

Study medicine in the UK

Where can I study medicine?

UK universities offer highly regarded medicine degrees, including four ranked in the global top ten: University of Oxford (first), University of Cambridge, (third), Imperial College School of Medicine, London (fourth) and University College London Medical School (eighth).¹²

What is the application process?

Medicine is a highly competitive subject in the UK, but every year we welcome thousands of international students to study at our medical schools. Typically, universities require three As at A-level, including biology or chemistry, an International Baccalaureate of 38 and an IELTS score of 7.0 for undergraduate medicine degrees.

Most medical degrees also use one of two admissions tests. While some universities use the GAMSAT the majority of UK medical schools use UCAT (University Clinical Aptitude Test), which you must register for and sit before making a UCAS application.

How long does it take to graduate?

Most UK medical degrees are structured over five or six years, depending on the university and course format. Some programmes include an intercalated year for research or additional study, which can extend the overall duration.

What is the course structure?

UK medical courses are generally divided into pre-clinical and clinical phases. The early part of the course focuses on foundational medical science, including the human body, disease mechanisms, and professional skills. From the second or third year, you'll begin clinical rotations across hospital departments and GP practices. The final stages of training are spent in immersive clinical

¹ [Medical Schools Council, 2025](#)

² [Times Higher Education, World University Rankings, 2025](#)

environments, preparing you for the two-year foundation programme as a junior doctor within the NHS.

What will I study?

Your training will include key subjects like anatomy, physiology, pathology, pharmacology, and communication in clinical practice. You'll also study behavioural science, public health, and ethics. Learning takes place through lectures, hands-on labs, and placements in real healthcare settings. As you progress, you'll work across multiple specialties—such as general medicine, surgery, paediatrics, and mental health—developing the clinical reasoning and patient care skills essential for medical practice.

Why is the UK a good choice to study medicine?

The UK has a unique medical heritage. Our universities have been helping to advance medical knowledge for centuries, and the UK medical researchers have contributed to significant advancements in global healthcare. In fact, we also have one of the most famous healthcare models in the world. The National Health Service was founded in 1948, and you'll develop a strong working knowledge of the service, as well as how it integrates with private practice and the wider care system.

You'll learn from experienced clinicians and academic researchers in modern teaching hospitals and labs. All courses are delivered in English, providing fluency in the global language of medicine.

Are there any scholarships for studying medicine?

There are often funding options available for international students who want to study medicine in the UK. These range from part-funding, for example paying part of your fees, to full-funding which covers programme fees, living expenses, and return flights to the UK.

You can search our database of scholarships at study-uk.britishcouncil.org/scholarships-funding and check with individual university websites for institution-specific opportunities.

What is UK medical research like?

The UK spends over £37.1bn on research and development a year and is ranked fourth in the world for scientific research and second for life sciences research.³ We have a global reputation for research that changes lives – pioneering treatments for some of the most pressing medical challenges through diverse international collaborations.

³ [UK Government, 2025.](#)

What are my work options after I graduate?

After completing your medical degree and foundation training, you can apply for specialist training in areas like general practice, cardiology, psychiatry, surgery, or any of the UK's 60+ recognised medical specialties. UK-trained doctors are recognised globally, and training pathways offer flexibility across clinical and research-based roles.

The UK's Graduate route allows international students to apply to stay in the UK and work, or look for work, upon graduation. International students who have successfully completed an undergraduate, master's degree or PhD have the option to apply to stay in the UK for an agreed period, following their studies. The Graduate route does not require you to secure sponsorship.

To find out more about studying medicine in the UK and find a course, visit study-uk.britishcouncil.org