

Work Experience FAQs

Why must my work experience be within four years of application; I have gained extensive work experience that falls outside of these dates?

We believe that recent experience is indicative of your recent motivation for, and insight into, a career in medicine. Health professions move on with time, so recent experience provides you with better insight. Moreover, we ask you to discuss your work experience at our Selection Centre – recent experiences will be fresher in your memory.

Why must my experience demonstrate two different experiences?

We expect our candidates to build a broad portfolio of experiences as this will provide a better insight and understanding of the demands and requirements of training for a career in medicine, where you will be required to work as part of a multidisciplinary team. We believe there is little benefit in repeating the same experiences when a more varied portfolio would provide a wider range of different perspectives.

Your experiences can both be with the same organisation, but must be distinct in terms of your role. You need a separate reference for each experience, written by different people.

What is hands-on-care?

To fulfil our requirements your work experience must demonstrate hands-on care of patients/people with healthcare needs. This may be performing basic tasks of caring for patients, including helping them get out of bed and going to the toilet, feeding, washing and dressing. In a healthcare environment you may also be performing observations, dressing wounds or administering drugs. You will almost certainly be dealing with the emotional needs of individual patients alongside other tasks.

In short, hands-on care is where you are meeting the healthcare needs of others (including mental health needs).

Why does shadowing only count for 20 hours (out of a minimum of 70 hours)?

We believe that observation of health care and healthcare practitioners can provide you with some insight into a specific role or area of a hospital. However, it does not provide you with the same insight as actually providing hands-on care for patients/people with healthcare needs.

With the exception of acceptable online shadowing, your shadowing should be of others providing hands-on care.

Why does “virtual” (online or telephone) experience only count for 20 hours (out of a minimum of 70 hours)?

Most healthcare within today's NHS takes place "in-person" and such in-person care includes the physical care that is very challenging to provide virtually.

Where can I find a work experience placement?

There are a number of online resources available to medical school applicants in providing guidance and advice on gaining work experience and the expectations of UK Medical Schools.

- The BMA [Work Experience Advice for Students](#)
- Medical Schools Council [Guidance on relevant experience for applying to medical school](#) (2017 update)
- NHS Health Education England: [Health Careers: gaining experience](#)
- GAP Medics: [International Medical Work Experience](#)
- The Student Room: [Medicine Work Experience](#)

I am an overseas applicant; how can I gain experience of the NHS?

Work experience in the NHS is not expected for overseas students. However, we strongly recommend that you gain an understanding of the UK health service via your own research.

I work at a school with children who have a disability; would this be acceptable work experience?

Yes, if you are assisting the children with their daily tasks and domestic care (including dressing, toileting and feeding, as well as providing therapy for their condition). Teaching or tutoring alone would not be acceptable.

Why do roles such as Meeter & Greeter or Ward Befriender not count towards my work experience?

We believe these roles provide an essential patient service and provide a welcoming and friendly environment for patients who may need information or company during their stay/visit. These roles provide valuable experiences in learning about patients' emotional needs and promote patients' wellbeing but do not demonstrate hands-on care, because you are not meeting patients' healthcare needs.

What experiences during previous study count as acceptable work experience?

Clinical placements undertaken as part of previous Higher Education-level study on health professions courses count for up to 50 hours of work experience, providing the placement was undertaken within the last four years. We accept clinical placements on the following courses: Nursing, Midwifery, Dentistry, Optometry, Physiotherapy, Physicians Associate, Paramedic Science/Practice and Radiography. Please contact us for verification if your health profession is not in this list.

Why are there limitations on what Pharmacy work experience is acceptable?

If your primary work experience is in Pharmacy (either in-hospital or as a community pharmacist), then your second experience must be in another healthcare profession. This is to ensure you have a broad understanding of the healthcare environment in which doctors work. We do not accept “shop assistant” roles within Community Pharmacies (e.g. shelf-filling or working on the till), since there is insufficient “hands-on” care of patients/people with healthcare needs within these roles.

Why do activities coordinator roles in care homes not count towards my work experience?

These roles support the wellbeing of residents and are valuable in terms of learning about people’s emotional needs, but they do not include hands-on healthcare.

Why are clinical trials or clinical research which involves patients not an acceptable experience?

Experience that does not provide direct hands-on care of people/patients is not acceptable as it does not meet the requirement of you meeting the healthcare needs of others. Work not carried out in a healthcare environment will not provide you with the insight and realistic understanding of the role of a doctor and the values required to practise medicine.

How do I tell you about my work experience?

At the point of application, all applicants will be provided with a link to an online survey, where you will be required to provide us with details of your work experience placements, including a named contact who can confirm what you did and for how long.

How do I evidence my work experience?

You will be required to upload verification of your work experience placements via our online portal. The link to the portal will be provided once you have submitted your application; your referee can also upload your reference directly to this portal if they prefer. Your reference must include written evidence of the number of hours, dates and your role. All work experience verification must be on the official letter headed paper of the organisation that you worked for; we will not accept references from a private individual or relative. We therefore strongly recommend that you ask for references at the time of your placements, or soon after.

If you do not provide this evidence your application will be withdrawn. We are unable to guarantee that references received by email and/or post will be considered so please make sure they are uploaded to our online portal.

A template letter for your evidence can be found [here](#).

What should I do if I cannot source a reference?

If you have completed online or COVID-19 related work experience such as GoodSAM or are otherwise unable to get a letter to verify your experience, please upload an email confirming appointment to the role and evidence such as a screenshot of hours worked. Other acceptable evidence includes payslips and a job contract outlining dates, hours and duties of the role. Without this evidence, our course selectors have no way of knowing that you actually carried out the experience.

References are preferred where possible, as these allow us to gain an insight into how your skills and abilities make you suitable for a career in medicine.