

# Medical student-selected components

Your medical student-selected component (SSC) will be an important part of your medical training. Find out about what it is and the different types available.

## What is an SSC?

SSCs offer you an element of choice in your studies, either within or beyond the core curriculum. Each medical school designs its own programme which results in variation regarding the timing and content of SSCs. Some medical schools arrange their SSCs into four or five week blocks, whereas others might be timetabled into one half-day session for a number of weeks.

SSCs may have other names including 'student selected units', 'selected study components', 'special study units' or special and 'selective study modules'.

## When will I do them?

Some medical schools offer SSCs from year one onwards, whereas others offer them from year two or three onwards. The longer blocks are often timetabled later in the medical degree.

## How can they help me?

The aims of SSCs include:

- enabling the development of research skills
- encouraging self-directed learning to help life-long learning
- to enable students move beyond the core curriculum
- to improve students' self confidence
- to enable students to make verbal presentations and to present work visually or in writing
- to encourage exploration of possible career paths
- to assist with decisions regarding the choice of intercalated degrees [1]

If you have a future specialty in mind then taking a relevant SSC can really enhance your application for core or specialist training later on. This is particularly true for very popular specialties such as surgery. So it's important to choose your SSCs carefully.

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Choosing options and teaching methods

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The range of options under SSCs varies but may include:

- a specialist area of medicine or surgery, such as palliative care and oncology [2] or A&E/intensive care [3]
- topics from a psychological or social sciences perspective, such as counselling skills, medicine and spirituality or homelessness, drugs and crime
- modern foreign languages such as French or Spanish

It may also be possible to undertake a research project, which is particularly beneficial if you are plan to apply for an academic foundation programme. The content of the research could vary, but might include a structured literature review or original research using qualitative or quantitative data.

SSCs offer a variety of teaching and learning methods which may include:

- tutorials
- practicals
- guided self-study
- problem-solving scenarios
- role play
- projects
- group work
- portfolios
- e learning
- patient based learning

SSCs may also be community-based.

SSCs are assessed just as other aspects of your studies are, and you will need to pass in order to progress.

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**Source URL:** <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/medical-school/medical-student-selected-components-sscs>

### **Links**

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/medical-school/intercalated-medical-degrees>

[2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Oncology>

[3] [https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Intensive\\_care](https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Intensive_care)