

CASE STUDY 1: A very selective programme with high academic and non-academic requirements at a highly selective research-intensive university

Programme of Study:	Medicine
Total applications received:	2,691
Places available:	216
Applications per place:	12.5
Applicants invited for interview:	718
Offers made:	355
Percentage of offers made to applicants:	13%
Standard A-level offer	AAB
Range of accepted A-level achievement/average tariff score of accepted applicants:	AAA-AAB 467 tariff points
Proportion of accepted applicants with qualifications other than A-level:	5%

Selection process

Centralised or devolved selection	Mixed
Is an admissions test required?	No
Are interviews or auditions held?	Yes
Interview/audition period	Mid-November to mid-March
Equal consideration date	15 October
<p>Policy on considering applications after this date Very few applications are received after the 15 October. Those that are received within a month or so are seen by the Chair of Selectors and those that seem well qualified entered into the scoring process, if it is considered that there is capacity to consider them fully. Applications received in November/December are rejected. This programme never enters UCAS EXTRA or Clearing.</p>	

Admissions policy setting process

Early in September, detailed statistics from the previous admissions round are considered by the admissions selection committee to ensure that the process was fair, that those involved in the process have applied the selection criteria consistently. Selection criteria, academic and non-academic are considered and amended where necessary. This may involve a relaxing of the criteria or a tightening up, depending on the out-turn the previous session. Major changes to admissions requirements eg. a change in A-level subjects can only be enacted where sufficient notice is given to applicants, and therefore with a lead time of 18 months.

New selectors are required to undertake training before they are allowed to make decisions. On-going training is provided to others on for example, how to score forms, legislative requirements, how to conduct interviews etc. Extensive written guidance and operational manuals are also provided.

Admissions criteria

A-levels: Minimum 3 A-levels including Chemistry at grade A, and one laboratory based science at A or B. Excluded Subjects are General Studies and Critical Thinking.

International Baccalaureate at 35 points, including 3 Higher level subjects at 6 6 6 including Chemistry and one other science.

Welsh Baccalaureate: Pass the core and grades AA at A level including Chemistry and one other laboratory based Science.

Scottish Advanced Highers and Highers: Achieve grades AB to include Chemistry and Advanced Higher with five higher at grades AAAAA.

GCSE: Grade B in double award Science (or 2 single sciences), Maths and English Language.

Additional criteria: evidence of a realistic interest in Medicine; knowledge of a career in Medicine; demonstration of a commitment to helping others; demonstration of a wide range of interests; demonstration of a contribution to school/ college activities; a range of personal achievements (excluding examinations).

Detailed description of process

UCAS forms are first scored for academic achievement. All those meeting the minimum entry requirements for the programme are divided into batches of 30 and each batch is sent to one of 30 academic selectors for review against a range of published criteria. Selectors base their assessment on the personal statement and reference, recording this using a scoring proforma. The resulting score is added to the academic score. The highest-scoring candidates (normally those scoring 80% or above) are invited for interview. Interviewees' forms are then read by two interviewers, who use the interview to make a more detailed assessment, against the published criteria.

All forms of applicants **not** selected for interview are moderated by one of two 'second readers', based in the central admissions office, who are able to compare applications reviewed by different selectors in different application batches. They are also trained to take account of special medical,

family or educational circumstances, where permitted by the University's admissions policy and are authorised to invite up to 50 additional 'widening participation' candidates to interview. Where appropriate, second readers adjust scores to reflect the moderation process and then divide the remaining forms into two groups: 'high reserve' (applicants scoring between 70% and 80%) and 'unsuccessful' (applicants scoring below 70%). Unsuccessful applicants are notified, as soon as possible, through UCAS, that their application has been unsuccessful. 'High reserve' applicants are notified that their applications have been placed on hold until later in the application cycle, when a review of the cut-off scores and the number of interviewees is undertaken. In a typical year, this process results in the majority of 'high reserve' candidates being invited for interview.

Student Case Studies

Helen was a 17-year old state school applicant who, at the time of application, was studying for 'A' Levels in Biology, Chemistry and Mathematics. Her application was received from UCAS on 29th September. The application was reviewed and given a high score by a member of the selection committee, with the result that Helen was invited to interview on 24th November. The interview panel concluded that she was a strong but not outstanding candidate and asked the Undergraduate Admissions Office to write to her to explain that, because of this, a final decision on her application would be deferred until all interviews had been completed. This enabled the medical selection committee to gain a clearer picture of the quality of all applicants. In March, all applications held in this way were reviewed alongside each other and, as a result of this process, an offer was sent to Helen on 29th March.

Katherine was a 17-year old independent school applicant, studying for an International Baccalaureate, with Biology, Chemistry and Maths at Higher Level. Her application was received from UCAS on 2nd October and reviewed by a member of the medical selection committee. She did not score highly enough for automatic interview, but was identified as a 'high reserve' by the second reader, meaning that we were able to offer her an interview date later in the cycle. On 24th January, following a successful interview, held on 15th January, Katherine received a conditional offer from the University. Katherine's interviewers assessed her as having performed strongly against all the published criteria.

Paul was in his late twenties when he decided to enrol for an Access course in a local FE college, with a view to studying for a medical degree. His application for Medicine was received from UCAS on 9th October. Paul did not score highly enough for automatic interview. His form was therefore referred to a 'second reader'. As well as reviewing Paul's application against the normal selection criteria, the second reader was also able to take account of Paul's particular educational circumstances, in accordance with the University's widening participation policy. As Paul's application was felt to be significantly stronger than those of other similar applicants, the second reader decided to invite Paul to interview. Paul attended for interview on 12th March and was assessed by the interview panel as having performed strongly against the majority of the selection criteria, resulting in a conditional offer, which was sent to Paul on 22nd March.

Mark was an 18 year old state school applicant who, at the time of application, was studying for 'A' Levels in Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics and Religious Studies. His application was received from UCAS on 29th September. He scored very highly academically, but after scoring of his personal

statement, his total score fell outside the automatic interview range, and was also below the 'hold' or 'high reserve' score. Second reading did not change this and, as a result, Mark was advised that he had been unsuccessful on 12th January.

Annabel was an 18 year old state school applicant who was taking A Levels in Chemistry, History and Mathematics, which was not suitable for the A100 programme that she had applied for on 12th October (as this requires two laboratory sciences). She was considered for the 6 year A104 programme, and was scored for her academic grades and her personal statement, but unfortunately did not score highly enough to be shortlisted for interview, and was informed via UCAS on 3rd March.

Carly was an 18 year old applicant studying at a sixth form college. She applied for A100 on 12th November, but was automatically unsuccessful because she had not met the 15th October deadline, and was notified of this on 23rd November.