

Hyndland Secondary School



The UCAS Application Process – Apply 2017

Useful hints and tips for S6 Students

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regarding UCAS will be
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Introduction & Key Dates

This booklet has been created in order to assist you with the process of applying to university through UCAS. The booklet includes the necessary information to help you with the process, however it is by no means definitive. You should feel free to add or omit any of the information that you feel does not apply to you.

The Key dates for your diary this session are:

July-August 2016	On return from the Summer Break, any pupil who is wishing to apply for Dentistry, Medicine or Veterinary, will require to complete an on-line critical awareness test (UKCAT) and should register themselves for this before 21st September 2016 – no late registration is allowed . Pupils must sit their test before 5th October 2016 . Further information about the test can be found at http://www.ukcat.ac.uk/ Students register for this by themselves – the school does NOT register candidates for this test.
Thursday 8th September	UCAS Launch—Parent and Pupil Information Evening.
Friday 2nd September	First draft of Personal Statements for pupils applying for Medicine, Veterinary, Dentistry, Oxford or Cambridge. [Remember applying to these courses could require completing an admissions test prior to completing a UCAS application.]
Tuesday 23rd September	Higher Education Convention – Glasgow. Students will be invited to attend this by the school.
Thursday 29 th September	Final Draft of Personal Statements for pupils applying for Medicine, Veterinary Studies, Dentistry, Oxford or Cambridge (LNAT to be done by early October at the latest for Oxbridge candidates).
Saturday 15th October	All applications for Oxford/Cambridge, Dentistry, Medicine and Veterinary Studies submitted to UCAS. For all other courses, a first draft of Personal Statement submitted to Guidance Teacher. School sends applications off by Thursday 6th October due to holiday week.
Friday 28 th October	Final Draft of Personal Statement for all other courses. (LNAT to be done by end of December if applicable for all non-Oxbridge candidates).
Friday 25 th November	All applications submitted to UCAS.

Notes:

- The UCAS Fee is £23 for 5 choices. You will be required to pay your fee via credit or debit card. You can only pay this once all sections of your application have been completed.
- Any pupil who is applying for law at the University of Glasgow and some English universities, will require to sit the Law National Admissions Test (LNAT). This can be found at www.lnat.ac.uk. Registration for this test opens on 1st August and applicants must have sat their test by 15th January 2015.
- Please note that you must meet the deadlines put in place by the school. Due to the number of applications to check and process within the school, we will be unable to process late submissions.

Due to the competitive nature of the application process, it is important that pupils have a 'back up' either as a course where they have the qualifications for or to participate in a HNC/D course at college.

Universities are clear that all offers made to applicants, including unconditional offers, are based upon them achieving their current qualifications. Any changes that are made to subjects being studied, the universities must be notified and your offer may change.

Applying to Med/Dent/Vet/Oxford/Cambridge

General Information

It is important to realise that applications to any of the above courses have an early deadline (**15th October**) therefore, it is important that applications are started early and all of the relevant test are taken. When making an application, it is important to be sure that you have or will gain the correct qualifications prior to applying as well as the necessary experience. All assessments have practice papers available online and as part of the preparation for applying to these courses, you will be allocated time to study these within school. It would be an idea to invest as much time as possible to familiarise yourself with these prior to sitting the assessments.

It is important to note, that some courses may not require you to sit an assessment and it is important you check the requirement of this through UCAS.

The information contained within this section of the booklet is transferable for each of the High tariff courses. It is important that you research thoroughly the pathway you would like to follow and make sure that you demonstrate an interest in the 'super curriculum' (an understanding and interest in researching some of topics covered at 1st year university level of that course.)

Applying to Medicine

If you applying for courses such as Medicine, Veterinary Medicine or Dentistry, you are often required to sit an aptitude test, the UKCAT. You will need to register for your test between **3 May – 21 September 2016**. The test must be taken between **1 July 2016 and 5 October 2016**. There is a test centre in Glasgow. The cost of taking the test is £65 (1 July - 31 Aug) and £80 (1 Sept – 5 Oct). Bursaries may be available to cover the cost of the test depending on parental income You can do this by visiting the UKCAT website www.ukcat.ac.uk.

The key dates for the UKCAT are given below:

What's happening	Dates
Registration opens	3 May 2016
Testing begins	1 July 2016
Registration Closes	21 September 2016
Bursary & Exemption Deadline	21 September 2016
Booking/Rescheduling Closes	4 October 2016
Last Testing Date	5 October 2016
UCAS application deadline	15 October 2016

Applying to Medicine

Applying to study medicine.

1. Deciding if Medicine is for you

Before you even think about applying to study Medicine it is extremely important that you understand what is involved in being a Medical student and in the career that follows. You **MUST** be sure that this career route is for you – remember, you will be studying for at least 5 (or 6) years and will continue to study throughout your career.

In order to decide whether Medicine is definitely for you, you should do as much career exploration as is possible for you. Universities understand that not everyone can do the same amount of career exploration so don't worry if you can't get lots of work experience.

2. Finding out what it's all about – Career Exploration

In order to find out what being a Doctor is really like and to decide whether it really is for you, it is vital you get as much career exploration as you can. By career exploration, we mainly mean work experience but you should also try and keep up to date with current affairs that may be important to the healthcare profession. Work experience can range from working in the voluntary sector (Nursing homes and charities) to shadowing doctors in hospitals.

Career exploration is very important for your application to study Medicine in showing what you have gained.

3. Applying to study Medicine

When you apply to study Medicine, you will do so through UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service). The **deadline for applying** to Medicine is **15th October prior to the year of entry** (e.g. 15th October 2016 to start in September 2017). You will have 5 choices of courses. However, **you can only apply to 4 Medical Schools**. You can use your 5th choice for a backup course (e.g. Chemistry / Biological Sciences). Your application will consist of your personal details, school qualifications and a personal statement. You will also sit the UKCAT (UK Clinical Aptitude Test) which will count towards your application.

Advanced Highers and S6 Studies

All universities have different stances on Advanced Highers. We suggest that students sit 2 Advanced Highers and one further Higher in S6. The subjects that are most relevant to Medicine are Advanced Higher Biology and Advanced Higher Chemistry. Some universities may make conditional offers based on S6 results which may include Advanced Highers. Please check with admissions for each university for information about Advanced Highers and S6 studies.

Aberdeen: <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/smd/medicine/uk-academic-requirements.php>

Dundee: <http://www.dundee.ac.uk/undergraduate/courses/medicine.htm>

Edinburgh: http://www.ed.ac.uk/studying/undergraduate/degrees?id=A100&cw_xml=degree.php

Glasgow: <http://www.gla.ac.uk/undergraduate/degrees/medicine/#tabs>

St Andrews: <http://medicine.st-andrews.ac.uk/prospectus/>

If you're still considering applying for Medicine, you need to think carefully about your S6 course choices. Read this sheet carefully – it should give you all the advice you need!

PLEASE NOTE: this sheet should give you general advice, but remember to check directly with universities you're planning to apply to if you're unsure of anything.

S6 Course Choice Advice

- Take any essential subjects you're missing at Higher. So, if you haven't already got Higher Biology or Higher Chemistry, for instance, you MUST take them in S6.
- Take at least THREE examinable subjects, with at least TWO Advanced Highers (Chemistry and Biology are the most relevant for Medicine, but they are not specified requirements).
- You are NO MORE LIKELY to get into Medicine with 3 AHs than with 2 AHs and a Higher: although 3 AHs is an excellent preparation for university study and if you are considering applying to English universities for Medicine, they often expect 3 AHs.
- If you plan to apply to any unis in the rest of the UK (ie not in Scotland), 3 AHs are realistically needed
- Remember you need Highers in Chemistry, Biology and EITHER Maths or Physics to meet the subject requirements for the majority of medical schools in Scotland (Note that Biology can either be Human Biology or just Biology – neither is any more preferred). You DON'T necessarily need all three sciences at Higher – and you are no more likely to get into Medicine if you have them than if you only have Chemistry and Biology.
- REMEMBER! Predicted grades in S6 are CRUCIAL, so take subjects you are confident that you will do well in.
- DON'T take Higher Human Biology if you've already done Higher Biology – or vice versa. They will just be seen as the same Higher!

By now, you should have a good idea of which universities you would like to apply to for Medicine. This booklet is designed to give you some extra pointers which you should consider before making your final application. It will also give you some advice about deciding on your 5th UCAS choice.

PLEASE NOTE: this is advice to help you think about your options. It should be considered objectively and we encourage you to conduct your own research.

Academic Requirements

Minimum academic requirements for all Scottish medical schools are almost all the same (the main differences being with Dundee, who will consider applicants on AAABB and Glasgow who have a published minimum of AAAAA). The Pathways to the Professions / Reach "Medicine Academic Requirements" sheet gives you full details of these – you received this sheet when you joined Pathways / Reach, but contact us if you need another copy.

Obviously, you can only apply to a university if you have achieved the minimum academic requirements that they state, so that needs to be your first consideration.

Course Content / Teaching Style

Although the medical degree from each Scottish medical school has the same name – MBChB Medicine – the courses do vary considerably, in terms of what is covered at what point, the teaching styles adopted, choice of electives etc. You need to apply to the ones that you think will suit you best. There is no short cut here: YOU have to research each university's particular medicine course to see which ones might suit your own learning styles / preferences best. There is loads of information available about each of the courses on the universities' websites, so get reading!

University of Aberdeen: <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/smd/medicine/our-course.php>

University of Glasgow: <http://www.gla.ac.uk/undergraduate/degrees/medicine/>

University of Dundee: <http://medicine.dundee.ac.uk/dundee-mbchb-medicine-programme>

The University of Edinburgh: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/medicine-vet-medicine/undergraduate/medicine/mbchb>

University of St Andrews: <http://medicine.st-andrews.ac.uk/prospectus/>

Selection Processes – Applying for Medicine

All of the five Scottish universities who offer Medicine are highly competitive and have different selection processes. You should be well aware of how the universities select by now: refer to the Pathways / Reach sheet on how they use UKCAT scores to start with, and also check the universities websites for full information about their selection processes:

University of Aberdeen: <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/smd/medicine/application-process.php>

University of Glasgow: <http://www.gla.ac.uk/undergraduate/degrees/medicine/> (click on “Entry Requirements” and scroll down

University of Dundee: <http://www.dundee.ac.uk/undergraduate/courses/medicine.htm> (click on “Your Application)

Visiting the Universities

Once you’ve looked into the courses themselves, don’t forget that you will be living in that city / town for a minimum of 5 years (3 in the case of St Andrews). So, you need to know that you will be happy living there! And the only way to get a feel for the place is to visit it! Get to the Open Days of the universities that you are thinking of applying to. You can find Open Day dates on the websites of the universities, or here: <http://www.opendays.com/>

Open Days are an ideal opportunity not just to find out more about the medicine course, entrance and selection etc, but also to find out more about the university itself. What are its sports facilities like? What support systems for students are available? What is the accommodation like? And don’t forget the social life!

If you miss an Open Day of a university you are thinking of applying to, and it’s in a place you don’t know, visit the town / city anyway. Walk around.

Getting Advice from People

You will probably be getting LOTS of opinions put to you about which is the “best” medical school, or where you might be more likely to get into etc etc. **Please: listen to these opinions with caution!** All of the five Scottish medical schools are excellent. Yes, they are different – but they are all excellent and they are all highly competitive for entry. And just because one university suits one person, it doesn’t mean that will be the right option for you.

By all means, talk to friends and family about where you’re considering applying to – but do remember that the final decision has to be YOURS and a lot of what you will hear from other people will not be true! The ONLY way to find out about a course / university is to research it yourself. Another good option is to talk to current students to find out what their course is like. But, again, remember that just because it suits them, it may not be the same for you!

Your 5th Choice “Back-Up”

You should be well aware that you can only use FOUR of the five UCAS choices for medicine courses. So, what do you do with that 5th space? You have two options: leave it blank (which is allowed) or choose a “back-up” option.

If you decide to leave it blank, that’s up to you – you certainly can, but you also have to be aware that if you do not get any offers from your medicine choices, you will have no course at all to fall back on. Some people are happy to do this, as they plan to apply to medicine again the next year if they’re unsuccessful first time round.

If you decide to have a “back up” choice, you really need to ensure it is REALISTIC and, ideally, one that you are highly likely to receive an offer for. So, here are some pointers:

Choose a course that you would be happy to study. Remember that you will NOT be obliged to take it, if you get no medicine offers - you can just decline the offer and try for medicine again the following year - but it should still be a course you are genuinely interested in.

Check the entrance requirements carefully for your back-up choice – especially in terms of required subjects, as these may be different to what you need for Medicine. Make sure you have all the required subjects / grades.

DON'T apply for other highly competitive professions that require significant work experience / career exploration as your 5th choice! Courses such as Veterinary Medicine, Law, Architecture, Dentistry etc would NEVER be a safe back-up for Medicine.

We would never recommend that you apply for any of the Allied Health Professions (Physiotherapy, Dietetics, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Podiatry, Radiography, Speech & Language Therapy etc) as your 5th choice. All of these are very competitive and expect significant understanding of the profession from their applicants. You will simply not have enough space in your personal statement to show that you are 100% committed to medicine AND any of the Allied Health Professions.

Your 5th choice back-up should be **realistic**, so don't apply for a course which is very competitive for entry. The only way to be 100% sure about this is to contact the university offering your back-up course and ask them if they are likely to make you an offer for it, even if your entire personal statement is about medicine. There are **plenty** of courses that do not mind being a back-up for medicine – they understand that only 4 choices can be used for medicine – but, equally, there are plenty that are unlikely to give an offer to someone who is clearly only interested in medicine. This may particularly be an issue if you're planning to use a very different subject as a back-up, so you **MUST** contact the university in that case.

We would strongly recommend that you discuss your planned 5th choice with your Pastoral Care Teacher before you submit your application form to UCAS.

Medicine Career Exploration (Work Experience and Research)

It is important that you have had a range of work experience opportunities to demonstrate your suitability to become a doctor. You can gain experience through a number of routes including; formal work placements with Forth Valley Hospital, Nursing Homes, charities, shadowing Doctors. You can also gain suitable experience through volunteering. This could include working at a local nursery, Special Needs groups, vulnerable members of the public or a local primary school. By undertaking these experiences it helps to demonstrate your ability to work with all members of the public.

Volunteering

Some volunteer experience can be obtained via a range of organisations including the Royal Voluntary Service (www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk). They can offer volunteering opportunities throughout the Scottish Borders and Forth Valley. Enter your home postcode on their website to find more details about opportunities in your area. If you are considering a Gap Year, or are looking for full-time volunteering for 4 months or longer, see the Community Service Volunteers Scotland website at www.csv.org.uk .

Applying to Medicine

Research

In order to demonstrate that you have an up-to-date understanding of some of the issues that are current in medicine and more importantly, an understanding of the profession. This can only be done through:

- Speaking to professionals (doctors, nurses, dentists etc)
- Knowing the application process and teaching style of each individual university. Take the time to find out if any of the establishments have any particular field of research in Medicine that they are leading.
- Demonstrating an awareness of the ethics involved in Medicine.
- Researching the Main unions and regulatory bodies of Medicine.
- Try to access the Lancet (Medical Newsletter)

Personal Statement

The most important aspect of the personal statement is to make sure that you sell yourself and write it as yourself. Don't try to impress by using vocabulary and words that you would not usually use, it will not read properly.

Throughout your statement, don't just tell the admissions officer what you have done in a list. Make sure that you EXPLAIN the situation i.e what you did, what you LEARNED and what INSIGHT this has given you. There is excellent advice available via the 'Student Room Forum' which can be found at:

[www.thestudentroom.co.uk/wiki/Advice for People Writing their Medicine Personal Statements](http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/wiki/Advice_for_People_Writing_their_Medicine_Personal_Statements)

When constructing your personal statement, it is worth considering writing your paragraphs under the following headings as a starting point.

- Opening Paragraph—Simple Statement about why you want to become a doctor.
- Work Experience and Core Skills—Provide evidence you understand the career implications of your choice.
- Career Exploration—Prove that you have a good insight into the career and ALSO the course. Give evidence of being a proactive applicant.
- Personal Qualities and Achievements—Demonstrate you are an all-round achiever with the ability to contribute to university life. Relate your achievements to how you will be successful in the course.
- Conclusions and other interests—short simple paragraph to explain why you are suitable for the course and how you could contribute to the profession. Demonstrate an understanding of where you would like to possibly see your career progressing in the future.

Personal qualities / core qualities of doctors: teamwork, motivation, leadership, communication

- Evidence of good communication (and listening) skills
- Evidence of concern for the welfare of others, empathy
- Evidence of being trustworthy & honest
- Evidence of understanding teamwork and experience of working as part of a team
- Understanding of the personal qualities needed for a doctor and your own suitability for this career
- Undertaking work of a caring nature (care home, working with people with disabilities or learning difficulties, etc.)
- Learning from shadowing doctors / healthcare workers
- Undertaking work which benefits school colleagues
- Personal experience of using "people skills" in social / work situations
- Participating fully in school life, school honours & prizes

Commitment to Medicine / well informed understanding of what a career in medicine involves / awareness of the course

- Demonstration of attempts to experience the work of a doctor
- Demonstration of research into the training involved for a career in medicine; both at university and after graduating
- Demonstration of an understanding of the level of commitment required
- Clinical work experience: shadowing in a hospital / GP surgery
- Working / volunteering in a healthcare setting
- Talking with doctors and medical students about their careers, lives, plans, etc.
- Attending Open Days and medical lectures / conferences
- Keeping up with news stories and medical journals

Non academic achievement

- Cultural / sporting activities and achievements
- Interests and hobbies
- Social involvement

Do's and don'ts

- **DO** be organised. Make bullet points or a mind map of all of the information you'd like to include and prioritise them. You won't fit everything in!
- **DON'T** ask too many people for advice. It can just end up confusing you – and your personal statement needs to be personal!
- **DO** check and re-check the grammar, spelling and standard of writing. If you struggle with written expression ask someone to help or proof read it for you. It's really important that it is of a high standard of English and reads well.
- **DON'T** write a discursive essay or make your personal statement too quirky. You might get away with that for some subjects, but for medicine it is not worth the risk!
- **DO** take your time with it. You may need to work on it, then take a break for a couple of days and come back with fresh eyes. It is too important to rush!
- **DON'T** try to squeeze in all of your work experience or achievements by listing them. You need to explain the relevance of each point, demonstrating why it makes you a good candidate for studying medicine.
- **DO** keep it personal and try to avoid clichés ("I like science and I like people...")

Applying to study Law

If you are making an application to Law, you are often required to sit an entrance test, commonly the LNAT. The **LNAT** (National Admissions Test for law) is being used by Glasgow University (and other institutions outside Scotland) to assess applications to all courses in Law, including joint degrees in Law and another subject. The test costs £50 for all applicants living in the United Kingdom.

You should aim to take the LNAT exam as early in the academic year as possible (Sept –June 2014/15) in order to increase the availability of appointment times and venues as well as to ensure that all admission deadlines are met. That said, it is important that you maximise the amount of time that you spend practicing for the test as you are only able to sit the test once in the admissions process.

2016/17: LNAT Registration

DO NOT sit the LNAT before the 2016 summer holiday as your result WILL NOT COUNT for 2016/2017

- Early August 2016 - UCAS registration already open. LNAT registration begins.
- 1 September 2016: LNAT testing begins
- Mid September 2016: UCAS applications **can** be submitted

2016/17: Deadlines for Oxford applicants

You must meet these deadlines in order to guarantee that your application to Oxford will be considered.

- 1 October 2016: Register and book your LNAT test slot
- **15 October 2016: Submit your UCAS form**
- 15 October 2016: Sit the LNAT before or on 15 October 2016 at the very latest

2016/17: Deadlines for all other LNAT universities

You must meet these deadlines in order to guarantee that your application will be considered.

- 10 January 2017: Register and book your LNAT test slot
- 10 January 2017: Submit your UCAS form
- 15 January 2017: Sit the LNAT before or on 15 January 2016.

Note: the deadline for sitting the LNAT for King's College London is before or on 10th January 2016.

The test is 2hr and 15 minutes long and is split into 2 sections. The test comprises of a combination of multiple choice questions and essay writing questions.

Practice Tests

Practice Tests are available via the LNAT website. There is a downloadable 'test simulator' for you to use as well as access to various Practice Test Papers and answers. It is advisable that you familiarise yourself with these prior to undertaking the 'test simulator'. This will help to prepare you for taking the test under similar situations that you will face in the LNAT test centre.

You can also download the 'Your Guide To Preparing for the National Admissions Test For Law' here <http://www.lnat.ac.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Your-Guide-To-Preparing-For-The-LNAT.pdf>

Advice from Past Candidates.

Preparation

- 'The more you practice the more you can understand what the questions are getting at; tutoring doesn't help, it's common sense.'
- 'Read the sample paper on the internet site, seek advice from tutors at college or school and familiarise yourself with texts of a more advanced and complex nature.'
- 'Read newspapers and learn to formulate opinions and express them succinctly. Also practice at being able to read subtle differences in things, for the multiple choice.'
- 'Doing the practice was useful to get a feel for how the test would go. This was helpful because I knew what to expect. I didn't feel that I could have prepared any more for it though as you don't know what the questions are going to be. Reading newspapers is helpful for the essay part as you'll have a wider knowledge of the world and be able to answer a question more easily, it will also help your essay writing.'
- 'Practice writing essays on subjects with which you are unfamiliar. This helps you to focus on the planning aspects of essay writing and the structure of the essay instead of getting too wrapped up in the subject detail.'
- 'Perhaps read some difficult articles on topics of personal interest to familiarise with possibly difficult words that you may not understand out of context.'
- 'Use the material and advice on the LNAT website. Familiarisation with typical content, format and timing was invaluable.'

During the test

- 'Carefully read the instructions at the beginning of the test. I panicked half-way through the multiple choice section of the test and believed I only had half the actual time available to do this section.'
- 'Stay calm and keep track of time during the test as it was very time pressured and it would be easy to mismanage your time and therefore not perform as well as you should.'
- 'Try to keep to time on the multiple choice section and don't over analyse the questions too much. I ran out of time on the multiple choice section and had to guess the last few which didn't help my score. Also don't panic or get unnerved by the timer.'
- 'It sounds silly but thoroughly read the questions, everyone is likely to say it, but genuinely read every single word'

Further advice and information can be found on the LNAT website (www.lnat.ac.uk)

Applying to Dentistry

Applying to study Dentistry

1. Deciding if Dentistry is for you

Before you even think about applying to study Dentistry it is extremely important that you understand what is involved in being a Dental student and in the career that follows. You **MUST** be sure that this career route is for you – remember, you will be studying for at least 5 years and will continue to study throughout your career.

In order to decide whether Dentistry is definitely for you, you should do as much career exploration as is possible for you. Universities understand that not everyone can do the same amount of career exploration so don't worry if you can't get lots of work experience.

2. Finding out what it's all about – Career Exploration

In order to find out what being a Dentist is really like and to decide whether it really is for you, it is vital you get as much career exploration as you can. By career exploration, we mainly mean work experience but you should also try and keep up to date with current affairs that may be important to the healthcare profession. Work experience can range from working in the voluntary sector (Nursing homes and charities) however, it is anticipated that you will have made an attempt to gain work experience in a dental practice. The University of Glasgow advise that you should undertake a minimum of 3 days work experience and no more than 14 days prior to applying. This does not mean contact with just the dentist however, other members of the dental team.

Career exploration is very important for your application to study Dentistry in showing what you have gained from your experiences and how these experiences relate to you being a good candidate for the course.

3. Applying to study Dentistry

When you apply to study Dentistry, you will do so through UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service). The **deadline for applying** to Dentistry is **15th October prior to the year of entry** (e.g. 15th October 2016 to start in September 2017). You will have 5 choices of courses. However, **you can only apply to 4 Dental Schools**. You can use your 5th choice for a backup course (e.g. Your application will consist of your personal details, school qualifications and a personal statement. Oral Health Sciences). You will also sit the UKCAT (UK Clinical Aptitude Test) which will count towards your application.

Advanced Highers and S6 Studies

All universities have different stances on Advanced Highers. We suggest that students sit 2 Advanced Highers and one further Higher in S6. The subjects that are most relevant to Dentistry are Advanced Higher Biology and/or Advanced Higher Chemistry.

The university of Glasgow suggest other useful qualifications as Higher Music or Art and Design as well as Psychology.

Dundee: <http://www.dundee.ac.uk/undergraduate/courses/dentistry.html>

Glasgow: http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_25414_en.pdf

If you're still considering applying for Dentistry, you need to think carefully about your S6 course choices.

PLEASE NOTE: this sheet should give you general advice, but remember to check directly with universities you're planning to apply to if you're unsure of anything.

Choosing Which Universities to Apply to and Safe Back-up Options

By now, you should have a good idea of which universities you would like to apply to for Dentistry. This booklet is designed to give you some extra pointers which you should consider before making your final application. It will also give you some advice about deciding on your 5th UCAS choice.

PLEASE NOTE: this is advice to help you think about your options. It should be considered objectively and we encourage you to conduct your own research.

Course Content / Teaching Style

Although the medical degree from each Scottish Dental school has the same name – Bachelor of Dental Surgery – the courses do vary, in terms of what is covered at what point, the teaching styles adopted, choice of electives etc. There is no short cut here: YOU have to research each university's particular dental course to see which ones might suit your own learning styles / preferences best. There is loads of information available about each of the courses on the universities' websites, so get reading!

Selection Processes

Both Scottish universities who offer Dentistry are highly competitive and have different selections processes. You should be well aware of how the universities select by now: refer to the Pathways / Reach sheet on how they use UKCAT scores to start with, and also check the universities websites for full information about their selection processes:

Dundee: <http://www.dundee.ac.uk/undergraduate/courses/dentistry.htm>

Glasgow: http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_25414_en.pdf

For further information regarding writing your personal statement, please refer to the information on Pages 8 and 9 as well as at the back of the book.

A great website for support is http://thestudentroom.co.uk/wiki/Dentistry_at_University where students provide overview s and support when applying for the course.

Applying to Veterinary Medicine

Applying to study Veterinary Medicine.

1. Deciding if Veterinary Medicine is for you

Before you even think about applying to study Veterinary Medicine it is extremely important that you understand what is involved in being a Medical student and in the career that follows. You **MUST** be sure that this career route is for you – remember, you will be studying for at least 5 (or 6) years and will continue to study throughout your career.

In order to decide whether Veterinary Medicine is definitely for you, you should do as much career exploration as is possible for you. Universities understand that not everyone can do the same amount of career exploration so don't worry if you can't get lots of work experience.

2. Finding out what it's all about – Career Exploration

In order to find out what being a Vet is really like and to decide whether it really is for you, it is vital you get as much career exploration as you can. By career exploration, we mainly mean work experience but you should also try and keep up to date with current affairs that may be important to the profession. Work experience can range from working in the voluntary sector (cattery, Kennels) to shadowing Vets in a local practice. It is important to try and gain experience in working with both large and small animals.

Career exploration is very important for your application to study Veterinary Medicine in showing what you have gained from your experiences and how these experiences relate to you being a good candidate to study Vet Medicine.

3. Applying to study Veterinary Medicine

When you apply to study Veterinary Medicine, you will do so through UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service). The **deadline for applying** to Medicine is **15th October prior to the year of entry** (e.g. 15th October 2016 to start in September 2017). You will have 5 choices of courses. However, **you can only apply to 4 Vet Schools**. You can use your 5th choice for a backup course (e.g. Chemistry / Zoology). Your application will consist of your personal details, school qualifications and a personal statement.

Veterinary Medicine Career Exploration (Work Experience and Research)

What do I need to do?

You need to try and organise work experience to cover as many of the areas below as possible. This can often be difficult as there is a high demand for work experience; if you are under 16, this may be even more difficult. However, do not despair! Organise what you can, even if this is just a day here and there. Career exploration is about reflecting on your experiences, so a few days' work experience can be just as insightful as a week's work experience. Be curious and ask questions: this will take you a long way! And remember: no question is a stupid question.

- Seeing veterinary practice, both large and small animal.
- Spending time on livestock farms (dairying and lambing are particularly useful).
- Other animal establishments, for example, zoos, kennels, catteries, wildlife centres, pig farms, poultry farms & stables.
- A day at an abattoir is recommended but not essential.

- Experience gained in Veterinary Investigation (VI) centres, veterinary laboratories or biomedical research laboratories is also encouraged to help candidates appreciate the scientific basis of veterinary medicine.

Larger Animals:

Farms: Farmers may offer opportunities over Easter when they are dealing with lambing. Start contacting farms in your local area from January to find out how you can volunteer your services

Equine Centres: Contact local riding stables about volunteering. If you do get a job/volunteering with an equine centre, ask them to let you know any time a Vet will be visiting so you can observe.

Small Animals:

Veterinary Practices: Call or email Vet practices in your local area. Remember that they may be more likely to give you work experience if you are volunteering and if you are able to fit in when they most need extra help. Try to get frequent work experience if possible. If you managed to get work experience through school with a Vet Practice, call them to see if you can go back.

Small businesses:

Do a search on the internet for any charities, catteries, kennels, etc. in your local area. Give them a call to see if they need volunteer dog-walkers, etc.

There are many other organisations that accept help. It is worthwhile looking up the internet for local businesses such as SSPCA, Kennels, Dog Walkers, Pet Rescue, Pets at Home etc.

It is important not to be disappointed if a business/Vet surgery are unable to take volunteers. They may be willing to provide you with access for a couple of hours or a day here and there so try to make yourself available as much as possible. Remember, you may have time during your holidays and this is a perfect opportunity to 'clock up' some volunteering hours.

For further information regarding writing your personal statement, please refer to the information on Pages 8 and 9 as well as at the back of the book.

A great website for support is http://thestudentroom.co.uk/wiki/Veterinary_Medicine where students provide overview s and support when applying for the course.

The practicalities

- Find out exactly where the interview will take place, and work out how long it will take you to get there. If possible, take a trip there in advance so you know exactly where you are going. If you're using public transport or travelling at rush hour you should leave plenty of time.
- Decide what you are going to wear – dress smartly, but comfortably.
- Make sure you have any required documentation prepared in advance and with you on the day. The Vet School may not allow you to do the interview without it and may not be able to reschedule.
- Eat well and get a good night's sleep before you go. Don't skip breakfast!

The content

You cannot predict exactly what you will be asked at an interview, nor should you prepare specific answers.

However, you should be prepared to talk about the following topics:

- The learning environment of the university. Can you study independently? What appeals to you about this Vet School in particular?
- Your motivation for veterinary medicine/dentistry/medicine. Why do you want to be a vet/doctor/dentist rather than another related healthcare professional? How is a vet different from another related healthcare professional? How do you feel you've prepared yourself for vet study and practice? How do you see your career in ten years' time?
- Veterinary medicine and the wider world. Can you talk about a current relevant story in the media? (If you are asked about a specific case that you don't know, don't be afraid to admit you haven't heard of it – just ask them about it and then try and link it to something you do know about)
- Personal qualities and teamwork. What makes an effective team? Can you talk about a time you worked as a member of a team? What did you learn from it? How have you helped a fellow team member? How do you think you will deal with the stress of being a vet/doctor/dentist? The work/life balance? How will you deal with difficult situations professionally? How do you describe yourself? Are you aware of your strengths/weaknesses?
- Ethical issues. What is ethics? How do you decide who is to receive a transplant organ? Do you think doctors should be able to refuse to carry out a treatment on ethical grounds, for example in the case of abortion?

This list is non-exhaustive, and should be used to get you thinking about the general areas you should be prepared to talk about at interview.

- Read over your UCAS Personal Statement – be prepared to talk about its content and answer questions on it in more depth. Make sure you can back up any claims you make in it! Use information in your personal statement to answer questions during your interview. Can you reflect on experiences you've had and discuss what went well and where there was room for improvement?
- Keep up with healthcare related stories in the news
- Read about good medical practice on the GMC website
- Prepare some questions of your own – but not anything that's in the prospectus or on the website!
- Read all about Medical School on their websites – and not just the pages for prospective students! Research, facilities, info for current undergraduates... Search online resources – there are some useful things for medicine interviewees, but these should only be used as a rough guide, and to complement the breadth and depth of preparation you are already doing.

On the day

- Smile, shake hands, make eye contact and use positive body language.
- Relax, speak slowly and take a few deep breaths if you feel your nerves getting the better of you.
- Don't answer a question you don't understand! It's perfectly OK to ask interviewers to repeat a question or to clarify it.
- DON'T answer a question you haven't been asked! Always think – what have I been asked? Am I answering it?

- Interviewers aren't looking for perfect candidates who behave and answer exactly like doctors – they are looking for candidates who **show the potential** to become good doctors. Would you be a good student who is keen to learn and a pleasure to teach?
- Interviewers are looking to identify a candidate who is enthusiastic, motivated, committed to medicine and who has a realistic image of the role of a doctor and the difficulties of the job. These are all things you are perfectly capable of displaying, so just be yourself and don't let nerves get the better of you!

What kind of interview...?

Panel Interview

Usually involves 2 or 3 panellists, at least 1 of whom is a practising clinician. This is usually in a quiet room with just you and the panellists, and will last 15-20 minutes. You may be given a few minutes to read an article, and then expected to discuss it. This kind of interview might involve acting out a scenario. If you are told in advance who will be interviewing you – google them! Knowing a bit more about your interviewers will put you more at ease, and may help you come up with an interesting question or two to ask them at the end.

Multiple Mini Interviews

Between 7 and 10 stations, each lasting between 7 and 10 minutes. It will cover topics similar to those in the panel interview; it divides the discussion into smaller, 'bitesize' sections. You are also extremely likely to encounter interactive stations – to play the role of a doctor in an interaction with a patient, or to demonstrate communication and problem-solving skills in a task totally unrelated to medicine, for example. In these situations, you will be tested on your ability to listen, to communicate clearly, to empathise and so on. Don't worry if you feel that a station didn't go well! If you stay calm and focus on listening and communicating well you will do just fine. Always put the previous station to the back of your head and be ready to start afresh at each new station.

...Find out!

Aberdeen: <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/smd/medicine/interview.php>

Dundee: <http://www.dundee.ac.uk/undergraduate/enquiry/medicine/> (under 'What is the Dundee Interview like?')

Glasgow: <http://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/medicine/mus/medicineadmissions/faqs/> (scroll down to the section on interviews)

St. Andrews: <http://medicine.st-andrews.ac.uk/prospectus/#> (under 'How are students selected?' click 'The Interview Process')

No matter what format your interview takes, you will need to be ready to speak about all of the topics on the first page. Make sure that you have done your research, and that you appear prepared! Not all medical schools are the same, and the interviewers will want to know why this particular medical school is right for you – it's crucial that you can demonstrate knowledge of the institution you're applying to and how the course there is taught.

Final remarks

The interviewer is not there to catch you out, and will most likely try to put you at your ease. It's usually no more than an hour of your time, so just see it as a challenge and try to enjoy it!

You may only receive your invitation to interview a week or two before the date. Don't panic! Early preparation will save you last minute stress.

Read the information you are sent very carefully. You may need to bring ID or some other documents to your interview – don't forget these!

Write down any information or instructions you receive on the day – e.g. "you can expect to hear by ___", or "you need to submit X".

Use your interview as a learning experience. When you get home, write down what you think went well and what could be improved. You may have more interviews to get through, so the more you are able to think critically about how it went, the better prepared you will be for the future.

Personal Statement General Advice

Your personal statement is the part of your application which allows you to explain about your reasons for applying for a particular course/courses as well as explaining the skills and abilities that make you stand out from the crowd.

The basics

- You cannot exceed 47 lines/4000 characters.
- No spell check so write in word and copy over.
- UCAS use similarity detection software – NO JOKE!
- DO NOT SUBMIT YOUR FIRST DRAFT

What should your Personal Statement be?

Your Personal Statement should:

- Be clear and Concise
- Reflect your commitment and suitability for the course
- Be correctly spelled ☑ Be grammatically accurate
- “Sell” you to the University

What are universities looking for?

Universities are looking for your personal statement to:

- Display maturity—show that you are ready for university
- Display ability—show that you have the academic and personal skills and ability to go to university
- Display commitment—show that you have the dedication, reliability and suitability to go to university
- Display knowledge—show that you have an awareness and familiarity with the subject area and courses that you are applying for.

Things that will help

In reading your personal statement, universities will expect you to:

- Display an insight into what the course or ultimate career goal is actually about.
- Show that research into the course/career has been done.

Hints and Tips

- Don't be shy and retiring in what you are saying about yourself.
- The best personal statements are the ones that sound genuine.
- Consistency in your course choice makes the Personal Statement easier to write.
- You may need to write a few drafts in order to get it right.
- Get someone to look over it.
- Ask yourself if it makes sense? Does it flow? Can you say “so what?” to anything in it?, have you shown that you are a reflective thinker? (You can detail the experiences you have had and the skills you have gained from them.) Have you worked out what information is the most important and 'adds value' to what is being discussed in your statement? Have you shown evidence to demonstrate this?
- Don't use language that does not sound natural to you. If you wouldn't say it, think about why you want to write it.

Personal Statement General Advice

What makes an effective personal statement?

An effective personal statement should:

- Discuss your choice of course - What interests you about the course?
- Detail any background interest in the area that you are applying for
- Detail any relevant experience explaining the skills you developed through that experience and link back to your choices. Be honest about skills/experiences you have had, do not exaggerate.
- Career aspirations
- Personal achievements
- Positions of responsibility
- Show that you have the skills suited to university life, self v-disciplined, self-motivated, hardworking, committed and sociable.
- Show that you are somebody who will benefit from life at university—remember that you are there to study. Show that you realise that you need a balance between work and social life.
- Show yourself to be an interesting personality. Try to be specific rather than general about your interests and experiences.

Check spelling, grammar, capitals and punctuation.

Advice about using 'I'

Do not write	Instead write	Do not write	Instead write
I am captain of the Football Team...		Being a captain of the Football Team...	
I enjoy playing sport		Having enjoyed playing basketball...	
I am studying Highers in...		My Higher subjects are...	
I enjoy socialising		Socialising is important to me because...	
I have taken part in		Taking part in...	
I have gained a number of skills		This skills I have gained from...	

Creating your Personal Statement

When writing your Personal Statement it is better if you are able to structure it in to sensible paragraphs which contain information about different skills and abilities that you have gained through a variety of experiences. Remember to show that you are a reflective thinker—relate everything you are talking about such as the skills you have gained from an experience back to the course and your career path.

A suggested layout is given below:

Introduction

- Give your reasons for choosing the course you want to do.
- Be enthusiastic about the course
- Career aspiration – brief mention
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New Paragraph

- Write about work experience and link to your core skills e.g. working with others, numeracy, punctuality etc.
- Include work experience from school or any you have arranged and completed personally as part of S6 wider experience

New Paragraph – link all to core skills and your chosen course where appropriate

- Write about school experiences S1 -5
- S6 Wider school experience.
- Extracurricular activities – sport/music/trips/clubs etc.
- Roles within Tutor class / House group
- Charity work

New Paragraph – link all to core skills and your chosen course where appropriate

- Interest out with school – clubs, membership of scouts/BB's
- Relevant experiences outside school – travel, hobbies, sport, part time work

New Paragraph – Concluding statement

- How are you preparing for life at University – financial, practical issues living away from home e.g. cooking for yourself, cleaning rooms and clothes etc.
- Identify an area you have mentioned and find a way to build on it for a concluding comment about your course or suitability for university.
- Career aspiration – more detail

Creating your Personal Statement

Following on from the advice on the previous page, it is important that you evaluate your skills and experience before putting it into succinct paragraphs. In order to help you with this, complete the self-reflection in the boxes.

Why are you applying for the course?

Why does this subject interest you? Include evidence that you understand what's required to study the course.

Why do you think you're suitable for the course(s)? What skills and experience do you have that will help you to be successful in the course?

Do the courses you are studying or have studied relate to the course in any way? If so, how?

Have you participated in any activities that demonstrate your interest in the course?

List the accredited and non-accredited achievements that you have below.

Creating your own Personal Statement

Do you have any positions of responsibility in or out of school that will make you stand out from the crowd?

List all of your hobbies and interests and explain the skills you have gained from them and how they link to the course.

Include details of jobs, placements, work experience or voluntary work that you have undertaken, especially linked to your chosen course. List the skills and qualities you developed from them linked to your course.

What are your future plans linked to your career? What do you want to do with your degree after university?

Improving your Personal Statement

The 'before' version – The following student has written a Personal Statement to support an application to read History. It is an early draft which needs improving.

I enjoy History lessons so I have decided to pursue the subject at degree level. At university I look forward to examining a range of historical sources. I am particularly interested in French History, and trips to France have broadened my historical awareness. As a school prefect I hold many responsibilities: organising and attending school functions, delivering speeches to the school body, being an active member of the school council, working effectively with other students. Having played in school concerts with the keyboard orchestra when I was in S3, I have recently taken up piano lessons.

I am a keen sports player and I am a member of the school hockey team, netball team, the athletics squad and the volleyball team, earning me the "Sports Personality of the Year" Award. I have taught information technology skills to younger students and helped a particular student to overcome language difficulties. I have organised sports days and Christmas parties for the elderly; and written, directed and performed a series of short plays.

I have always enjoyed reading but more recently my Higher studies have enabled me to explore foreign literature.

Currently, I am involved in the European Youth Parliament Competition in which I will be representing my school at a residential debating conference. The winner will represent the United Kingdom in Cyprus. This venture enhanced my general knowledge (specifically of genetic engineering and drug legislation).

The 'after' version – The following student has improved their Personal Statement from the earlier draft.

I have always been fascinated by the past, beginning with childhood interests in time-travel and mythology. This interest continued with student exchanges to France and Germany which gave me the opportunity to study 18th century French history and dictatorship and to widen my historical scope. A trip to France, where I studied issues relating to the World Wars, confirmed my interest in History and my decision to pursue the subject at degree level. At University I look forward to analysing varied interpretations of history and the original sources upon which they are based.

As a school prefect I have held many responsibilities such as organising school events, delivering speeches, and participating actively on the school council. This experience has taught me to use my own initiative, and developed my skills of public speaking and diplomacy. Having played in concerts with the keyboard orchestra, I have recently taken up piano lessons and gained a wider awareness of music, especially of Debussy and romanticism.

Playing in various school sports teams has earned me several awards including that of "Sports personality of the Year", and taught me the importance of communication, team working and self-reliance. Organising a series of plays and other events for the elderly was a fulfilling challenge. I also found that the experience of assisting younger pupils with IT and language development was extremely rewarding. I have also enjoyed reading, but more recently my Higher studies have enabled me to explore foreign literature. Brecht is particularly absorbing for his insight into the way people attempt to overcome the horrors of war.

Currently, I am helping to produce a film for the European Student Travel Company concerning the career opportunities for young people in Europe. Also, I represented my school at a national selection conference for the European Youth Parliament. This venture not only enhanced my general knowledge, but improved my teamwork, language and debating skills, which will be particularly useful for my course at university.

Buzzwords and Key Phrases

Below are some 'buzzwords' and 'key phrases' that you can select from to enhance your Personal Statement or even just to help you write it. This list is by no means definitive and you should only use them if appropriate. Remember, use language that you are familiar with, it will sound better.

IN ADDITION – 'in addition to my work experience I have also gained valuable skills throughout my voluntary work.'

AS WELL AS – 'As well as my involvement in team games I am also keen on playing individual competitive sport.'

REINFORCE – 'My involvement in the school voluntary programme has reinforced my decision to study a degree in Nursing.'

STRENGTHEN – 'My decision to study a degree in Economics has been strengthened by my enjoyment and success in my Higher course.'

FURTHERMORE – 'Furthermore, I am particularly suited to a degree in Chemistry because of my love of the subject and my keen interest to further my knowledge of the subject.'

BESIDES – 'Besides my involvement with sport I am also involved in amateur dramatics.'

NOT TO MENTION – 'Being involved in the voluntary work programme not to mention my work experience has provided an opportunity to work with a diverse range of people.'

MORE RECENTLY – 'Although I have taken part in classical music concerts, more recently I have decided to learn to play the piano.'

ENABLE ME – 'The opportunity to play in the school football team enabled me to work as part of a team.'

PROVIDED ME – 'The work experience provided me with an opportunity to work with a range of people.'

OPPORTUNITY TO – 'The opportunity to work with people was provided by my work experience.'

Through my experience.....

I believe that as a result of my participation in.....

Communicator/communication skills

Team player

Time management skills

Effective at managing my time through

Developed my interpersonal skills

Leadership abilities

Positive and enthusiastic person

Use my own initiative

Problem solving abilities

Creative person

Responsible person

Resources and Help Guides

Medicine: As part of preparing for your Medicine Degree, some courses require you will be expected to be able to type as quickly as you write

- www.goodtyping.com
- www.sense-lang.org
- www.typeonline.co.uk

www.ucas.com – UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service) Details of degree courses throughout the UK. Includes course search by subject and/or institution, course profiles, university/college information, student finance. Also includes Apply, the on-line application system used by applicants to UK universities.

www.myworldofwork.co.uk – Skills Development Scotland's website. Provides information on Higher National and Degree courses as well as a Graduate Portal for details of graduate careers.

www.planitplus.net - PlanIT Contains information on all full and part time courses at Scottish colleges including Higher National Certificates/ Diplomas, along with information on degree courses at Scottish universities.

<http://unistats.direct.gov.uk> - Unistats Detailed information on the going rate for entry to courses. Also includes a survey of current students' views of their course, including how it is taught and assessed, level of academic support provided, availability of learning resources including libraries and IT facilities. Data on graduate employment destinations for individual courses.

www.push.co.uk - PUSH Online The ultimate Guide to student life, university and everything! Researched by students and recent graduates. Includes brief university profiles, university links to student unions/newspaper websites, information on how to apply, prices of beer, a jargon buster and lots more.

www.prospects.ac.uk - Prospects - the essential guide to graduate careers, jobs and postgraduate study in the UK. Gives information about employment opportunities in its 'What do Graduates Do' section.

www.saas.gov.uk - Student Awards Agency for Scotland Information on all aspects of student funding including bursaries and student loans. Scottish students studying in Scotland do not pay tuition fees for their courses. Some students may be eligible for a non-repayable Young Student Bursary depending on the level of their family's income. All students can apply for a non-income assessed repayable loan of up to £4500 per annum. Look at this site to find out more about the cost of Higher Education.

www.lattitude.org.uk - GAP Year Activities Projects Information on 'Year Out' opportunities. Over 1,500 placements for UK volunteers in 34 countries across the world each year. There are opportunities in schools, conservation, medicine, outdoor activities and caring.

Resources and Help Guides

For more detailed information on courses and entry requirements, look at individual websites for example:

www.gla.ac.uk - Glasgow University

www.caledonian.ac.uk - Glasgow Caledonian University

www.gsa.ac.uk - Glasgow School of Art

www.strath.ac.uk - Strathclyde University

www.uws.ac.uk - University of the West of Scotland

www.stir.ac.uk - Stirling University

www.ed.ac.uk - Edinburgh University

www.hw.ac.uk - Heriot-Watt University

www.napier.ac.uk - Edinburgh Napier University

www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/edinburgh-college-art - Edinburgh College of Art

www.qmu.ac.uk - Queen Margaret University (Edinburgh)

www.abertay.ac.uk - Abertay University Dundee

www.dundee.ac.uk - Dundee University

www.abdn.ac.uk - Aberdeen University

www.rgu.ac.uk - Robert Gordon University (Aberdeen)

www.st-andrews.ac.uk - St Andrews University

www.sruc.ac.uk - Scottish Agricultural College

www.uhi.ac.uk - University of the Highlands and Islands

www.rcs.ac.uk - Royal Conservatoire of Scotland