Doctor of Medicine (MD)

MD application guide
(for Cambridge University Health Partners (CUHP) employees)

Academic year 2021
Before applying

**Eligibility:** please ensure that you are eligible to apply for the MD. The essential academic/professional requirements for the MD are:

- a medical degree giving entitlement to provisional or full registration with the General Medical Council, and
  - *either:*
  - a primary degree of the University of Cambridge (e.g. BA, MB BChir, MPhil, PhD)
  - or
  - an appropriate contract of employment within a member institution of Cambridge University Health Partners

*Note:* at least 4 years must have elapsed since being awarded your medical degree (MB BChir, MBBS, MB ChirB, etc.) before you may submit a dissertation for the MD degree.

**Contract of employment:** your CUHP contract must allow at least two years’ full-time research (or part-time equivalent). In addition, you must be at ST1 grade or above.

**Your supervisor:** You should identify a University of Cambridge Principal Supervisor who is willing to supervise your research throughout the duration of the programme before you apply. He/she should:

- hold a fixed contract with the University of Cambridge (e.g. as a Clinical Lecturer, Associate Lecturer, etc.) and thereby be a member of a University Department;
- be experienced in supervising graduate research students to doctoral level (PhD, MD);
- understand the University’s requirements concerning termly progress reporting using the CamSIS system (and therefore have an @cam email address and a Raven password).

**Your application to the University of Cambridge**

If you are working in Cambridge within a member institution of Cambridge University Health Partners, you must apply online as a graduate student using the Application Portal. [https://www.graduate.study.cam.ac.uk/courses/directory/cvmdmdmed](https://www.graduate.study.cam.ac.uk/courses/directory/cvmdmdmed)
The application fee is £70. The Course fee is £8,844 payable over the first two years of the course.

In addition to completing the application you will be asked to upload the following documents:

- 2 academic references
- A detailed research proposal (about 8–10 pages)
- Copy of the transcript of your medical degree (if easily available)
- Details of your CUHP employment contract (duration, level, research time allocation, etc.)
- A brief CV
- A letter of support from your supervisor, including confirmation that you have been interviewed.
You may apply to start at three points in the year: April 2021, October 2021 and January 2022.
The closing dates for each of these can be found at
https://www.graduate.study.cam.ac.uk/courses/directory/cvcmmdmed
And further information on the application process is available here:
https://www.graduate.study.cam.ac.uk/

**Application timeline:** the MD Committee meets monthly during the academic year and the majority of applications will be considered by the Committee on several occasions. Most research proposals raise questions and are sent for expert review outside the Committee (see below). This process can take a number of months. Applications should therefore be submitted as far in advance of the preferred admission term as possible. Applications where insufficient attention has been paid to the information and advice in the following sections, may be subject to significant delays before a decision is reached.

**MD research proposal**
The description of your work should contain sufficient information to enable the MD Committee, or experts approached by the Committee, to assess the suitability of the work for an MD dissertation. As a general guide, sufficient information can usually be provided in 2,500—3,500 words (excluding references), though this will depend on the nature of the project and how far you have progressed with it (e.g. whether you have any results to report). A poorly constructed proposal will delay the application process and may result in your application being rejected.

Please include, where relevant, the following:

- (i) the significance and purpose of the proposed work
- (ii) a clear statement of the hypothesis/research question(s) being tested
- (iii) a clear description and explanation of the research techniques, materials and statistical analyses used (with reference to previously published methods and brief description of any new methods)
- (iv) the number of experiments to be undertaken or sample size (including controls), with power calculations
- (v) preliminary interpretation of any results already obtained
- (vi) need for ethical approvals as appropriate
- (vii) details of how the work will be financed
- (viii) the University or CUHP department/unit where the work is to be carried out
- (ix) how much of the work will be carried out personally and how much with the help of others (specify the nature of any help); and how much of the work may already have been completed and what still remains to be done
- (x) name of your proposed Principal Supervisor and/or other research collaborators.
- (xi) Letter of support from supervisor, including the fact that the candidate has been
interviewed must be included.

Common pitfalls
Your proposal will be reviewed first by the MD Committee and then, if appropriate, by experts in your field. If your proposal fails to meet the basic standard of being suitable for external peer review, it will be rejected by the Committee. We therefore draw your attention to the following common mistakes:

- unrealistic aims – MD research projects are often part of a larger ongoing research programme; the MD dissertation must be a stand-alone piece of work undertaken by the applicant with aims that are feasible within a framework of 2–3 years’ full-time research (or part-time equivalent)
- opaque experimental questions
- lack of hypotheses
- missing links between experimental design and hypotheses
- lack of clarity about your own involvement at each stage of the project – the MD Committee will seek assurance that you have had input into the study design and will be undertaking the literature searches, experimental work and analysis yourself. You must be very clear about those areas of the work where you rely on the assistance of others.
- failing to obtain adequate statistical advice

Ethical considerations
The design and conduct of research work proposed for the MD degree must conform to high standards of medical ethics. It is advisable to seek the approval of a local ethical Committee where appropriate. We draw candidates’ attention to the code of ethics of the World Medical Association (Declaration of Helsinki), and the Committee reserves the right to make a judgement on the ethical propriety of studies.

What happens next?
Your application will go first to the MD Committee, who will assess the suitability of your work for the MD. They may seek the advice of experts external to the Committee if required, and they may send comments back to you for a response (e.g. requesting clarification about the methods, sample size, the extent of your role, etc. – but see ‘Common pitfalls’ above). If the Committee is happy with your responses to questions about your proposal, the Committee will then make their recommendation to the Faculty Degree Committee, and if you have been successful, they will recommend that you are made an offer of a place by Graduate Admissions. You will be able to track the progress of your application on CamSIS (you receive access to CamSIS when you make your online application using the Application Portal).

Once you receive your formal offer of a place, your college place will be confirmed and you will be asked to meet your financial undertaking (course cost plus college fee). You can then take up your place and you will become a registered student of the University of Cambridge.
How soon can I submit my dissertation?

The MD is a part-time course over 6 years. You are not permitted to submit your dissertation earlier than the end of your second year as a registered student of the University.

Examination

Examination is by dissertation, which must be defended at a viva (the Act) at a location in Cambridge.

The MD Committee

Chaired by Professor Ashcroft and Dr Allen the MD Committee comprises 16 members of the Faculty of Clinical Medicine and University and NHS departments, all of whom are leaders in their field of research and practicing clinicians.

Dr Chris Allen is Deputy to the Regius Professor of Physic and Assessor (Academic Secretary) for the MD Committee. Professor Margaret Ashcroft is Chair.

The Postgraduate Training Office is administrative support for the MD degree. The Administrative Secretary to the MD Committee is Ms Jane Muir

md-admin@medschl.cam.ac.uk

Data Protection – How we use your personal information (for applicants)

https://www.information-compliance.admin.cam.ac.uk/data-protection/applicant-data

Application Deadlines

Programme deadlines are set to enable plenty of time for application review.

https://www.graduate.study.cam.ac.uk/courses/directory/cvcmmmdmed

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**Change of Course:** During the course of your studies it will not be permitted to change from an MD to a PhD. [https://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/so/2018/chapter06-front.html](https://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/so/2018/chapter06-front.html)

[https://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/your-course/graduate-study/your-student-status/changing-your-course-registration](https://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/your-course/graduate-study/your-student-status/changing-your-course-registration)