

What made you want to apply for medicine?

Milan:

I really enjoyed the science-based subjects, and wanted a practical and human element, so medicine was an obvious choice. In my personal statement, I wrote, "I am inspired by the great advances made in healthcare and what it provides for our society; the ability to support lives, combined with a delicate balance of all the sciences, is what makes medicine so attractive to me".

Callista:

I applied to medicine because I wanted to enter a profession which comprised both demand and reward. Medicine is less of a job and more of a lifestyle, which is intended to push doctors constantly. I love biology and really enjoyed reading books written by doctors, which portrayed such determination and passion despite the obstacles that they meet daily, which made me want to make a difference to people's lives just like they had.

What advice would you give to someone who wants to apply for medicine?

Milan:

I would say that applicants should be aware of what you are applying to. Medicine is a profession where you will spend a lot of time learning throughout your entire career. It can be very arduous but don't ever give up. Even if you don't get in first time, reapply if you know that medicine is the path for you.

Callista:

Do your research, as there are so many resources out there which demonstrate what life is like for medical professionals, so even whilst you cannot physically volunteer or do any work experience due to the pandemic - read blogs by doctors, follow Instagram journey accounts or books about the career which you plan to dedicate yourself to. Make sure you want it and go for it!

What are your goals for the future? (i.e. specialties etc.)

Milan:

I haven't given it much consideration yet but if everything goes to plan, then surgery looks very attractive. However, everything is up for consideration.

Callista:

I really like the idea of medical research, especially within oncology, as I did the UNIQ oncology summer school and was very enticed by the subject. It would definitely be something that I would want to explore in the future.

Is there anything you wish you'd done differently throughout the application process with the knowledge you have now?

Milan:

I would've prepared a bit more for the UCAT and BMAT but apart from that, not much, as school provides so much support. Always ask teachers for help!

Callista:

I wish I had committed myself years before I did, instead of jumping between different career paths and making sure I had picked A levels which would've kept as many options open as possible for me, which would've been a better decision.

How did you narrow down the medical schools you wanted to apply for?

Milan:

I liked the BMAT medical schools more than the UCATs, so that narrowed a lot of universities down and I ended up with 1 UCAT and 3 BMAT universities. I'd already visited my UCAT university, so I'd already got to experience the atmosphere there. I also considered the course structure, as all the universities that I applied to were either traditional learning or integrated.

Callista:

I, personally, had my options significantly reduced since I didn't choose to study A level Chemistry. From the remainder, I decided, after due consideration, that the integrated style was best for me. Only a few med schools in the UK still offer a full body dissection as part of anatomy and this was something I wanted as I am quite a 'hands on' person.

Have you considered a plan B if medicine doesn't work out for you this year?

Milan:

Yes, if I don't get into medicine, I will reapply for it again because I am dedicated to my career decision, therefore I would go through the application process again with the knowledge I have now.

Callista:

I personally really enjoy biology, so I would actually take my biomedicine offer and do that at undergraduate level. At some point in the future, I might explore post-graduate medicine, however, I feel I would be happy in either occupation and I am likely to pursue post-graduate qualifications within the biomedical field.

What did you do to make your personal statement stand out?

Milan:

I made sure to do a lot of virtual work experience in the pandemic. I also had the opportunity to do work experience online with a GP. I read a lot of medical books and scientific papers to show that I had made an effort to learn more about the profession before applying.

Callista:

Similarly to Milan, reading is a big hobby of mine, so I read lots and lots of books on medicine and research papers and reflected on them all. Reflection is a massive part of being a doctor, so I emphasised how I had improved through an activity and not what I had done. I participated in every opportunity given to me including UNIQ oncology summer school, joining the Medic Mentor association, using a Zero Gravity mentor, and completing Brilliant Club in Year 12. Make sure you have some substance in your statement and don't be that applicant who wants to 'help others'.

How did you prepare for your interview?

Milan:

For my interview at the University of Cambridge, I made sure that I knew my sciences, as they would ask a lot of science questions, especially chemistry-based ones. I would recommend:

- Try practising thinking out loud using all your thought processes
- Know all the science you spoke about in the Personal Statement and read more about it
- Watch YouTube videos online about the Cambridge interviews

Callista:

For MMI's, I learned about ethical principles and practised multiple role play scenarios at home. I worked with my Zero Gravity mentor to create mock interviews, met a network of other individuals also applying to medicine through my medic mentor, along with other students and we were able to work together to improve each other's interview skills – the key is to practise, practise, practise. If you don't know something, do your research into the question afterwards, like looking at certain Youtube channels, such as Ali Abdaal, which would walk you through the stations, which is a very useful starting point.

What qualities are needed to be a good doctor?

Milan:

The General Medical Council state that a good doctor should: show respect for patients, treat patients and colleagues fairly and without discrimination and act with honesty and integrity. A good doctor should be empathetic, skilled, focused, knowledgeable, unbiased, respectful and promote a healthy lifestyle.

Callista:

The best doctors will display a well-rounded balance of knowledge and empathy. A doctor should be able to recognise a patient's vulnerability and reciprocate emotions to allow patients to trust them and allow the doctor to provide the best holistic care for the patient, which is beneficial to both the health of the patients and the doctor's development.

How did you finalise your decision between applying to University of Cambridge and University of Oxford? (For Milan)

Milan:

I had been to Cambridge a few times on school trips and liked the atmosphere - the open days at Cambridge were more inviting than those at Oxford. The Cambridge course structure appeals more to me personally, despite the two being very similar.