



English Language Requirements for Medicine

Any applicants applying from outside of the UK or who have lived in the UK for less than 5 years must demonstrate their English Language proficiency at the point of application through either:

- **IELTS (a minimum score of 7.0 with no component less than 7.0)**
- **Pearson PTE (at least 70 overall and at least 70 in each communicative skill sub-test)**

Why is the requirement for Medicine higher than for other courses?

Our problem-based learning (PBL) curriculum requires better English language skills than, for example, a lecture-based degree course because it revolves around small group teaching, where all students are expected to speak and listen to complex group discussions; where people talk over each other, and use a mix of jargon and conversational English.

Moreover, very early in the course, students are out on the wards and in GP practices, talking to patients - some of whom will speak with strong regional accents and use vernacular. Our students spend 40% of year 2 on hospital placement, from the beginning of the year, interacting with patients, and 100% of years 3-5 in clinical placement. Our clinical placements begin much earlier than in some other medical degree programmes and, therefore, non-native speakers have less time to develop their English language skills before first interacting with patients.

Why can my English GCSE not be used to demonstrate proficiency?

We do expect all applicants, including those from overseas or the EU, to have studied English as part of their secondary education. In our experience, however, GCSE/IGCSE English language does not guarantee that applicants have appropriate English

language skills to cope with the demands of the course or to have a fair chance of success at interview.

Although GCSE/IGCSE English language can include elements of speaking and listening, these are in a context that does not necessarily test the kinds of language skills we require and these skills are assessed in a controlled environment, which is very different from the much less controlled environment of problem-based learning.

Why do applicants have to have IELTS before their interview?

As a reflection of our course, the interview stage of our selection process comprises multiple mini interviews (MMI) where applicants speak and listen to a range of different people, and may be required to read complex information in short periods. We have found that applicants who have yet to demonstrate their English Language proficiency can find this more challenging and are, therefore, less likely to be successful at interview. Applying to study Medicine in the UK is highly competitive; the number of places to study is strictly limited. As the number of places we have available for interview is also limited, it is important that we invite to interview those who are most likely to succeed.

Moreover, we require all applicants to be interviewed in person, which for applicants based outside of the UK can result in some expense and a not-insignificant time commitment. It would be unfair to invite someone to interview whose English language skills mean that they would be very unlikely to be made an offer. Consequently, we ask for IELTS or Pearson PTE to be taken before applying.



Any questions? Feel free to contact medicine@lancaster.ac.uk where a member of the Medicine admissions team would be happy to answer them.