at Higher level in relevant subjects. We would expect the highest grades to be achieved in science or mathematics subjects. Offers are designed to be realistic, taking into account individual circumstances, and to reflect potential and likely levels of achievement. Most of those who receive offers will attain the grades required.
FAQs

Is it a disadvantage to take a gap year?
This is very dependent on the student, and will vary. In principle, we are very happy for students who are applying to take a gap year, especially if they are quite young (in fact, Medics at Cambridge must turn 18 before the beginning of the second term of their first year). We would want that year to be focused, and to be a chance to gain at least some healthcare related experience rather than an extended holiday, but even that is not essential. If you want to take a Gap Year be prepared to justify what you will do with it!

I want to see patients from the start of my training. Should I apply elsewhere?
The medical course in Cambridge is an academic, science-based course. Peterhouse students will be taken up to the hospital to see patients on a number of occasions during their preclinical course, and there are ‘Preparing for Patients’ (PfP) courses, but the majority of the work is non-clinical. If this would deter you, you may be better considering another course, as it would be a shame to become frustrated at the lack of patient contact during the first 3 years.