

Dr Karen Grant

Director of Admissions for the MBChB programme at Lancaster University

Why do you need work experience to apply to Lancaster Medical School?

Studying Medicine is not for everyone and there is a limit to how much you can learn about 'being a doctor' from reading books or talking to people.

Therefore, it is really important that you have some relevant work experience to help you decide if medicine is the right career path for you.

This does not have to be shadowing a doctor but can be any experience (unpaid work, paid work or volunteering) within a healthcare setting that gives you an insight into what it would be like to 'be a doctor' today. It is important that you reflect on these experiences to decide whether you have the skills, values and attitudes to work in healthcare.

Work experience in your UCAS personal statement:

We are more interested in what you have learned from your work and voluntary experiences, than in the details about where and when they occurred. Rather than listing your work and voluntary experiences (in a "I did this, I saw that" manner), try to draw upon these experiences to demonstrate what you learned about being a doctor and about your suitability for the profession. There is no magic formula about what you should mention. Avoid 'buzzwords' and talk about your own personal experience, using examples to illustrate how it shaped your understanding of a medical career and cemented your desire to study medicine.

<https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/lms/medicine/mbchb-medicine-and-surgery/entry-requirements/>

Make the most of whatever experiences you can get:

Relevant experience in a healthcare environment is important but you can also draw on non-healthcare work experience, if you can relate the skills you developed to your chosen career. You could also draw upon your life experiences, hobbies and interests in a similar way.

Work experience in the interview process:

During the interview process, you will need to draw upon your work and voluntary experiences to demonstrate insight into your chosen career and into your own suitability. In preparation, you should reflect on your work and voluntary experiences but please avoid formulating a pre-prepared 'statement' about your work experience. Be prepared to think on your feet and provide examples to back up anything you say.

<https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/lms/medicine/mbchb-medicine-and-surgery/how-to-apply/>

Advice from the Medical Schools Council on work experience:

In addition to high academic achievement, medical schools look for commitment, perseverance, initiative, originality, personal integrity, concern for others and the ability to communicate.

Applicants should demonstrate some understanding of what a career in medicine involves and their understanding of, and suitability for, a caring profession. Applicants may draw on relevant work experience, either paid or voluntary, in health or related areas, to demonstrate this understanding.

Medical schools recognise that practical experience in hospices and residential homes, or domestic caring responsibilities, is equally appropriate as work in a conventional healthcare setting such as a hospital or GP surgery. More important than the experience itself is the ability to demonstrate an understanding of the relevant skills and attributes the profession requires by reflecting upon and drawing on any experience you may have.

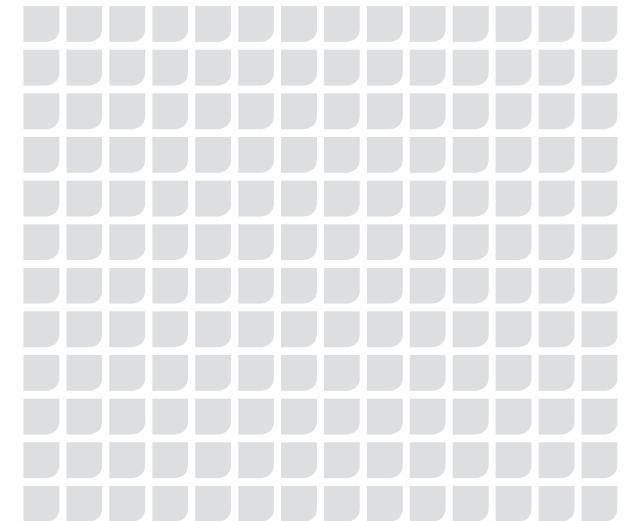
<https://www.medschools.ac.uk/studying-medicine/applications>



Lancaster University
Medical School

Work Experience

Our top tips



What our students say...

When applying for medical school the most important thing about the experiences you have had is not the experiences themselves (i.e. the type, nature, or length of experience) - the thing of greatest importance is what you have learned from your experiences. Whether your experiences are healthcare related or not, by applying what you have learnt to a career in healthcare, you are able to demonstrate an awareness of what the future holds, and that you have taken the time to prepare yourself for such a future.

Zachary Thomas, Pendle College

[I volunteered at a] local dementia care home where I would go and help with breakfast and just talk to some of the residents. I enjoyed this placement so much, that it has led me to volunteering on a dementia ward in [Royal Lancaster Infirmary].

Brooke Davies, Pendle College

I became an inpatient volunteer at East Lancashire Hospice. I completed the volunteer application form on their website and was invited for an interview. In order to shadow an Oncologist Consultant at University Hospitals Birmingham, I emailed the person responsible for work experience there and proceeded to complete the forms she emailed through. I enhanced my communication and listening skills through observation and participation of the consultations that took place with patients.

Summer Gideir, Furness College

I worked for 2 years as a Sales Assistant at an Iceland store, learning skills including communication, time management, working under pressure, working in a team and working independently. I stated these qualities in my personal statement and adapted these experiences in interview to talk about team working and responsibility.

Charlotte Brighton, Lonsdale College

What our students say...

In my experience, many people found the prospect of getting shadowing experience in particular very daunting, but there are lots of doctors out there who are happy to help, it's just important to keep trying. I found it important to remember that the aim of my placements was not to acquire medical knowledge. I found it much more useful to ensure that a career in medicine is what I truly wanted, as going into medical training is a big commitment!

Oliver Drever, County College

I applied to Age UK to serve tea and coffee to the patients and their visitors on the ward of the local cottage hospital, and sit and talk to any patients who didn't have any visitors. I used all this in both my personal statement and interview.

Emily Douglas, Lonsdale College

During the hospital placement I shadowed clinicians in A & E, MDT meetings, on ward rounds, in the Histology and Haematology departments, and observed a colectomy of the distal part of a bowel containing a tumour. It gave me a decent insight into the day to day workings of the NHS. I included 'qualities of a good doctor' in my personal statement with examples such as Specialists and Consultants needing each other's input to produce the best outcomes for patients.

Sam Frampton, County College

When visiting many different departments to mainly look at different types of hip fractures, [I learnt that] other orthopaedic surgeons in other areas of the country rarely see hip fractures, and they were common in my local hospital because my area has an older population – my first exposure to epidemiology and other subjects other than medical science.

Charlie Thurston, Pendle College



"In my personal statement, I included other topics/activities such as the DofE Gold and what I gained from this (for example, improved teamwork) and the EPQ, mentioning that it increased my skills in areas such as independent research and time management."

Amy Gaffney, Pendle College