



OPEN EVENINGS: THE BHASVIC MEDICAL CAREERS PATHWAY INFORMATION

These introductory notes set out to address some of the questions which parents/guardians have asked in previous years and dispel some of the myths and misunderstandings which can surround a medical application. At BHASVIC, we support students with aspirations to study medicine, dentistry or veterinary medicine to realise their ambitions. We help students to investigate the realities and commitment required to study these subjects in order to pursue a career in medicine.

In 2020, 13 BHASVIC students accepted offers to study medicine, 1 student accepted a place to study dentistry and 3 students accepted places to study veterinary medicine.

In 2020, our students gained places at:

Birmingham (1), Bristol (3), BSMS (2), Cambridge (2), Exeter (1), Leeds (1), Liverpool (1), Newcastle (1), Oxford (1), Royal Veterinary College (1), Sunderland (1), University College, London (2).

What support does BHASVIC offer applicants to medicine, dentistry or veterinary medicine?

All Year 12 students at BHASVIC have the opportunity to join the BHASVIC MedSoc – we meet weekly and have a full programme to help students find out more about the careers available, to test out their vocation and to guide prospective medics through the application process.

Through MedSoc students meet practising healthcare professionals and medical students to gain a greater understanding of the lived experience of their chosen careers. Students are supported to develop a portfolio of volunteering and work experience to inform their application. They develop their communication skills, participate in ethical debates and get involved in charity work.

A wealth of opportunities from lectures and conferences to opportunities to be involved in healthcare are advertised to students through our website and Facebook page.

There are many opportunities for students to get involved in MedSoc:

- Join the MedSoc Team using this link <https://bit.ly/bhasvicmedsoc>
- Email Jacque Punter (Medical careers Coordinator) j.punter@bhasvic.ac.uk
- Drop in to Student Services and ask about careers in medicine, dentistry or veterinary medicine

Uniquely, **BHASVIC provides specialist tutor groups for medicine, dentistry and veterinary applicants** to support students as they prepare their Personal Statement and to meet the early application deadline. **These specialist tutor groups will form in June 2021.**



What sort of GCSE profile does a student need in order to apply for medicine, dentistry or veterinary medicine?

The guidelines on entry requirements in terms of GCSE grades vary hugely from one university to the next. For the majority of medical schools, students will need a 6 in English Language and a 6 in Maths. Most require at least 6 6 in Double Science.

Entry into medical school is undoubtedly competitive and successful candidates tend to be those with a strong profile of grades 6 to 9 at GCSE.

Students with a weaker GCSE profile may be best advised to consolidate their A-level grades before application. We have a strong record of supporting Widening Participation candidates to gain access to the 6-year extended programmes at universities such as Southampton.

Do students taking four A levels have an advantage over those studying for three?

No. University offers to study medicine, dentistry or veterinary medicine are invariably high ranging from A*A*A to AAA. The majority of medical schools make offers in terms of three A-levels; where a fourth AS-level is preferred, students can consider the EPQ or Further Maths. Three A-levels with top grades are far better than four with weaker outcomes.

However, an appropriate A level subject profile is important; most medical schools specify Chemistry A-level plus at least one other science A-level, usually Biology. Many students choose a full science programme so include Maths or Physics as their third A-level choice but it is perfectly acceptable to choose humanities subjects. BHASVIC students have gained places at medical school studying A-levels in Psychology, History, English, French, Spanish and Geography amongst others.

How is MedSoc functioning during the Covid-19 pandemic?

MedSoc is still meeting weekly, albeit remotely on Teams. Students get to hear information about preparing and applying for medicine/dentistry/veterinary medicine. Ex-students, now studying or graduated, guest in to talk about their experiences. As the term progresses we use online discussions to develop skills of critical thinking and ethical debate. We will practise the skills needed for the entrance exams and for interviews. There are lots of opportunities to get important questions answered.

How important is work experience?

Very important. Students applying for a vocational course in medicine are expected to have realistic insights into their chosen career and this means having spent time in a hospital, dental or veterinary surgery. A significant proportion of their Personal Statement will discuss their reflections on work experience and an evaluation of their own personal motivation and skills. Students should also spend some time volunteering in a suitable healthcare setting where they can learn from skilled professionals and develop their own maturity and interpersonal skills.



Volunteering also demonstrates a student's commitment and drive for their career choice, and the ability to juggle academic and other commitments.

How important are extra-curricular activities?

Extra-curricular activities are helpful but not essential. Students have to be able to demonstrate that they have the skills and personal qualities to make a good potential medic. The ability to successfully juggle the time commitments of study, volunteering and outside interests is key here. Skills such as leadership and teamwork can be demonstrated in any context.

How do students prepare for the entrance exams and the interview process?

Students applying for medicine, dentistry or veterinary medicine will have to sit one (or both!) of the UCAT or BMAT exams. These exams are skills-based and do not require any new knowledge content; they are intended to test logic, judgment and thinking speed. Students familiarise themselves with the tests through MedSoc and there is plenty of practice material available.

Interviews give our students a chance to shine and to demonstrate their worth. Students prepare for interview through MedSoc sessions and one-to-one mock interviews. Medical students from Brighton and Sussex Medical School put our students through their paces in preparation for the MMI interview format.

How do you apply for medicine, dentistry or veterinary medicine? What's the difference between a medical application and applications for other subjects?

All applicants to UK Universities apply through UCAS and can **choose up to four medical schools**; the fifth choice on their application must be for a subject other than medicine/dentistry/veterinary medicine. This is in recognition of the competitive nature of a medical school application; students are effectively forced to choose a back-up course in case their medical school application is unsuccessful.

Many students choose a medically –related subject (nursing, biochemistry, pharmacology, clinical sciences) but they can choose any subject as their fifth choice.

- The closing date for submitting a non-medical UCAS application will be mid-January 2022 (the internal BHASVIC deadline will be mid-November 2021).

However, one of the key differences between applications for medicine as opposed to other universities is this timescale.

- It is necessary to submit the UCAS form **by 15th October in the student's second year.**



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- UCAT must be taken before submitting the UCAS form (most students prepare and sit the exam over the summer holidays). BMAT is sat at the beginning of November in the student's second year



Further Links

There is an enormous amount of material available online relating to applications for medical school. Some useful sources include:

The Medic Portal: www.themedicportal.com

BMA: www.bma.org.uk/advice/career/studying-medicine/becoming-a-doctor

Medical Schools Council: www.medschools.ac.uk/studying-medicine/applications

NHS: www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/applying-medical-school

British Veterinary Association: www.bva.co.uk/Professional-development/Careers/Becoming-a-vet/

RCVS: <https://animalowners.rcvs.org.uk/veterinary-careers/i-want-to-be-a-vet/>

BDA: <https://bda.org/students/careers-education/becoming-a-dentist>

Further Queries and Contact Info

If you have any further queries then email the Medical careers Coordinator, Jacquie Punter: j.punter@bhasvic.ac.uk.

BHASVIC makes an application for medicine, dentistry or veterinary medicine an option for many students; any student who is genuinely interested in applying can access all the expertise, guidance and support they need throughout their time at BHASVIC.