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Is medicine for you?



If the challenge of becoming a doctor, the description of medical school and the training programme appeals to you then you can do the following to help you decide whether you would like a career in medicine:

Deciding

- Make use of the internet to find out more about medicine (there is a wealth of information on this website). We have included a full [resources section](#) for those considering medicine. For information on the range of jobs within medicine look at our [careers options pages](#) and our [specialty pages](#).
- You can discuss the option with your family, friends and/or teacher/careers/connexions adviser. Often discussing an idea will help you think it through. A word of caution though, your parents may be delighted that you are thinking about being a doctor, but if you are unsure you should not feel that you are being pushed into the decision by them.
- Try to talk to a GP or a hospital doctor; perhaps a junior trainee who has recently graduated from medical school. Although shadowing a GP or hospital doctor to find out more about their work would be a helpful experience, these placements are increasingly difficult to organise because of patient safety and confidentiality issues that require formal arrangements. Your school might be able to organise career evenings with local doctors. If you have some time (e.g. the summer holiday or a gap year) then you could try to work or volunteer in a hospital or in some other health care setting. For this you could look at our pages on [volunteering opportunities](#) or follow some of the advice in the guide that we have written for medical students on [summer and part-time jobs](#). Finally, if you are still at school, you should consider using your two weeks work-experience to work in a caring environment such as an old peoples' home or as a volunteer at a hospice.
- A number of universities offer 'taster' courses which will give you some experience of academic and social life at medical school. The majority of these courses are free and they last between one day and one week. They are usually held during the spring/summer before you apply for medical school. The courses fill up quickly so you will need to book early to reserve a place. These taster courses will be advertised on the individual [universities' websites](#).
- Universities also hold open days. At a medical school open day you will learn about what the course involves and about the attributes required for medicine. Even if you are younger (i.e. year 11), or have not made up your mind about medicine you will often be welcome to attend.
- Web forums on the internet can also be useful. One example is: <http://www.newmediamedicine.com/>. Potential applicants can post questions and they are usually returned by medical students

The 4 stage career planning model

This website uses a four-stage career planning model, which we would encourage you to use. This model is recommended for those considering their career choices. It is appropriate to use the model at any stage of your career.

The model is demonstrated below:

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1. Self Assessment

You will find it useful to consider how you can think about your careers values, skills and motivation with respect to your current choices. The [interactive self-assessment tools](#) on this website have been written and developed specifically for those already studying medicine or in training. However those considering a career in medicine will still find the tools useful. They can be accessed for free if you register and log on to the website.

2. Career Exploration

This relates to the choices that you are facing at the moment. In your case it could be an exploration into whether or not to apply to study medicine. It could also be around which medical schools you decide to apply to in your UCAS application. If you are fully armed with the facts then you will be able to make an informed decision.

3. Decision making

Once you have developed a good understanding of yourself and your career options, you're in a great place to start making decisions. Here you will find some ways to integrate what you've learned about a career in medicine with your self-assessment. There are some useful [decision-making tools](#) on this website that will be appropriate for you to use at this stage.

4. Plan implementation

This is where you put your plan into action after you have gone through the first three stages. See our page on [applying to medical school](#).

It is recommended that the stages below are followed in order i.e. you consider stage 1 before moving to stage 2 etc.



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