

**MB BCh BAO**  
**UNDERGRADUATE ENTRY TO MEDICINE (UEM)**  
**&**  
**GRADUATE ENTRY TO MEDICINE (GEM)**

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**1. What is GAMSAT and what is MCAT?**

GAMSAT is available to any student who has already completed a Bachelor degree, or who will be enrolled in their penultimate (second-last) or final year of study for a Bachelor degree, at the time of sitting the test. UCD awards EU places on their Graduate Entry to Medicine (GEM) programme strictly on the results of this examination. GAMSAT is 75% science; 25% other skills

The Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) is a standardised, multiple-choice examination designed to assess problem solving, critical thinking, writing skills, and knowledge of science concepts & principles prerequisite to the study of medicine. Scores are reported in Physical Sciences, Verbal Reasoning, Writing Sample, and Biological Sciences. UCD requires MCAT scores for all Non-EU applicants to the GEM programme.

**2. What is HPAT?**

The admissions test selected by the Irish Medical Schools is called HPAT-Ireland (Health Professions Admission Test-Ireland). The test measures a candidate's logical reasoning and problem solving skills as well as non-verbal reasoning and the ability to understand the thoughts, behaviour and/or intentions of people. Further information is available from the '*Undergraduate Entry to Medicine for EU Applicants 2011 brochure*'. All EU students applying to study Undergraduate Entry to Medicine (UEM) in Ireland are required to sit the HPAT examination.

**3. What is the ratio of EU to Non-EU students in the UEM and GEM programmes?**

In the UEM programme, Stage One has a ratio of approx 6:1, EU:Non-EU.

Stage One of the GEM programme is weighted approx 4:1, EU:Non-EU.

**4. How will I learn?**

One of the strengths of both the UEM and GEM programmes is our Patient and Advocate Centred Education (PACE) approach to learning including teaching in small groups where our students learn the necessary skills under the tuition of highly qualified clinical tutors. We aim to enhance your experience by attention to student welfare and by adopting innovative teaching strategies and assessment methods.

**5. What style of teaching will be used? Is the course primarily traditional, integrated or PBL based?**

We will not be relying on problem based learning for the delivery of the course. Instead there will be a blended approach using all modalities to deliver modules that have clear learning outcomes.

**6. How many credits does each module have in the Medicine programmes?**

A standard undergraduate module is 5 credits, although there are some 10 credit modules in the early stages of the GEM programme. Later in your clinical curriculum the majority of modules will have a value of 10 or more credits. One credit represents 20-25 hours of student time. Therefore, a standard 5-credit module represents 100-125 hours of student time.

**7. What is an Elective?**

An elective is a module which is not part of the core modules of your programme of study. Most undergraduate students undertake elective during their studies. Electives can be chosen across many subject areas in the University

**8. For the GEM programme, what level of science is it assumed that students will have at the beginning of the course? Is any additional support available for students from a non-science background?**

We have put in science options in both years one and two to allow students who would like to learn more science to do so. Students from a non science background are very welcome. There will be academic support – for all students.

**9. I hope to join the UEM programme but I haven't studied Chemistry before? How will I manage alongside those who have?**

The six-year UEM curriculum has been designed to accommodate students without Leaving Certificate Chemistry. You will still enjoy and thrive in Stage One of Medicine.

**10. Are any additional supports available for students who struggle with certain science subjects?**

The Maths Support Centre offers free support to students from any UCD programme particularly in Maths but also in Physics or a maths-rooted subjects. In addition, the module coordinators are very supportive, and go out of their way to assist those who request help.

**11. Where will I study on the UCD Campus?**

UCD's Health Sciences Centre, which opened in September 2005, is a state-of-the-art facility for medical education and research and brings the research and teaching activities of physicians, nurses, physiotherapists and radiographers together under one roof.

**12. What hospital might I be based in?**

The major general teaching hospitals are the Mater Misericordiae University Hospital (MMUH) and St Vincent's University Hospital (SVUH), based in Dublin. However, our education programme stretches across more than 21 hospital sites and more than 100 general practices.

**13. In the UEM programme, what are the main focuses of study in each of the 6 years and is there a major distinction between clinical and pre-clinical years?**

Clinical studies and professionalism are integrated into the medical science modules of the first 3.5 years. In the last 2.5 years, especially years 5 and 6, the course is rooted in clinical practice.

**14. How is the GEM programme structured and how does it differ from the UEM programme? What are the main focuses of study in each of the 4 years and is there a major distinction between clinical and pre-clinical years?**

In the GEM programme, clinical studies and professionalism are integrated into the biomedical modules in the first 1.5 years. In the last 2.5 years, especially years 3 and 4, the course is rooted in clinical practice. For this four year programme we have designed modules that reduce repetition and integrate normal and abnormal biology within semesters. This makes education and learning more efficient – especially suited to adult learning. The programme has a total 270 ECTS course – 30 credits shorter than a traditional 5 year programme.

There will also be more group learning than in a conventional programme, but we do not have a wholly problem based curriculum. Instead, there will be lectures, seminars, clinical skills and anatomy dissection etc right from the beginning. There will be also case based tutorials and both courses involve early access to patients.

**15. How is the GEM programme structured in terms of clinical/scientific mix?**

The question regarding clinical / scientific mix in the first two years is difficult to answer simply because the course has a complex structure, and multiple instructional methods. For example, in the first semester, you see a patient in the community, learn life support skills, practice clinical skills in a clinical skills laboratory with hospital consultants, and also patients come and train you on campus as part of our PACE scheme. (Patient and Advocate Centred Education)

In the second semester, you will have PBL sessions with general practice registrars and in addition to clinical skills sessions, you will have afternoons in general practices where you will learn how to interact with real patients. This carries through into the third semester.

In semester four (after December of your second year) you will be required to go on hospital visits associated with paediatrics, obstetrics and psych introductions, you will spend a week in an ENT based clinical and a further week in an ophthalmology based clinical, you will take a history from a patient in our National Rehabilitation Hospital or similar facility, and you spend 4 weeks completely immersed in an acute general hospital split between medicine and surgery where you will learn to systematically review patients. After that, you will join the final two years of the newly modularised UEM Programme. So, you will learn from doctors and patients throughout, the exposure is gradated and spread between the community and acute hospitals.

**16. Do GEM and UEM students share lectures for any parts of the course?**

Yes – in the first two years, 30% of the course will be shared.

**17. How does the UEM programme at UCD differ from Medicine programmes at other Irish Universities?**

All medical programmes in Ireland are accredited by the Medical Council of Ireland, and have high quality standards of educational practice. There are however some distinct flavours to the UCD medical experience of which we are particularly proud including a strong scientific grounding, a wide portfolio of clinical training sites and an emphasis on the role of the patient or patient advocate as educator. A further benefit is our commitment to widening access through New ERA access, disability access, mature access, Graduate Entry access and reduced dependence on leaving certificate chemistry. A further major distinction is the opportunity to take horizons electives in any discipline the University has to offer.

**18. What are the term dates for the Medicine programme?**

UCD operates modular programmes and the academic year consists of two semesters. Each semester consists of 12 weeks teaching followed by end of semester examinations. The term dates for medical students in years 1, 2 and 3 of the course are the same as other university students (approx. early September to end of May incl. exam period). The final 2.5 years of the programme are rooted in clinical practice and the dates vary.

**19. Are there any specific charges attached to the Medicine Programmes**

Yes, all Medicine students are required to demonstrate evidence of immunity to certain infectious diseases (Hepatitis B and Tuberculosis) and will also be screened for evidence of immunity to Measles, Mumps and Rubella. This compulsory Healthcare Screening carries a cost of €225, which is payable at the time of registration. Please refer to: <http://www.ucd.ie/medicine/aboutus/studentlife> for further information. The Garda Vetting programme (outlined below) also carries a charge of €5 per student, which is also payable at registration.

**20. Is there anything else which I need to be aware of in terms of my application?**

All students entering Medicine are required to undergo Garda vetting in Ireland, overseas police clearance (if applicable) and affidavit signing on arrival to Ireland. You are not considered a fully registered student until each of the above has been completed. Please refer to: <http://www.ucd.ie/registry/admissions/gardavetting/> for further details.

**21. Will I have the opportunity to study abroad?**

Our extensive international links offer you a variety of opportunities to widen your experiences. Scholarship awards on the basis of an essay competition are available to support elective periods in centres of clinical and research excellence in the USA, Europe and Malaysia. UCD School of Medicine & Medical Science currently has links with several USA medical schools (e.g. University of Pennsylvania, University of Kansas, University of California, Emory University and Washington University, (St Louis) as well as Penang Medical College in Malaysia where you may take elective

programmes and gain valuable experience overseas. In the clinical years of the degree there will be a mandatory credit bearing elective placement that students can arrange anywhere in the world (within reason).

**22. Are there any research opportunities for me whilst studying Medicine?**

As a medical student, you will have access to credit-bearing summer research in laboratory science, clinical science and alongside our partners in a wide variety of charity organisations. In addition, there is a competitive opportunity to take a year out of the programme to pursue an intercalated Master of Science (MSc).

**23. What happens once I graduate?**

Upon graduation, you must complete one year as an intern or Pre-Registration House Officer to gain full registration with the Irish Medical Council. You may then pursue training towards a career in a wide variety of specialities in a diversity of settings, including hospitals, primary care facilities or laboratory-based diagnosis and research. The opportunities for those taking the graduate degree are no different from those students within the undergraduate programmes.

**24. How are Internship places determined and am I guaranteed a place?**

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has assumed responsibility for the allocation of intern posts throughout the 6 intern networks. Applicants must apply through a two stage application process – the first stage requires submission of personal and medical education details and the second the submission of intern post choices. Eligible applicants will be matched to the available posts based on (i) EU Community Preference (applicants who require a work permit will be ranked after those who do not require a permit to work in Ireland and (ii) the centile ranking of each applicant as calculated by the Medical School based on the position in the final graduating class. Applicants can apply to posts in any network and are not confined to posts within the network affiliated to their own Medical School. Please refer to the following for further information: <http://www.medicine.tcd.ie/assets/pdf/Irelands-Interns-Guide-to-Intern-Training-2011-Guide-Part-1.pdf>

**25. Are there Postgraduate Courses I could take?**

Postgraduate courses are modularised to facilitate access, continuing professional education and life-long learning. In UCD we are committed to the enhancement of our research training and of our graduate programmes, both of which have expanded considerably in recent years. Amongst others, we offer programmes in dermatology, forensic medicine, psychotherapy and healthcare informatics.

*The School of Medicine has a dedicated team of staff to support you during your studies at UCD. Should you have any queries prior to commencing your studies at UCD, please do not hesitate to contact us at [healthscience@ucd.ie](mailto:healthscience@ucd.ie). You can alternatively call us at +353 1 716 6652/6686 from Monday-Friday, 8:30am-5pm.*

*We look forward to welcoming you to UCD School of Medicine in the Fall.*