

## **MBBS Admissions Policy – 2009 Entry**

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**DURHAM UNIVERSITY**  
**SCHOOL OF MEDICINE & HEALTH – PHASE 1 MEDICINE**  
**MBBS Admissions Policy – 2009 Entry**

**1) Introduction**

The admissions process is supervised by the Associate Dean, acting on behalf of the Dean of Medicine. The Admissions Policy is intended to ensure that the process of student selection is free from discrimination of any kind. It is based on guidelines from the Medical Schools Council produced in consultation with the Commission for Racial Equality. In considering all applicants, the Medical School will take into account the General Medical Council's guidelines on [Fitness to Practise](#).

The admissions policy is reviewed annually by the MBBS Recruitment and Admissions Executive Committee (a joint committee of the Universities of Newcastle and of Durham). Since the policy is made freely available, via the World Wide Web and other sources, and in order to ensure that all applications are dealt with on the same basis, changes are not made part-way through the admissions cycle.

As a member of the UKCAT consortium Newcastle University and Durham University require valid<sup>1</sup> UKCAT scores as part of the entry requirements for medicine. (See [www.ukcat.ac.uk](http://www.ukcat.ac.uk) and section 11 for further information)

The Executive Committee takes a strategic overview of the admissions policy and ensures that the policy is applied using consistent principles to medical admissions to both Newcastle University and Durham University, [Queen's Campus](#), Stockton.

**2) Equal Opportunities Statement**

The Universities aim to ensure equality of opportunity for applicants and for all their students in teaching, learning and assessment, and in the provision of services. The Universities aim to create conditions whereby students are treated solely on the basis of their academic achievement, ability and potential,

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<sup>1</sup> Definition of 'valid', UKCAT scores can only be used in the year you achieved them.

regardless of age, religion or belief, ethnicity, gender, marital or family status, sexual orientation, or disability. However, selection for a medical degree course implies selection for the medical profession and all applicants must have the potential to fulfil the duties of a doctor as stated by the GMC in their document '[Good Medical Practice](#)'.

Admissions Selectors are drawn from a wide pool representative of gender and ethnicity and including individuals from healthcare, academic and lay backgrounds. All selectors and staff involved in the selection exercise are aware of their responsibility to implement the Universities' policies on equal opportunities and have participated in training sessions covering equal opportunities. Any selector who is found to be in breach of the Admissions Policy will be required to stand down from office.

As part of our policy review, admission statistics on ethnic origin, and gender and socio-economic background are regularly monitored.

Additional factors that will **not** determine the assessment of the UCAS application for medicine are:

- a) being from a medical family, or being related to a member of the Alumni or staff of either University or the Health Service
- b) inclusion of choices other than medicine in the UCAS application
- c) type of school or college attended
- d) political belief

### **3) Disability**

The Universities are committed to the principle of equal treatment of disabled persons and the proper application of the Disability Discrimination Act. Thus, an applicant who is judged academically suitable will, subject to the provisions of the Act, be neither treated less favourably nor placed at a substantial disadvantage on the grounds of disability, unless this can be justified within the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act. It is important for applicants to contact the Medical School and/or disability support unit to discuss the course requirements, and any concerns they may have, at an early stage. For all applicants/students, issues of good medical practice are taken into account at

admission and throughout the degree programme. Applicants should be aware that such requirements change from time to time in line with evolving guidance and prevailing legislation.

Applications from those with medical conditions which limit their day to day activities are welcomed; applicants are strongly encouraged to disclose their limitations or disabilities, of whatever nature, on their application. Selectors assess individuals on their personal and academic merits without reference to any declared disability or limitation.

Any applicant who (a) meets the academic requirements, (b) is called for interview, and (c) has declared a disability on the UCAS application form, may be contacted by Durham University Service for Students with Disabilities (DUSSD) with whom the applicant can discuss his/her support requirements, and in certain circumstances be invited for an information visit to ascertain if there are any access issues.

Most health conditions and impairments should not impede you from being accepted for training, though the Medical School does have to ensure that you are capable, with support if needed, of acquiring the core clinical skills and competencies to qualify, practise as a doctor and work safely with patients. The requirements are defined in the GMC publication, *Tomorrow's Doctors*, available at [www.gmc-uk.org](http://www.gmc-uk.org). Consequently, on accepting an offer to study at Durham University Phase 1 Medicine Programme, leading to the Newcastle University Medical Degree, all applicants will be contacted by the Occupational Health Service who will undertake confidential health screening prior to registration. Occupational Health will ask about all impairments and/or health conditions which could affect applicants throughout their training so that, where appropriate, they can advise the Medical School and discuss what adjustments can be provided.

#### **4) Health Requirements for Admissions and Continuing Practice**

The Medical School has an overriding duty of care to the public, with whom students come into close contact from the first term of their studies, and follows Department of Health guidance on health clearance for medical students. Details of immunisation requirements will be sent to every applicant on

acceptance of a conditional offer; however applicants are encouraged to monitor this website for any changes in requirements.

All successful applicants must produce at registration evidence required for standard health clearance; this includes evidence of immunisation against, or immunity to, measles, mumps, varicella, rubella, diphtheria, tetanus and polio, as well as non-infectivity to tuberculosis. Students will not be permitted clinical contact with patients until they have met these standard health clearance requirements. As a medical student you will be advised for your own protection to commence a programme of immunisation against Hepatitis B; applicants are strongly encouraged to begin their hepatitis B immunisation many months before registration on this course as the process is lengthy and is a requirement for some optional student placements.

Additional health clearance for non-infectivity to hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV will be required before any student is permitted to train or participate in any exposure-prone procedures. Durham University Phase 1 Medical Programme, leading to the Newcastle University Medical Degree, follows the Medical Schools Council protocol on such blood borne viruses:

<http://www.chms.ac.uk/publications.htm>. During the course students will be requested to be tested for Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV; all aspects of a student's medical record will be bound by the same duty of confidentiality as for any doctor-patient interaction and informed by the same ethical guidance. The status of any individual in respect of blood borne viruses will not be a factor in the admissions selection process and will not prevent them completing medical education.

## **5) Occupational Health**

On accepting an offer to study at Durham University Phase 1 Medical Programme, leading to Newcastle University Medical Degree, all applicants will be contacted by the Occupational Health Service who will ask about any impairments and/or health conditions which could affect applicants throughout their training so that, where appropriate, they can advise the Medical School and discuss what adjustments can be provided.

In certain circumstances, it may be necessary for applicants to undergo further Occupational Health Assessment with NHS Occupational Health staff before we are able to confirm their offer of a place. This assessment is designed to help us ensure that applicants are not only able to undertake the rigours of the MBBS programme, especially with respect to working with patients in the clinical setting, and meet its outcomes in line with the statutory requirements of the General Medical Council, but to also ensure that we provide any reasonable support necessary.

## **6) Fitness to Practise**

For all applicants/students issues of [fitness to practise](#) are taken into account at admission and throughout the degree programme.

The University is under a duty in the public interest to ensure that students following degrees leading to professional health care qualification meet relevant professional standards for fitness to practise. The University is also under a duty to ensure that no member of the public is harmed as a consequence of participating in the training of health care professionals. In discharging these duties, the welfare and safety of actual or potential patients is the University's chief concern. In addition, the University has a duty of care to its students, and must ensure that any decisions are made with the best interests of the student at heart, as part of its support and welfare strategy. This includes being sure, as far as possible, that a student is fit to undertake the rigours of a demanding programme of study and a demanding profession.

Students who experience problems concerning health or conduct which may affect their ability to register to practice medicine will have their cases referred to the Fitness to Practise procedure of the University of Newcastle upon Tyne for consideration. The School of Medicine & Health has a procedure in place designed to ensure the Fitness to Practise of its students. This procedure has been drawn up with specific reference to the guidance provided by appropriate health care professional bodies.

## **7) Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure**

The Medical School requires that new medical students undergo a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Enhanced disclosure check. This type of disclosure is

designed to check the background of individuals who will have a high degree of contact with children or vulnerable adults. Applicants who decide to firmly accept an offer of a place will be requested to initiate the process to obtain an Enhanced disclosure. We reserve the right to discontinue your studies on receipt of an unsatisfactory disclosure, or on discovery of failure to disclose information which appears on a CRB form. Enhanced Disclosure includes offences which would otherwise be regarded as spent, and includes police cautions.

### **8) Providing False or Misleading Information**

Applicants suspected of providing, or found to have provided, false information or application similarities shall be referred to UCAS if their application was originally submitted through that service. The University reserves the right to cancel an application and withdraw any offer if it is found that the application contains false or misleading information.

### **9) Description of Programmes and Application**

**A106 Five-year programme:** available as *either* a full five-year programme at Newcastle University *or* a programme which commences with the first two (pre-clinical) years at the Durham University, Queen's Campus Stockton before three years as a student at Newcastle University. Available to both 'home/EU' and 'International' students at Newcastle and Durham, Queen's Campus, Stockton. **Valid UKCAT scores are required.**

**Durham, Queen's Campus Medical Foundation Programme:** Queens Campus, Stockton accept a small number of students from their medical foundation programme. **Valid UKCAT scores will be required.**

All applicants should read carefully the full description of the [Phase II](#) programme of clinical training at Newcastle University. During Phase II, clinical teaching takes place in NHS facilities throughout the North East, and students may be required to spend prolonged periods at sites distant from either of the two University campuses.

Candidates making an application must indicate, in the 'Campus Code' section of their UCAS application, their campus preference as follows:

**D** - entry through the Durham University, Queen's Campus Stockton

**N** - entry through the Newcastle University

**E** - no preference (leaving the decision to be made by the Medical School)

A minority of candidates may choose to make multiple applications, e.g. to A106 at either/both Newcastle and Durham, Queen's Campus, Stockton. Such candidates should be aware that each will be considered as a separate choice of the four allowed for medicine. Selectors will consider candidates independently for each course to which they have applied.

## **10) The Admissions Process**

Applications are received from UCAS in the period from early September to 15th October. Entry to medicine is highly competitive.

All applications will be acknowledged on receipt by the School. Candidates should note that there can be a three-week delay between submitting an application to UCAS and the application being received by the School. We do not normally consider applications which have been submitted to UCAS after the 15 October deadline.

The selection process involves three stages: a) shortlisting; b) selective interview of shortlisted candidates; and c) making offers. The following are the processes used at Durham University.

### *a) Shortlisting*

Applications are assessed initially to check the acceptability of qualifications. At A level grades AAA are required. Subjects should include Chemistry or Biology at A or AS level. If only one of Biology and/or Chemistry is offered at A or AS level, the other should be offered at GCSE grade A (or Dual Award Science grade A). We do not accept General Studies or Critical Thinking as an A level entry qualification. Applications fulfilling the academic requirements will be

passed to the next stage. Those failing to achieve this requirement are not normally considered further.

Applicants offering qualifications other than A levels (e.g. Scottish Highers, International Baccalaureate, Access etc.) should refer to the Section on 'Particular Groups' below. Potential applicants offering qualifications not mentioned in the 'Particular Groups' below are advised to contact the University Admissions Office for clarification on whether their qualifications are acceptable.

**Note:** We would normally expect applicants to have achieved their A levels on their first attempt. Those who wish results to be considered must provide information on the extenuating circumstances they wish to be considered. Supporting evidence must be provided from your school or GP.

We do not normally consider applications from candidates who have previously commenced a medical degree at another institution. Applicants should contact the university with supporting evidence explaining why they left their previous medicine degree programme. The circumstances will be considered and a decision made on whether we would consider an application.

**Please Note:** *Once the academic screening criteria have been met academic achievement is not considered further in subsequent parts of the application process.*

### **UKCAT used to identify those for interview**

Applications fulfilling the academic threshold will then be assessed on their UKCAT scores. The UKCAT cut off score may differ in each admission cycle as our cut off is derived from the scores achieved by those applicants who apply to our School in the current cycle. These scores will be used to determine in which of the following categories an applicant is placed.

- to interview
- unsuccessful

*b) Interview*

The purpose of the interview is to confirm whether the candidate has the aptitude, motivation and personal qualities to succeed as a medical student at Durham University, Queen's Campus Stockton, and as a potential doctor of the future.

The following are the processes used at Durham University. These may differ slightly to those used at Newcastle University and further information can be found at Newcastle University, [Newcastle University's website](#).

**Interviews will be held between mid-November and mid-March at Durham University, Queen's Campus, Stockton.**

We do not admit to the programme without interviewing applicants.

The interview will be conducted by two selectors. At the conclusion of the interview the selector will grade the candidate's performance and complete an assessment form. These grades are used as the basis for the decision making process for actual offers. Selectors will not convey their recommendations to the candidates at the time of the interview or at any time thereafter.

We will normally endeavour to arrange interviews whilst taking applicant requests on limited availability into consideration, but this cannot always be guaranteed.

At interview in making their judgement, selectors will expect applicants to show an element of reflection, evidence of insight into their personal attributes, the learning that has resulted from their experiences, and an understanding of the relevance of these factors to a career in medicine.

*c) Making Offers*

Candidates who have been unsuccessful at the shortlisting stage will normally be informed by mid February.

The final ranking of a candidate at interview will determine whether or not they receive an offer of a place and offers will be made to candidates in order of merit. To ensure equity, offers will be made in writing, following interview, once all of the interviews have been completed. The official offer will be sent via the UCAS system. All offers will normally be made in March.

For A Level candidates, offers will normally be conditional on achievement of AAA.

Offers to candidates with Scottish Highers will be conditional on AAAAA.

For graduate candidates, offers will normally be conditional on achievement of at least a 2(i).

**Note:** All results must be confirmed and received by August to coincide with the release of the 'A' level results. Those applicants who hold an offer and are appealing an A level grade must inform the University as soon as possible to obtain information on the timescales relating to their offer.

## **11) Particular Groups**

Potential applicants offering qualifications not mentioned in the 'Particular Groups' below are advised to contact the medical school for clarification on whether their qualifications are accepted.

### *a) International applicants*

There is a fixed HEFCE quota of 7 places for International students (i.e. non-home/EU applicants) each year. Applications falling into this category will be processed and assessed separately but by the same method as outlined above.

All applicants required to provide an English Language qualification must have achieved/achieve a minimum score of 7 in each domain of the IELTS or equivalent qualification.

**All applicants must have taken the UKCAT, see section 11**

*b) Non-standard applications to the 5-year course (A106)*

Applicants who have followed an approved Access to Higher Education course (HEFC) will also be considered in which case modules in Biological Sciences, Chemistry and Quantitative Methods are essential at Distinction level.

For applicants offering Scottish Highers, the requirement is AAAAA at Higher Grade including Chemistry and/or Biology. Five passes at Standard Grade 3 or above (or Intermediate 2) are required.

For applicants offering International Baccalaureate qualifications, a minimum of 38 points is required, no subject should be graded less than grade 5 and with Higher Level in Chemistry or Biology of at least grade 6. A combination including 2 Sciences and Mathematics at Higher Level, and three other subjects including English are desirable but not essential.

For applicants offering the Irish Leaving Certificate, the requirement is AAAAAA at Higher Level, excluding Irish. Subjects at Higher Level should include Chemistry and Biology, along with Physics and English Language to at least Ordinary Level.

**All applicants must have valid UKCAT scores , see section 11**

*c) Graduate applicants to the standard 5-year course (A106)*

Graduate applications from candidates with a scientific background will follow the processes as detailed in section 8. Offers will be conditional on a 2(i) or first class honours Science degree.

A level and GCSE results for graduate applicants will have no direct bearing on the decision to interview or offer a place to such a candidate but evidence of recent and relevant academic endeavour should be provided. (see section d for information on academic endeavour)

**All applicants must have valid UKCAT scores , see section 11**

d) *Deferred Entry*

We will consider applications from candidates who wish to defer entry by one year provided they use their time constructively. Once offers have been made deferrals will not normally be guaranteed.

e) *Transfers*

Due to the integrated nature of our medical degree programme, we do not normally consider students wishing to transfer from another medical school. Such students would be expected to apply to Stage 1 entry, via UCAS, provided they have not previously been considered and declined by us.

## **12) UKCAT**

All applicants will be required to complete the UKCAT aptitude test. More information is available at [www.UKCAT.ac.uk](http://www.UKCAT.ac.uk) Those applicants with extenuating circumstances, who arrange to sit the extended test (UKCATSEN) , will be required to provide the university with the relevant evidence to support their extenuating circumstances.

The UKCAT will be used to identify those we wish to interview. The cut off may differ in each admissions cycle as the cut off is derived from the scores achieved by those applicants who apply to our Medical School in the current cycle.

**WARNING** – The UKCAT results are only valid in the year you achieve them therefore if you are reapplying through UCAS you will need to resit the UKCAT. All applicants should register and book a UKCAT test as early as possible as applications will not be considered without a current test (excluding exempt countries or applicants who hold an exemption from the UKCAT Administrator).

## **13) English Language Test**

All applicants required to provide an English Language qualification must have achieved/achieve a minimum score of 7 in each domain (IELTS) or equivalent qualification.

#### **14) Open Days**

Durham University Queen's Campus holds Open Days most Wednesday afternoons. Information is available at [www.dur.ac.uk/undergraduate/](http://www.dur.ac.uk/undergraduate/) regarding visits to Queen's Campus, Stockton or contact [d.l.bade@durham.ac.uk](mailto:d.l.bade@durham.ac.uk)

#### **15) Scholarships**

Durham University operates a generous grant scheme providing assistance to students from lower income backgrounds. This scheme is open only to full-time, home fee paying students. Other scholarships and prizes are also made available from time to time. Further details can be found at: <http://www.dur.ac.uk/undergraduate/finance/>

#### **16) Late Applications and Clearing/UCAS Extra**

Late applications are not normally considered. Clearing/UCAS Extra applicants may be considered should vacancies arise late in the admissions cycle. These applicants will be interviewed.

#### **17) Extenuating Circumstances**

Applicants with extenuating circumstances will be considered by the Associate Dean on an individual basis. All correspondence will be treated confidentially and applicants are encouraged to inform us of extenuating circumstances as early as possible, as prior knowledge ensures the correct level of support and advice. Extenuating circumstances may be considered to enable an applicant to apply with resit A level grades. Extenuating circumstances **will not** be accepted to enable an applicant to be considered without the relevant academic entry qualifications.

If an applicant has extenuating circumstances which they feel may impact on their interview performance they must inform the School before the interview. We will not accept any retrospective information regarding extenuating circumstances.

### **18) Feedback**

Feedback will be given to unsuccessful applicants upon written request. An e-mail request will not be sufficient. Applicants should note, however, that this cannot be provided until **after March** at the earliest. The University will not enter into discussions relating to the academic judgement underlying the scoring at interview.

**Please note:** In accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 such feedback can only be given to the applicant. Specific feedback can only be provided to a third party when written consent has been provided by the applicant to the university.

### **19) Age**

We do not impose an age limit.

### **20) Immigration Rules for Postgraduate Doctors**

International students will be covered by the existing ('permit free') arrangements if appointed to a 2 year Foundation Programme after they have successfully completed their medical degree in the UK. For information on requirements after this time visit [http://www.gmc-uk.org/doctors/work\\_permits/index.asp](http://www.gmc-uk.org/doctors/work_permits/index.asp) website for Doctors interested in working in the UK.