

The Medicine Application Timeline

This is a summary of the whole application process to medicine. It specifically takes you through each stage, breaking down the commendable feat of admission to medical school into simple steps. The Three Stages: **Prep, The Grind, The Final Mile**. Below are the times of the year and main goals for each stage.

When?	Stage	What does this stage involve?	Proportion of Total Work
Pre-Summer	Prep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work Experience + Volunteering • School Grades • Reading, Lectures, Science Clubs • Entrance Exams Light Prep 	40%
Summer to Oct	The Grind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More Work Experience • Personal Statement • Entrance Exams • Interview Light Prep 	40%
Nov to March	The Final Mile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topical Reading • Interview Preparation • Final Interviews • Securing The Bag (aka offers) 	20%

Let's break each stage down.

The Prep Stage – Pre-Summer

When does this stage start? When you finally decide on pursuing medicine

When does this stage end? Summer of your application year

Why should I bother? Insufficient grades/Lack of work experience will lead to a quick rejection from many medical schools

Challenges of this stage? Lots of studying, lots of admin work, no instant rewards at all

A lot of this work is derived from achievements gained before your application period to medicine begins. To be able to carry out the Prep Stage properly, ensure to decide on whether you want to pursue medicine early.

As with many things, if you prepare yourself well, final tasks will not be difficult. Contextualising this, if you prepare all the tools needed to erect a shed in your garden before you begin, your project will be much easier. are crucial to a successful application to medicine, so sorting this out during your GCSE and A-Level years will help you greatly. Ensure you sort out Work Experience early, ideally having completed some after your GCSEs and given how long it takes to sort out Volunteering, ideal candidates will have started around the age of 15/16.

The Grind Stage – Summer to October

When does this stage start? After end of school exams in Year 12

When does this stage end? After you submit your UCAS application and finish BMAT

Why should I bother? Entrance exams are used to grade candidates for interviews + your personal statement is the main way of showing what you've done relevant to medicine so far.

Challenges of this stage? Endless thinking, writing and editing, studying for two new completely different exams (UCAT and BMAT), meeting deadlines and working under constant time pressure

This part of the medical application process is where your determination to get into your dream medical school will be tested. You will be focussing on nailing things which are completely new to you – writing your personal statement, learning Abstract Reasoning for the UCAT and squeezing in even more work experience, all whilst missing out on your Summer vacation is quite tough.

Only the most resilient students will be able to sacrifice their time, to put in the effort needed to do this well. This sets the barrier high, again contributing to the well-known fact of only the most competitive students get into medicine. During this, you should keep your head down, manage your time well and work hard! Not losing focus is critical. Once you do your entrance exam, your score is final. Once you submit your personal statement to universities, via UCAS, it's final.

This stage will comprise of lots of critical components of your medical school application.

The Final Mile – November Onwards

When does this stage start? As soon as you submit your UCAS application

When does this stage end? After your interviews are all over + Offers come in

Why should I bother? Interviews make or break your chance of getting a medical school offer

Challenges of this stage? Overcoming nervousness and presenting yourself confidently, being able to discuss your experiences and reading thoughtfully and fluidly, doing multiple intense interviews.

This part is most straight forward, if you've done the two steps before properly. The Final Mile is only possible to take part in, if you've run every mile that had come before it. Once you are this stage, you have completed the majority of work you need to. However, for the first the time you will have to present yourself.

When presenting yourself, it will be in the flesh (or through video camera during the COVID pandemic). Attending medical school interviews, will allow medical schools to make a real-life judgement upon your character, interests and intentions to pursue a career in medicine. Like other parts of the application, if you prepare diligently for your interviews, it will be fine. Unlike everything else however, presenting yourself in a live format means there are no second chances if you a make a mistake. You can't backtrack on an inaccurate statement you make nor can you apologise for mentioning a book you have read in your personal statement, that you haven't actually read.

To conclude, here's a nice phrase I tell students when they begin their medical journey:

“Admission to medicine, similar to a successful career in medicine, is like a marathon. Hard work at a steady pace, always wins the race.”