

Medical School Selection Playbook

How to choose your four UCAS Medicine choices using what each school actually measures — not a league table. Built from the published admissions criteria of 41 UK medical schools.

Profile-based shortlisting

UCAT strategy

GCSE weighting

Contextual routes

Self-audit worksheet

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What is in this Playbook

Four choices, spent where your particular profile is worth the most. Sections 01–05 are the framework; the rest is reference — jump to your situation.

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06 · YOUR PROFILE

If your UCAT is low

A low score is a constraint, not a verdict. The strategy is to spend all four choices at schools where the UCAT is **diluted** — either weighted against something you are strong at, or explicitly not used as a cut-off.

DO THIS

- Target schools weighting UCAT *with* academics, so strong grades pull you up
- Target schools that state there is no cut-off
- Check your **SJT band** first — a Band 1 or 2 keeps doors open that a Band 4 slams
- Look hard at graduate-entry and contextual routes (Section 15)

AVOID THIS

- Schools that publish a number you are clearly below — that choice is spent
- Pure-ranking schools in a strong year
- Assuming a great statement compensates: at most schools it is not even read first
- Applying to all four in the same family

Where a weak score costs you least

These schools state, in their own words, that there is no UCAT cut-off. That does not mean the score is ignored — several still rank on it — but it does mean a low score is not an automatic rejection before anything else is read.

SCHOOLS THAT STATE THERE IS NO UCAT CUT-OFF

MEDICAL SCHOOL	WHAT THEY SAY
East Anglia	No cut-off score — a high score is advantageous but a low score does not disqualify
Dundee	No minimum cut-off score (explicitly stated)
Cardiff	No minimum threshold — 'we don't have a minimum threshold score'
Aberdeen	No cut-off — ranked in deciles (UCAT is 20% of assessment weighting)
Exeter	No fixed cut-off — UCAT weighted with academics into an 'Exeter score' used to rank for interview
Edge Hill	No fixed threshold — set each year based on interview capacity; SJT Band 4 automatically excluded
Newcastle	No fixed cut-off — points awarded on total UCAT score; SJT Band 4 excludes candidates
Birmingham	No published minimum cut-off

Aberdeen weights the UCAT at 20% of the assessment and ranks in deciles; Exeter folds it into a combined "Exeter score" with academics. Both are structurally kinder to a candidate whose strength is grades rather than the test.

WHY THE WEIGHTING FAMILY DECIDES YOUR LIST

A threshold school asks **"is your score high enough?"** A ranking school asks **"is your score higher than theirs?"** A weighting school asks **"what is your score plus everything else?"** Only the third question lets a strength elsewhere in your application rescue a weak UCAT — which is why, if the test is your weak point, this is the family your shortlist should lean on.

CHECK YOUR BAND BEFORE YOU DESPAIR

A middling cognitive score with SJT Band 1 is a meaningfully different application from the same score with Band 4. Several schools reject on band alone — see the next page.

13 · THE APPLICATION

Who actually reads your statement

This is the section that surprises applicants most. A substantial number of UK medical schools state plainly that the personal statement is **not scored at any stage** of selection. If that is news to you, it should change how you allocate your remaining time.

SCHOOLS THAT STATE THE PERSONAL STATEMENT IS NOT SCORED

MEDICAL SCHOOL	WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT THE PERSONAL STATEMENT
Queen Mary (QMUL)	No — explicitly not scored at any stage
Nottingham	No — explicitly not used for interview selection
Hull York	No — 'we do not score your personal statement'
Brighton & Sussex	No — explicitly not used in admissions
Plymouth	No — 'we do not currently consider personal statements or work experience'
Lancaster	No — 'we do not score or rank it at any stage'
Anglia Ruskin	No
Liverpool	Not routinely used for interview invites

These are the schools' own words, taken from their published admissions information. Note how unambiguous several of them are.

Where it still counts

WHERE THE PERSONAL STATEMENT STILL CARRIES WEIGHT

MEDICAL SCHOOL	HOW IT IS USED
Keele	Yes — ranked on a combination of UCAT and personal statement scores
Kent & Medway	Only for applicants without school performance data (Groups C/E)
Newcastle	Checked after interview, before offers — not used in initial selection
ScotGEM	No — not scored, but discussed at interview

IF YOUR STATEMENT IS YOUR STRENGTH

This is a real profile — strong reflective writing, unusual experience, a compelling reason for medicine. But it is only cashable at a minority of schools. Put Keele on your list and read the Kent and Medway conditions carefully; then accept that at your other choices the statement is a supporting document, not a lever.

THE REALLOCATION THIS IMPLIES

If three of your four choices do not score the statement, then the fourth week you were going to spend polishing it is worth more spent on UCAT technique or interview practice. Effort should follow weighting.