

Choosing your medical school

This page looks at the various factors you should consider before choosing medical schools. There are links to websites where you can find out more.

You have a choice of 33 UK medical schools but you are only allowed to put four on your UCAS application. Your fifth choice can be used for a different subject. You can't apply for both Oxford and Cambridge unless you are applying for four-year Graduate Entry Programmes.

male doctor with patient in office

One of the main things to consider is how you like to learn. Courses vary in their format and teaching style.

Teaching styles at medical school vary and there can be said to be three different types: problem-based learning (PBL), traditional (conventional) teaching and an integrated style. You should be able to tell from a medical school's prospectus which teaching style dominates.

Find out more by listening to [an audio of current medical students talking about PBL v lecture-based courses](#) ^[1].

When making your choices, other factors to consider include:

- how competitive it is to get into the medical school and whether you're likely to achieve the entry requirements - you'll likely need grade As and A*s. It's a good idea to select medical schools with a range of offers in case you don't get into your first choice
- whether the medical school offers a foundation year, if you need to do one
- if you're a graduate, whether the medical school offers a four-year accelerated course
- whether the medical school is based at a university or a teaching hospital. This might impact on the facilities available and the opportunities you have to mix with non-medics
- how well the medical school ranks in league tables. Be warned that these are often based on research ratings rather than the quality of teaching. Highly academic courses don't necessarily produce better doctors
- whether the course includes a compulsory or [optional intercalated degree](#) ^[2], involving an extra year of study
- the location of a medical school. Depending on your preferences you may prefer a city, campus or collegiate environment
- the facilities at the university in general and for learning (eg laboratories)

- the expenses involved including the cost of accommodation and how far it is to travel home
- whether or not to live at home – there are obvious pros and cons

• **How to help you choose**

In order to help you choose medical schools, make sure that you:

- go to open days and talk to students and staff (you can find these on our [events calendar](#) ^[3] - if you filter for 'doctor')
- read prospectuses, including any alternative prospectuses
- look at medical school websites
- find out the exact entry criteria

For general advice, visit the [Medical Schools Council](#) ^[4] website.

Source URL:<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/applying-medical-school/choosing-your-medical-school>

Links

[1] <https://soundcloud.com/health-careers/experiences-of-lecture-versus-problem-based-learning-pbl-approaches> [2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/considering-or-university/studying-be-doctor/your-medical-training/intercalated-medical-degrees> [3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/events> [4] <http://www.medschools.ac.uk/Students/Pages/default.aspx>