

GO BEYOND BOUNDARIES



# MBCChB Medicine

UNDERGRADUATE GUIDE



→ **1ST IN THE UK  
FOR MEDICINE**

Guardian University Guide 2025

# Welcome

At the University of Aberdeen we have a long and distinguished history of producing excellent medical graduates, many of whom have subsequently travelled the world practising medicine or undertaking highly acclaimed research.

As a medical student at the University of Aberdeen you will be part of the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition. Our Medical School is relatively small, enabling us to offer superb care and support for our “medical apprentices”, whilst remaining at the forefront in areas of medical research. The clinical facilities, both locally and across the Highlands and Islands, are outstanding and available to all students.

Our medical programme aims to produce excellent doctors who will be able to assimilate and apply new knowledge throughout their careers and who will themselves contribute to the advancement of medicine.

I hope you enjoy reading about the opportunities there are for you in the School.



**Professor  
Colin Lumsden**  
Director of  
the Institute  
of Education in  
Healthcare &  
Medical Sciences

# Your learning experience

## Degree Structure & Content

Our students develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes that ensure they are well prepared for life as a junior doctor and that provide a firm basis for postgraduate training and lifelong learning.

The length of the programme is five years and each year students undertake a step-by-step approach to the development of knowledge, skills and professional attitudes, whilst undertaking a systems-based approach to learning.

There is an option to undertake a one-year intercalated degree and all students will experience our Remote & Rural option in Years 4 and 5. Student Selected Components (SSCs) are undertaken in each year, which allow students to follow up areas of personal interest for more detailed study.



## Year 1

The first term sets the scene for the whole of undergraduate study. This begins with the student gaining an understanding of the medical sciences and the disease processes that underpin medicine. The foundations of clinical method and communication skills are fully integrated from the start of the curriculum.

The systems-based course commences with the study of two major systems, the Respiratory and the Cardiovascular Systems. This systems-based course uses clinical cases to act as a focus for learning. Students learn how to explore patients' symptoms and perform clinical examination for each of the systems studied. The Foundations of Primary Care (FPC) uses a network of General Practices across Aberdeen and introduces students to psychological and social roles of humans within society with particular reference to health, while a Personal and Professional Development (PPD) thread starts in Year 1.

## Year 2

The systems-based courses, FPC and PPD continue to develop throughout Year 2, with students building on their basic knowledge of clinical skills acquired in Year 1.

## Year 3

The study of the systems and the FPC is completed in third year. Students by now are able to perform a complete history and examination and have basic knowledge of common diseases in all the major body systems. A six week SSC provides students with a unique opportunity to study a topic outwith the mainstream of medicine, with a wide variety of topics within Medical Humanities.

## Intercalated Degrees

At the end of third year or alternately, between fourth and fifth year, there is the opportunity to be involved in cutting edge research, by undertaking an intercalated one-year Honours BSc or Masters in the School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition. There is also the option to take an intercalated degree in the Medical Humanities.

## Year 4

The Year 4 curriculum is a clinically-based, person-centred learning experience that builds on the breadth and depth of specialty knowledge from the earlier years systems-based teaching. Students develop their clinical reasoning, diagnostic and management skills for both individual patients and patient populations of all ages, with medical conditions affecting any of the body systems. Students undertake seven six-week clinical blocks during which experience will be gained in many different clinical areas and disciplines.

At least one of these clinical blocks will be undertaken in Inverness. Students may choose to undertake the Remote and Rural option for all the blocks in Year 4, and these students will be based in Inverness for the year.

Five horizontal themes also arc across the curriculum: diagnostics, end of life care, health-data science, quality improvement, cost and value of healthcare.

## Year 5

The final year is very much an apprentice year to prepare students for the competent, safe, effective and professional practice of medicine as a pre-registration Foundation Doctor. Students gain extensive clinical experience during three eight week attachments in medicine, surgery and GP/psychiatry. Student Assistantships allow students to take on the role of a junior doctor under supervision for a short time during each of their clinical attachments. This experience, together with our Professional Practice course, helps bridge the gap between life as a student and the practicalities of life as a junior doctor. Students also have the unique opportunity during final year to seek out worldwide locations for an eight week project-based elective in a subject of the student's choice.





# Learning and assessment

The core material is delivered using an integrated approach, with science and medicine taught together whenever possible.

A variety of teaching methods are used including lectures, tutorials, anatomy practicals and small group sessions. Clinical expertise is acquired both in the Clinical Skills Centre as well as in hospitals, general practice and other clinical areas. Teaching sessions may involve practical demonstrations with real or simulated patients.

## Remote and Rural Experience

There is a wide range of clinical attachments on offer across the North East of Scotland and across the Highlands and Islands. There are clinical campuses at Dr Gray's Hospital, Elgin and Raigmore Hospital, Inverness and all students undertake clinical placements outside Aberdeen.

The Inverness campus at Raigmore Hospital is the gateway to healthcare delivery in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. Students can undertake clinical attachments in final year at more distant locations such as Stornoway, Fort William, Wick, Orkney and Shetland. In addition, our extensive network of teaching general practices around Scotland, also give students opportunities to experience patient care in a wide range of community settings.

**PLACEMENTS IN THE REMOTE AND RURAL AREAS OF SCOTLAND PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH UNIQUE OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPERIENCE HEALTHCARE IN A VARIETY OF SETTINGS.**

## Assessment

The Medical School has a duty to ensure that its graduates have achieved a safe and satisfactory standard of performance in all the elements of medical practice. Assessment is built in throughout the five years of the course, to ensure that basic skills are mastered before moving on to more advanced topics. Since medicine is not simply a theoretical subject, teaching and learning covers knowledge, skills and attitudes and assessment must therefore do the same. A variety of assessment methods are used.

**Written exams** – these test factual knowledge, but can also test clinical reasoning/diagnostic skills and, to a lesser extent, attitudes.

**Course Work** – In some courses, essays or reports are written. Some courses also involve students working in groups to produce oral presentations.

**Clinical Exams** – clinical skills include history taking, communication skills, procedural skills and examination technique. Diagnostic skills, knowledge of disease management and a wide range of professional skills including ethics are also encompassed within clinical exams. These are tested by the use of the Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCE).

These comprise a sequence of stations, which tests the students on their ability to perform a specific clinical task or solve a clinical problem. In the final years of the course some of the assessment of clinical skills takes place with real patients in real clinical settings using workplace based assessment tools. This form of assessment is used as part of the ongoing assessment of all doctors.

# Our students

## Jeremie Juan

MBChB Medicine  
with intercalated year studying  
BSc Biomedical Science (Anatomy)



Aberdeen became my first-choice medical school after the amazing experience I had during my interviews and at the open

day. I felt like the medical school had the perfect balance of early clinical contact and first-rate anatomy and clinical skills teaching. The course had so many unique and interesting aspects, such as the option to do remote and rural placements in beautiful parts of the country. The biggest factor, though, was the real atmosphere of togetherness within the medical school – it was great to see the friendship and support between students from all different year groups, staff members, and patient partners!

## Dominika Boldovjakova

MBChB Medicine



I really enjoyed my time in Aberdeen and loved the course. My favourite memories are probably from the clinical placements.

They were always the main highlight of my week and I felt very privileged to be able to communicate with patients from very early on. To add to that, I really enjoyed all the simulation sessions. They were always good fun, and it is such a great way to learn in a safe environment. For me, the most interesting thing about the MBChB programme is all the different places that we had the opportunity to visit during our clinical attachments.

## Jack Miller

MBChB Medicine



Aberdeen caught my eye as a medical school for its early exposure to clinical environments, high student satisfaction rate, and the

reputation it holds for producing confident and competent doctors. The location is unique in that it offers placements across several health boards that serve remote and rural communities, forcing you to think of different modes of healthcare delivery and how best to overcome all kinds of challenges for patients. Aberdeen has been a wonderful place to study for 5 years, I'll cherish the memories and keep in touch with my uni friends forever. I'd strongly recommend you study here!

## Nina Hallwood

MBChB Medicine



The most valuable part of my degree undoubtedly has been my time on placement, learning firsthand how to diagnose, manage

and treat patients. I feel I have had lots of time to practice my communication and clinical skills with patients in a safe, supported environment. I feel my degree has helped to prepare me, in particular, for my first two years as a junior doctor. I hope that I will be able to go back to my school and help other young people from widening access backgrounds into medicine and offer them advice and support in future.

# Your medical career

At the end of the undergraduate programme you will receive your MBChB degree, which is a primary medical qualification (PMQ). Holding a PMQ entitles you to provisional registration with the General Medical Council, subject only to its acceptance that there are no Fitness to Practise concerns that need consideration. Provisional registration is time limited to a maximum of three years and 30 days (1125 days in total). After this time period your provisional registration will normally expire.

Provisionally registered doctors can only practise in approved Foundation Year 1 posts: the law does not allow provisionally registered doctors to undertake any other type of work. To obtain a Foundation Year 1 post you will need to apply during the final year of your undergraduate programme through the UK Foundation Programme Office selection scheme, which allocates these posts to graduates on a competitive basis. All suitably qualified UK graduates have found a place on the Foundation Year 1 programme, but this cannot be guaranteed, for instance if there were to be an increased number of competitive applications.

Successful completion of the Foundation Year 1 programme is normally achieved within 12 months and is marked by the award of a Certificate of Experience. You will then be eligible to apply for full registration with the General Medical Council. You need full registration with a licence to practise for unsupervised medical practice in the NHS or private practice in the UK.

Although this information is currently correct, students need to be aware that regulations in this area may change from time to time.

There is some discussion about whether to remove provisional registration for newly qualified doctors. If this happens, then UK graduates will receive full registration as soon as they have successfully completed an MBChB (or equivalent) degree. It should be noted that it is very likely that UK graduates will still need to apply for a training programme similar to the current Foundation Programme and that places on this programme may not be guaranteed for every UK graduate.

The Medical Licensing Assessment (MLA) is a two-part assessment made up of an applied knowledge test (AKT) and a clinical and professional skills assessment (CPSA) which, for students in UK medical schools, will be embedded within your degree from the academic year 2024-25. If you are graduating in the academic year 2024-25 or beyond, you will need to have a degree that includes passing the MLA before you can apply to the GMC to join the medical register.

## Working with the NHS

The NHS National Medical Careers website [www.medicalcareers.nhs.uk](https://www.medicalcareers.nhs.uk) contains a lot of valuable information to assist you in planning your medical career. International Medical Graduates UK graduates from overseas who have completed the Foundation Programme and who hope to stay in the UK for further training, may obtain further information from the General Medical Council Website.





### **Fitness to practise**

By awarding the MBChB degree, the University is stating that the graduate is fit to practise as a doctor. The University, therefore, has a duty to ensure that medical graduates meet the high standards laid down by the General Medical Council (GMC) in its guidance to the medical profession. The University also has a duty to ensure that no member of the public is harmed as a result of taking part in the teaching of medical students.

Details of our Fitness to Practise requirements can be found at: [www.abdn.ac.uk/medicine](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/medicine)

### **Transfers from other degree programmes**

Transfer of students from another degree course into medicine is not normally considered. Undergraduates enrolled in other degree programmes are advised to complete their current degrees and apply as graduates.

### **Entrance requirements**

To avoid the disappointment of non-completion of a degree, or indeed complete disillusionment with a subsequent career in medicine, we need to ensure that applicants enter this profession with their eyes open and understand the implications and commitments of such a career.

It is important to understand that there are academic requirements (ie the minimum achievements required in examinations) as well as non-academic requirements for medicine. In addition, all applicants must take the Universities Clinical Aptitude Test (UCAT).

Full details of academic and non-academic entry requirements alongside information on how we use the UCAT test can be found at: [www.abdn.ac.uk/medicine](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/medicine)



### **How Do I Apply?**

Applications to this degree programme are made through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). You apply online at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)

Applications must be submitted before the UCAS October deadline.

# 10 reasons to choose Aberdeen

- 01** Our thriving medical school is co-located on one of the largest clinical sites in Europe with superb teaching and extensive research facilities.
- 02** The course is modern, dynamic and clearly delivered using a systems and case-based approach.
- 03** Clinical experience is central to teaching and you will have increasing patient contact from year one.
- 04** Our senior students have the option to undertake a range of clinical placements in remote and rural areas of Scotland.
- 05** In your final year, you may choose to travel anywhere in the world to undertake a project-based elective.
- 06** As a medical student you are encouraged to join our many dedicated clubs and societies with opportunities to develop yourself and your interests.
- 07** You will have access to state-of-the-art teaching and learning facilities at our purpose-built health care education centre. The Suttie Centre offers excellent teaching and simulation facilities as well as good social facilities.
- 08** The medical school actively encourages and support students who are interested in a career with a major focus on research offering opportunities to undertake summer projects in this area.
- 09** Aberdeen is everything a student city should be and more! Historic, international, fashionable and friendly.
- 10** Aberdeen is probably closer than you think. Affordable and regular air, rail and bus connections will get you around Scotland, the UK and further afield in not time.

**Any questions?** Phone us on 01224 272090 or email [study@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:study@abdn.ac.uk)







**[abdn.ac.uk/smmsn](https://abdn.ac.uk/smmsn)**

Medical Admissions  
+44 (0)1224 437923  
[medadm@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:medadm@abdn.ac.uk)

 [@UoAsmmsn](#)

 [@AbdnLifeScience](#)

 [uniofaberdeen](#)

 [uniofaberdeen](#)