



THE UNIVERSITY OF
BUCKINGHAM

MEDICAL SCHOOL

MB ChB

University of Buckingham Careers Advice for Medical Students

The Student Support Team in the Medical School works closely with clinical staff and the Professional Support Unit (PSU) at Higher Education Thames Valley in Oxford to provide careers advice for each stage of your MB ChB programme. Through workshops and career education talks we aim to provide all medical students with the resources that you will need to make the right decision in your medical career or in selecting your chosen speciality. The PSU provides 1:1 confidential career counselling to doctors at any stage of their career, regardless of their specialty, as well as a range of career and professional skills workshops for trainee doctors. Medical students are very welcome to make appointments with the PSU and should contact med-studentsupport@buckingham.ac.uk

The Student Support Team will assist you in providing advice or guiding you to the most appropriate person to talk to about:

- career choice
- applying for electives
- CV checking
- interview skills
- leaving medicine

1 How can I prepare myself?

During your studies on the MB ChB programme there are several aspects of career management that you can be thinking about and exploring right from the first year. You may already have a very clear idea about the sort of medical career that you wish to follow after medical school, but others of you will be less sure, and some of you will have no idea yet as to the direction that you wish to take. Please do not worry as all these three states of career decision making are fine and understandable!

Wherever you currently are on the 'know exactly where I'm heading' / 'where am I?' continuum of career management, there are various things to be thinking about at each stage of your course to help with your career direction. As part of your Personal Development Plan we strongly encourage you to reflect on your initial choices of specialisation in your eportfolio, and review these reflections frequently with your Personal Tutor or a Clinical Educator, as you progress through your training and how you see current challenges affecting your choices. Here are some questions that you might like to consider and honestly answer:

Phase 1 Year 1

- What initially attracted me to studying medicine?
- What are my main strengths, what do I want to be better at?
- Are my expectations about the course and my career realistic?
- How aware am I of the diverse range of careers within medicine on a scale of 0-10?
- Reflect on the HETV workshop in Term 2 to understand more about your personality type and associated strengths and preferences.
- At this current point in time, is clinical medicine what I expected or not?

Phase 1 Year 2

- At this point in time, what is quite important to me in a career?
- Which subjects have I enjoyed the most so far and why?
- Which parts of the course do I find less rewarding and why?
- Which skills am I taking longer to develop than others?
- Is clinical medicine what I expected or not, what am I most looking forward to in my later clinical years and why?
- How clear is my understanding of the various career paths within medicine?

Phase 2 Year 3

- Is clinical medicine what I expected or not?
- How much do I enjoy research and is academic medicine interesting to me?
- How have keeping a self-reflective log in my eportfolio helped me in my careers thinking?
- Which specialities am I starting to become more interested in and why?
- How up-to-date is my CV and what could I add to it to improve it?
- How could I learn more from my clinical colleagues about their specialty?
- Which core competencies or skills am I developing and how?
- How clear is my understanding of the various career paths within medicine?
- Where else could I find different information on specialties?

Phase 2 Year 4

- Which environments do I prefer working in, is it the actual specialty that I like or rather the particular consultant?
- What has each rotation taught me about what is important to me in my career?
- How confident am I that I could complete the Foundation Programme application form effectively on a scale of 0-10?
- How would I describe my decision-making style, in terms of my career?
- How up-to-date is my CV, what could I add to it to improve it?
- Which aspect of the Foundation Programme am I most looking forward to and why?

Developing your Curriculum Vitae

You will find that many medical programmes and jobs use application forms, but maintaining a recent CV throughout your medical career is still useful and valuable. During the MB ChB, your CV maybe a useful format to record your skills and experiences and one which can be uploaded into your eportfolio. Furthermore, your CV is sometimes needed when applying for certain electives, for example. It is important to remember that there is no such thing as a 'perfect' CV, as effective CVs are tailored towards a specific role and employer. Irrespective of this, the way in which you present the information in a coherent, clear and persuasive manner will be a key to your success. Medical CVs are often more prescriptive than for other professions and so they do not have a real length limit. We suggest that at this stage, when preparing a CV suitable for Foundation, a document of 2-3 pages is ideal.

1. **Personal:** Name, Contact details, GMC registration number and registration date (add this when you have achieved it!), Medical Defence Union number.
2. **Qualifications:** University - MB ChB, clinical grades, prizes, previous degrees.

3. **School A levels, GCSEs and equivalents:** prizes and awards.
4. **Research:** Either a Student Selected Component or project in a research environment within the University. You should include the subject, date, supervisor's name, summary of content, publications and presentations (if applicable).
5. **Electives:** when, where, what, and with whom. A brief description, highlighting key skills gained both clinical and transferable is desirable.
6. **Work Experience:** Medically related, additional.
7. **Additional Skills:** Languages, IT Skills for example.
8. **Interests:** Headline different types of activity, e.g. sport, music etc, as well as your level of achievement, e.g. Vice-captain, Grade etc.
9. **References:** Seek permission from your potential referees, such as Personal Tutors or Consultants from your SSC, electives or rotations.
10. **Advice on layout:** Use CAPITALS, bold and italics to emphasise your points; but use them sparingly, underlining can look a bit outdated. Font size is usually between 10 and 12 for readability and clarity and use a simple font, such as Arial or Calibri; you want the content, not the layout, to capture their attention.

Remember there will be opportunities to develop your CV throughout your course as part of your ongoing eportfolio activities and professional development meetings with your Personal Tutor.

Reflective practice

As you progress through the MB ChB course you should collect specific examples of particular competencies and skills. These include communication skills, ability to work well in a team, prioritisation skills, and an ability to cope under pressure. These can be held in your reflective log of your PDP or your personal library in your eportfolio. You will have many examples of all these skills during your full time clinical years, but sometimes it can be difficult to remember all the best examples of such competencies. There are of course a range of ways that you may choose to organise your reflective diary and you need to choose the method that best suits you.

Ways of thinking about your reflective diary

- Focus on what is meant by the 'core competencies', eg communication skills, ability to work well in a team, professional behaviour, prioritisation skills, an ability to cope under pressure.
- You might want to start by reflecting on particularly positive (or negative!) experiences which you have had during your training, which you can then analyse in terms of particular skills and competencies.
- Remember, there is no 'one right way' to keep a reflective diary. You need to make the experience as practical, useful and relevant to you as possible.

Preparing for the Situational Judgement Test

Situational Judgement Tests (SJTs) are an assessment format, where students are presented with job-related scenarios and you are asked to indicate your response(s) according to predetermined options. The SJT administered by the UK Foundation Programme Office (UKFPO) is an invigilated paper-based assessment, taken in the UK on one of two national dates. The SJT consists of scenarios

set in a clinical setting and targets your professional attributes, not specifically your clinical knowledge, but specifically: commitment to professionalism, coping with pressure, effective communication, patient focus and working effectively as part of a team. Further information can be found at www.foundationprogramme.nhs.uk. An officially endorsed SJT Practice Paper is provided at www.sjt.foundationprogramme.nhs.uk. This will enable you to familiarise yourself with the types of question you may encounter.

While there are commercial guides and courses on the SJT, these are not endorsed by the (UKFPO). The only preparation material endorsed by the UKFPO, and created by those involved in developing the SJT for the Foundation Programme, is available free of charge from their website and we encourage you to make use of the online resources. The Medical School will guide you in this process nearer the time.

2 How the Medical School will help you to prepare

The Medical School is committed to ensuring that each of you has made the correct career choice for you, and that each of you has been given enough information to inform you of all the options available, both regard to choosing your specialisation, country of practise and careers beyond practising medicine. Working with the Professional Support Unit at Higher Education Thames Valley we have developed a series of workshops to signpost to further information.

Year 1

- 'Introduction to Careers' (HETV, Induction week January). Delivered by Dr Barbara Wallis, this afternoon workshop highlights the diversity of careers within medicine, provides an introduction to working in the National Health Service and some early signposting to the relevant sources of information both UK and overseas.
- 'Medical Leadership and Cultural diversity within the NHS' (HETV Terms 2 and 3). Delivered by Dr Anneliese Guerin-LeTendre, this afternoon workshop follows on from a workshop 'Effective Teams; creating team cultures that work' addressing the functions of a team, the sources of noise, creating a positive team environment and communication road blocks. In the second workshop we shall explore stereotypes and generalisations, test unconscious bias, look at organisational culture and dimensions, power distance and the cultural orientation framework and the Leadership at Work model.

Year 2-3

- 'Careers in Medicine, The NHS and transition to the Clinical Years' (HETV tbc). Delivered by Dr Barbara Wallis and Dr Anneliese Guerin-LeTendre, this afternoon workshop will focus on choosing your speciality, preparation for rotations and will focus on managing cultural shift, the culture of the NHS, team/department cultures and variations in communication styles and priorities in different specialties. Patient-centred medicine in multi-cultural Britain and communication across professional cultures in particular working in inter-professional teams

Year 3-4

- Introduction to the Career Management process and information on the Foundation School (HETV tbc).
- Preparing for the Situational Judgement Test (HETV tbc).
- Careers and the Foundation School application process (HETV tbc).
- Specialty workshops (HETV tbc).

We also strongly encourage you to attend any careers workshops external to the Medical School, for example those run through the BMA, details of these will be posted on Moodle.

Throughout your course the Student Support Team will put you in contact with Consultants and Foundation doctors who can share their experiences of their own career decision making process. Furthermore, Block Leads from the Trust and St Andrews Healthcare will run evening workshops from Year 3 acting as mentors, and providing advice and core specifications for the specialities in their particular area. This in conjunction with clinically based Personal Tutors, many of whom are from overseas, will allow you to explore as many avenues of medicine as a career as possible throughout your course.

3 *Preparing for Foundation Training*

The national application process for Foundation School training is managed by [UKFPO](#). The Medical School works with the Oxford Foundation School and Higher Education Thames Valley http://www.oxforddeanery.nhs.uk/specialty_schools/foundation_school.aspx; where Dr Anne Edwards is the Foundation School Director. The Medical School will provide you with more information on the process, the forms and the Situational Judgement Test nearer the time and will guide you through the application stages.

4 *What if I want to continue my training overseas?*

For those of you wishing to work abroad, return home to practise or who are from overseas and wish to practise in another country, we have prepared some guidance below, but we will work with you individually in finding out more detailed information for example the dates and requirements for any overseas entry examinations, and support you throughout this process.

5 *Working outside the UK*

If you are considering working outside the UK, or returning home to practise, you will find that there is plenty of information available to you. To make the transition as smooth as possible we suggest that you read some of the guidance pages listed and when doing your research consider the following:

- Plan well in advance and gather as much information as you can before you leave the UK.

- Make sure that you have everything in writing, do not rely on verbal offers or telephone advice alone.
- Talk to the appropriate Dean, Royal College and the GMC if you wish your work overseas to count towards your UK training.
- Talk to colleagues who have worked abroad for any advice and tips.

The BMA (British Medical Association International Department) has some excellent information on their website http://www.bma.org.uk/international/international_development/index.jsp.

Furthermore, Global Medics offers an extensive search engine of overseas positions and training programmes <http://www.globalmedics.com>. [BMJ Careers](#) often carries advertisements for both long- and short-term posts abroad and includes hospitals, practices and academic institutes advertising either directly or through a UK or overseas based agency.

Please also refer to the following guidance:

- Medics Travel <http://www.medicstravel.co.uk/>
- US Association of Medical Schools www.aamc.org
- American Medical Association www.ama-assn.org/go/imgs
- Australian Medical Association www.ama.com.au
- Canadian Medical Association www.cma.ca
- New Zealand Medical Association www.nzma.org.nz
- Médecins Sans Frontières MSF www.msf.org
- Médecins du Monde UK www.medecinsdumonde.org.uk
- Merlin www.merlin.org.uk
- RedR www.redr.org.uk
- Voluntary Services Overseas www.vso.org.uk

The BMA Working abroad guidance <http://bma.org.uk/developing-your-career/career-progression/working-abroad> produces extensive information packs on everything you need to know about working in New Zealand, USA, Canada, Australia and the EEA. We suggest that you read the guide to get all the information you need before you go and importantly whilst you're away and on returning to work in the NHS.

[Working in New Zealand](#)

[Working in USA](#)

[Working in Canada](#)

[Working in Australia](#)

[Working in the European Economic Area](#)

[Returning to the NHS](#)

[Contracts for appointments overseas](#)

Training overseas and working in developing countries

The GMC do not usually sanction FY1 abroad but it is sometimes possible. Talk to the appropriate Dean, Royal College and the GMC if you wish your work overseas to count towards your UK training. Gaining experience in developing countries can be beneficial later in your medical training, with many overseas medical agencies only accepting applications from doctors with at least two or three years of clinical experience. Please refer to the BMA guidance on volunteering <http://bma.org.uk/developing-your-career/career-progression/volunteering-abroad>.

Immigration

All enquiries about immigration should be addressed to the appropriate High Commission or embassy in the UK. A directory of foreign embassies in the UK is available from the [Foreign and Commonwealth Office](#) website. Most High Commissions and Embassies have comprehensive information on their websites about immigration procedures and will be your best source of information. It is essential to check your VISA restrictions in advance as once you have entered a country on a visiting or restricted-work visa, you may find it difficult to switch your immigration status without leaving the country.

Registration

In some countries registration is not organised on a national basis, as it is in the UK, and it may be carried out at the regional level with requirements varying from region to region. Ease of registration will often depend on how much the country or region needs doctors. Most organisations recruiting doctors to areas of need will arrange registration for you. Check what the requirements are, and what documentation you need before you go. Before you leave you may need to have a job offer confirmed before you can register and also a Certificate of Good Standing which can be obtained from the GMC. The conditions for registration will often depend on your individual circumstances and the BMA will not always be able to give you a definitive answer.

Medical indemnity

It is essential that you check your medical indemnity and take out separate indemnity insurance or appropriate defence body cover. A UK based defence body can advise you about the overseas cover they offer, and if they do not provide cover for medical practice in the country you are going to, they should be able to refer you to defence unions abroad that do.

Human rights and medical ethics

Some doctors working abroad have been asked to take part in practices which violate international standards of human rights and ethical codes. If doctors are in any doubt about the legitimacy of the work they are asked to perform, they should contact the GMC or BMA Ethics Department at ethics@bma.org.uk. You may also wish to refer to the BMA's handbook 'The Medical Profession and Human Rights'.

Contracts and terms and conditions of service

Each country will have a unique medical system designed to meet its own medical needs. UK grades may not have an exact equivalent in another country. Make sure that you get as much information

as you can about the duties and responsibilities of the position and if it is a training job check the training structure as a whole, before signing a contract. Always check your contract before signing as specific terms/conditions of employment overseas will be governed by overseas employment law.

GMC register check

Remember to notify the GMC of your change of address. If you are from the UK you may also wish to receive BMJ Careers advice when abroad and receiving it will help you to plan a seamless return to the UK www.careers.bmj.com. There have been cases where a doctor has resigned from the GMC register before going abroad and has had problems re-registering when they return. Resigning your registration may save you money but discuss the implications with the GMC before doing so.

For UK students note that as you progress through your training from basic to speciality to obtaining your licence to practise, your periodic revalidation will need to be confirmed. For those of you from overseas you will receive provisional registration and you will need to complete the F1 year (or the equivalent abroad) to obtain full registration with the GMC, this provisional registration will move with you, and your licence to practise will depend on the scope of the job that you are performing, so this is something that should bear in mind when considering any future post overseas. For certain posts overseas for example Canada, you may need to sit an additional exam, so please ensure you find out the dates for these well in advance of leaving the UK.

For those of you who plan to return to practise in the UK, you must obtain your licence to practise as this is not automatically guaranteed and for some of you, you will need to have a job secured before sending in your application to the GMC, and many of these jobs will require sponsorship. Please do not worry the Medical School will be there to advise and guide you to the appropriate sources of information, but we do encourage you consider your options in plenty of time.

Financial matters

Points that you may need to consider include:

- mortgages
- tax (home and abroad)
- insurance policies (property, life, medical, car, accident)
- savings and investment policies, national insurance and banking arrangements
- differences in the cost of living and how these might affect your financial planning
- pensions

Healthcare immunisation and insurance

- Always check with your GP to confirm what immunisations are required before you travel.
- The Department of Health has a section on its website providing [health advice for travellers](#).
- The [Department of Health](#) website also includes information about reciprocal healthcare agreements for UK individuals travelling to particular countries.

- You are strongly advised to take out private health insurance if this is not included in your terms and conditions of employment.
- **BMA Services** offers a range of travel insurance policies, and can be contacted on **0845 010 1120** and at www.bmas.co.uk.

Fit for Travel

Travel health information website provided by NHS Scotland.

www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk

National Travel Health Network and Centre

www.nathnac.org

The Travel Doctor

Details of various travel clinics around the UK.

www.traveldoctor.co.uk/clinics

Further information

[BMJ Careers](#) often publishes articles on working abroad.

[Medics Travel](#) is a website that helps doctors, nurses and other health professionals work overseas.

6 *What if medicine is not the right career choice for me?*

For some of you as you progress through the early parts of the course, you may be questioning whether medicine is the correct career choice for you. This may be as the result of an academic problem, poor health or a change of personal circumstances. The PSU coaches are highly experienced in having these conversations, especially those concerning whether medicine is the best career for you. Alternatively, you may also like to talk things through with your Personal Tutor as part of your Personal Development Plan or with a Clinical Supervisor, and they may be able to clarify your ideas and generate options to explore further.

7 *What are the alternatives beyond practising medicine?*

The vast majority of medical graduates go on to train within one of over 60 medical specialities. Medicine is such an extraordinarily diverse profession that the likelihood of finding a specialty that suits your interests, skills and preferences is very high. However, it is by no means the correct career choice for all trainees, and each year some doctors will choose to move away from practising medicine to work within one of the many alternative careers available. It is worthy to remember that over 60% of graduate level jobs are open to all degree disciplines, including medicine, so you may wish to treat your MB ChB like any other degree and see that you have a wider range of options available to you.

One of the most important questions to ask yourself before deciding if you are interested in an alternative career to being a doctor, is whether you still want to work 'within medicine' in some capacity, or whether you're more interested at looking at opportunities 'beyond medicine'. Your honest answers will help to clarify what it is you are looking for, and why you are considering leaving the profession. It can be valuable to reflect on what parts of your MB ChB programme you have most enjoyed and which parts of the course have you found more challenging as this may give you an insight into alternative options that would suit your preferences and interests. For example, do you enjoy the problem-solving or analytical aspects of medicine, or get most satisfaction from working closely with patients?

There are many career opportunities open to you both outside practicing medicine and here are a few ideas; health policy, medical journalism, medico-legal work, medical management, health economics, medical photography/illustration, medical education, medical statistics, humanitarian relief work, clinical trial management, translational research and development. As well as those extending beyond medicine, including management consultancy, psychotherapy, publishing, accountancy, social work, solicitor/barrister work, pharmaceutical research and development, forensic work, public affairs, banking, teaching and central/local government roles. However, it is important to remember that some of these roles will require additional study and training!

Resources and Further Information

- The NHS Medical Careers website has a useful section on alternative careers:
http://www.medicalcareers.nhs.uk/career_options/alternatives_to_practice.aspx
- As does the London Post Graduate Medical and Dental Education website
- <http://beyondclinical.thecareersgroup.co.uk/>
- Careerstaged.co.uk is a comprehensive career resource from The Careers Group, University of London with links to professional bodies, occupational profiles, relevant jobs boards, organisational website and so on.
- Prospects.ac.uk is a graduate careers site with occupational profiles, case studies, sector information and useful links to professional bodies.

8 External resources

General Sites

- The British Medical Association (BMA)(Need to register) www.bma.org.uk
- BMJ Careers - the careers service of the BMJ www.bmjcareers.com
- Modernising Medical Careers www.mmc.nhs.uk
- Conference of Postgraduate Medical Deans www.copmed.org.uk
- The Postgraduate Medical Education and Training Board www.gmc-uk.org/education/postgraduate.asp
- The General Medical Council (GMC) www.gmc-uk.org

Support for Doctors:

- Support4doctors <http://www.support4doctors.org/>
- Doctors.net <http://www.doctors.net.uk/>
- The Doctors' Support Network www.dsn.org.uk
- Medical Defence Union www.themdu.com

Medical Specialties

- <http://www.lpmde.ac.uk/training-programme/specialty-schools>
- www.medicalcareers.nhs.uk/specialty_pages.aspx
- BMJ Careers: <http://careers.bmj.com/>
- BMJ Career Topics: <http://careerfocus.bmj.com/collections/index.shtml>

Royal Colleges

- www.medicalcareers.nhs.uk/tools_and_resources/links_to_useful_sites.aspx

The Foundation Programme

- UK Foundation Programme Office (UKFPO) www.foundationprogramme.nhs.uk

NHS Careers

- <http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/medical.shtml>

9 Useful Additional Sites

Doctors.net <http://www.doctors.net.uk/> provides some information on current discussion points and useful job information.

Immigration rules and working as a doctor in the UK

- http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/explore_oversea_immigration-rules.shtml
- <http://www.bma.org.uk/international/immigration/index.jsp>

Research

- Medical Research Council www.mrc.ac.uk
- Association of Medical Research Charities www.amrc.org.uk

Women

- Medical Women's Federation <http://www.medicalwomensfederation.org.uk/>
- Women in Surgery (WinS) <http://surgicalcareers.rcseng.ac.uk/wins/>
- Association of Women Surgeons www.womensurgeons.org/

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