



The
Medical
School.

ADMISSIONS PROCEDURE – MEDICINE MBChB Entry 2012

1. Introduction

It is the policy of this Medical School to interview all students who are being considered for entry to either the five year course (A100) or the six year course (A104). The Admissions Tutor for Undergraduate Medicine has overall responsibility for the admissions process.

The approved target intake is 241 including a maximum of 18 overseas students, 20 students under the Sheffield Outreach and Access to Medicine Scheme (SOAMS) and 18 for the A104 pre-medical course. Our aim also is to include at least 10% of mature/graduate students. Applications from mature students will be judged on individual merit. The number of offers made each year for the five year course is determined by the number of students on the A104 course who will move into the A100 course and the number of students who have been offered deferred entry.

The selection process is monitored such that it is free from unfair discrimination of any kind. All applications are seen by the Admissions Tutor and either one senior member of academic staff and/or one Admissions Officer. All candidates will be required to undertake the UK Clinical Aptitude Test (UKCAT). Applications will initially be assessed on their academic ability and given an overall score. The criteria for scoring is contained in the document entitled 'Academic Scoring of UCAS Forms'. Those candidates who meet the minimum academic requirements and whose UKCAT score falls within the top 20 percentile will have their form sent out to an assessor. These forms are then graded for personal qualities and returned to the Admissions Office where a decision will be made as to whether an interview should be granted. Candidates who's UCKAT score falls outside the top 20 percentile may be considered once the initial round of interviews have taken place and provided places are still available.

This document will be revised annually or when necessary and will be issued to those involved in any aspect of the selection procedure.

2. Selection Criteria - Academic

To qualify for consideration for interview, candidates must usually have:

- i) a minimum of six grade 'A' passes at GCSE from the 8-11 taken.
- ii) predicted grades at 'A' level of at least AAA. For the A100 this must include Chemistry and another science subject. General Studies is not acceptable as a third A Level.
- iii) candidates with less than the above grades will be considered only in exceptional circumstances, e.g. the Compact Scheme, SOAMS.
- iv) we will not consider resit applicants except from candidates with extenuating circumstances when this has been agreed with the Admissions Tutor prior to application.
- v) for graduates at least an upper second class degree will be required together with BBB at A level. For candidates with a 1st class degree, A levels will not normally be taken into account.

Other qualifications are also considered for admission i.e. Scottish Highers, Irish Leaving Certificate, the International and European Baccalaureate and some national qualifications from students applying from other countries.

Currently it is recommended that applicants take four subjects at AS Level: Chemistry and one of either Maths, Physics or Biology, any other subjects including General Studies. However, because some applicants do not declare their AS results, these will not form part of the academic assessment of candidates.

The Admissions Tutor will continually review the entry requirements and academic evaluation, as and when necessary.

The standard 'A' Level offer to successful candidates for the A100 course will normally be AAA, to include Chemistry, another science and any other subject except General Studies. Equivalent offers are made to candidates offering other qualifications.

3. Selection Criteria - Non-Academic

In compliance with equal opportunities legislation, there is no discrimination made on grounds of race, religion or gender. It is not legal to base decisions on grounds of race, religion or gender. The assessors are requested to score candidates based on the following criteria:

- Motivation for Medicine
- Evidence of commitment for caring
- Work experience
- Understanding the Nature of Medicine
- Width and depth of interests
- Evidence of teamwork, leadership skills and acceptance of responsibility

The University is committed to seeking applications from candidates with varied backgrounds. The assessors are asked to bear this in mind and to flag up any candidates with less than formal qualifications for discussion with the Admissions Tutor.

4. Selection Criteria - Grading of Candidates

Candidates will be graded on their academic ability by staff within the Medical Admissions Office in line with criteria as defined in the 'Academic Scoring of UCAS Forms' document, which will be updated as and when necessary. UCAS forms are given an overall grade and checked that they meet the minimum subject requirements. Candidates will be given a grade A if they meet the minimum requirements and a grade B if they do not meet the minimum requirements. Those candidates graded A and who's UKCAT score falls within the top 20 percentile will have their UCAS form sent out to an assessor, candidates who's score falls outside the top 20 percentile may be considered once the initial round of interviews have taken place and provided there are places still available

The assessors will then grade personal qualities as indicated in 3 above. Candidates who meet the academic requirements, personal qualities and have achieved a high score in the UKCAT test will be considered for interview. Candidates who have achieved low scores will usually be rejected.

5. Interview Process

- i) Members of clinical and academic staff are recruited to help assess applicants for admission to the Medical School. The interview panel normally consists of three people; two members of staff, at least one of them being a medically qualified Consultant and one a senior Biomedical Scientist. The third member of the panel may be either an experienced clinical student, a junior hospital doctor, a senior nurse, or a lay person with experience in a medical environment.
- ii) All interviewers and all members of staff involved in the undergraduate selection process will be required to attend a training and/or briefing session.
- iii) Interview performance is carefully documented and all panel members provide a written assessment of each candidate interviewed.

- iv) An interview form is provided which lists a series of criteria with a grading from 1 - 5. The interviewers are asked to indicate for each criterion a grading and then award an overall score. Following the interview, the final decision regarding entry is made by the Admissions Tutor.

A candidate who achieves an overall score of 9 – 12 will normally be offered a place; those with a score of 13 – 15 may be offered a place or placed on a reserve list depending on the comments of the interviewers. Candidates who score over 15 will normally be rejected.

- v) For the commencement of each session, interviewers will be sent a copy of the interviewing guidelines with a request that they read it carefully before their first interview session. They will also be made aware of the Admissions Policy on interviewing students and they will also be asked to declare the name of any candidate known to them who has applied to the Medical School such that they are not involved with the interview process for that candidate.

6. Conduct of the Interview

- i) Questions on the following must be avoided:
 - a) being from a medical family or being related to a member of staff of the medical faculty
 - b) gender
 - c) marital or parental status
 - d) social class
 - e) ethnic origin
 - f) country of origin.
- ii) Interviewers are requested to ensure that their questions are well prepared and succinct to allow the candidate to make maximum use of the time allowed.
- iii) Although this is difficult to achieve in practice, interviewers should try to ensure consistency of assessment such that similar topics are covered with each candidate. Interviewers are requested to prepare their questions in advance to ensure that the following areas will be covered within the course of the interview:
 - a) why do you wish to study medicine?
 - b) why do you wish to study medicine in Sheffield?
 - c) what do you know about the course and the subsequent careers in medicine available to you?
 - d) what interests and leisure activities do you have?
 - e) what are prominent issues affecting medicine and health care at the present time and what do you see happening to them in the future?
 - f) have you any personal beliefs that would conflict with medical practice?
 - g) what have you learnt about medicine and caring at first hand?

As a result of the answers to the above questions the interviewers should be able to assess the candidate's communication skills and their knowledge of what is involved in a career in medicine.

- iv) The interview will last approximately 20 minutes. **Under no circumstances must the interview last significantly less than 20 minutes especially if a decision is made to reject the candidate. Also under no circumstances must the interview be significantly prolonged above 20 minutes.**
- v) Although there will be normally three interviewers, it is suggested that only two question each candidate, the third observing. At the end of the interview however, all three interviewers will score the candidate independently. The interviewers asking the questions should rotate during the course of the afternoon so that all interviewers are involved in questioning.

7. Policy on Students with a Disability /Medical Condition/Learning Difficulty

- i) Applicants who satisfy our academic criteria are encouraged to submit a formal UCAS application. They should indicate on their UCAS form if they have a disability/medical condition, including dyslexia that will require additional support during the medical course. The disclosure of a disability, including any specific learning disability such as dyslexia, will not influence the admission selection procedures.

- ii) Candidates with a learning disability are encouraged to contact the University's Disability and Dyslexia Support Service in advance of their UCAS application.
- iii) Applicants should inform the UKCAT testing organisation of their situation so that appropriate arrangements can be made.
- iv) Candidates who disclose a disability will be interviewed in the same way as all other students and their disability will not be discussed or evaluated during the interview. The selection panel will make a recommendation purely on the basis of the performance of the candidate at this interview.
- v) If an applicant with a disability/medical condition (with the exception of a learning disability) is offered a conditional place to study medicine, they will complete an Occupational Health Questionnaire, and an Occupational Health Physician will then assess the candidate's fitness to undertake a medical degree course. Applicants declaring a learning disability should provide the Admissions Office with a full dyslexia diagnostic assessment by an educational psychologist, specialist teacher or other appropriately qualified professional. A Committee chaired by the Admissions Tutor and including the Director of Teaching and a Senior Administrator in the Medical School Office, will assess the candidate's fitness to undertake the course. If the candidate is considered fit, the Admissions Tutor will write to the candidate confirming their offer and informing them that they will receive extra time in written examinations but not in clinical examinations.

Candidates are personally responsible to ensure that evidence is provided about any disability or other factor affecting their mental or physical ability to practise as a doctor. This evidence may also provide indications of recommendations of support, which can be followed by a full needs assessment if required, for those students who are eligible for Disabled Student Allowances. For those students not eligible for the Disabled Students' Allowances, e.g. overseas students, additional support may be funded through resources available within the University.

- vi) The Disability and Dyslexia Support Service write to every student who has been offered a place, and asks them to complete a learning support questionnaire. If a student discloses a number of support needs, an information visit with the student may be required to assess fully their learning needs and determine reasonable adjustments that may have to be implemented.
- vii) For candidates declaring a physical disability, the above Committee will meet to review the report of the Occupational Health Physician and make a decision on the fitness of the candidate to undertake the course.

8. Health Screening

In accordance with national guidelines for the protection of both patients and healthcare workers, all successful applicants should have completed a course of hepatitis B immunisation prior to commencement of study.

The immunisation process can take up to nine months and applicants are advised to consult their General Practitioner about this at the earliest opportunity. The Medical School will accept as documentary proof an authenticated laboratory report showing either the presence of hepatitis B surface antibody, or if antibodies are not developed after a full course of immunisation, that they are negative for hepatitis infectivity. The Medical School reserves the right to re-test any or all of its medical students for all or any markers of hepatitis B virus. Screening tests will only be recognised from a United Kingdom accredited laboratory. A negative result from overseas laboratories will be checked when you arrive in Sheffield.

If an applicant is an infectious hepatitis B carrier, there is no reason that they should not undertake a medical degree. However, the student will not be allowed to undertake exposure prone procedures and their course may need to be modified to accommodate Department of Health guidance on activities they may or may not perform. The student would also need to be aware at a very early stage that his/her career options will be limited by his/her carrier status.

The medical school is constantly reviewing the immunisation requirements and procedures for medical students. Candidates will be required to comply with these if they are offered a provisional place.

Students who have serious health problems, or who know that they are infected with Hepatitis C or HIV must disclose this on their UCAS form, as their course may need to be modified to accommodate Department of

Health guidance on activities they may or may not perform. All potential students with significant health problems will be individually assessed for suitability for the course.

Students who are late applicants or receive late offers, who have not had sufficient time to complete the vaccination programme, will receive any remaining vaccinations from the Occupational Health Service. Offers to students who have not completed their full vaccination will be confirmed provided that they have an authorised report stating that they are hepatitis B surface antigen negative.

It is imperative that all procedures outlined above are followed precisely in order to avoid prejudicing their entry to the course.

In March 2007 the Department of Health issued guidance on health screening of new entrants to the NHS for Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, HIV and TB, which requires all new starters who will carry out exposure prone procedures in the course of their work to be screened for Hepatitis B surface antigen, Hepatitis C and HIV. Anyone found to be an infective carrier of one of these viruses is excluded from carrying out exposure prone procedures (EPP's).

EPP's are defined as 'procedures where there is a risk that an injury to the worker may result in the exposure of patients' open tissue to the blood of the worker. These include procedures where the worker's gloved hand may be in contact with sharp instruments, needle tips or sharp tissues (e.g. spicules of bone or teeth) inside a patient's open body cavity, wound or confined anatomical space where the hands or fingertips may not be completely visible at all times.'

Most surgical procedures, some medical ones such as implantation of permanent pacemakers and some obstetric procedures are EPP's, as potentially are some activities in Emergency Medicine. Although students will be able to complete a medical course without doing EPP's, they will not be able to assist in theatre or in some practical procedures. Thus, students may miss out on some aspects of the course.

If any student declines testing they will be excluded from EPP activities. If a student is found to be infected, they will be excluded from EPP activities. The Occupational Health Service will not disclose the reason for exclusion to the University, only that the student is not allowed to do EPP work and the course may have to be modified.

It is strongly recommended that students be tested, not just to ensure that they can undertake EPP's during training, but also if they are not tested now, and then move into an EPP career such as surgery, they will have to be screened at that stage. It is better to know as early as possible about one's status, as it might influence career decisions.

Although it is extremely unlikely that a student will have one of these diseases, it is in the interest of the student to know if they are infected, as early treatment may be beneficial, and steps may need to be taken to protect partners and household contacts. If a student were to be HIV positive, it would be important to protect them from occupational risks such as TB.

Testing of blood borne viruses for occupational reasons does not influence insurance or mortgage applications unless the results are positive. The financial industry now understands that being tested for HIV does not indicate a lifestyle risk.

9. Criminal Convictions

UCAS state that an applicant who has a relevant criminal conviction should disclose this on the application. 'Relevant' is defined as 'convictions against the person, whether of a violent or sexual nature, and convictions for unlawfully supplying controlled drugs'.

Admission to the course is subject to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974) Section 4(2) (Exemption) Order 1975 and the Department of Health Circular HC (88)9 guidelines regarding child protection and police checks. All offers given to applicants will therefore stipulate a condition relating to the receipt of a satisfactory enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) disclosure. Candidates who have been resident overseas for a period of time will be required to provide equivalent evidence from that country. An enhanced CRB check will disclose any (live and spent) prison sentences, convictions, cautions, reprimands, final warnings and bind over orders.

A candidate who has any of the above would be referred to a Medical School Panel who will make a decision regarding entry onto the course.

Any data relating to the CRB check will be operated in line with the CRB Code of Practice (copy available from the Medical Admissions Office). A Policy Statement on the 'Secure Storage, Handling, Use, Retention and Disposal of Disclosures and Disclosure Information' is also available from the Medical Admissions Office.

10. Student Entry Agreement

On commencing the course all students will be required to sign a Student Entry Agreement that contains practice guidelines derived from GMC requirements on becoming a competent practitioner. A copy of this agreement is available from the Medical Admissions Office and at the Medical School website. It is also a requirement that all students are issued with guidance from the GMC and the Medical School Council and students will be required to sign a document agreeing that they have received a copy of the booklet *Medical Students: professional values and fitness to practise*.

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