

Gateways to the Professions

'Gateways to the Professions' is a project set up by the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (England).

It arose from the Langlands' report in 2005, which examined the potential impact of variable fees in terms of gateways into the professions. Further information can be found on the [Gateways website](#).

A partnership led by the General Medical Council (GMC) has produced guidance on [Advising medical schools: encouraging disabled students](#).

The guidance was produced with financial support from 11 medical schools and matched funding supplied from the development fund for Gateways to the Professions.

It provides practical suggestions to help medical schools ensure that disabled students do not face unnecessary barriers to successful medical careers

You will find more information about Gateways to the Professions, and about medical schools' initiatives to widen access to the profession, on the following pages.'

Widening access into the medical profession

1. The Gateways to the Professions Forum is a project initiative that includes a development fund on widening access to the professions. It arose from the Langlands' report in 2005, which examined the potential impact of variable fees in terms of gateways into the professions. Further information can be found on the Gateways website
<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/hegateway/hereform/gatewaystotheprofessions/index.cfm>
 2. Widening Access, in relation to education, refers to the policy that people such as students from disadvantaged backgrounds, mature students, students from ethnic and cultural groups and disabled students should be encouraged into higher education.
 3. Widening Access initiatives undertaken by a number of medical schools are designed to encourage a more diverse range of students into the medical profession. These programmes support a number of students from groups who have been historically underrepresented in the professions. The idea is to give opportunities to a wider range of people which should ensure the medical profession has the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities to reflect the needs of a culturally diverse population.
 4. Martin Hart was asked to present on widening access into medicine at the Gateways to the Profession Collaborative Forum on 17 October 2007. In order to support this presentation, we asked medical schools to tell us about some of their widening access programmes.
 5. 16 medical schools responded to our informal survey. In general,
 - a. The majority of medical schools had a foundation programme or extended first degree to help students achieve the necessary pre-requisites and grades for application onto the medical course.
 - b. A large number of medical schools also had specific eligibility criteria or flexible admissions requirements for students that completed the foundation programme or other feeder course.
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- c. Many medical schools also planned local events at primary and secondary schools to encourage students to think about a medical career early on in their education.
- d. Mentoring, coaching or other support through outreach programmes was also offered to students, with a focus on students from local or rural areas that are generally underrepresented at the medical school.

6. Where widening access programmes have been in place for a number of years, the medical schools report positive results with these students achieving at the same level as students who enter through more traditional routes.

7. Examples of good practice for widening access were also identified through the GMC Quality Assurance of Basic Medical Education (QABME) process. These examples focused on effective outreach programmes.

Widening Access to medicine

8. We asked the undergraduate medical school Deans to submit brief descriptions of their widening access programmes in order to illustrate good practice within undergraduate medical education. Table 1 sets out a summary of replies from 16 medical schools.

9. We require medical schools to ensure that anyone accepted on to a medical course is fit to become a doctor (Paragraph 56 *Tomorrow's Doctors*). We also require medical schools to put in place valid, open, objectives and fair selection procedures. They must publish information about the admission system and selection process. We also require the staff involved in selection to have appropriate expertise and knowledge and to be trained to apply the entry requirements fairly and consistently (Paragraph 57 *Tomorrow's Doctors*).

Recruitment into medicine

10. The British Medical Association produced a report on the Demography of Medical Schools in June 2004. The paper considered the kinds of students that applied to and were selected onto medicine. The Department of Health issued a report in 2004 that set out the future of medical education. Further details are summarised in Annex A.

Quality Assurance of Basic Medical Education (QABME) reports

11. In order to ensure that UK medical schools maintain the standards set out in *Tomorrow's Doctors*, we run a Quality Assurance programme, which involves regular assessments and visits to schools. As part of the 2006/7 programme, the teams considered ways that medical schools encourage underrepresented groups into medicine and identified a number of examples of good practice.

12. During the QABME assessment of the Glasgow Medical School for 2006/07, the visiting team commended the innovative work in widening access. They found that the School is actively participating in widening participation schemes, and is

developing a new approach to selection in order to support under-represented groups into the application process. In particular they commended the School's outreach work with young people from deprived communities, the access scheme partnership with Stow College, and the new initiatives to engage young Muslim women.

13. The QABME visiting team to Hull/York in 2006/2007 found the School has several widening participation projects running at present and commended its handling of disadvantaged prospective students. They were satisfied that the School has an appropriate widening participation strategy and that its selection procedures are fair, transparent and coherent.

14. The QABME visiting team for Peninsula in 2006/2007 found the School's policy on widening participation involves targeting Year 12 students and mentoring them through the admissions process through its e-mentoring scheme. The School report that currently 43 students are being mentored this year. Also the School is currently focusing its attention on schools where the conversion of medical schools applications to offers of places is disproportionately low.

15. The QABME visiting team for Sheffield in 2006/2007 found the School's main widening participation initiative is the Sheffield Outreach and Access to Medicine Scheme, which involves 82 secondary schools. The scheme raises awareness of medical careers and creates opportunities for students of varying socio-economic backgrounds to participate in activities introducing them to a career in medicine. All students who have completed the scheme are guaranteed an admissions interview and a specific quota of admissions is ring-fenced for students who have participated in the scheme.

Feedback from other medical schools 2007

16. We asked the deans of the medical schools to indicate if they have any innovative schemes to widen participation/recruitment into medicine. A more detailed account of the widening access programmes at these medical schools is in Annex B.

17. Out of the 18 schools that responded, 10 had a foundation year or an extended degree that allowed students that met the widening access criteria to develop the necessary knowledge, skills and requirements to enter the medical course. These feeder courses are proving successful and there is some evidence that these students achieve at the same level as students that gain admission through the normal route.

18. The second most common widening access initiative is a programme of events that target primary students or students from local or rural areas. 9 medical schools that responded hold events within their local communities in order to raise awareness that there are many different ways to enter medical school. A few medical schools also have a designated outreach worker or programme to explore ways of reaching underrepresented groups.

19. A number of medical schools (7 out of 18) have adapted their admissions requirements or eligibility criteria to take account of some of the less conventional backgrounds and requirements of potential students and applicants.

20. Most medical schools offer some sort of mentoring, advice, or tutoring programmes that offer support to potential applicants and students. One medical school offers funding and financial support to their widening access students.

Trends

21. Although there is still under representation in medical education by people from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, there have been significant improvements in recruitment, selection and retention of other groups such as women and some ethnic minorities.

22. Many medical schools are taking innovative initiatives to widen access to disadvantaged students through work with secondary schools, graduate entry programmes and enhanced support once on the course such as mentors/tutors.

23. There is a trend towards foundation programmes or feeder courses that help students achieve the necessary admissions requirements for the medical course. Some medical schools couple these programmes with alternative eligibility criteria or flexible admissions arrangements.

24. Some medical schools are also trying to affect change at the primary school level.

25. In general, most widening access programmes have been in place for five or fewer years. The medical schools report no problems with students that enter medicine through these programmes, but we may want to evaluate the outcomes once the first cohorts graduate and enter clinical work settings.

Further information

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Widening access into the medical profession - Annex A

Recruitment into medicine

British Medical Association – Demography of Medical Schools

1. The British Medical Association produced a report on the Demography of Medical Schools in June 2004. The paper considered the kinds of students that applied to and were selected onto medicine. Statistics are from UCAS.
2. The report indicated that ‘the majority of applicants to medicine and dentistry come from the highest social groups – the managerial and professional classes. In 2003, 59% of UK applicants to medical and dental school came from managerial and professional backgrounds. The proportion of *accepted* applicants from these social backgrounds is even higher (64% in 2003).’
3. The report suggests ‘even if there is no direct discrimination against students with lower socio-economic backgrounds, it is still likely that these applicants experience a certain degree of disadvantage during the application and selection process.’
4. ‘An applicant from a professional background is proportionately most likely to be accepted to medical or dental school, and the likelihood of being accepted generally declines with socio-economic background. For example, in 1998 and 1999 applicants with a professional background were over twice as likely to be accepted to medical school as those from an unskilled background.’
5. The report suggests that the low level of applicants from non-professional/managerial backgrounds is due in part to:
 - Cultural barriers in which progression to higher education is not a tradition in the secondary school or family.
 - Lack of aspiration to attend university.
 - Poor attendance/grades because of periods of time in care or in employment.

- Lack of support/information from secondary schools especially in filling out applications and meeting entry criteria as well a lack of references.

6. Some statistics from 2003 indicate better inclusion for women and some ethnic minorities into medical programmes:

- Over 60% of all entrants to medical school (UK, EU and 'other overseas' domiciled students) were female
- Over 30% of UK domiciled medical and dental students came from minority ethnic backgrounds. There was significant variation in the application and acceptance rates between ethnic groups. Of the minority ethnic students entering medicine, over two thirds were from Asian backgrounds
- 22% of those accepted to medical school were over 20 years old
- Just over 9% of students accepted to medical school were not UK residents: 2% came from other EU countries, and 7% came from 'other overseas' countries
- Medical students were still predominately drawn from professional and managerial backgrounds.

Department of Health Report: Medical Schools- Delivering the doctors of the Future

7. The Department of Health issued a report in 2004 that set out the future of medical education.

8. The report stresses the expansion of medical school placements with four new medical schools and further places at others as well as expansion into graduate entry courses. [We have been advised that there are now about 37, 500 medical students in the UK].

9. One of the biggest moves to widening access has been the introduction of graduate entry programmes. Almost all medical schools now offer this option, which allows a wider variety of students.

10. Some medical schools offer foundation programmes to help students to get work towards the entry requirements to medical school. According the DH report, St. George's Medical School has a 2 year foundation programme that is targeting those already working in healthcare. It is run through distance education.

11. According the report, a number of medical schools have summer school for perspective applicants to explore their options, road shows with local schools and outreach programmes for students 13-16.

12. For specific examples from the various medical schools, please see the report http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4075403

Widening access into the medical profession - Annex B

Feedback from medical schools 2007

1. We asked the deans of the medical schools to indicate if they have any innovative schemes to widen participation/recruitment into medicine.
2. Imperial indicated that they:
 - Are beginning the third year of an initiative in collaboration with Thames Valley University (TVU) which consists of a one year premedical foundation course aimed at people who have not reached their full potential at school because of socioeconomic factors. Providing a sufficient level of achievement is reached and candidates are successful at interview, up to six places on their MBBS course are guaranteed. Last year five students joined their first year intake to medicine from the TVU course.
 - Have a specific focus on a couple of local comprehensive schools which have a low level of success in getting pupils into higher education. Last year, two students from one of these schools got places at medical schools. An e-mentoring system involving their undergraduates has been introduced for specific pupils. This is a new venture.
 - Are initiating a specific pairing between local school pupils interested in a medical career and local GPs who will provide work experience.
 - Have increased the number of visits to schools mainly, but not exclusively, in the north-west of London. Imperial also has an efficient Outreach programme which reaches many other schools in London.
 - Are increasing the number of events and programmes for local schoolchildren visiting either the Imperial College site in South Kensington or some of their main teaching hospitals.
3. Aberdeen Medical School is taking forward some initiatives including:
 - Inviting 80 students from three remote/rural high schools to attend a workshop for health professionals.

- Developing a long-term strategy for remote/rural students events.
 - Having a conference for senior pupils on what have been the advances in medical schools.
4. The Southampton School of Medicine indicated they have:
- A Six Year Widening Access to Medicine programme that has run for five years now. It is aimed at encouraging lower Socio-Economic Status (SES) students into medicine through eligibility criteria that focus on areas of deprivation and means tests and more flexible entry criteria. Students must also pass the UKCAT entry exam and participate in an interview. There are 30 students per year in this programme. If the student passes the first year, they are guaranteed places in the first year of the medical course.
 - Crucial to the recruitment of appropriate students and overcoming some of the 'gate keeping' by teachers was the appointment of a dedicated outreach worker. The outreach worker engages directly with teachers and pupils in schools and colleges, giving talks, running 'taster' Easter and Summer Schools, including Aim Higher activities and events.
 - The cohort profile on the Widening Access programme is:
 - Very diverse ethnically – though no consistency across the cohorts
 - Very few white working class males and black afrocaribbean males in cohorts
 - 40 – 60% of cohort with English as a second language
 - Generally higher proportion of males:females than the direct entry cohort
 - Parental occupations very different to direct entry parent profile
5. The Newcastle Medical School has developed a widening access scheme that includes:
- Working closely with specific schools and colleges in the North East England, Cumbria and North Yorkshire. The MBBS programme participates in the 'supported entry route' where students from PARTNERS schools and colleges apply and are considered in exactly the same way as any other applicant except that if they are made an conditional offer it is BBB as opposed to AAA (standard offer). They are then required to successfully complete a two-week Assessed Summer School. They have admitted PARTNERS students since 2002 at about 12 per year. The first cohort graduated this summer and they have not seen any significant difference in performance in this cohort when compared to the standard cohort.
 - Allowing the transfer of a maximum of seven Stage 1 Bioscience students from within our Faculty. Students are selected on the basis of their academic performance in Stage 1 of the Bioscience course, a personal statement and interview (identical to the standard admissions process). They do not take their A level grades into account since this scheme operates on the premise that once in

a University environment students whose achievement at school/college was inhibited by their environment/background will flourish.

6. UCL is setting up a new widening access strategic group to support their programme. They have already developed:

- A week long Summer school for year 11 students who are interested in medicine, whose parents did not attend university and who are predicted A grades in their GCSEs.
- A programme to help students with interviews skills.
- A short comprehensive course for year 12 &13 students.
- A student ambassador programme and a tutoring scheme.

7. Barts and the London School of Medicine and Dentistry aims to widen participation by raising aspirations by a variety of outreach activities, such as school visits, open days, summer school courses and taster days including:

- SAMDA, a student-led organisation, which specifically aims to increase applications to medicine and dentistry from local low-participation neighbourhoods by raising aspirations and supporting individual student applications and mentoring.
- The Newham Doc Route which is a collaborative foundation year for a small number of medical applicants unsuccessful at initially gaining a place at Barts due to academic performance who satisfactorily meet other entrance requirements. They then go on to mature through a further year of both academic and work based activities at Newham University Hospital NHS Trust.

8. Medical schools in Scotland as a group have developed a programme called the Working in Health Access Network (WHAN). It involves:

- Developing regional networks representing the geographical diversity of Scotland
- Raising awareness of healthcare careers, including Medicine
- Developing the support structures necessary to ensure successful study and transition into healthcare employment for individuals from under-represented groups.
- The programme is directed at secondary schools but material is being developed for younger children. They are also looking at extending the programme to adult learners.

9. The University of Nottingham is:

- Collaborating with the University of Lincoln which offers a one year Certificate in Health Science. Entry to the certificate course is dependent on meeting Widening Participation (WP) criteria and successful completion allows progress onto the five year medical course at Nottingham. A maximum of ten places on the medical course are set aside for this and the first cohort made the transition in September 2006. Seven students have now progressed successfully onto the second year of the medical course. In September 2007, the second cohort of students transferred from the certificate course onto the first year of the medical course.
- Currently monitoring the WP background of the direct entry A level applicants.

10. Peninsula Medical School is:

- Currently carrying out work with local schools in Devon, Cornwall and Somerset both on its own and in conjunction with the University of Plymouth and the University of Exeter. The outreach work includes liaising with other schools and colleges as well as presenting at career events.
- Expanding its e-mentoring schemes for students in secondary school.
- Developing a number of events including participating in National Science Week and attending teachers' conferences to ensure a dialogue with students and teachers in primary and secondary education.
- Offering financial support to disadvantaged students already on the course.

11. At Oxford Medical School, It has:

- Undertaken initiatives to widen participation from ethnic minorities/under-represented groups include the Sutton Trust and AimHigher. They have run events for ethnic and minority group organizations trying to raise aspirations and encourage minority groups, including 'Black Boys Can', and 'Generating Genius'.
- Several candidates who attended the Sutton Trust Summer School in summer 2006 applied later that year for entry to Medicine; two were successful in gaining a place at Oxford.
- Liaised with the University's central access team on re-setting the Sutton Trust entry level for Medicine in 2008, in order to ensure that participants have the necessary academic background to realistically be able to compete for a place at Oxford. They shall monitor the progress of applications this term from any candidate who has attended an Oxford access programme for Medicine.

12. St Andrew's Medical School is:

- Supporting students through central funding in order to target schools that traditionally do not send pupils either for university education or for a career in

medicine. They have altered their admission criteria not to reduce standards but to allow standards to be obtained over a longer period particularly in schools who may have difficulty in presenting pupils for the science subjects.

- Developing a relationship and agreement with Perth College. This is aimed at mature students who have either missed out on the opportunities at an earlier stage of acquiring school leaving examinations or have left school prematurely.

13. Dundee Medical School is

- Offering a premedical course, predominantly for entrants with an arts rather than science background.
- Offering 20/154 places to mature or postgraduate applicants.
- Participated in the Scotland-wide Scottish Funding Council-funded “Working in Health Access Programme” (WHAP) and is part of the continuing “Working in Health Access Network” (WHAN). The aim is to identify young people who might make good doctors in the future, and to encourage applications from under-represented groups and schools. As part of the WHAP project over 400 local youngsters visited Ninewells Hospital and Medical School including the Clinical Skills Centre. With the establishment of secure funding for the WHAN initiative, the programme will continue to see recruitment into medicine as extremely important, but the programme has been extended to include encouragement to apply to a range of health and science professions.
- Recognising the difficulty in increasing diversity of applicants and entrants. For example the well-established University Access Summer School for those without conventional entrance qualifications has yet to prove a means of access for any individual to medicine.
- Reviewing the admissions criteria. Increased use of UKCAT scores and multiple mini-interviews may reduce dependence on unreliable UCAS statements to assess motivation.

14. University of Cardiff is

- Running a Step-Up to Health (includes Medicine and other health-related course/careers). Pupils who have actively taken part in the scheme are guaranteed an interview should they choose to apply to Cardiff University and have the ability to achieve the required grades. Approximately 120 pupils are admitted into the Step-Up to Health scheme each year, of whom 40 – 50 are interested in Medicine. Eight of the 2006 cohort were admitted to the University’s Medical Course and six of the 2007 cohort were admitted. Three of the 2007 cohort were admitted to medical courses at Manchester and Birmingham Universities and others to medical science or health-related courses at Cardiff and other universities. Pupils who have taken part in the Step Up to Health Scheme over the last few years and admitted to Cardiff University are now assisting with widening access activities and are acting as role models. This has

been of particular relevance when students have been able to return to their own schools to inspire pupils there.

- Organising a Medical Roadshow to provide information, guidance, support and role models for pupils.
- Organising MedWales, an annual event to give Year 12 students to give them insight into medical training. This is a one-day (free-of-charge) conference held on a Saturday to give 200 Year 12 students.
- Providing a seminar for Year 12 students living in rural locations in mid-Wales on careers within the health professions (including medicine) – led by health professionals and Cardiff University students.
- Offering a Feeder courses such as the Foundation year (pre-med). It is a six year foundation course offering students who have a ‘non science’ background and also for students with alternative qualifications to A Levels. There are roughly 16 places a year on this course. After successfully completing the first year of the course, students then ‘feed’ directly into the first year of the five year course.
- Developing a link with the University of Glamorgan to provide an opportunity to a small number of students who are studying a BSc in Medical Sciences at Glamorgan. Another such link is being created for students studying for a BSc in Pharmacology within Cardiff University.

15. University of Liverpool Medical School is

- Running for a number of years a four year, graduate entry, MBChB programme. This is aimed at people that already have a first degree but who did not consider medicine the first time around. The entry number is 32 per year out of a total intake of 370 and the places are very over-subscribed.
- Linking up with three local Further Education colleges in order to provide so-called ‘Year 0’, access programmes to the medical school, dental school and allied health professions programmes. These are aimed at students that were unable to obtain the appropriate A levels for entry on to the medical course. Successful completion of the ‘year 0’ course leads directly to a place on the MBChB programme. We are involved in the admissions process to the ‘year 0’ programmes.
- Linked up with Lancaster University to provide 50 MBChB places studying the Liverpool curriculum but based at Lancaster University and with clinical placements throughout Cumbria and Lancashire. This in an effort to improve the healthcare provision in this rural area and encourage able students from this area to study medicine closer to home.
- Implementing a policy of considering applications from students re-sitting A levels on an equal footing with those taking them for the first time.

16. Leeds Medical School is

- Running access courses with a potential intake of up to 40 students a year from disadvantaged backgrounds in the local area that the School now has over 150 students who have been admitted through that route and that the first cohort graduated last year, one to take up an academic F1 post.

17. King's College London has

- 50 entrants to the Extended Medical Degree Programme (EMDP).