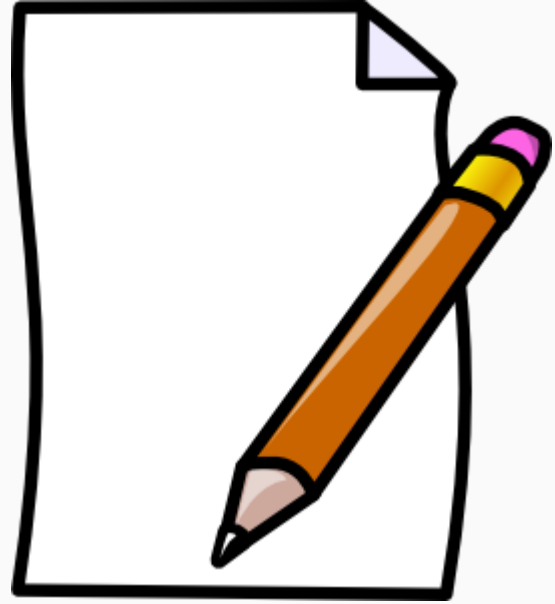


Personal statements

Rahul Geetala (4th Year)

Shannon Bernard Healey (6th Year)



The basics

- 47 lines of text – about 600 words
- Your opportunity to
 - Explain why you want to study medicine
 - Demonstrate enthusiasm and commitment to your subject
 - Outline how you've pursued their medicine interest in your own time
 - Show that you're suitable for the course!
- It is only one part of the whole application!



What admission tutors are looking for

- An interest and motivation for medicine
- That you appreciate the demanding nature of medicine
- Compassionate and committed applicants
- A well-rounded applicant: sports, societies, community activities, etc.

What do I put in my personal statement?

Intro Statement

A very general template

Medicine related content

The majority should be focussed on academic interests – your work experience, your volunteering, etc.

Extracurriculars

Closing statement

Intro Statement

Intro Statement

Medicine related
content

Extracurriculars

Closing statement

- A couple of sentences explaining why you want to do medicine
- Short and sweet!
- Doesn't really matter too much – don't agonise over it!

enthusiasm for science and my
miracles of childbirth to
is a fascinating

As a child I was
and their equipment
glamorous as well as
developed into a serious interest in



Medicine content

Intro Statement

Medicine related
content

Extracurriculars

Closing statement

1. Work experience

2. Volunteering

Articles

Talks

3. 'Academic'

Books

Courses

Podcasts

Videos

Your go!



Medicine content

Intro Statement

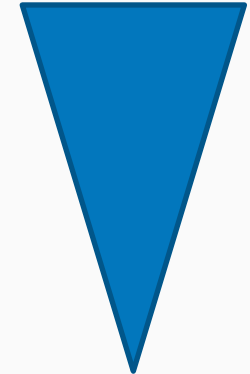
Medicine related
content

Extracurriculars

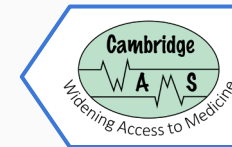
Closing statement

- Analyse each experience and say what you've learned and how you've taken it further
- Topic technique – try to organise it into themes
 - demonstrates enthusiasm
 - shows a greater depth of thought
 - reads more nicely – like a story, not a list

General topic



Researched interest



My time spent in Neuroanaesthesia ICU allowed me to witness critically ill patients in distressing situations, highlighting the complex moral issues involved in medicine, especially as one of the patients I saw had attempted to commit suicide. This gave me an insight into the difficulty of the decisions made by doctors, allowing me to experience some of the emotional burdens of medicine.

Attending a presentation by the Nuffield Council on Bioethics on the management of dementia, highlighted that vulnerable people can fall through gaps between health and social care. I learned about respect for past and present wishes of patients and realised that their 'best interests' are hard to determine. The ageing population will have a huge impact on the NHS: for my AS Biology coursework, I chose to study telomeres, important in cell aging and cancer.

Medicine content – structure

Intro Statement

Medicine related
content

Extracurriculars

Closing statement

Common structure

1. Work experience

2. Volunteering

3. 'Academic'

Topic technique structure

Topic 1

Topic 2

Topic 3

Medicine content – structure

Intro Statement

Medicine related
content

Extracurriculars

Closing statement

- Don't worry!
 - most people don't have topics they already know they like
 - most people don't get the chance to do work experience in their area of choice
- The solution: make your reading fit your work experience/volunteering
 - pick something you saw that interested you
 - read an article / book / TED talk / podcast about it
 - say what you thought about it

During my week in the Royal Free Neurology Department, the clinics I attended made me appreciate the bank of knowledge and skills doctors must retain, from diabetic neuropathy to treating hemifacial spasms with Botox. It also showed me the challenges of diagnosing patients, since the same medical conditions can often have symptoms which manifest in different ways. This stimulated my interest in neurology and led me to read *The Private Life of the Brain*, which explores whether the mind is connected to chemical activity in the brain.

My passion for politics and improving lives on a larger scale has contributed to an appreciation of epidemiology and global health. Through work experience at general practices in Hackney and Brighton I saw how primary care must be tailored to the community's health inequalities. To learn about this on an international level I researched Médecins Sans Frontières and visited their London office. Since attending an MSF conference on tropical disease, I read 'Humanitarianism in Crisis' and 'Hope in Hell', exposing the ethical complexity and frequent futility of 21st Century aid medicine.

Your go!



Extracurriculars

Intro Statement

Medicine related
content

Extracurriculars

Closing statement

- **80:20**
- Again, don't just list!
- Demonstrate transferable skills
- Pick key skills and qualities from "Tomorrow's Doctors"

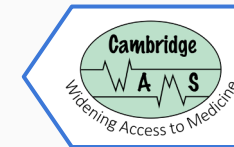
Leadership

Communication
skills

Time
management

Organisation

Empathy



For twelve years I have done gymnastics, which has developed determination, self-reflection and discipline. I coach on a voluntary basis, requiring me to teach skills responsibly and safely.

Representing my college at debating and running the Feminist Society have honed my ability to listen and speak with clarity in high pressure situations.

My roles as head of the school Medical Society and prefect have developed my skills in leadership, organising and communicating with peers, younger students and presenting in front of large audiences. I enjoy fencing for my local club and play the violin and piano, which has taught me about perseverance and patience.

I am a Sergeant in Air Cadets where I assist with the running of the squadron and support younger cadets. Through cadets I play netball; I was captain of the Central and East Yorkshire Wing team and played for the North of England. I now coach the senior and junior teams which requires a lot of organisation, leadership and dedication.

Closing Statement

Intro Statement

Medicine related
content

Extracurriculars

Closing statement

- Similar to the opening statement – don't overthink
- A summary – why you would be a good doctor
- Whatever you say, make it positive

While I have been drawn to medicine for a long time, my experiences over the past few years have made me realise why I find it so captivating. The ability to understand the detailed science behind the human body and then apply it, not only to cure people using conventional techniques, but to change and improve the way medicine is practised, is a formidable challenge and one that I am eager to undertake.

I know that a career in medicine will be highly challenging and emotionally demanding, but also interesting, rewarding and intellectually stimulating. The constant learning coupled with the capacity to change other's lives makes medicine an amazing profession, and I believe that the experience and skills I have developed over the last few years: my capacity for hard work, commitment and empathy are all attributes of good doctors.

Studying medicine opens up a huge variety of career paths, but all the doctors I have met are enthusiastic and committed. I am confident that I will share this enthusiasm and commitment, and would relish the opportunity to make my contribution to life at university and to medicine.

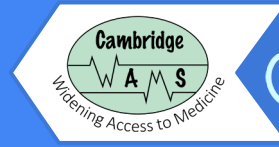
School Reference

- Can include school stuff in the teachers reference!
- Advice for teachers:

<https://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/find-out-more/teachers-and-parents/school-college-reference>

Final tips!

- Don't include information about A levels/GCSEs
- Be prepared to discuss anything in your personal statement at interview
- Be honest!
- Remember its only one part of your application – not the be all and end all!
- For Cambridge, it doesn't matter too much and isn't a hurdle in the process



Good luck!