



The  
Medical  
School.

## **ADMISSIONS POLICY – GRADUATE ENTRY MEDICINE - MBChB A101, 2021-2022 Admissions Cycle**

### 1. Introduction

The University of Sheffield wishes to operate a transparent, evidence-based admissions policy to the Graduate Entry Medicine - MBChB course (UCAS Code: A101). No discrimination, positive or negative, based on gender, age, disability, racial or ethnic origin, school type or family background will be applied to any candidate. Medical Schools' Council recommends that academic achievement, an admissions test (such as UCAT), Multiple Mini Interviews and a Situational Judgement Test be considered when selecting applicants to become medical students. Candidates will be selected through a complex step-wise process, which emphasises personal qualities as well as academic achievement.

The Director of Undergraduate Medical Admissions has overall responsibility for the admissions process. All applications are seen by the Director of Undergraduate Medical Admissions and either one senior member of academic staff and/or the Admissions Officer.

The Medical School receives approximately 250-350 applications each year for the Graduate Entry Medicine - MBChB course. The approved target intake is 15 Home students. There are no places on this programme for Overseas students. The number of offers made each year for this four-year programme is determined by the number of students who can be made unconditional offers and the number of students who have been offered deferred entry in the preceding admissions cycle. Unconditional offers are only made when an applicant has already fulfilled all of the Academic entry requirements.

The UCAS application deadline for the A101 MBChB programme is 15<sup>th</sup> October each year.

The A101 MBChB Admissions Process is divided into three consecutive stages:

- Stage 1: Applications are considered to determine whether the applicant meets the Academic, UCAT and widening participation thresholds for entry and whether they have Home fees status. Applications that meet all of these criteria are progressed to Stage 2. Applicants that do not meet all three of the Academic, UCAT and widening participation criteria thresholds and/or who do not have Home fees status are deemed unsuccessful. Applications are considered based on the information contained within them at the time this selection stage is in operation. Subsequent receipt of additional or amended information (for example, a revised grade prediction or fees status) will not alter the decisions made in this stage.
- Stage 2: Applicants who meet or exceed the minimum thresholds for Academic attainment, UCAT attainment and Widening Participation and who have Home fees status are ranked according to their UCAT score. This ranking stage will only be applied if there are more applicants meeting all three thresholds than can be invited to interview. Typically, approximately 50-60 applicants will be invited to interview. The remaining applicants are informed that their application has been deemed unsuccessful.
- Stage 3: Those applicants with Home fees status who meet all three of the Academic, UCAT and Widening Participation entry criteria, and (if ranking is required)

who have the best UCAT scores are invited to attend an interview. Typically, a Multiple Mini-Interview (MMI) is used. It is the policy of this Medical School to interview all students at this stage who are being considered for entry to the four-year course (A101). The applicants with the strongest performance at MMI will be made an offer of a place on the degree programme via UCAS.

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 (Stage 1)

To progress from Stage 1 to Stage 2 of the admissions process and qualify for consideration for interview, candidates must usually have:

- i) Attained A2 grades of at least BBB. For A101 this must include Chemistry or Biology. General Studies and Critical Thinking are not acceptable A Levels. A Levels taken early are not considered (irrespective of whether they are certificated in Year 12 or Year 13). Further Mathematics is not acceptable. Where an A-Level has a separate practical component, this is required, and must have been passed. (Applicants must meet the University's minimum entry requirement of a Grade C (Grade 4) in GCSE English Language and GCSE Mathematics but we otherwise do not consider GCSEs, AS-Levels or Extended Project Qualifications.)
- ii) Where an applicant has taken A2 Level Mathematics in Year 12 and A2 Level Further Mathematics in Year 13 we will accept the result of the A2 Level Mathematics, provided two other subjects (one of which must be Chemistry or Biology) are studied in Year 13 alongside A2 Level Further Mathematics. We will not accept A2 Level Further Mathematics when determining whether an applicant meets our academic entry criteria.
- iii) We will consider applicants who have taken resits in order to meet our academic entry requirements. Resits may be taken in each qualification. All A2 Level resits must be taken in the same sitting. Applicants need only resit those subjects in which their attainment did not reach the required level as set out in points 2(i)-2(ii) above. We will not consider applicants who have taken resits in a qualification more than once, except from candidates with extenuating circumstances/disrupted studies. Whether or not disrupted studies are accepted is determined by a Disrupted Studies Board that meets after the application deadline, and which considers each Disrupted Studies application individually on its own merits.
- iv) Where an applicant was taking A Level resits in 2020, the grades awarded in July/August 2020 and those awarded after September 2020 attempts will be regarded as the same sitting of the examination, and whichever result is higher will be used. At the time of writing it is not yet known whether there will be an Autumn examination series in 2021. [This section has been updated to reflect the realities of last year and current uncertainty]
- v) For applicants who first took A Levels in 2020 (only), the grades awarded in July/August 2020 and those awarded after September 2020 attempts will be regarded as the same sitting of the examination, and whichever result is higher will be used. At the time of writing it is not yet known whether there will be an Autumn examination series in 2021. [This section has been updated to reflect the realities of last year and current uncertainty]
- vi) In addition to meeting the A2 Level requirements set out above, applicants must have or be predicted to attain an upper second class or first class Bachelor's degree in an appropriate life sciences subject. Masters degrees (taken after a Bachelors degree) and doctoral degrees are not considered.
- v) Candidates with less than the above grades will be considered only in highly exceptional circumstances.

- vi) Applicants applying to the A101 Graduate Entry Medicine – MBChB programme are required to have met at least two of the following widening participation criteria at the point at which they completed their secondary education (prior to entering higher education):
- Lived in an area with low progression to higher education;
  - Lived in a deprived area;
  - Received free school meals in years 10-13;
  - Received a 16-19 Bursary or similar grant;
  - Was a young carer;
  - Was in local authority care;
  - Was estranged from both of their parents or legal guardians during their secondary education;
  - Was the first in their family to enter higher education;
  - Have parents who were unemployed or working in unskilled jobs;
  - Have a disability.
- vii) 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. A number of qualifications, (including but not limited to BTECs, T-Levels and Access Courses) are not accepted.
- viii) The standard offer to successful candidates for the A101 course will normally be an upper second class degree in an appropriate life sciences subject.

### 3. Selection Criteria – UCAT (Stage 1)

All candidates will be required to undertake the University Clinical Aptitude Test (UCAT). The application is then considered by the Director of Undergraduate Medical Admissions and a decision will be made as to whether an interview should be granted. Candidates whose UCAT score falls below the threshold (currently 2430/3600 for 2022 entry) will not normally be considered for interview.

Applications that meet *all three of* the minimum Academic, minimum UCAT and minimum Widening Participation entry criteria from those with Home fees status will be progressed to Stage 2 of the Admissions Process. Applications that do not will be deemed unsuccessful.

### 4. Selection Criteria – UCAT Ranking (Stage 2)

Applicants who have Home fees status and who meet or exceed *all three of* the minimum Academic requirements *and* the minimum UCAT score *and* the minimum Widening Participation criteria will be ranked on their UCAT score. This ranking will only be applied if more applicants reach this stage than can be invited to interview. In the event that ranking is applied, those applicants with the highest UCAT scores will be invited to attend a Multiple Mini Interview. The UCAS Personal Statement and UCAS Reference are not considered in deciding who to invite to Multiple Mini Interview.

### 5. Multiple Mini Interview Process (Stage 3)

Candidates with the highest UCAT scores will be invited to attend a Multiple Mini-Interview. The Medical School interviews approximately 50-60 candidates for Graduate Entry Medicine each year. In 2021-22 the Medical School will use Multiple Mini-Interviews (MMIs) as evidence has shown that

these are a more reliable and fair means of assessing applicants. In the event that COVID-19 restrictions are in force, online structured panel-based interviews will be used instead of MMIs.

The Multiple Mini-Interviews comprise a series of eight stations. Each station typically lasts 8 minutes. The focus of these stations may be centred around the following criteria:

- Communication skills
- Depth and breadth of interests (achievement in specific fields)
- Empathy and evidence of commitment for caring
- Knowledge of and interest in study in Sheffield
- Medical work experience/Extended project qualification (as appropriate)
- Motivation for Medicine
- Numeracy
- Critical thinking, problem solving and logical reasoning
- Understanding the nature of Medicine (including Ethics and Good Medical Practice)
- Values and attitudes (including those set out in the NHS Constitution)
- Resilience and the ability to deal with difficult situations

Interviewers will not have access to applicants' UCAS Personal Statements. The MMI stations may, however, overlap with material contained within UCAS personal statements.

Applicants invited to attend an MMI will be sent the MMI station questions in advance of their interview.

The Situational Judgement Test component of the UCAT is considered as a virtual 9<sup>th</sup> station in the MMI.

MMI Interviewers are drawn from medical educationalists, medically qualified senior members of academic staff, biomedical scientists, junior hospital doctors, senior hospital doctors, general practitioners, senior nurses, senior medical students, patients and lay people.

During the MMI, candidates are graded on performance at each station. The scores from each station (including the virtual 9<sup>th</sup> station) are totalled to give an overall score. Successful candidates typically have at least a satisfactory performance at every interview station in the MMI. Based upon this grading the Director of Undergraduate Medical Admissions will then make the final decision as to whether a place is offered, following a review of the UCAS Reference. Candidates will be notified of the decision through UCAS.

## 6. 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 or other specific learning disability that will require additional support during the medical course. The disclosure of a disability, including any specific learning disability such as dyslexia, allows the University to provide support for offer holders, but will not influence the admission selection procedures.
- i) Candidates with a learning disability are encouraged to contact the University's Disability and Dyslexia Support Service in advance of their UCAS application.
- ii) Applicants should inform the UCAT testing organisation (in advance of the test) of their situation so that appropriate arrangements can be made. The Medical School will not make adjustments to the UCAT score for candidates who have taken the UCAT (or UCATSA, UCATSEN, UCATSENSA or UCATSEN50) but whose performance may have been affected by health or other circumstances. Applicants who are unable to take the UCAT (or UCATSA, UCATSEN,

UCATSENSA or UCATSEN50) due to health issues should submit a disrupted studies application. If the candidate meets or exceeds the academic threshold and the disrupted studies application relating to the UCAT is accepted, the applicant will be invited to attend a Multiple Mini Interview.

- iii) Applicants who are not able to obtain sufficient reasonable adjustment for the UCAT in the form of UCATSA, UCATSEN, UCATSENSA or UCATSEN50 should submit a disrupted studies application. If the candidate meets or exceeds the academic threshold and the disrupted studies application relating to the UCAT is accepted, the applicant will be invited to attend a Multiple Mini Interview.
- iv) Applicants who are not able to take the UCAT due to reasons of geography will be deemed unsuccessful.
- v) Candidates who disclose a disability will be interviewed in the same way as all other applicants 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.
- vi) 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.

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.

- vii) 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.
- viii) 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 must complete a course of hepatitis B immunisation.

Applicants do not need to complete a course of hepatitis B immunisation prior to commencing the course, as this will be arranged by the Occupational Health Department on entry. The Medical School will however 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 infection. 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.

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 or more 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 ones 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

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 DBS (Disclosure and Barring Scheme) enhanced disclosure. Candidates who have been resident overseas for a period of time will be required to provide equivalent evidence from that country.

Amendments to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (Amendment) (England and Wales) Order 2013 mean that the University no longer requires applicants to declare all convictions or cautions because some are not classed as 'protected'. Candidates are advised to visit the DBS Website which provides a full list of offences that will never be filtered from a criminal record (i.e. not protected regardless of time). Listed offences must always be declared as they include serious violent and sexual offences and other specified offences of relevance for posts concerned with safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. Cautions and convictions received outside of the UK that meet the same criteria as above also do not need to be declared. Candidates must tell us on the UCAS form about non-protected criminal convictions, including spent sentences, cautions (including verbal cautions), reprimands and bind over orders.

A candidate who's DBS disclosure reveals any prison sentences, convictions, cautions, reprimands, final warnings and bind over orders may be referred to a Medical School Fitness to Practise Panel who will make a decision regarding entry onto the course. The Medical School may also seek advice from other bodies such as Student Services, the Postgraduate Deanery or the General Medical Council.

Any data relating to the DBS check will be operated in line with the DBS 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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