



A&M's COMPLETE GUIDE

GETTING INTO MEDICAL SCHOOL

2017
ENTRY

created by

Ahmed Morgan & Mosab Ahmed

A&M's Complete Guide **GETTING INTO MEDICAL SCHOOL**

created by
Ahmed Morgan & Mosab Ahmed

All rights reserved. This book or any portion thereof may not be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except for the use of brief quotations in a book review.

Disclaimer

While we try to keep the information up-to-date and correct at the time of creation, the authors cannot accept responsibility for any errors or omissions, however caused. There are no representations or warranties about the completeness, accuracy, reliability or suitability of the information in this book. No responsibility for loss or damage occasioned to any person acting, or refraining from action, as a result of the material in this publication can be accepted by either of the authors.

Contents

Introduction	1
PART A YOUR APPLICATION	2
1 The Ultimate Checklist	3
2 Choosing Your Universities	6
3 Foundation Courses	10
4 Universities & Their Requirements	15
5 Work Experience & Volunteering	48
6 Writing a Personal Statement	54
7 Student Finance	73
8 Further Reading	75
PART B THE NHS	77
9 Structure of the NHS	78
10 Values & Principles of the NHS	80
11 Important NHS Topics	83
12 Medicine as a Career in the NHS	86
PART C THE UKCAT	88
13 UKCAT Introduction	89
14 Section 1 - Verbal Reasoning	94
15 Section 2 - Quantitative Reasoning	104
16 Section 3 - Abstract Reasoning	108
17 Section 5 - Situational Judgement	114
18 Top Tips	122
PART D THE BMAT	124
19 BMAT Introduction	125
20 Section 1 - Aptitude and Skills	129
21 Section 2 - Scientific Knowledge and Applications	133
22 Section 3 - Writing Task	140
23 Top Tips	147
PART E INTERVIEWS	148
24 Introduction to Interviews	149

25	How to Prepare	151
26	The Answering Principles	154
27	Ethics of Medicine	156
28	Questions & Stations	158
29	Group Exercises	208
30	Top Tips	211

PART F CLOSING

214

31	Common Myths	215
32	Conclusion	217

FREE SAMPLE www.completemedguide.com

Introduction

We are two medical students who feel that the resources available for future applicants aren't good enough. They're mostly outdated, full of nonsense and light on detail. We'd know. We massively struggled trying to get our heads around the quagmire of resources and contradictory information.

After spending a huge amount of time researching and working on our application we decided that we could make something better. Something that would help you get into medical school. Something that was practical, comprehensive and up to date.

A bit more about us....

If you'd asked us a few years ago if we could be doctors we would have laughed at the suggestion. With middling school exam results, a defeatist attitude and an unrealistic view of what it takes to get in, we were in a situation that many wannabe medical students find themselves in.

After a long and stressful application cycle, we can look back and smile. We put in a huge amount of effort and came out with interviews from 100% of our applications. That's right. We each got 4 interviews. We also got offers from our top university choices and scored in the top percentiles for all our entrance exams.

The sharp contrast between what we know about applying for medical school now versus what we knew before applying is a big reason that we chose to write this book. If we'd had then what we have now, the whole process would have been so much easier and less stressful. Although we were successful at getting our top choices, we would have had a much greater chance of securing those coveted offers with the knowledge you'll find in this book.

Join us and we will show you how to massively increase your chances at getting that dream offer to go to medical school.

Let's get started.

Part A

Your Application

FREE SAMPLE www.completemedguide.com

CHAPTER 2

Choosing Your Universities

UCAS allows you to apply to 4 medical schools. Making this decision can be hugely challenging, as you have to strike a balance between applying to your favourite universities and applying to your strengths. It's important to be realistic with your application and this chapter will help guide you through how to make the best decisions.

Things that can influence your decision

- Which teaching styles appeal to you
- What your school grades are
- How much work experience you have
- How your entrance exams went
- The entrance requirements of the university
- The location of the university

Depending on your application profile, some universities may be off limits. By understanding what each university wants, you'll be able to more easily narrow down your options. Use this chapter to help you brainstorm about where to apply. You want to balance your favourite universities with the ones that give you the greatest chance of getting in. It's a myth that all universities are equally difficult to get into. Everyone has weaknesses and strengths and identifying them can drastically improve your chances of achieving your goal. For example, if your weakness is the UKCAT, you may want to steer clear of universities that heavily use it. This isn't necessarily a hard and fast rule but it's vital to consider if you want 3 or even 4 interview invites. Ask yourself whether getting into your favourite university is more important than becoming a doctor.

KEYPOINT

Always check the website of each university as the entry criteria change from year to year. You need to know the requirements inside and out to avoid getting a rejection.

The Decision Process

Below are the **5 steps** that you should work through in order to decide which universities to apply to.

Step 1 - Think About Possible Universities

Before you can make a final decision, you have to sit the appropriate entrance exams and see how you do in them. This means you first need a rough idea of where you would like to go. Most people will sit the UKCAT, but you also need to look at whether or not the BMAT universities appeal to you. Have a look at all of the medical universities and get an idea of which you may want to study at. This initial shortlist will allow you to plan for the appropriate exams and sit them so that you can move on to step 2.

Step 2 - Identify Your Strengths & Weaknesses

Sit down and reflect on your application. Identify which areas make you stand out. Think about the following: your UKCAT score, your GCSE grades (especially maths/English), your A-Level predictions and the quality of your work experience.

Alongside this, think about what you're weak in. Do you have a bad UKCAT score? A C grade in GCSE maths? Only a small amount of work experience? By doing this, you'll know which universities you'd best avoid.

Analysing your application can be difficult when it comes to the BMAT as the results are released after you apply. This means that you'll have to take the risks you feel are appropriate.

Make a list of all the pros/cons of your application and be honest.

CHAPTER 4

Universities & Their Requirements

Here we have broken down the key things you should know about each university. This will help you compare and contrast, making your decision easier. The data is key to applying smart and should form the basis of your shortlisting. However, be sure to thoroughly read each university website as the details may be different during your application cycle. We do our best to keep everything up to date, but small changes regularly happen.

University of Aberdeen (A100, MBChB, 5 yrs)

Entrance Exam	UKCAT. Considered alongside academic achievements. No minimum cut-off is used. SJT may be used to decide between two similar applicants. Minimum score interviewed in 2015/2016 was 2180 and minimum score for someone getting an offer was 2480.
A-Levels	AAA. Requires chemistry and 1 more from either biology, human biology, maths or physics.
GCSEs	C in English and maths. Biology and physics or dual award science are recommended. Require As and Bs at GCSE especially in the sciences.
Admissions Process	UKCAT scores and predicted/achieved academic results are weighed and the top 800 applicants are interviewed. Offers are based on 20% UKCAT, 30% academics and 50% interview performance.
Interview Style	MMI. Each station is 7 minutes and tests different skills. Communication is assessed in each station.
Teaching Style	Integrated with clinical cases being the focus.
Applicants:Interviews:Offers	(2015) 2436:749:416

University College London (A100, MBBS, 6 yrs)

Entrance Exam	BMAT. Used alongside rest of application to decide who to interview. Scores below average will disadvantage applicants.
A-Levels	A*AA. Must include biology and chemistry with A* in either one.
GCSEs	<p>English and maths at grade B and for UK students, C in a foreign language. GCSEs are scored 1-5:</p> <p>GCSE score 1: Maths, English and science subjects with all A* grades. Overall, more than ten GCSEs (taken in one year) with at least half A* and the rest at A.</p> <p>GCSE score 2: Maths, English and science subjects with at least three A* and the rest A grades. Overall 9-10 GCSEs (taken in one year) with at least half A* and the rest A.</p> <p>GCSE score 3: Maths, English and science subjects with at least one or two A* and the rest A grades. Overall seven or more GCSEs (taken in one year) with grades of A* to B.</p> <p>GCSE score 4: No A* grades in Maths, English or science subjects. Resitting any of these subjects would also drop an applicant down to GCSE score 4 even if they have achieved highly in other less relevant subjects.</p> <p>GCSE score 5: The lowest score. Mostly below B grades and/or a smaller number of GCSEs than normal (e.g. six or fewer) without good explanation (such as moving to UK from a different schooling system).</p>

Admissions Process	Applicants are looked at as a whole. This includes assessing academics, personal statement (including motivation and attitude to medicine, teamwork, leadership, communication), independent learning such as doing the EPQ or research), work experience, other interests, reference, and BMAT results. Personal statements are marked as either below average, average or above average.
Interview Style	Panel with 2-3 interviewers. You are given your BMAT essay and you may have to discuss it.
Teaching Style	Integrated
Applicants:Interviews:Offers	Roughly 2400:720:450
Notes	Good for well-rounded candidates. Good for candidates with only small weaknesses.

CHAPTER 5

Work Experience & Volunteering

Having work and voluntary experience is vital to getting into medical school. There's absolutely no way you'll get in without it. How much you need is up for debate, but it's generally more about the quality of your experience than the content.

Why it's Important

Work experience allows you to find out whether you're suited to a career in medicine and whether it's something that you'll enjoy. If you spend a week rotating around different hospital departments and a week in a GP practice and hated both of them, maybe you should reconsider your application. You may grow into it but be honest with yourself. The only way you'll be happy in medicine is if you truly want to be there.

Universities like work experience as they want applicants who have seen what real medicine is like and have not been put off by it. As well as this, certain types of experience like volunteering and caring work are desirable as universities want candidates who can demonstrate altruistic characteristics in their daily lives. Simply put, it helps show them that you have the understanding, drive, and skills to become a doctor.

Work experience and volunteering makes up a huge portion of your application. Your personal statement would be weak without it and your interview performance will suffer from the lack of examples to talk about.

The Different Kinds of Experience

There are several types of experience that you can arrange and you should aim to get involved with as many as possible. However, don't worry if you only get 1 or 2 examples. It's all about what you get from the experience and how you sell it to your university. Here are the main categories:

Clinical

This experience is generally 1-2 weeks long and based in either a hospital or a GP surgery. You'll shadow doctors (and possibly other healthcare professionals) as they go about their daily work. The aim is to find out what healthcare is like in reality and use that understanding to show universities that you have thoroughly researched your career choice. It's also great to help you see what skills healthcare professionals need.

Caring

This is usually a long term commitment lasting several months. It involves any kind of work where you contribute to the care of others. For example, you can volunteer at a care home or hospice and spend time with the residents. You can also work as a healthcare assistant or help those who have learning disabilities. This is a flexible category of experience and the aim is to contribute to your community and develop your interpersonal skills - things that universities want to see in future doctors.

Charity

This can either be long or short term and involves any charity work you do. For example, working in a charity shop, volunteering at a youth club, homeless shelter or volunteering with St John's ambulance/ the Red Cross. Some of the experiences will overlap with those that are caring and so you don't necessarily need to do separate caring and charity work. The aim is to help others and donate your time to show altruism and caring.

KEYPOINT

Although caring and charity experience can take months, it only requires spending 1 day a week doing it. You don't have to go every day. It's easy to find this time and so do your best to get it. A little experience is better than no experience.

What You Need to Do

The earlier you start the better. Getting particular kinds of experience can be very time consuming and the last thing you want to do is to get your placement sorted

CHAPTER 6

Writing a Personal Statement

Your personal statement is your chance to sell yourself. However, it seems that universities seem to place less emphasis on it as time goes by. This may be due to the fact that most applicants have very similar statements and so it's getting hard to tell them apart. That being said, a good statement is still vital to success as many places still use it for selection and it tends to form the basis of many interview questions.

Key Points to Cover

There are several things that you must mention in your statement. Missing any of them will weaken your application.

- Why you want to study medicine
- What your academic history is/ what your interests are
- What work/ voluntary experience you have
 - What you have learnt from it
 - How it has developed your skills/ shown you their importance
- What your hobbies/ interests are
 - What you have learnt from it
 - How it has developed your skills/ shown you their importance
- What qualities you possess which a good medical student/ doctor needs

Things to Avoid

The people who assess personal statements are likely to have seen hundreds if not thousands of them. This means that you need to do your best to avoid the common phrases and mistakes that people make. You want to make your personal statement as fresh as possible and that can be hard. Start off by avoiding these things:

- **Don't mention every piece of experience you've ever had.** Focus on the important ones that you can somehow relate to medicine and being a

Part C

The UKCAT

FREE SAMPLE www.completemedguide.com

CHAPTER 14

Section 1 - Verbal Reasoning

This section tests your reading speed and comprehension. The idea is to find out if you're able to come to a correct conclusion after being presented with a large amount of information. There are 44 questions and you have 21 minutes to answer them with 1 extra minute to read the section instructions at the beginning. There are 11 passages that have 4 questions each. This gives you 2 minutes per passage, which includes reading and answering time. In effect, this gives you less than 20 seconds per question after you factor in reading time. An important thing to bear in mind is that the passages will vary in length quite a bit so you'll find that you spend much longer on some questions than others. You should therefore think about your time averaged over the whole section rather than rigidly sticking to and worrying about a certain time for each question.

Question Types

There are two question types in this section and they each require a different approach.

1) True/False/Can't Tell

This is the simpler type of question but you'll only find around 2-3 passages that follow it. You'll be given a passage and various statements regarding it. You'll then have to choose whether the statement is true or false. If you can't find a clear answer in the text, then you pick can't tell.

True – The statement is backed up by the information in the passage

False – The statement is disproved by the information in the passage

Can't Tell – There's not enough information in the passage to decide whether or not the statement is correct

Here's an example:

When a text is in the public domain, anyone--from you to the world's biggest publisher--can edit it and republish the edited version. When the edits are substantial enough, the edited work is deemed a "new edition", and gets a new copyright, dating from the time the new edition was created.

How substantial must the edits be to qualify as a "new edition"? That is for a court to decide in any particular case. Changing some punctuation or Americanizing British spelling would not qualify a work for a new edition. Theorizing something about Shakespeare and rewriting lots of lines in "Hamlet" to emphasize your point would make a new edition. In between those extremes is a grey area, where each new edition would have to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

A special case, that isn't quite a new edition, is when someone "marks up" a public domain text in, for example, HTML. Where this happens, the text is in the public domain, but the markup is copyrighted. We've already seen that when an editor adds footnotes to a public domain text, he owns copyright on the footnotes but not on the text: similarly, when he adds markup to the text, he owns copyright on the markup.

Q) A text that has a new introduction can qualify as a 'new edition'

- A. True
- B. False
- C. Can't Tell

Answer: C - Can't Tell. The passage states that it 'is for a court to decide in any particular case'. This means that we can't truly come to a conclusion with whether or not the statement is true or false. Because the passage is not clear, we say that we can't tell.

Q) A text in the public domain can be edited by people other than the original author

- A. True
- B. False
- C. Can't Tell

Answer: A - True. The passage states that 'When a text is in the public domain, anyone--from you to the world's biggest publisher--can edit it'. This supports the statement and so we say that it's true.

Q) If a text is classed as a 'new edition', the copyright date does not change

- A. True
- B. False
- C. Can't Tell

Answer: B - False. The passage states that 'a new copyright, dating from the time the new edition was created' is used. This means that the statement is false as it's disproved by information from the passage.

Inferences – Certain questions ask you to discern what a passage is trying to get across without directly stating it. The key here is to be aware of the fact that for something to be inferred from the passage that it must not require anything but small leaps in logic; anything that requires complex thinking is unlikely to be supported by the passage.

Tackling Type 1 Questions

We feel that the best way to tackle these questions is to read the statement first and then scan the passage for keywords from the statement. You then read the sentence before and after, and the answer should hopefully be contained there. For example, for statement 1, a key phrase is 'new edition'. Scanning the passage for this will bring your eyes first to the first paragraph. This doesn't show your answer and so you should keep scanning. The second time 'new edition' is mentioned is the second paragraph where you'll then find the answer to your statement. Try and use this technique for all T/F/C questions.

2) Comprehension

The majority of questions in the test will be of this type. These questions are more difficult and will take more time to answer as they require you to think more critically about the passage. They consist of a passage and 4 answer choices.

Whilst these questions may seem very different from the true/false/can't tell questions, many of them operate on similar principles. No matter the phrasing of the question, you're looking out for the statement that supports it and it will be the only one of the 4 that does. The other statements will either not support it at

no point trying to get a hard question right if it causes you to lose so much time that you aren't able to answer 3 easy ones.

Don't Read the Whole Passage

There are approaches where reading the passage before the question works for some, but generally you want to avoid it as it will waste a lot of time, especially if you're a slow reader.

FREE SAMPLE www.completemedguide.com

CHAPTER 15

Section 2 - Quantitative Reasoning

This section tests your mathematical skills. There are 36 questions and you have 24 minutes to answer them, with 1 extra minute to read the section instructions at the beginning. This gives you around 40 seconds per question. Some you'll be able to answer very quickly and this will give you more time for the longer questions. You'll have different data sets (e.g. graphs/tables) and several questions for each. The topics are up to GCSE level and the calculations are all fairly simple. The key is to identify important information and equations you need quickly.

You're provided with a non-erasable whiteboard/ laminated piece of paper and a marker pen. You'll need to use it to note down any interim answers you get as the computer based calculator you are provided with doesn't have a memory function or brackets and some calculations will require multiple steps.

Every year the same topics come up. Below we have listed the key areas that you should read up on and practice. You don't get any equations in the exam and so you should remember the key ones.

Question Types

- Percentages (% changes, increases, decreases)
- Volumes and surface areas of 3D shapes (i.e. cubes and cylinders, nothing complex like spheres or pyramids will come up)
- Reading graphs and tables
- Speed and distance
- Areas and perimeters of 2D shapes (square, rectangle, triangle, circle, awkward shapes)
- Simple division/subtraction/multiplication/addition
- Averages (mode, median, mean)

Part E

Interviews

FREE SAMPLE www.completemedguide.com

How to Prepare

The core of your preparation will be the same no matter the interview styles you have to sit. In this chapter we'll break down everything you need to do to stand out and get your offer.

Step 1 - Background

To start with, you have to find out exactly what your interviews will be like. Although universities generally look for similar things, they have differences that are important to be aware of; one university may look for personal characteristics that another may not place as much or any emphasis on.

Head to the university's website and thoroughly read all of the medical school's pages, especially the interview section, which will contain information that should guide your preparation. Look for the skills that they expect you to show, and if it's an MMI interview, note down what the stations will be. Your preparation and this book will help you think of ways to demonstrate those skills in an interview situation.

You can also browse the internet to find out what other students have said about the interview process at your university. Try searching 'your university name' + 'medicine interview' + 'forum'.

KEYPOINT

'thestudentroom.co.uk' has threads dedicated to each medical school dating back several years. This can be an excellent resource for preparing for your interview.

Things to look for

- How many people you'll be assessed by
- Who you'll be assessed by
- Interview/ station length
- The characteristics and skills they want you to demonstrate
- Knowing this information will make you more comfortable and will help you to avoid any nasty surprises on the day

Step 2 - Research

Now that you know what to expect from your interview, you need to intimately familiarise yourself with the medical course offered at the university. This means knowing:

- The length of the course
- The support resources available including both educational and pastoral support
- Intercalation options
- What type of anatomy teaching it offers i.e. prosection/dissection/mixture
- Learning resources available e.g. if the teaching hospital has a library available for student use
- Electives/optional modules available
- Research opportunities available to students
- The styles of teaching (i.e. integrated/spiral/traditional)
- The locations of where you'll be taught, (i.e. the campus/teaching hospitals)

Once you feel confident that you know everything about the school and the course itself, it's time to set your sights a bit wider and learn about the university in general. This doesn't need to be at the same thorough level as your preparation for the medical school and course. This means briefly covering its history, what departments it has, its extra-curricular activities, what the student union offers and general activities available to you as a medical student that sound interesting. If you're applying to a collegiate university then you should do the same for the college you're interviewing for as well.

Ethics of Medicine

Ethical dilemmas are a favourite of interviewers as they give them an insight into your thinking process. They may ask you for a specific conclusion but the key is to be considerate of both sides of the argument. As a doctor you'll have to make any difficult decisions, and being able to understand different points of view is a very important skill.

You should familiarise yourself and be able to apply the 4 bioethical principles: autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence and justice to practical questions in an interview. These are the core guiding principles you need to consider when answering an ethical question.

Autonomy is about respecting the patient rights as an individual and providing them the ability to make their own decisions. An example is giving a patient all of the information about two different treatments and then asking them which they would like to go with. This is a core tenet of medicine and is something you must always bear in mind.

Things can get complicated when you're dealing with children (under 16 years), adolescents, and those who may be mentally unwell. This is where the idea of 'competence' comes in. As a doctor it's important to assess whether or not people are able to understand the information presented to them and make an informed decision. For example, a 5 year old child is unlikely to understand which form of treatment is best for them. This means that their parents have control over the decision making. Gillick competency is a test that is used to assess whether kids under the age of 16 are able to be treated as adults. As well as competence, the patient must not be under any coercion for their autonomy to be respected e.g. a parent pressuring their adult child into not accepting a procedure.

Beneficence is the act of doing good towards a patient. An example is giving a patient medication to relieve their pain. Doctors have a duty to help their patients, and this includes both removal of things harmful to a patient as well as giving them something to feel better. Whilst you could think that this value is supreme

2) Medical Course & Career Questions

Why not nursing?

What they're looking for:

- That you truly want medicine and won't have second thoughts about another career. You need to show that you have thought about it seriously and realistically
- That you aren't doing it for a reason like prestige or money

Ideas:

- Doctors study science in much more depth
- Doctors have more leadership and decision making power when it comes to patient treatment
- There are wider career options available (e.g. surgery or medicine)
- There's a wide range of roles that nurses don't have (e.g. diagnosis, operations)

Key Points:

- DON'T downplay the role that nurses have. Acknowledge their importance before going on to explain why medicine

What traits do you think doctors need?

What they're looking for:

- That you understand and are aware of the traits you'll need to possess to be a successful doctor

Ideas:

- They have to be good with people - always interacting with patients and other staff members
- They have to be very organised - time is very stretched and you have to work efficiently to see as many patients as possible
- They have to have excellent communication skills - the role involves counselling patients on difficult diseases and drugs as well as frequently giving bad news. They also work with many people and communication is key to effective practice

- They have to be passionate - the career is very challenging and you can only succeed if you truly care about it
- They have to be excellent team workers - most of medicine involves working in a team and it's important that this is done properly to maximise quality of care
- They have to be able to deal with a lot of pressure - being a doctor is incredibly stressful

Key Points:

- Pick a few points that you personally feel are important. They all are so there isn't a wrong answer. However, it's always good to have one along the lines of having good people skills/being good at communication
- Take a look at Tomorrow's Doctors and the GMC's Good Medical Practice documents online for more ideas

What can you contribute to our medical school?

What they're looking for:

- That you'll be proactive during university and will bring something to the table as well as learn from them

Ideas:

- Taking part in a wide range of societies. Mention a few examples of ones that have caught your eye, don't just go for the medically related ones.
- Maybe you have a really professional work ethic that will make the university look good
- Maybe you want to set up your own society
- Maybe you enjoy mentoring and want to help other students
- What skills will you bring with you? Strong leadership? Teamwork? A drive to succeed?

Key Points:

- This question can be difficult but try to think of at least 4 good points. Focus on the strengths you have that you can pass on to others

3) Top News Questions

Tell us about something you have read about in the news (healthcare/science article)

What they're looking for:

- That you have an interest in healthcare/science and keep up to date with current affairs

Ideas:

- Read the news every week leading up to your interview
- Make a note of any interesting articles that you read
- Maybe something related to patient care, a scientific discovery, or news about the NHS
- Make sure you're ready to answer follow up questions regarding the topic. Don't pick something you aren't clued up on
- Think about the following: what the article is about, what was the purpose of the study, what the main findings were, what methodology was used (be brief), what was good/bad about the research/news, what questions are still unanswered.
- Not all of the above points will apply to each article so use your judgement

Key Points:

- DO read around the topic
- DO understand the topic so that you can answer any follow up questions
- Choose something that would be interesting to someone who hasn't read anything about it before
- DON'T pick something too controversial or negative

What is a recent ethical dilemma you have read about?

What they're looking for:

- That you're able to critically analyse an ethical issue that you have read about

Ideas:

- Euthanasia

- Should people who help patients travel to assisted suicide clinics be prosecuted?
- Opt-in/ opt-out organ donation
- Designer babies
- Mandatory vaccination
- Anything that sparks debate in the news. Make sure it's current

Key Points:

- Provide arguments for and against and make up a conclusion. Be careful to not take a hard-line stance on any issues, acknowledge the fact that it's a very difficult topic to make your mind up about
- Try to keep your example as one related to medicine
- Brush up on recent ethical issues on the news a few weeks before your interview
- DON'T take a stance that is too strong when making any opinions
- DON'T pick anything overly sensitive or controversial (e.g. religion)

What do you think about privatisation of the NHS?

What they're looking for:

- That you're able to critically analyse the issue

Ideas:

- + May bring higher quality services as people compete for contracts
- + May help relieve staffing issues
- + May be quicker to adapt as local decisions are made locally and not nationally
- + Demand for the NHS is rapidly increasing, privatisation may be a way of helping to reduce the burden on the NHS.
- + More patient choice.
- May lead to profits being prioritised over patients
- The public might lose confidence in doctors
- The poorer in society may have less access to healthcare
- People may avoid seeking primary care treatment which can lead to more expensive secondary care and increased A&E usage
- Accountability may be reduced due to less transparency

8) Ethical Questions

What do you think about euthanasia?

For:

- Allows the patient to exercise their right to self-determination
- Benevolent act as you're helping to end their suffering
- It's already practised in Switzerland and doing it here would help to make people who would otherwise choose to travel there be able to die at home instead
- Patients can avoid a lengthy and unnecessary suffering period
- Patients can die with dignity at a time of their choosing

Against:

- In the UK, euthanasia is currently illegal
- Assessing mental capacity is crucial and, as it's difficult to do so, it can lead to inappropriate situations especially concerning patients who are mentally ill or who have learning disabilities
- It goes against current medical ethics and codes of conduct which state that doctors should do no harm
- The patient may change their mind at a later time
- The patient's condition may improve
- It's very difficult to set criteria for who would be allowed to be euthanised
- May erode the public's confidence in doctors
- Some healthcare professionals may be against it for ethical reasons

Should organ donation be opt-out?

For:

- Get to save more lives
- People who may be happy to donate may not bother to say so, so a default opt-out list would make it easier

Against:

- Some people are against it for personal/religious reasons
- Can be distressing for friends/family
- There might be a taboo with opting out, making people feel ashamed of doing so

9) MMI Stations

There are a wide range of possible scenarios for each station and so it's unrealistic to prepare for everything. Here we have listed a few examples and written key points that can be applied to any situation.

As a reminder, you should compile a list of questions that could be asked for the stations in your interview. If a station is based on a trait (e.g. empathy), think of examples from your own life where you demonstrated it, as well as when you saw doctors at work demonstrating it.

Communication skills

Example Situation:

- A conversation with an actor playing a disinterested patient

What they're looking for:

- That you speak clearly and are easy to understand
- That you're professional and calm
- That you listen and don't interrupt the person when they're speaking
- That you can build rapport with the patient
- That you make good eye contact and maintain open body language (i.e. uncrossed legs/arms)

Key Points:

- DON'T interrupt the person whilst they are speaking
- DON'T laugh at the person unless they are making a clear joke
- DON'T make too many jokes. Remember to be professional
- DON'T use jargon

Empathy and listening skills

Example Situation:

- A conversation with an actor playing an upset/worried patient

What they're looking for:

- That you ask the patient how they're feeling

Group Exercises

Some interviews feature a group assessment component where you're expected to complete a task or discuss a topic. During medical school and in your career as a doctor, you'll frequently be expected to work in a team towards a common goal which is why many medical schools want to see that you're competent at this.

The group tasks that you can do at interview can vary wildly but the skills and characteristics that assessors are expecting you to demonstrate tend to be similar.

The first thing to do is to ensure you fully read and understand the instructions provided. You should make sure you read it twice and take note of all important information - this is an easy step that many do wrongly. Keep the instructions in the forefront of your mind and make sure that everything you do on the day doesn't contravene them. You'll come across poorly if you stray from what the assessors expect.

You'll be expected to show that you're a good communicator, which involves speaking clearly and addressing the whole group, making sure to never interrupt and to make it very clear that you're listening to anyone that's speaking. Good ways to do this are to make eye contact with anyone that is speaking and to face in their direction. You can also try to involve participants who are being quiet, showing that you care about all team members. Just try to make it natural and not forced - don't overly prompt a quiet member of the group who clearly doesn't want to speak. Don't act like a robot.

Since this is a group task, you need to show that you're taking the other group members' views into account at all times. You would do this by asking what other people think about what you have just said after you make a point or asking what everyone thinks before a final decision is made. This can be easily incorporated into any answer you give by first making the point you want to make to the group and then asking if anyone has any other ideas. This shows that you're not the type of person who would try to dominate group work. Whilst it's important to try and get quieter members involved to get everyone's input, don't do this at the cost of