

The Ashbourne Medical School Programme (AMSP)



A close-up portrait of Amy Youngman, a woman with blonde hair, looking slightly to the right.

Amy Youngman

Head of the Medical Programme

Amy only joined Ashbourne in September 2015 but has spent the last seven years working with medical students, guiding them through the application process. She is Head of faculty for the Natural Sciences and teaches biology in addition to running the medical programme.

Amy runs the medical sessions each week, and will be the first point of contact for all students wishing to apply to medical school.

By having a member of staff dedicated to all medical students, it ensures each student receives individual attention and assurance that they are supported throughout the entire application process. Amy is also an interviewer for UCL Medical School.



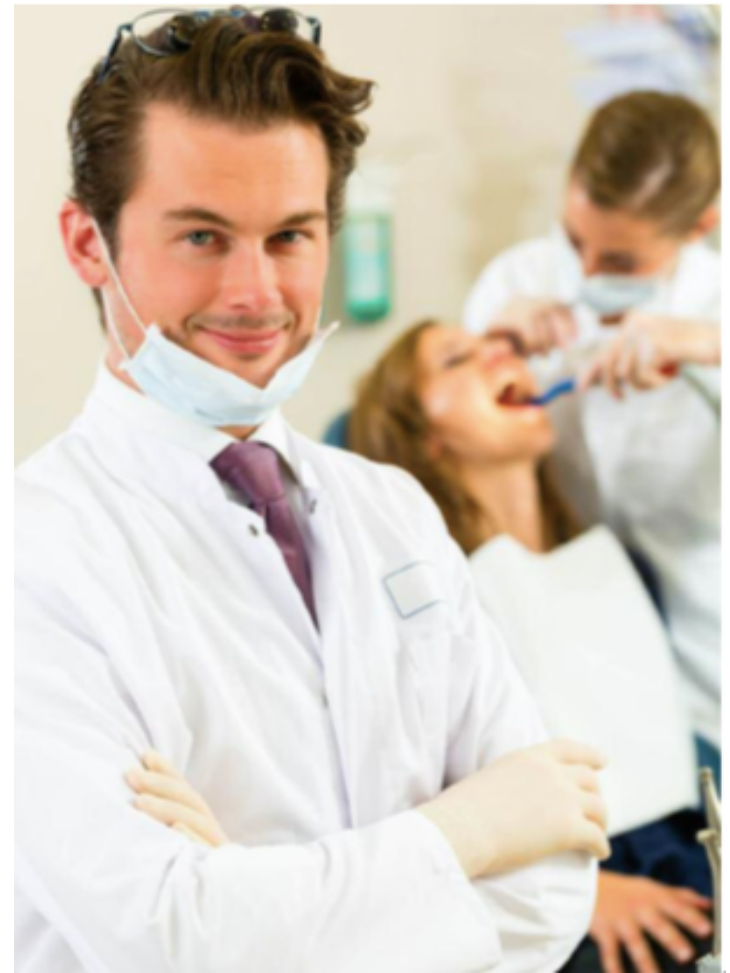


Students will be provided with:

- A thorough understanding of what a medical career will involve
- BMAT and UKCAT preparation
- Interview preparation: both traditional and MMI's
- UCAS help: The personal statement and how to know where to apply
- Assistance in securing work experience placements
- The opportunity to discuss medical ethics and current medical issues with other prospective medical students during weekly meetings
- The opportunity to talk to current doctors and Ashbourne alumni who are now at medical school

Can the AMSP help students considering Dentistry?

- Yes!
- Although less common, we still get a small handful of students wishing to apply for dentistry each year.
- These students will attend all the AMSP sessions and will also need to keep up to date with what is going on in the world of dentistry.
- This year we have had 3 students apply for dentistry



Statistics

Source: UCAS (Number of applicants in the 2014-2015 academic year)

Type of applicant	Number of applicants	Applicants accepted onto degree courses	Successful applicants (%)
UK	64,345	6,825	10.6
EU	7,750	205	2.65
Non-EU	12,775	650	5.09
Male	36,000	3,400	9.29
Female	48,250	4,280	8.87
TOTAL	84,850	7,680	9.05

Why are so many applicants unsuccessful?

- BMAT/UKCAT scores may not be high enough
- Not enough work experience
- A poor interview
- Weak personal statement
- Applying to the wrong universities
- Lack of extracurricular activities



One does not simply 'get accepted' to Medical School



How can the Ashbourne Medical School Programme help?

- By attending weekly sessions, in addition to the Medical Easter Revision course, students will be provided with all the information necessary for a successful application.
- All potential medical students are identified when they interview at Ashbourne. This ensures that they are given guidance right from the start.
- The AMSP guides students through the entire application process, from drafting the personal statement to accepting an offer.



Weekly sessions



ashbournecollege.co.uk

Typical Timetable for weekly sessions

Week	Topics discussed
1	Introduction to Medicine
2	How to write a powerful Personal Statement
3	Where will the NHS be in 5 years' time?
4	How to decide which medical schools to apply to
5	How to secure work experience
6	BMAT preparation
7	UKCAT preparation
8	Previous successful applicants: how did they do it?
9	Advice from real doctors
10	The Traditional Interview: typical questions
11	Multiple Mini Interviews (MMI's): typical questions
12	The 5th choice: how to make it wisely

The benefits of weekly sessions

- The weekly sessions give students the opportunity to improve their non-academic skills.
- Debating current medical issues allows students to consider arguments from both points of view.
- Presenting information about important topics such as euthanasia or abortion also allows students to improve their public speaking.



Work Experience

Work experience is absolutely essential.

- When to apply
- CRB check



Volunteering

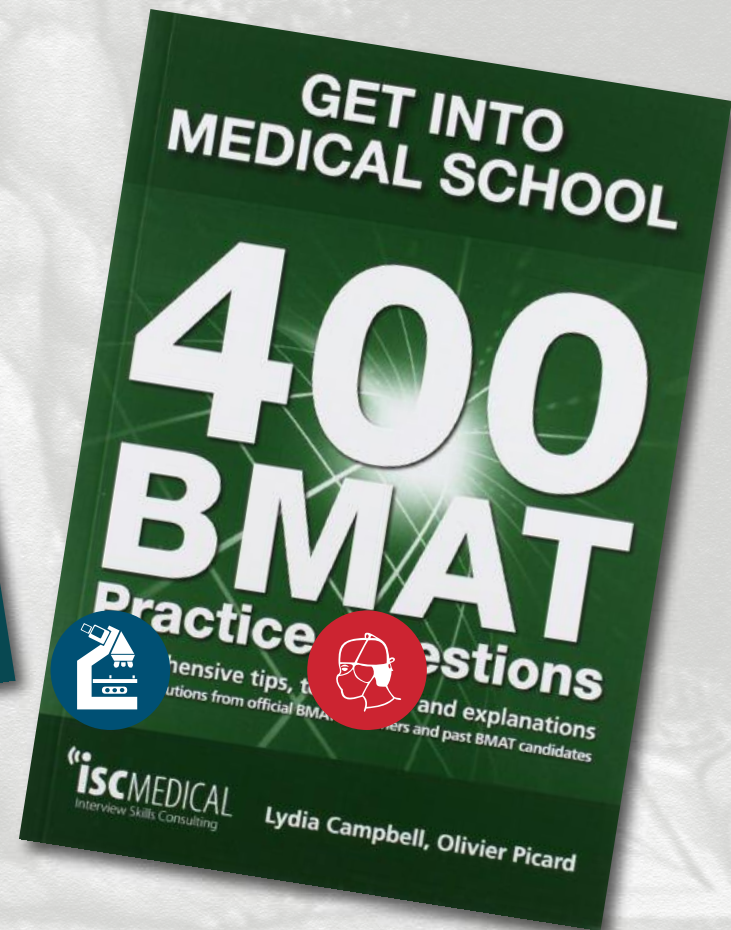
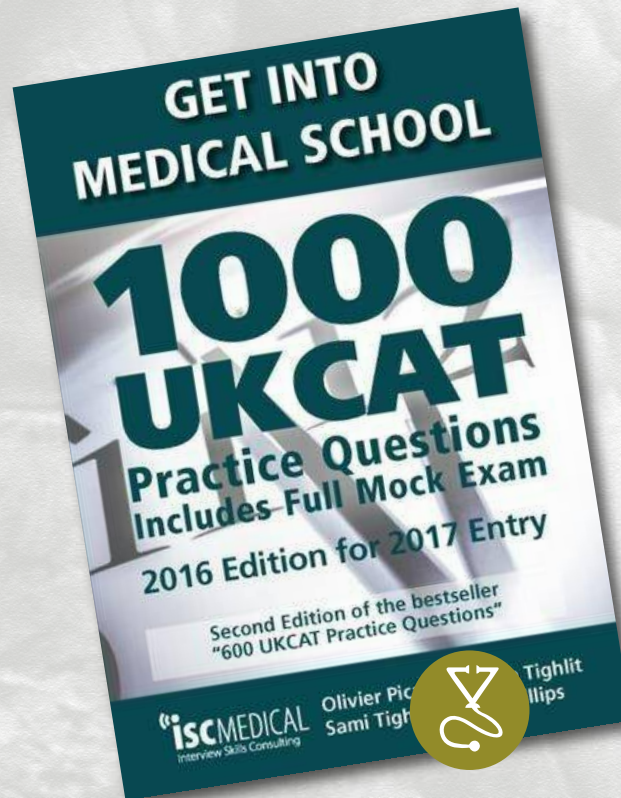
In addition to high academic achievement, medical schools look for applicants who are genuinely concerned for others. Some time spent volunteering is not only a good way to enhance your experience, but it also demonstrates your empathy and committed to a career in medicine.

NHS consortium



Admissions Tests for Medicine

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BMAT and UKCAT

- **BMAT (Biomedical Admissions Test):** The BMAT was introduced in 2003 because the top institutions receive many more applications from extremely well qualified students than there are places to offer. The purpose of the test is purely to provide a predictive assessment of candidate's academic potential.
- **UKCAT (UK Clinical Aptitude Test):** It helps to ensure that candidates selected have the most appropriate mental abilities, attitudes and professional behaviour required for new doctors and dentists to be successful in their clinical careers. It is used in collaboration with other admissions processes such as the UCAS application and academic qualifications. The UKCAT does not contain any curriculum or science content. It focuses on exploring the cognitive powers of candidates and other attributes considered to be valuable for health care professionals.



BMAT: Sat at Ashbourne in November

Section 1:

Aptitude and Skills

Duration: 1 hour

Number of Questions:
35 multiple choice or
short answer questions

This section tests the
generic skills of problem
solving, understanding
argument, data analysis
and inference.

g the personal statement
to accepting an offer.

Section 1:

Scientific Knowledge and Applications

Duration: 30 minutes

Number of questions:
27 multiple choice or
short answer questions

This section tests your
ability to apply core
scientific and
mathematical knowledge
and principles (typically
covered by the age of 16
in non-specialist school
science and mathematics
courses).

Section 3:

Writing Task

Duration: 30 minutes

Number of Questions:
one question must be
answered from a choice
of four.

This section tests
whether you can
demonstrate the
capacity to develop ideas
and communicate them
effectively in writing.



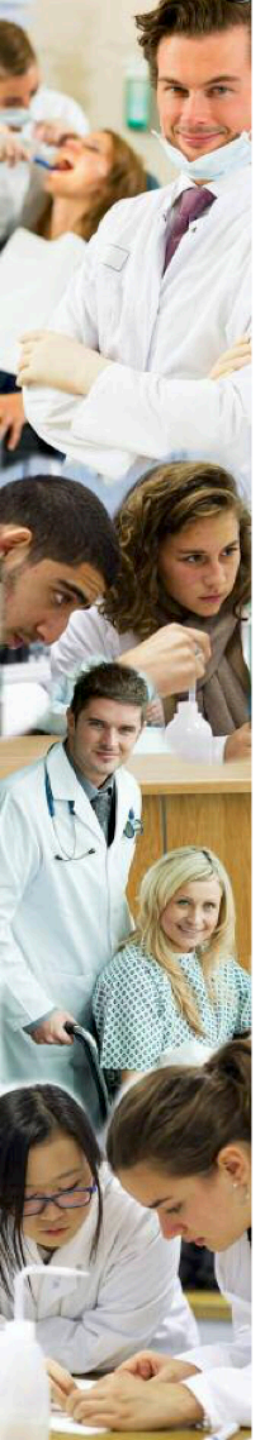
BMAT: Sat at Ashbourne in November

UNIVERSITY	COURSE
Brighton and Sussex Medical School (B74)*	A100 Medicine
Imperial College London (I50)	A100 Medicine A109 Graduate Medicine (5 year course)
Keele University (K12) Keele requires only 'overseas for fees' applicants to take BMAT.	A100 Medicine A104 Health Foundation Year
Lancaster University (L14)	A100 Medicine & Surgery A900 Foundation Year for Medicine & Surgery
Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine (LKCMedicine)	Medicine: MBBS degree jointly awarded by Imperial College London and Nanyang Technological University, Singapore
University College London (U80)	A100 Medicine
University of Cambridge (C05)	A100 Medicine
University of Leeds (L23)	A100 Medicine A200 Dentistry
University of Oxford (O33) `	A100 Medicine A101 Graduate Medicine BC98 Biomedical Sciences
Universidad de Navarra	Medicine



UKCAT: Sat at an external centre between July and September

SUBTEST	Items	UKCAT timing*	UKCATSEN timing**
Verbal Reasoning Assesses ability to critically evaluate information that is presented in a written form	44 items	22 minutes	28 minutes
Decision Making *** Assesses the ability to make sound decisions and judgements using complex information	TBC	32 minutes	39 minutes
Quantitative Reasoning Assesses ability to critically evaluate information presented in a numerical form	36 items	25 minutes	31.5 minutes
Abstract Reasoning Assesses the use of convergent and divergent thinking to infer relationships from information	55 items	14 minutes	17.5 minutes
Situational Judgement Measures capacity to understand real world situations and to identify critical factors and appropriate behaviour in dealing with them	68 items	27 minutes	34 minutes
	Total Time	120 minutes	150 minutes



Courses Requiring UKCAT

University of Aberdeen

University of Birmingham

Cardiff University

University of Dundee

Durham University

University of East Anglia

University of Edinburgh

University of Exeter

University of Glasgow

Hull York Medical School

Keele University

King's College London

University of Leicester

University of Liverpool

University of Manchester

University of Newcastle

University of Nottingham

Plymouth University

Queen Mary, University of London

Queen's University Belfast

University of Sheffield

University of Southampton

University of St Andrews

St George's, University of London

University of Warwick



Academic Requirements

It is no secret that the entry requirement for Medicine is high.

- Typical offers range from A*A*A to AAA.
- It is absolutely essential that students achieve all A grades at AS in order to guarantee that they are at the academic standard required for medicine.
- With such small classes and individual attention at Ashbourne, this is perfectly achievable with complete dedication and hard work from the student.



Different medical schools use different teaching methods

The Traditional Approach

Long-established

Lecture-based style

Becoming increasingly less common

A definite pre-clinical/clinical divide

Oxford, Cambridge, St Andrews

PBL (Problem Based Learning)

Problem-based learning

Becoming increasingly popular

A patient-oriented approach

From year 1 onwards, students are heavily involved in clinical scenarios, with the focus on the student to demonstrate self-motivation and proactive, self-directed learning

Designed to get away from previous, traditional spoon-fed' approach.

The Integrated Approach

A compromise between a traditional course and a PBL course

They have patient contact from the start BUT there is a huge variation in the amount of contact from school to school

Basic medical sciences are taught concurrently with clinical studies



Knowing where to apply

- It can be overwhelming for students when deciding where to apply.
- The AMSP talks students through all the different teaching methods medical schools use in order to help them make their choices.
- It is also crucial for students to look carefully at the entry requirements. For example, some medical schools require students to have a minimum score of 600 for the UKCAT. This is why the AMSP ensures students feel thoroughly prepared for this test.
- Attending open days is also crucial.

Preparing for the different types of interview

The Traditional Interview



Multiple Mini Interviews (MMI's)





The Traditional Interview

Typically lasts between 20-30 minutes

There are usually 3 members of staff on the panel and occasionally a medical student. Typical questions include:

"Why do you want to become a doctor?"

"I notice that you spent two weeks at Hospital X. Tell me something about what you did there?"

"Where do you think the NHS will be in 5 years time?"

"What have you done to show your commitment to Medicine and the Community?"

"What do you think makes a good doctor?"

"Why have you applied to this medical school?"

MMI's

- A multiple mini interview consists of a series of short, structured interview stations used to assess non-cognitive qualities including cultural sensitivity, maturity, teamwork, empathy, reliability and communication skills.
- Prior to the start of each mini interview rotation, candidates receive a question/scenario and have a short period of time (typically two minutes) to prepare an answer.
- An example of an MMI question "Tell me about a time where you later regretted a decision you made. What would you do differently?"





Interview Practice on the AMSP

- All students will be provided with both a mock traditional interview and a mock MMI interview during their AS year. This allows them to see how they are able to cope under pressure and which areas they need to improve upon.
- Upon being offered an interview in their A2 year, students will again, be offered practice interviews with both Amy and other members of staff in order to fully prepare them for the real thing.
- This crucial practice can make the difference between an offer or a rejection.

Extracurricular Activities



Extracurricular Activities

- Medical Schools like to see that students have interests outside of academia.
- Luckily, there are various extra-curricular activities students are able to get involved with at Ashbourne. This will not only make their application look more impressive but will also demonstrate their ability to work as part of a team.



Advice from the Experts



Dr. Rebecca Wood



Dr. Laura Quint



Dr. Charlotte Smith

Laura and Rebecca studied Medicine at Imperial College. Becky is now working as GP in Birmingham and Laura is working in the States. Charlotte studied at King's College London and is now working as an obstetrics registrar in the midlands.

Becky's advice:

I I would advise people to think about where they want to study with regards to how they teach the course as this can make a lot of difference in the university experience.

I think the important thing is to be prepared for the fact that it may be challenging and different from a typical student experience. However the overall experience is rewarding, you come out with an almost guaranteed job at the end and you get to make a difference to people's lives.



Laura's advice:

|| Sadly a career in medicine is far from the glamour of ER, Gray's Anatomy and even Scrubs (although that's probably the closest). If you are prepared to sacrifice nights out to study, your weekends and nights to be in the hospital dealing with blood, poop and pee, spend half your days telling people to stop smoking, drinking, doing drugs, reassuring them that their pain does not need narcotics because it's being caused by constipation, and live for the few moments of glory when you do make a difference, then sleep for a few hours before you have to get up and do it all over again, then you might just be able to make it as a doctor (or a nurse, pharmacist, physiotherapist, social worker).

There are several great books you can read to find out more, "In Stitches" by Dr Nick Edwards, "Confessions of a GP" by Dr Benjamin Daniels, and a quick search on Amazon will find many more. Anything written by Atul Gawande is worth a read too. Try and get some experience in a GP office or a local hospital. Volunteering at a nursing home is good for you too and looks great on your application.



Charlotte's Advice:

|| You need to do medicine because you really want to, not because your parents think it's a good idea or you have the right grades. Gone are the days where it is really easy to make a lot of money and you are the most respected person in the town. It involves a lot of hard physical and mental work, there is no overtime pay, you will finish late a lot, patients shout, relatives can get angry, and I'm not sure how much longer we will have the NHS as we know it now for.

However, it is such a rewarding job, it's incredibly social (I feel like my day is one long social event) and offers so many diverse careers - there really is something for everyone. Medicine also offers the opportunity to work abroad so is not limiting to the UK. I don't ever remember a day where I've woken up and thought 'I don't want to go to work today' - mostly because I don't really think of my job as work, it's part of my life and I love it.





To do list for prospective medics

- Book a meeting with Amy to discuss all things Medicine.
- Sign up to the medic portal for lots of free online resources for medicine:
<https://www.themedicportal.com/sign-up/?reason=portfolio>
- Securing work experience is vital but it can take months. Start contacting local hospitals for availability ASAP.
- Make sure that you are up to date with what's going on in the world of medicine. Start with the

BBC News, The Guardian Newspaper and New Scientist.

- Look at the UKCAT and BMAT websites and start having a look at past papers/practice questions.
- Start looking at the websites of the different medical schools in order to gather more information.
- Look at the specifications for all your A level subjects. Start looking at the recommended books in order to make a head start.