Choosing Medicine, Dentistry and Health Courses

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Current Context:

- Almost 13 million professionals in UK = 42% of all UK employment
- 1.4 million professionals in healthcare
- Professions have withstood the economic downturn more robustly than other forms of employment

http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/universityeducation/9415613/Graduate-jobs-Top-10-degree-subjects-for-getting-a-job.html#?frame=2282934

- Professions are key to social mobility

(Fair Access to Professional Careers; A progress report by the Independent Reviewer on Social Mobility and Child Poverty, Milburn 2012)
What is a profession?

- Recognisable entry points – for example, with standard qualification requirements
- Codes of ethics – for example, that set out aspects of professional responsibility
- Systems for self-regulation – for example, setting and regulating standards for professional development
- A strong sense of vocation and professional development.
2011/12 Full-time UG Intake
(numbers vary slightly year on year)

Clinical Dentistry
- Applications 700-800
- Places 75

Medicine
- Applications 2500-2700
- Places 248
- About 10:1 ratio
• Medicine and Dentistry are still two of the most over-subscribed and highly selective courses.

• Improvements in diversity but courses across the UK are still over-represented by those from higher socio-economic backgrounds.

• Allied professions in healthcare are also worth considering.

• Good preparation for application to courses is vital to success.
What are we going to cover?

• What are medicine and dentistry departments (and healthcare courses) looking for in applicants?

• Strategies for tackling the application process

Useful links:

http://www.shef.ac.uk/schools/outreach-programmes/soams
http://www.shef.ac.uk/schools/outreach-programmes/adopt
Which health care courses do we offer?

- Medicine
- Dental Surgery
- Diploma in Dental Hygiene and Therapy
- Health and Human Sciences
- Orthoptics
And...

- Human Communication Sciences
- Speech Science
- Biomedical Science
- Bioengineering
- Microbiology and many more...
The context – Medicine and Dentistry

- Applications continue to rise
- Entry requirements are high
- Students need to do more and more to make themselves stand out from the crowd
- Students need to think carefully about their back-up option
• Medicine – AAA (including Chemistry and a second science) taken in one sitting
• Dental Surgery – AAA (including Chemistry and Biology)
• Not General Studies, not EPQ
• Orthoptics – BBB
• Speech Science-AAB
• Biomedical Science - AAB
• Less is more?
Over to you...

- What are the key issues your students face when applying for health care courses?
Application requirements

- Work experience
- Academic grades
- UKCAT /BMAT score
- UCAS form – personal statement
- Interview
- All universities will use this information in different ways
Application Timetable

- UKCAT/BMAT before applying
- Apply by 15th October for Medicine/Dentistry
  - 4 medicine/dentistry
  - 1 other
- Interviews mid-November to late March
- Decision via UCAS
- Decide on first and insurance choice by May/early June
Personal qualities and skills

- Caring attitude
- Conscientiousness
- Courage Determination
- Diligence
- Flexibility
- Initiative
- Humility
- Teamwork
- Communication
More personal qualities and skills

- Leadership
- Long-term commitment
- Orderly organisation
- Public performance
- Responsibility
- Self-directed study skills
- Time management
- Trustworthiness
- Etc.
Work Experience
• Appropriate work experience is essential for any application

• What is appropriate work experience?

• This does not have to be in a medical/dental setting

• Using initiative and perseverance to secure a placement is part of the challenge

• Work experience needs to inform and illustrate an applications – keep a diary
What is in the Test?

- Verbal reasoning
- Quantitative reasoning
- Abstract reasoning
- Decision analysis
- Situational judgement test
Verbal Reasoning

UKCAT Practice Exam Review - Candidate Name

Research into the variation in numbers of the arctic fox has shown that, in areas where there is a population of small rodents, the number of foxes is associated with the numbers of rodents. The fox populations respond to increased food availability by increasing reproduction. However, in areas where there are no small rodents (e.g., Svalbard in Norway), the picture is more complex.

Prior to 1973, the diaries of polar bear trappers (who took the bear furs, but left the carcasses) reported flourishing populations of arctic foxes. After 1973, when the polar bear became a protected species, both the trappers and the reports of foxes declined.

Researchers estimated the fox numbers in Svalbard by several methods including a “capture index” (the number of live foxes trapped in baited traps) and an “observation index” (based on sightings by scientists and local people). Estimated numbers of foxes fluctuated: they were low in 1989/1990, rose from 1992 to 1995, and then dropped so sharply in autumn 1995 that they seemed to have disappeared from the area by 1996. Fox tracks were not observed again until autumn 1996.

Two important sources of food for arctic foxes in Svalbard are Barnacle geese and reindeer carcasses. Numbers of Barnacle geese rose until 1994, when predation on nests by foxes left only 2 surviving goslings. Numbers of goslings then rose to over 600 in 1996, when no foxes were observed. There was a sharp rise in reindeer mortality in the winter of 1988/9, which led to a high number of carcasses, but lower numbers in the winter of 1989/90.

Fox numbers may be influenced by the migration of foxes to other areas and/or by disease, but no studies were carried out to investigate this.

Which of the following is most likely to be true?

- A. There is no relationship between the numbers of foxes captured, and those observed by local people.
- B. The numbers of foxes captured and those observed by scientists will be the same.
- C. Where there are rodents, as numbers of rodents go up, so will the number of foxes.
- D. Where there are rodents, as numbers of foxes go up, so will the number of rodents.

The test assesses your ability to read and think carefully about information presented in passages and to determine whether specific conclusions can be drawn from information presented. You are not expected to use prior knowledge to answer the questions.
Quantitative Reasoning

The table shows the total cost of renting different types of motorboats for a certain number of hours. Total cost is calculated using the deposit and the cost per hour. Some information is missing in the table.

**Motorboat Renting**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Deposit</th>
<th>Cost per hour</th>
<th>Total cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>£25</td>
<td>£135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>£60</td>
<td>£330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>£100</td>
<td>£75</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>£95</td>
<td>£100</td>
<td>£1,085</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If the deposit for Type D motorboats is increased by 5% on Sundays, what will be the total cost of renting a Type D motorboat for 6 hours on a Sunday?

- **A. £895.00**
- **B. £890.75**
- **C. £750.20**
- **D. £754.26**
- **E. £850.00**

The test assesses your ability to use numerical skills to solve problems. It assumes familiarity with numbers to the standard of a good pass at GCSE. However, items are less to do with numerical facility and more to do with problem solving.
Abstract Reasoning

13 minutes to answer 55 items associated with sets of shapes.

The test assesses your ability to identify patterns amongst abstract shapes where irrelevant and distracting material may lead to incorrect conclusions. The test therefore measures your ability to change track, critically evaluate and generate hypotheses and requires you to query judgements as you go along.
Decision Analysis

33 minutes to answer 28 items associated with one scenario, each with a related Confidence Rating.

The test assesses the ability to make decisions in situations of uncertainty, where information may be incomplete, complex and ambiguous. The associated confidence rating for each item asks you to rate confident you feel about the response you have provide so it measures your awareness of your own decision making.
Situational Judgement Test

26 minutes to answer 71 items associated with 17 scenarios (consisting of between 3 and 6 response options).

The test measures your capacity to understand real world situations and to identify critical factors and appropriate behaviour in dealing with them.
UKCAT

• Is it possible to prepare? Yes!
• Benefits of testing early? (register from 1st May)
• Testing early gives students greater flexibility with their choices on their UCAS form.
• Updated resources on the UKCAT website
• Iphone app
• Bursaries are available towards the cost of the test
• A high UKCAT score will make an applicant stand out but not in isolation!
• Universities use the test in a variety of different ways
Personal statement
Over to you...

- In groups decide whether or not you would give the student the offer of a place on the basis of their personal statement
- For the purposes of this exercise, assume that they have met all the other entry criteria
Personal statements - What does TUOS say?

- explain motivation for a career in Medicine/Dentistry
- Describe your work experience and most importantly, what you have learned from it
- Provide evidence that you have a commitment to caring for other people
- Describe any activities that have involved teamwork and leadership
- Describe your achievements and outside interests
- Overall, try and be concise and clear

- **Passion** for the subject.....show don’t tell
Making the most of your experience

- Service – volunteering, school, community roles
- Performance – sport, music, drama, debate
- Leadership – school, expeditions, work with younger children
- Maturity – paid regular work, care roles
- Other outstanding qualities?

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Personal statement – the basics

- Needs to reflect qualities of a doctor/dentist
- Has to be personal to the applicant
- Be wary of ‘trying too hard’
- 4,000 characters
- Well structured
- Concise language
- Be reflective!
Things to avoid...

- Clichés
- Fibs
- Waffle
- Talking about things that aren’t relevant
- Elaborate language if you don’t use it
A word of warning:

• Use of templates is obvious
• Be honest and truthful
• UCAS have software to detect plagiarism!
Interviews
Over to you...

• What do you think would make a good answer to the following sample interview questions:
  • Why Medicine/Dentistry?
  • What have you learnt from your work experience?
  • Tell us about a current medical news story that caught your eye?
  • Should cosmetic surgery be freely available on the NHS?
The Sheffield Interview

- Informal Setting
- Interview Panel – 3 interviewers
- 20 minutes in duration
- Conversational style
- Looking for evidence of key qualities
- Can be guided by the interviewee

- Manual dexterity? (Dentistry)
- MMIs
- Can vary from one institution to the next
Key areas

• Why Medicine/Dentistry?
• What do you know about the role of a doctor/dentist?
• What are your skills and qualities?
• What have you learnt from your work experience?
• Are you a well rounded-individual?
• Do you keep track of the news?
• Are you able to cope with ethical questions?
Common problems

- Some young people find it hard to talk about themselves
- Some students struggle to understand the need to be reflective
- Lack of familiarity with university environment and academic staff
- One dimensional answers
• Lack of awareness of how high the standard is

• Issues with confidence and language ability

• Nerves

• Appropriate dress

• Having a good knowledge base but not knowing how to draw it out
Tips on preparing for interview

• Know yourself – strengths and weaknesses
• Know the role of a doctor/dentist
• Key examples
• Research history of medicine/dentistry, medical breakthroughs, topical controversies, ethical issues, NHS politics
• Research university, the course and possible future career options
• Practice, practice, practice
Finally, some points to remember

- Having the grades is not enough
- Applicants need to demonstrate a depth of understanding – key qualities
- Applicants need to be reflective on their application form and at interview
- Encourage all applicants to think seriously about their back-up plan
- It’s never too early to start preparing for making their application
100 Years Of Excellence.