

St Ninian's High School

Medical and Dentistry Interview Top Tips



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Panel Interviews

These usually involve a panel of two or three interviewers. The interviewers can be a mixture of clinical and faculty staff, a senior medical/dental student or a 'lay' interviewer (a member of the public). Panel interviews can be either structured, where specific set of questions are followed, or semi structured, where questions can be influenced by the interviewee's answers so the process is more conversational. Panel interviews can be 20–30 minutes long and some medical/dental schools require two interviews to be completed over two days.

Example: Glasgow University School of Medicine, Dentistry and Nursing

All necessary instructions and guidance will be given on the day (we know candidates may be nervous and are there to help), but to give you a guide as to what to candidates can expect:

- The interview session will last around 30 minutes. Candidates will be interviewed by two panels (A and B), swapping mid-point, with two interviewers on each panel. Multiple candidates will be interviewed within rooms.
- From the applicant waiting area, candidates will be led to wait outside the interview rooms prior to interview, by candidate grouping A and B. One of the groups will use the waiting time to read and select ONE from two scenarios to discuss. The other group will sit and wait.
- Candidate groups A and B will go into their respective rooms for interview. Those who have just selected one scenario will be expected to discuss this with their interviewers at some point during this interview panel.
- After the first panel has finished, candidate groups A and B will again wait outside the interview rooms. One of the groups will use the time to read and select ONE from two scenarios to discuss. The other group (who have already discussed the scenario they chose) will sit and wait.
- Candidate groups A and B will go into their respective rooms for their second panel interview. Those who have just selected one scenario will be expected to discuss this with their interviewers at some point during this interview panel.

Once finished, candidates are encouraged to submit feedback to help develop the candidate experience. This is completely anonymised and has no bearing on interview results. Should candidate concerns be raised during the interview, candidates must report to a member of administrative staff immediately after the interview at the venue, prior to departure.

Preparation for Panel Interview

- Refer to our undergraduate medical curriculum
- Revisit your personal statement
- Think of examples of your achievements and skills.
- Consider your personal characteristics.
- Reflect on previous interactions or experiences.

Explore what being a doctor/dentist means and the related themes or topics around this.

Multiple-Mini Interviews

These are often referred to as MMIs and consist of seven or eight different 'stations', or small interview scenarios. Each station will assess candidates for specific attributes and will only last for a short time. Stations can range from discussing personal statements and experience (like in a regular panel interview) to more practical scenarios that involve candidates interacting with an actor who will be playing a role of a patient in distress and/or have a particular issue needing resolved. Before MMIs, candidates are briefed on the structure of their interview and given an opportunity to ask questions. It is worth researching or contacting the medical/dental school before an MMI to find out what information is available about each station.

Example: University of Aberdeen School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition

Many questions that will be covered in the MMI stations are available in the public domain (examples are at the end of this booklet). Although the exact wording may vary, candidates may find it a useful exercise to be familiar with some questions and to consider their own responses that are based upon their own thoughts and experiences, rather than quoting existing text and the opinion of others.

There are many ways that selectors may explore the domains that form part of an MMI.

Candidates may be asked to discuss their preparation for entry to Medicine/Dentistry. For example:

- Research into undergraduate curricula and postgraduate training
- Research then understanding of the implications of a medical career
- Experience of caring or other environments
- Consider a new situation and discuss their thoughts or suggest a solution to solve a problem
- Outline any learning points from previous experiences
- Reflect upon their own and others' skills and abilities
- Consider their potential contribution to the care of others

Candidates should be aware that for some questions there will not be a 'correct' answer – simply that the student's ability to reflect upon and discuss diverse aspects of the problem may be under scrutiny.

Given that the pre-interview scoring system selects candidates who appear to have sufficient academic potential, the interview is not intended to:

- Test academic knowledge
- Include questions directly related to the school curriculum.

Are All Candidates Asked the Same Questions?

Not necessarily exactly the same questions, but the same categories/domains will be used on each of the MMI days.

How will Answers be Scored?

The student will be scored in several areas including:

- Ability to express ideas freely and coherently
- How well they use their existing knowledge to formulate answers to unknown areas
- Their ability to follow a reasoned argument and to formulate an opinion
- The degree to which they are prepared for questions
- Their ability to discuss different aspects (advantages & disadvantages) of a problem / situation
- The degree of motivation, commitment, reflection and sensitivity demonstrated

Each station will also independently score communication and interpersonal skills.

The more research undertaken into a medical career using many resources, the better the student will be prepared to answer questions confidently and to interpret the unexpected.

Undertaking interview practice with different 'interviewers' will help build confidence in their ability to perform in unfamiliar circumstances, as will frequently practising answering different interview questions.

MMI Examples

Below we have provided you with an example of what you might expect to find at a station.

Candidates were asked to imagine that they were a first year medical/dental student and at the end of the year had found out they had failed a very important exam. The re-sit was in 2 weeks time and would establish whether the student could continue with the course. The student is also captain (and one of the top scorers) of the basketball team, with a very important match coming up that requires daily training sessions. On top of that, candidates were informed that they had just received a text from a friend that they haven't seen for a while, asking if they wanted to go out 'to party'.

Candidates had 2 minutes to consider this situation and think of possible questions that might arise and how they would go about answering them. They then enter the station and are 'interviewed' for 7 minutes.

Example: Dundee University Dental School

Dentistry will adopt the method of interviewing known as Multiple Mini Interviews (MMIs). This will be a series of 10 seven-minute interviews. You can expect the usual topics to be covered in these interviews, e.g. why do you want to study Dentistry, what makes Dentistry at Dundee unique. You will also be asked to expand on some aspects of your UCAS personal statement. We will be assessing your communication skills at most stations and also team working through a series of interactive interview stations, where you may have a task to complete or an actor to talk to.

For Dentistry there will often be a station where you are asked to demonstrate your manual dexterity while under pressure e.g. transferring small beads from one jar to another while maintaining a conversation or build an structure from Lego.

Key Points

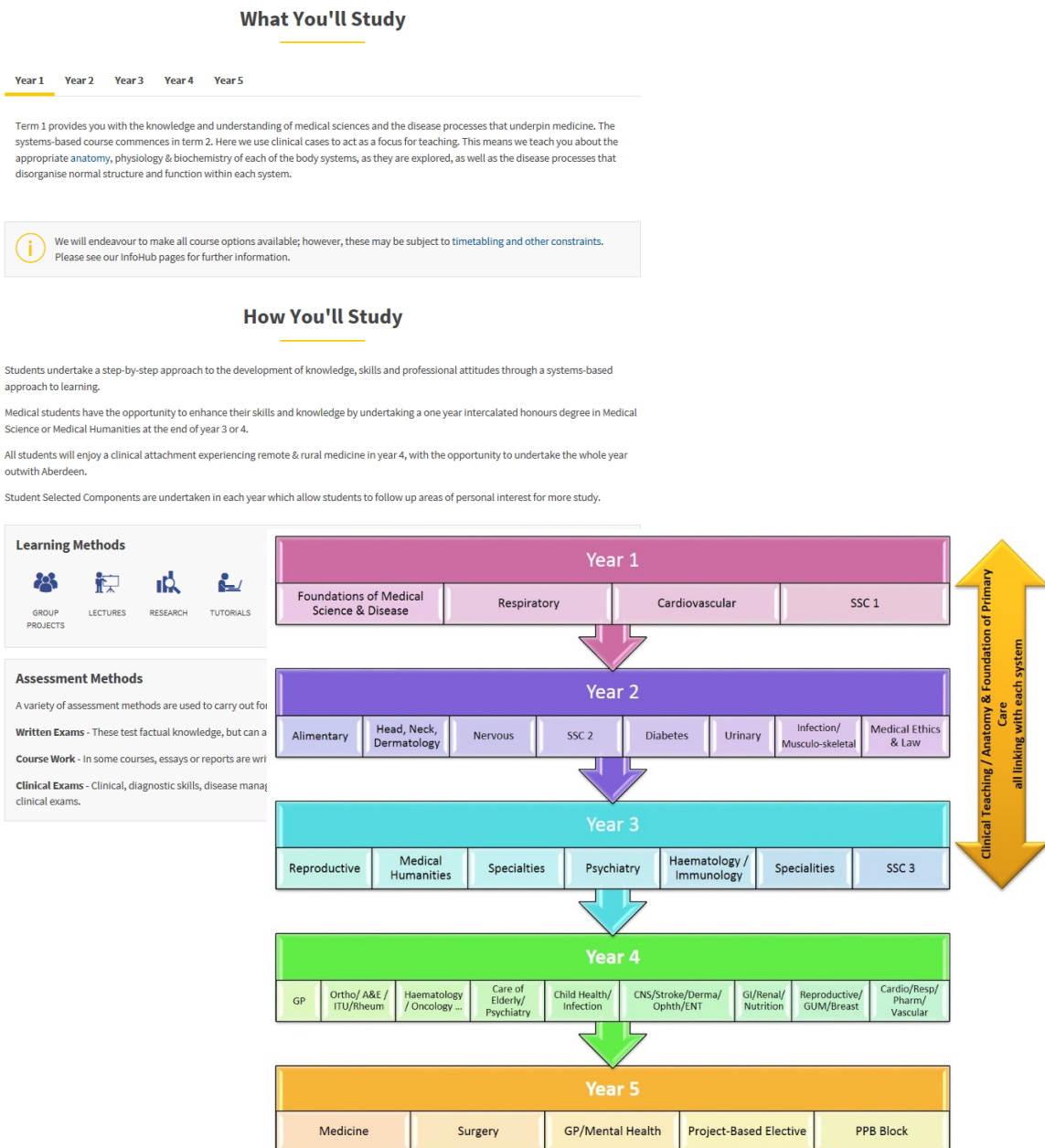
- Don't worry if you think you've 'messed up' a question/station
- The whole point is to test you under pressure
- The next question/station will likely be something completely different so try and regain your composure
- No one will be perfect.
- The interviewers want you to do well—they've been in your position once upon a time!

Preparation: Know the Course and University

Each university has a completely different course. Learn each university course you are applying to. Why do you want to go to this course over others. Learn what's unique to each university (e.g. Aberdeen's remote and rural location, Edinburgh's necessary intercalating year, Glasgow University Dental academic exams in Year 4 and clinical examinations in Year 5, Dundee Dental School academic exams and clinical exams all in Year 5).

You will find out all of this information on the university website. Make sure you have researched this and demonstrate this in the interview by referring to things you have learned.

Example: University of Aberdeen School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition



Examples: University of Glasgow Dentistry Programme Structure (left), University of Dundee Dental School Programme (right).

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

YEAR 1

You will be introduced to all aspects of clinical dentistry, supported by the teaching of clinical medicine, patient management and health promotion, and biomedical sciences such as anatomy, physiology and microbiology.

YEAR 2

You will be introduced to the theory and practice of the subjects that form the clinical basis of dentistry: operative dentistry, prosthodontics and periodontics. As part of the introduction to operative dentistry you will learn about the treatment of dental caries, carried out in a simulated clinical setting.

Knowledge from the first year of the programme is built upon by further study of biomedical sciences, clinical medical sciences and patient management/health promotion. You will also begin the management and treatment of patients.

YEAR 3

You will expand your skills in all aspects of restorative dentistry and will also carry out your first extraction. You will attend outreach placements in paediatric dentistry. Other teaching includes a comprehensive head and neck anatomy course, the dentist's role in providing smoking and alcohol advice, initial preparation for the provision of sedation, and self-directed work within various subject areas on computer.

YEAR 4

You will continue to work in the Dental School and in the community and will have an opportunity to develop your clinical skills through exposure to patients in all the dental disciplines. Teaching includes oral medicine, sedation, orthodontics fixed appliance course, and further aspects of patient management/health promotion.

At the end of fourth year you are required to undertake a period of elective study of around four weeks' duration. This is an opportunity for personal and professional development. Possible elective study options include:

- an audit project
- an educational comparison
- a research project (quantitative or qualitative)
- other types of experience such as veterinary dentistry or learning a foreign language within a clinical environment
- a healthcare project in a remote or low-income country

You will have a supervisor to help you plan your study, which will be written up as a report at the beginning of fifth year.

YEAR 6

You will spend half your time in the Dental School and half working in a community outreach centre. There will be no lectures; instead you will attend eight sessions in each of the following core units:

- Crown and bridge
- Minor oral surgery
- Endodontics
- Paediatric dentistry
- Prosthodontics
- Periodontics
- Consultant clinics (1)
- Consultant clinics (2)

You will be allocated to one residential and one non-residential outreach centre.

What you will study

The dental curriculum is under continuing development and review.

Therefore, although all the content indicated below will be covered, how this is arranged across the years may be subject to change by 2014/5. This page will be updated to reflect any changes.

Year 1

- The early years focus on the pre- and para-clinical sciences, knowledge of which is vital for a full understanding of your patients' problems and the reasoning behind the treatments you will provide.
- In Year 1, the focus is on the basic biomedical sciences of anatomy, physiology and biochemistry, with the addition of the para-clinical dental sciences of oral biology, cell biology, microbiology, pathology and dental materials science.
- The clinical relevance of these subjects is highlighted in integrated clinically relevant activities (ICRAs).
- You will also undertake a basic emergency care module and basic clinical infection control measures will be introduced in the Cleanliness Champion programme.

Year 2

- Year 2 is a continuation of your studies from Year 1 but with the emphasis moving to the dental and para-clinical sciences. There will be further ICRAs and you will complete the Cleanliness Champion programme.
- You will also begin to develop your clinical skills, with introductory skills courses in periodontology and the management of dental caries.
- At the end of Year 2, you will undertake the Introduction to Clinical Skills course, where you will learn a range of basic clinical skills in preparation for entering the clinical phase of the curriculum.
- These skills will be assessed in a degree examination to ensure that you are ready to go on to provide dental care for patients in Year 3.

Year 3

- You will begin your clinical attachments in Year 3, providing care for patients in a range of dental disciplines within the Dental Hospital.
- You will also study the theoretical background of these different disciplines and will continue to develop your skills with further clinical skills courses.
- In Year 3 you will also study human disease, in order to appreciate the potential impact of a patient's general health on their dental treatment.
- This teaching takes place at Ninewells Hospital and there is a separate degree examination in this subject.

Year 4

- In Year 4 you will continue your clinical attachments with the addition of further disciplines such as orthodontics, oral medicine and treatment of the dentally-anxious.
- You will continue to build your theoretical knowledge and undertake advanced clinical skills courses
- At the end of Year 4 you will have your first outreach attachments, at centres both local and distant from Dundee
- You will also undertake your period of elective study.

Year 5

- The emphasis in Year 5 is on holistic patient care.
- You will have sessions in the Integrated Oral Care clinic in the Dental Hospital, providing total dental care for your patients.
- You will also have attachments to a range of specialist consultant clinics.
- A significant proportion of your time will be spent in outreach clinics, both longitudinal attachments to local clinics and week-long attachments at distant centres in Aberdeen and Inverness.

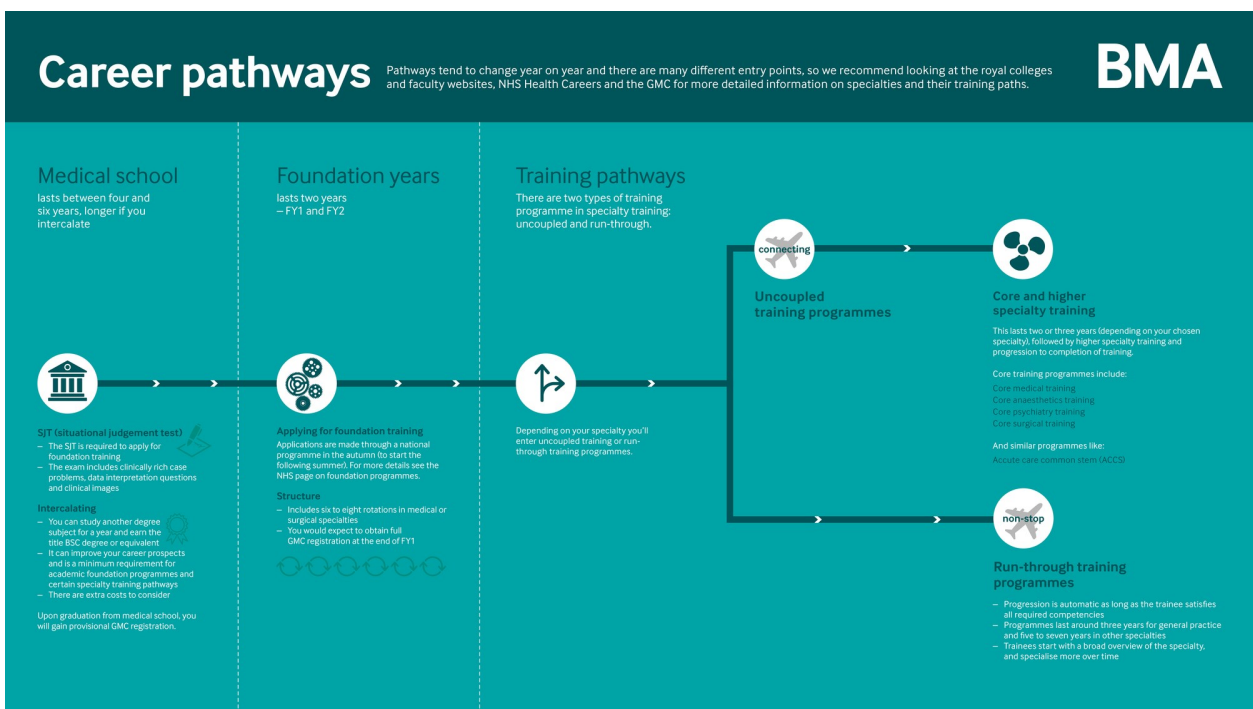
Preparation: Know the Career Pathways

Medicine/Dentistry is a rewarding career, and being a doctor/dentist involves a lifetime of learning.

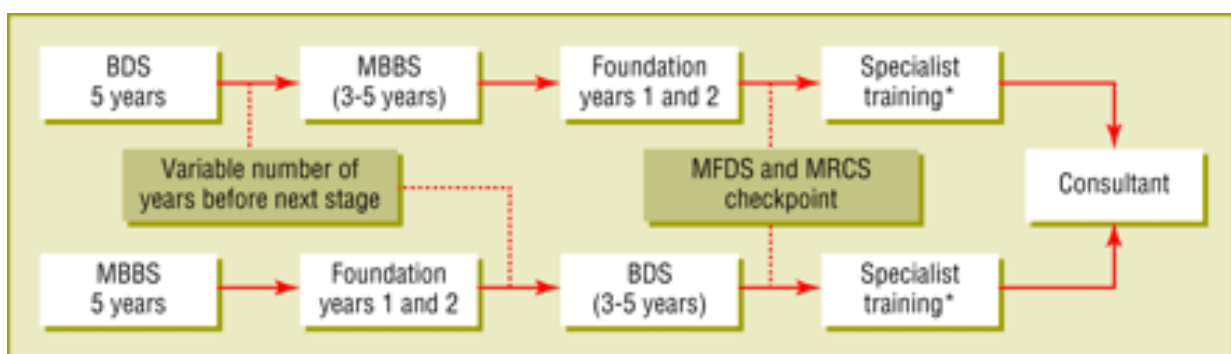
This begins with an undergraduate degree at medical/dental school, followed by a postgraduate period called foundation training, at which point a salary can be earned, followed by further higher specialty training and then progression to being a senior doctor once specialty training is complete.

Take a look at our training pathway information that gives you an idea of the different stages of a medical/dental career, from studying as a medical/dental student through clinical training to becoming senior doctor/dentist.

Medicine Career Pathway



Dentistry Career Pathway



Preparation: Know the Your Skills and Abilities

You will be asked about your skills and abilities and why these make you suitable candidate for Medicine/Dentistry.

You should be able to offer examples of where you demonstrated the skill or ability you say you have.

- Think of examples of your achievements and skills.
- Reflect on previous interactions or experiences.
- Revisit your personal statement and know this inside out as you will definitely be asked to tell the interviewer more about something you have said.

Literacy Skills

Reading and writing, listening and talking
Interpersonal and communications skills
Developing an effective vocabulary
Ability to make critical comments

Numeracy Skills

Confidence and competence using numbers
Analysing information and making decisions
Developing mental agility

Health and Wellbeing Skills

Developing good personal, social and working relationships
Confidence, resilience and respect for others
Motivation to face up to and learn from setbacks

Skills in Working with Others

Working as part of a team
Contributing ideas
Sharing roles and responsibilities
Supporting others

Problem Solving Skills

Analysing
Evaluating
Assessing solutions
Making decisions

Leadership Skills

Taking the initiative
Persuading and influencing
Making decisions
Leading others

Personal and Learning Skills

Time management
Self-evaluation
Setting targets and planning next steps in learning
Evaluating learning
Career management skills

Thinking Skills

Critical thinking
Classifying
Enquiring
Creative thinking

Interpersonal Skills

Communicating confidently
Interacting with other people, individually and in groups
Ability to listen and understand
Problem solving
Decision making
Empathy

Ethics


Think about the following scenarios:

- A senior police officer is asking for details of all patients on a certain drug. Perhaps in connection with a serious crime or an unidentified corpse, but the facts are vague. What do you think? Is patient confidentiality trumped by serious crime?
- You're new in your area and would like to meet people so surely going to a local barbecue is no problem? But what about the Facebook friend request you have had from one of the organisers who also happens to be a patient?
- A patient with fractured ribs who has a habit of falling down the stairs but won't let you tell the police about that or the cigarette burns on her arms? Her children don't look too good either - what should you do?
- A colleague turns up to work drunk—what do you do?
- Other questions may involve topics such as abortion, euthanasia or HIV.

You won't be expected to know the perfect answer though it is important that you can be balanced in your outlook and prioritise the patient, treating them with respect. It's not about saying you agree strongly with one view.

Medical Ethics

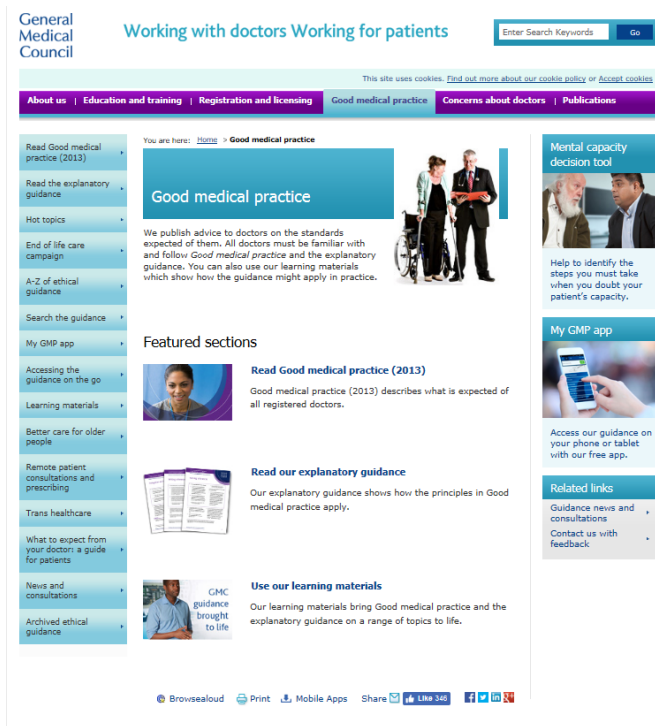
For Medicine read 'Tomorrow's Doctors—General Medical Council and look through the 'Good Medical Practice' section of the General Medical Council website.



Tomorrow's Doctors
Outcomes and standards for undergraduate medical education

Working with doctors Working for patients

General Medical Council



General Medical Council

Working with doctors Working for patients

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Good medical practice

We publish advice to doctors on the standards expected of them. All doctors must be familiar with and follow *Good medical practice* and the explanatory guidance. You can also use our learning materials which show how the guidance might apply in practice.

Featured sections

- [Read Good medical practice \(2013\)](#)
- [Read our explanatory guidance](#)
- [Search the guidance](#)
- [My GMP app](#)
- [Accessing the guidance on the go](#)
- [Learning materials](#)
- [Better care for older people](#)
- [Remote patient consultations and prescribing](#)
- [Trans healthcare](#)
- [What to expect from your doctor: a guide for patients](#)
- [News and consultations](#)
- [Archived ethical guidance](#)

Mental capacity decision tool

Help to identify the steps you must take when you doubt your patient's capacity.

My GMP app

Access our guidance on your phone or tablet with our free app.

Related links

- [Guidance news and consultations](#)
- [Contact us with feedback](#)

Use our learning materials

Our learning materials bring *Good medical practice* and the explanatory guidance on a range of topics to life.

Browsealoud Print Mobile Apps Share Like 346

Dental Ethics

For Dentistry read 'Standards for the Dental Team' — General Dental Council and look through the 'Focus on Standards' of the General Dental Council website where there are a number of case studies to learn from.



The screenshot shows a webpage with a corkboard background. At the top, the word 'ResPECT' is written in large, colorful letters. Below it, the heading 'Treating patients with respect' is visible. The main content area is titled 'CASE STUDIES FOR PRINCIPLE 1' and features a sub-section titled 'TRUST' with the sub-heading 'Being trustworthy'. The text describes a complaint from a patient about a dentist's behavior during her son's appointment. It lists several standards that were breached, including 1.2, 1.2.1, 1.2.3, 1.3.2, and 6.1.2. The case was referred to the Investigating Committee, which then referred it to the Professional Conduct Committee. The committee determined that the dentist had behaved unacceptably and issued a reprimand. A 'Learning points' section follows, discussing unprofessional communication and the importance of respectful communication with patients and colleagues.

Keep Up-To-Date With Health Related News

Study scientific journals such as the **British Medical Journal**, **The Lancet** and the **British Dental Journal**. Although these require a subscription to see full articles, often the abstracts are enough to give you an good understanding of current issues.

Free journals are available online such as:

- <http://freemedicaljournals.com/>
- <http://www.dentalindia.com/journals>

In terms of an interview, think of relevant challenges the NHS is currently facing (and will face in coming years with aging population).

Add the Health topic on the BBC News mobile app so you keep up to date with current medical/dental topics.

The screenshot shows the BMJ website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'thebmj' logo and links for Research, Education, News & Views, Campaigns, Archive, For authors, Jobs, and Hosted. Below this, a 'Latest articles' section features a large graphic about 'Shared decision making' with sub-points: 'Evidence Risk of tests Testing bias', 'Preferences Risk tolerance Test feasibility', and 'Shared decision making'. Below the graphic are several article teasers, including 'Patient centred diagnosis: sharing diagnostic decisions with patients in clinical practice', 'Ophthalmologists should be able to prescribe bevacizumab, says royal college', and 'Margaret McCartney: Pointless paperwork, not patients, is what GPs should avoid'. A 'More articles' section follows with various news items like 'Medical regulators could merge in government shake up' and 'Warfarin is associated with lower cancer incidence, finds study'. At the bottom, there's a 'BDJ British Dental Journal' section with a 'Journal content' menu (Journal home, Advance online publication, Current issue, Archive), 'Journal information', 'BDJ jobs', and 'BDJ resources'.

The screenshot shows the BBC News mobile app interface. At the top, there's a red header with 'BBC NEWS' logo and a search icon. Below the header, there's a navigation bar with 'Home', 'Video', 'Health', and 'Scotland'. The 'Health' category is selected and highlighted. Below the navigation bar, there's a large image of a man in a light blue shirt talking to an older man in a white coat and glasses, who is holding a clipboard. The headline below the image reads 'Psychiatrist vacancies on the increase'.

Psychiatrist vacancies on the increase

12 hours ago | Health

The screenshot shows a list of health-related articles from the BBC News mobile app. The first article is 'Surrogate mum of 'twins' finds one is hers' with a thumbnail image of a pregnant woman and a date of '1d | Health'. The second article is 'Contaminated blood to get 'full inquiry'' with a thumbnail image of blood vials and a date of '1d | Health'. Below the list, there's a 'Web feeds' section with 'Top ten' and 'BDJ Jobs' options, and a 'More dentistry jobs' link.

Social Media

Social media is a modern phenomenon and still very relevant in terms of medical/dental standards and ethics so there will likely be a question on this.



It is important to know that your own social media profiles may be looked at in the application process so make sure these are private and contain nothing that may harm your application. This also goes for your friends who may have 'tagged' you in a post so ask them to delete this if necessary.

If you become a doctor or dentist it is essential you understand your professional responsibilities and follow each profession's social media guidelines.

Familiarise yourself with the following documents that are available on the General Medical Council and General Dental Council websites.

You can find the latest version of this guidance on our website at www.gmc-uk.org/guidance.

Published 25 March 2013 | Comes into effect 22 April 2013

General Medical Council

Doctors' use of social media

<p>1 In <i>Good medical practice</i> we say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 36 You must treat colleagues fairly and with respect. 65 You must make sure that your conduct justifies your patients' trust in you and the public's trust in the profession. 69 When communicating publicly, including speaking to or writing in the media, you must maintain patient confidentiality. You should remember when using social media that communications intended for friends or family may become more widely available. 70 When advertising your services, you must make sure the information you publish is factual and can be checked, and does not exploit patients' vulnerability or lack of medical knowledge. 	<p>2 In <i>Confidentiality: good practice in handling patient information</i> we say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 118 Many improper disclosures are unintentional. You should not share identifiable information about patients where you can be overheard, for example, in a public place or in an internet chat forum... 119 You must make sure any personal information about patients that you hold or control is effectively protected at all times against improper access, disclosure or loss. You should not leave patients' records, or other notes you make about patients, either on paper or on screen, unattended. You should not share passwords.
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3 In this guidance, we explain how doctors can put these principles into practice. Serious or persistent failure to follow this guidance will put your registration at risk.

4 Social media describes web-based applications that allow people to create and exchange content. In this guidance we use the term to include blogs and microblogs (such as Twitter), internet forums (such as doctors.net), content communities (such as YouTube and Flickr), and social networking sites (such as Facebook and LinkedIn).

5 The standards expected of doctors do not change because they are communicating through social media rather than face to face or through other traditional media. However, using social media creates new circumstances in which the established principles apply.

6 You must also follow our guidance on prescribing, which gives advice on using internet sites for the provision of medical services.

7 As well as this guidance, you should keep up to date with and follow your organisation's policy on social media.

Social media

Working with doctors Working for patients

www.gdc-uk.org

General Dental Council protecting patients, regulating the dental team

Guidance on using social media

Social media

Social networking sites and other social media are effective ways of communicating with others on both a personal and professional level.

Social media covers a number of internet based tools including, but not limited to, blogs, internet forums, content communities and social networking sites such as Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, LinkedIn, GDUK, Instagram and Pinterest.

Professional social networking websites aimed solely at dental professionals are also forms of social media and are covered by this guidance.

Professional standards

4.2.3 of the [Standards for the Dental Team](#) states:

"You must not post any information or comments about patients on social networking or blogging sites. If you use professional social media to discuss anonymised cases for the purpose of discussing best practice you must be careful that the patient or patients cannot be identified."

The standards expected of dental professionals do not change because they are communicating through social media, rather than face to face or by other traditional media. As a dental professional you have a responsibility to behave professionally and responsibly both online and offline.

However, because anything that is said on social media is instantly made public, it creates new circumstances in which the standards apply. Your professional responsibilities, such as patient confidentiality and professional courtesy, are still fundamental when you use social media.

When using social media, you must:

- Maintain and protect patients' information by not publishing any information which could identify them on social media without their explicit consent;
- Maintain appropriate boundaries in the relationships you have with patients and other members of the dental team;
- Comply with any internet and social media policy set out by your employer.

General Dental Council 37 Wimpole Street London W1G 8DQ
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Possible Interview Questions

Although you may not be asked these questions directly it's great to have a bank of the common medical/dental interview questions you might expect:

Why do you want to go to Medical /Dental School?

Answer Guide:

- This is a common Background and Motivation question, so reflect carefully on the answer prior to interview
- In order to answer it properly, you will need to first understand what exactly being a medical student and a doctor entails. This comes from research, work experience and talking to people ahead of you on the pathway
- Aim to strike a good balance between passion and pragmatism — many people come across disproportionately one way or the other
- Provide enough detail to be persuasive, but avoid waffling. More than three points is usually too much and impact will be lost
- Get across your desire to interact with – and ultimately help — people. This is what being a doctor/dentist is all about
- Try to capture why the combination of scientific drive and human engagement involved in Medicine/Dentistry appeals to you
- Use examples from work experience and your personal life throughout to personalise and strengthen your answer

Common Mistakes:

- Knowing you want to be a doctor but not being able to articulate why. This is usually a result of a lack of reflection
- Referring to financial rewards or social status: these are not good motivators and there are other careers that offer more of both
- Saying that you come from a family of doctors. This is not a mistake in itself, but you must stress that you have done your own exploration

What do you wish to achieve from your Medical/Dental career?

Answer Guide:

- You need to have a basic understanding of what a typical medical/dental career may involve.
- Aim to cover your interests in the areas of clinical training, academia, general skills development and social activities.
- Take why you wish to study medicine/dentistry and translate that into something tangible that you would like to achieve. For example, this may be an idea to train as a Consultant then travel the world to engage in humanitarian work.
- What they want to see is if you have an idea of how a medical/dental career could satisfy your interests and how you can contribute to society as a doctor/dentist.
- It may be worth reading up on training pathways for doctors/dentists. Remember these are a guide and many doctors/dentists take unconventional routes during their training to take time out for doing research, travelling or having a family.
- As a doctor/dentist, excelling in clinical practice will be a given, but try to mention things that shows appreciation of the other responsibilities of a doctor/dentist, such as teaching junior doctors/dentists and medical/dental students.
- Use your reflection on your work experience to strengthen your answer. You may have been inspired by one or more of the doctors/dentists you interacted with.
- Try to be creative with your answer and show how you aim to make the most out of your career in medicine/dentistry.

Common Mistakes:

- Not being open enough. Many medical/dental students and even doctors/dentists end up changing their minds on what they would like out of a medical /dental career.
- Forgetting to mention that you wish to help patients in some way. After all, that's what being a doctor/dentist is about.
- Focusing on financial rewards or social status.

Do you read any publications that are relevant to your interest in Medicine/Dentistry? Tell us about an interesting article that you have read recently.

Answer Guide:

- This is an opportunity to demonstrate that you have explored your interest in medicine in your own time, outside of your school curriculum and work experience.
- British Medical Journal, The Lancet and British Dental Journal are examples of publications that produce content relevant to an interest in medicine/dentistry. They have articles that are available online without a subscription, although you may choose to subscribe for access to more of their content.
- Prepare in advance. It is worth having a few articles that you have read in mind in case a question like this comes up. You should be able to give a brief explanation of what they were about so be sure to glance over them again ahead of the interview to jog your memory.
- When you give your example, explain why you found that article so interesting or exciting. You want your enthusiasm for the subject of medicine to come across.

Common Mistake:

- Throwing out the name of a publication or online resource that you are not actually familiar with. You will probably not be able to back this up if you have not read any of their articles and a mistake like that could really derail your interview.
- Not looking back at the article ahead of time. You do not want to be trying to recall an article that you read weeks or months ago on the spot.

What role do public health campaigns such as anti-smoking TV adverts have in the NHS, and why is this a good way to spend NHS resources?

Answer Guide:

- Pay close attention to health campaigns. These are used a lot and are seen as a significant weapon against disease and a way of safeguarding the NHS
- Although healthcare professionals are well equipped to deal with a huge range of medical conditions, they are overstretched and under-funded. Prevention of disease is a major way that this burden can be, to a degree, alleviated
- Through education, it is possible to make people aware what causes certain diseases, and therefore to encourage them to cut down on such practices. This can both improve the quality of their lives and ensure NHS resources are well used on other patients
- However, it is important to note that not all diseases are preventable through education. Cancer, for example. So this is not a catch all solution
- Think also from a scientific and analytical perspective: how measurable are the results of these campaigns? Try to look up some statistics online
- Whether this is good or bad is probably too black and white: it ultimately depends on effectiveness, which links to the cost/reward ratio on a campaign basis and requires constant monitoring

Common Mistakes:

- Viewing this kind of campaign as unimportant when set against the serious business of saving lives through medical activity. Saying for instance, that people never really listen to TV adverts and it is a waste of money
- Being closed minded and not seeing all sides of the debate. Instinctively believing that money needs to be spent on hiring more doctors, as they are the ones who actually treat the patients
- Not recognising the power of prevention — an increasing trend, which you need to be aware

Is mental health an area of concern for the NHS, and if so why?

Answer Guide:

- Mental health conditions can be a terrible burden for somebody suffering from them, and it is the duty of the NHS to help them
- Modern society is increasingly fraught and stressful for many people, and this can lead to a wide range of mental health problems
- Mental health conditions can also lead to physical problems
- Mental and physical health care are both equally important when considering the health of a whole person, and mental health should therefore be receiving a significant amount of NHS resources
- Recently, this has been a focus for many of the political parties, and the Liberal Democrats focused on mental health as a flagship policy in the 2015 election

Common Mistakes:

- Saying that the NHS is charged with treating serious conditions like trauma and cancer, and mental health should be dealt with by other services
- Believing that depression is not that serious and that psychologists can sort out things like that

Should vaccinations of children against common infectious diseases be compulsory?

Answer Guide:

- First, as with so many questions of this type, it is important to establish the basic facts before getting into detail
- Despite medical progress, preventable disease continues to affect millions of people, and vaccines for many of these are readily available. Vaccinating children is one way of halting their spread
- The consequences of a parent's child becoming infected are not just borne by that child, or that parent, but also the local community, who are at risk as well
- However, forcing vaccination on all school children might be seen as overly paternalistic and parents may see this as a loss of their freedom to choose how to care for their child
- In terms of the four pillars, this comes down to a choice between autonomy and non-maleficence — it's a difficult balancing act

Common Mistakes:

- Taking up a partisan position based on personal opinion
- Even if you have a very strong personal opinion, it is better to walk through the arguments on both sides

A recent study estimated that by 2050 more than half of the UK population could be obese. Is this a cause for concern and if so, why?

Answer Guide:

- Start by recognising that the issue has been in the news and cite anything you may have read or heard to corroborate this. If you have seen the study, say who it was by to really impress the interviewers
- Move on to the problem itself. Why might obesity cause concern? Well, obesity is associated with a wide range of health problems, including diabetes and osteoarthritis, among others
- These lead to a low quality of life for the person affected. Furthermore, their consequent conditions can cost the NHS. This is already a huge drain of NHS resources, so it is worrying that the trend is going up
- It is therefore the interest of the NHS, and the population as a whole, to try to combat the rise of obesity
- In most cases obesity is preventable and manageable, and can be reduced with exercise and diet advice. So, there is hope that even though the study estimates a spike in obesity numbers, these can be brought down with hard work

Common Mistakes:

- Failure to see all the angles. There are lots of stakeholders in this problem: the patient, the NHS and the population as a whole. Try to see the big picture
- Believing that the NHS shouldn't be involved in giving lifestyle advice; it should stick to treating illnesses

Do you agree that people should be charged for attending A&E with non-life-threatening ailments?

Answer Guide:

- Before tackling this controversial issue, you need to establish the context and signal your awareness of what the issue that this question relates to: the crisis in A&E departments across the NHS.
- Since 2004, A&E Departments have been set a target of seeing, treating and discharging (or admitting) patients within 4 hours of attendance. These figures are tracked and reported each quarter – and are the benchmark for A&E performance.
- In October 2015, NHS England had missed this target in 13 out of 14 months in the previous periods. This led Dr Clifford Mann – President of the Royal College of Emergency Medicine – to declare the A&E system at ‘full capacity’ and near-to-breaking-point.
- Pressures on A&E are complex and are driven by a number of intersecting factors: Demographic factors (an aging and more long-term disease affected population); Lack of GP appointments (actually a myth with the real problem being lack of awareness of how to contact out-of-hours GPs); Staff shortages (between 2012-2015 a third of the A&E workforce quit the specialty).
- And of course, increased attendances. When tackling the actual question you need to acknowledge that a proportion of these attendances are most likely non-life-threatening.
- But acknowledge that: It is very difficult to determine which attendances are life-threatening and which aren’t (a headache *can* be nothing or it *could* be a subdural haemorrhage). It is unreasonable to expect the lay public to be able to determine what is an emergency and what is not. The NHS Constitution states that access to care at the point of need is a right (would charging remove that access for low-income families?). Would instituting a charge deter sick people from attending and cause an increase in preventable deaths?
- There are an enormous number of For’s and Against’s for this question! Remember to structure your answer in a logical order and use any clinical experience where appropriate.

Common Mistakes:

- Simply agreeing or disagreeing with the statement without any logical reasoning.
- Going down the rabbit hole and speaking continuously without structuring your answer.

Other Questions to Consider

- What qualities do you think patients appreciate in a doctor/dentist?
- What qualities do you think colleagues appreciate in a doctor/dentist?
- Do you think/why is research important?
- Can you give an example of how medical/dental research has been beneficial?
- Tell us about something medically/dentistry related that you have read in the press?
- Describe a situation you have been in which was stressful.
- How do you deal with stress?
- What do you think the benefits of PBL (problem-based learning) are?
- What are the disadvantages of PBL?
- What do you think you will find most difficult about a career in medicine/dentistry?
- Tell us about your work experience?
- What did you learn about yourself from your work experience?
- What did you learn from the doctors and nurses from your work experience?
- Research has shown that “integrity” is an important quality in a doctor. What do you think is meant by this and can you give an example of a situation in which acting with integrity might be important?
- Give an example of when you have worked in a team.
- Name 10 qualities you need to be a doctor/dentist and examples of when you have shown these?
- Know your personal statement inside out—they will most likely refer to it at some point.
- If you were in charge of the NHS what would you do?
- What is the General Medical Council (GMC) / General Dental Council (GDC) and what do they do?
- Why are you applying for Dentistry and not Medicine?
- Who is the most important member of the hospital team?
- What will you do if you don't get in?
- Tell me about your volunteering experience?
- Where do you see yourself in 10 years?
- What are your strengths and what are your weaknesses? How will you improve on your weaknesses?
- Tell me about a challenge in your life and how you overcame it?
- How do you handle stress?
- What book have you read recently? What did you learn?
- What role does research play in Medicine/Dentistry? Have you engaged in any research projects? Tell me about it.
- Who is the most influential person in your life and why?
- Is there anything else that you'd like to add?

Unrelated Critical Thinking Questions

There is a chance that you may be asked a question which is not directly related to Medicine or Dentistry to test your critical thinking skills. There is no 'right answer' and they are looking to see your thought process.

Interview Day

Before the Interview

It's very important to try and get a good night's sleep. This will help you focus on the question being asked.

Be punctual. Leave in plenty of time to reach the interview and allow for the possibility of delays. This will help calm your nerves.

The interview begins as soon as you enter the building. Leave your parents at the door.

Think about your personal appearance

You must be smartly dressed and well-presented. Doctors are in constant contact with members of the public and appearance is important.

Be aware of your body language

Walk confidently into the interview room, say hello, smile and make eye contact with each interviewer. They should invite you to sit down and introduce themselves. If they offer, shake hands with them. Make sure you sit upright in the chair and avoid adopting a defensive posture (don't fold your arms or push your feet back right under your chair). At the same time, don't look too casual (don't put one foot up on the other knee). It's a good idea to cross your hands and hold them in your lap when you're not using hand gestures. This helps to avoid nervous fidgeting, picking at nails etc.

Listen carefully and answer the question asked. Sometimes there is a temptation to give a prepared answer. This is fine if it answers the question asked. Don't be afraid to ask for clarification or for the question to be repeated. Use positive language and sell yourself. Be confident to say if you are a 'skilled' communicator, have 'strength' in a particular area etc.

Prepare a few questions to ask them at the end, as they may ask you if you would like to ask them anything

Good questions include those that are specifically related to their course. This shows that you have a genuine interest in their particular medical school.

Thank them, smile and say goodbye before leaving the room

This is important as it is polite and leaves a positive lasting impression – usually they will have a discussion about your interview performance after you have left the room. Also, there will almost certainly be points for good communication/interpersonal skills.

More Information

St Ninian's High School S6 Website—Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Medicine Section

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/er/snhss5201617/medicine-dentistry-and-veterinary/>

General Medical Council

Website: <http://www.gmc-uk.org/>

Twitter: @gmcuk

General Dental Council

Website: <https://www.gdc-uk.org/>

Twitter: @gdc_uk

Medical Schools Council

Website: <https://www.medschools.ac.uk/studying-medicine/medical-schools>

Twitter: @ukmedschools

Dental Schools Council

Website: <http://www.dentalschoolscouncil.ac.uk/>

Scottish Medical Schools

University of Aberdeen School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition

<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/smmsn/undergraduate/medicine/>

University of Dundee School of Medicine

<http://medicine.dundee.ac.uk/>

University of Edinburgh Medical School

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/medicine-vet-medicine/edinburgh-medical-school>

University of Glasgow School of Medicine, Dentistry and Nursing

<https://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/medicine/>

University of St Andrews School of Medicine

<http://medicine.st-andrews.ac.uk/>

Scottish Dental Schools

University of Glasgow Dental School

<https://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/dental/>

University of Dundee School of Dentistry

<http://dentistry.dundee.ac.uk/>