



**Information for Parents
and Students**

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WELCOME

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to MedEntry, and congratulations on making the decision to pursue a career in the medical field. Medicine is a rewarding profession, with the potential to make lasting and positive change to individuals and the community.

No doubt you will have started considering the various universities that offer medicine, or considered sitting the HPAT. At MedEntry, our aim is to assist you in entering medicine by providing preparation for the HPAT, as well as providing advice on university admissions requirements.

In this guide is some basic information about how to get into medical school and what MedEntry can offer to assist you.

For more information, please visit www.medentry-hpat.ie or call us on 00613 9359 9960 or the contact numbers listed on the MedEntry website.

Regards,

The MedEntry Team

OBTAINING ENTRY INTO MEDICINE

Entry criteria

Entry into undergraduate medicine in Ireland is based on a combination of two criteria:

- Your adjusted Leaving Certificate Examination (LCE) points
- Your score in the HPAT (Health Professions Admission Test) Ireland

In determining entry into medicine, Leaving Certificate Examination points are adjusted as follows:

- Students who obtain 550 points or less in the LCE: no adjustment to points
- Students who obtain higher than 550 points in the LCE: each additional 5 points achieved over 550 points is adjusted to 1 point. Therefore, the highest adjusted LCE points possible is 565.

The HPAT-Ireland measures a candidate's logical reasoning and problem solving skills (Section 1), the ability to understand the thoughts, behavior and intentions of people (Section 2) and non-verbal reasoning (Section 3). The maximum score that can be achieved in the HPAT is 300, however, few students each year are able to achieve scores higher than 200. The three sections are weighted as follows: Section 1 (40%), Section 2 (40%) and Section 3 (20%). In addition to their overall HPAT score, candidates will also receive an overall percentile which compares their performance to other candidates.

Entry into medicine in Ireland is determined by the addition of a student's adjusted LCE points with their HPAT score. The minimum points required varies from year to year and between universities, but in general total combined points of *at least* 720 is required for entry into medicine.

Minimum requirements

In order for school leavers to obtain entry to undergraduate medicine, they must both (a) achieve a minimum of 480 LCE points, and (b) meet the minimum subject requirements for the medical school(s) to which they have applied. These must both be achieved in the same sitting of the Irish LCE or equivalent.

Each institution has specific minimum subject requirements so students are advised to check the website of the relevant university for full details of entry requirements. Students need to ensure they select subjects that will satisfy these requirements. Generally the subjects required are English, Irish, a Third Language, Mathematics, Chemistry and at least one other Science subject, as well as any additional subjects the student wishes to study.

The table below summarises the minimum subject requirements for each university.

Medical programmes			Minimum SUBJECT Requirements [#]					
Institution Name	CAO CODE	Duration	Minimum Number of subjects	English	Irish	Third Language	Mathematics	Science
National University of Ireland, Galway (NUI GALWAY)	GY501	6 Years	2 x HC3 and 4 x OD3	OD3	OD3	OD3	OD3	OD3 in one of Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Physics/ Chemistry, Agricultural Science
		5 Years	2 x HC3 and 4 x OD3	OD3	OD3	OD3	OD3	HC3 in two of Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Physics/ Chemistry, Agricultural Science
Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI)	RC001	6 Years	2 x HC3 and 4 x OD3	OD3	OD3	OD3	OD3	OD3 in one of Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Physics/ Chemistry, Agricultural Science
		5 Years	2 x HC3 and 4 x OD3	OD3	OD3	OD3	OD3	HC3 Chemistry and HC3 in either Biology or Physics
Trinity College Dublin (TCD)	TR051	5 Years	3 x HC3 and 3 x OD3	OD3	OD3 in a language other than English		OD3 or OC3/HD3 if no Physics	HB3 and a HC3 from Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Physics/ Chemistry, Agricultural Science
University College Cork (UCC)	CK701	5 Years	2 x HC3 and 4 x OD3	OD3	OD3	OD3	OD3	HC3 Chemistry and HC3 in either Biology or Physics
University College Dublin (UCD)	DN400	6 Years	2 x HC3 and 4 x OD3	OD3	OD3	OD3	OD3	OD3 in one of Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Physics/ Chemistry, Agricultural Science

Don't I need very high leaving certificate points to study medicine?

Since the introduction of HPAT-Ireland to select students into medicine in 2009, this is no longer the case. Students who have done well in the HPAT have obtained entry into medicine with LCE points of 500 or lower.

The fact that LCE points are adjusted after a threshold of 550 points is reached also reduces the relative importance of a high LCE score. Even if a student obtains 625 points in their LCE (which would be adjusted to 565 points), they still need to perform well in the HPAT to obtain entry into medicine.

On the other hand, a high HPAT score will reduce your need to obtain top-end LCE points. Given how difficult it can be to achieve high LCE points, your performance in the HPAT exam will be the key to enabling entry into your desired course.

High LCE points is not the sole determinant of whether or not you will gain entry into undergraduate medicine in Ireland.

What if I don't do well in HPAT or my leaving certificate?

If you do not do well in HPAT but have performed reasonably well in your LCE, you can resit the HPAT the following year. If you obtain a sufficient score in HPAT, you will be admitted into medicine the following year.

On the other hand, if you do not do well in your LCE but do well in your HPAT, you can resit your LCE but you will also need to resit HPAT, as HPAT results are valid for only one year.

Entry for mature age students

For mature age students, information on minimum educational requirements and places available should be obtained from the respective universities. In the majority of cases the HPAT will form part of the selection process; results will be sent to the universities for short-listing prior to the official release of results.

If you are unable to obtain entry into an undergraduate medical course, you also have the option of taking the graduate entry medicine pathway.

What is the difference between the graduate and undergraduate medical entry pathways?

An undergraduate course means you enter your chosen course straight away i.e. you commence studying medicine at university straight out of high school. A graduate course means you must first complete an undergraduate degree in another area of study, before studying medicine.

The criteria for entry into graduate medical courses are:

- Your performance in your first degree (a minimum 2H1 is required)
- Your performance in GAMSAT (Graduate Medical School Admissions Test)

In general, the graduate pathway is longer and more expensive than the undergraduate one. If you are sure that you wish to pursue medicine, it is far less stressful, less expensive and less time consuming to obtain entry via the undergraduate pathway. As one example, undergraduate medicine allows you to get out into the field and practice earlier than graduate medicine. Undergraduates will obtain more experience compared to those who take the graduate medical entry pathway and who end up practising much later in life.

The graduate pathway is best for those who are very unsure of their career path or who are unable to obtain entry via the undergraduate route.

Some factors to consider when deciding which medicine course (undergraduate vs. post-graduate) is best for you:

- Will you be able to study what you want to do straight away, rather than having to wait until your first degree is completed?
- The added cost of pursuing a graduate degree – including additional years of study and the fact that universities can (and do) charge more
- Will you be able to get a taste for what medicine is really like early on (undergraduate courses) so you know if it is the right course for you?
- Will you be guaranteed a place in your desired medical school (undergraduate courses) with no uncertainty and stress?

An important factor outlined above is that if you choose an undergraduate degree, you will be able to start studying what you truly want to study straight away. Having just finished an extremely stressful final year of high school the last thing you want is have to continue studying hard in order to maintain high enough marks to gain entry into post-graduate medicine. There is also the additional stress of having to prepare for and sit the GAMSAT (a six hour test that also includes knowledge based and essay writing components).

In summary, if studying medicine is really what you want to do, then you should aim to get out into the field and begin helping others sooner rather than later.

WHAT SHOULD I DO NOW?

Three years from completing high school

Your research on different university requirements should begin now! Make a shortlist of universities at which you would like to study medicine. Note down the pre-requisite subjects they may require. This will help you choose your subjects for your final years of high school. It will also encourage you to focus on your weaknesses if you need to obtain a minimum score in one or more of the subject areas that you find challenging.

Make a shortlist of universities at which you would like to study medicine. Note down any pre-requisite subjects that they may require.

Some students start preparing for HPAT before their final years of schooling, and if you are motivated, go for it! The earlier you start preparing for a generic skills test such as HPAT, the better. Most of the skills needed to succeed in the HPAT exam need to be developed over a period of time. Note that you will not be able to actually sit the HPAT exam until your final year of schooling.

Two years from completing high school

Make sure you are studying the required prerequisite subjects needed by your preferred medical course institution. Your remaining subjects should be subjects that you enjoy and excel in, but also those which will help you to obtain a high LCE score. You can also obtain advice on choice of subjects during the MedEntry HPAT course.

Ideally, you should aim to begin your HPAT preparation at least a year prior to the HPAT exam. Because the HPAT is a skills based exam, you cannot 'cram' for it in a short period of time. You need to learn, practice and master the skills required to succeed in the HPAT over several months. Furthermore, the sooner you begin your HPAT preparation, the less stress you will be under next year, when you will be busy with your final exams.

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Final year of high school

If you haven't already done so, your HPAT preparation should begin now!

Unlike your school subjects, the HPAT is not a content-based or knowledge-based exam. The HPAT aims to measure a student's aptitude and suitability for future professional success. Success in the HPAT will depend on your skills in answering specific HPAT style questions.

HPAT preparation should be treated like an extra school subject and you should allocate your time accordingly. HPAT is held in late February each year so you will need to dedicate time in the preceding months to prepare.

Consider which universities you would like to apply to, and if you have not already done so, research their entry requirements. Remember that some universities have specific prerequisite subjects that are required.

HPAT preparation should be treated like an extra school subject and you should allocate your time accordingly.

Make sure you have registered with the Central Applications Office. Applications open from early November until late January/early February (this may vary slightly from year to year). Applications must be made online at www.cao.ie

Make sure you have also registered to sit HPAT. Applications open in early November and close in mid to late January each year. Applications must be made online at hpat-ireland.acer.edu.au

You should also consider researching scholarships offered by different universities. Scholarship applications often close before LCE results are released so if you are interested in scholarships, it is important to start investigating your options early.

UNIVERSITY RANKINGS AND PRESTIGE: HOW MUCH DO THEY REALLY MATTER FOR STUDYING MEDICINE?

Is studying medicine at Trinity College more prestigious than studying at University College Dublin?

Prestige, prestige, prestige. It's a word often heard echoing from the halls of the oldest universities and perpetuated by certain people who may state: 'my son will only obtain his degree from The University of...'

When selecting your preferred university for medicine, we would suggest that there are factors to consider other than university rank and prestige. Unlike other professional practice areas such as law, the number of medical graduates is controlled by the government. Thus a career in medicine offers a safe and guaranteed job because the need and demand for medical professionals is always there. This is reflected in the success of medical graduates finding jobs after completing university. Once you graduate, you will obtain a licence to practice medicine irrespective of which university you graduate from.

When selecting the university with the right medicine course for you, we would suggest that there are other factors to consider that are more important than university rank and prestige.

Furthermore, it is important to understand that while a university as a whole may hold certain prestige, medical courses differ in how they are viewed. A university that overall may not have the 'best' reputation may have a medical course that is considered outstanding.

What are university rankings based on, anyway?

The vast majority of university rankings are based on the research output of the university. This involves: the number of PhDs obtained by academics at that university, the journals in which those academic papers are published, and the number of times such papers are cited by other academics and journals. University rankings do not tell you which universities produce graduates who have the greatest success in the medical field or who specialise in those more prestigious areas of medicine (such as Dermatology, Ophthalmology, Surgery and specialist Physician training).

The vast majority of university rankings are based on the research output of the university. They do not tell you which universities produce graduates with the greatest success in the medical field.

Older universities tend to maintain their higher rankings despite a steady decrease in their entrance scores or changes to the structure of the medicine courses offered. Most university rankings also do not take into account to a great extent other factors such as student life on campus.

So what is the best way to rank medicine courses offered by different universities?

It is almost impossible to come up with a sound ranking system for universities because the notion of what is the ‘best’ university is highly subjective. Perhaps the most effective way to judge a university is by its popularity which can be determined by several factors:

- *Is the required entrance score or other entry requirements consistently increasing?*
 - If the answer is yes, then it’s fair to say that the university’s popularity is also steadily increasing.
 - If the answer is no, then ask yourself why: it may be because the university has increased the number of medical places available and thus ‘diluted’ the entry requirements, or more likely, the popularity of that university’s medical course and medical pathway is in decline.
- *What is the retention rate?* Good universities should not have an attrition rate of more than 10%.
- *How many students from that course go on to practice medicine in highly sought after specialties?* University websites and some other independent websites will provide such statistics.

Is location important?

In an ideal world, we would all be able to walk to university or work in less than five minutes. The reality of the situation is that in some instances you may have to travel some distance to your desired university.

Keep in mind that unlike other degrees, in medicine you will usually only be on campus for the first couple of years. Subsequent years will be in hospital placements which can be situated anywhere in the country. You will usually be able to put in your preferences for where your placement will be, and you can choose one which is closer to home.

Further things to consider

Simply attending a so-called prestigious university will not guarantee a top-tier job in your desired field of medicine. When looking at applicants, assessors will consider a number of factors – references, resume, previous work experience, performance in an interview and grades received at university. The actual medical school you attended is less important (and usually not even part of the selection criteria).

Which is the ‘better’ course?

A broken arm is a broken arm no matter which area of Ireland you live in or which university you attend. Being qualified to practice medicine means you can practice throughout Ireland. Furthermore, the study of medicine focuses on the application of proven, objective medical knowledge to a patient problem. All doctors throughout Ireland are required to follow the same set of standards and guidelines. Therefore, the content of medical courses between universities will not differ greatly, although the style of teaching may.

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Factors to consider other than a university’s rank

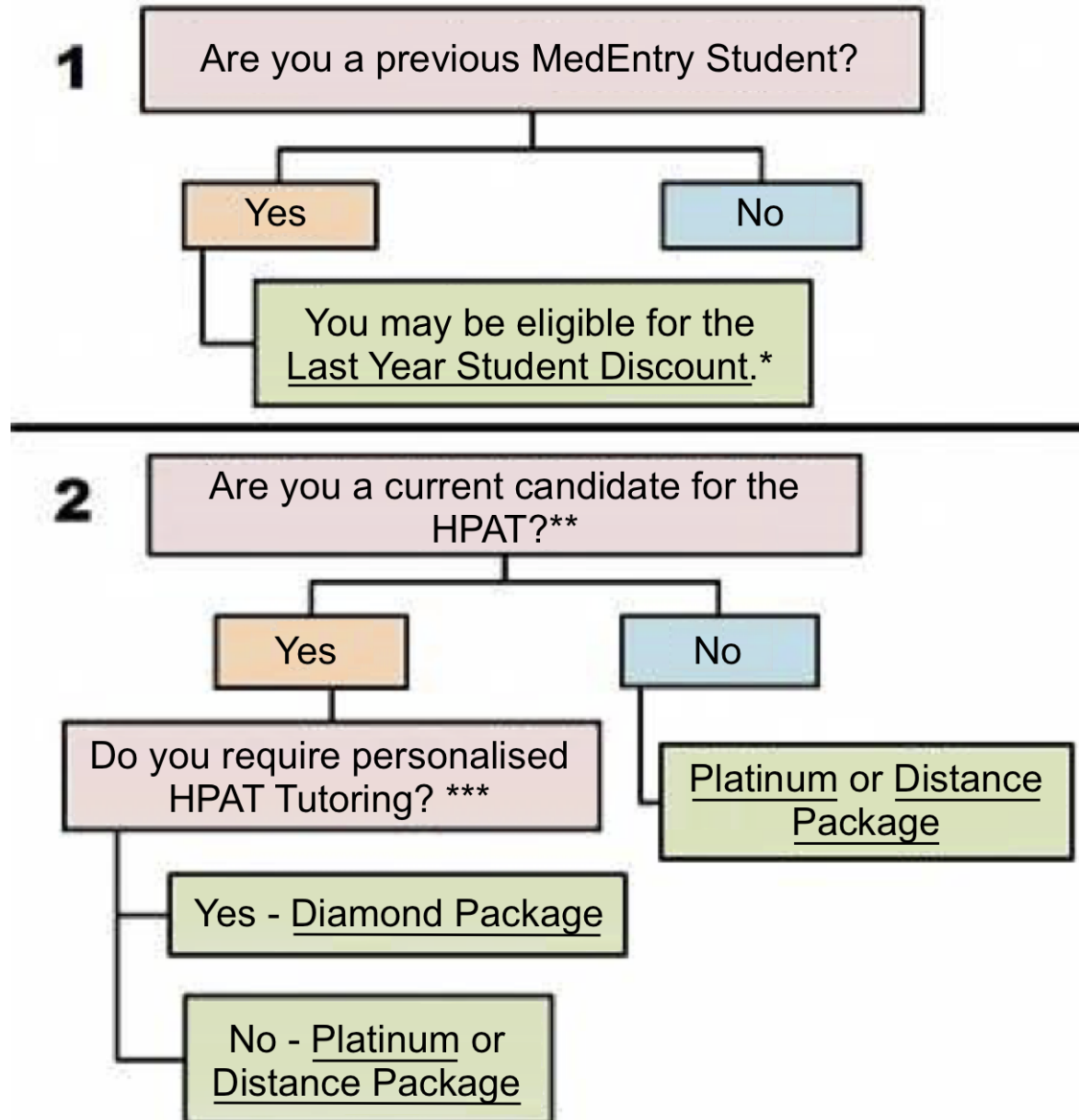
We suggest you consider factors other than university rank and prestige when deciding which medicine course is best for you.

For example, consider the following:

- Which university is situated closer to where you reside?
- Student wellbeing and welfare
- Student success post-university
- Student opportunities within your course (eg. overseas placements) and extra-curricular activities
- Quality of teaching staff
- Style of teaching
- Social opportunities (eg. clubs)

WHICH MEDENTRY PACKAGE SHOULD I CHOOSE?

MedEntry has packages to suit all your HPAT needs. The Platinum Package is by far the most popular package and is the package recommended by MedEntry. Simply follow the flowchart to see which package will suit you best for the HPAT.



Footnotes for flowchart:

* Previous Student: A student who has enrolled in a MedEntry package in the previous year. The discount will be applied when you checkout.

** Current Candidate: students in the sixth year.

***Students will be tutored by one of MedEntry's tutors – all of whom have performed outstandingly in the HPAT (and usually LCE) themselves.

Note: The information is intended to be a recommendation. Students are able to upgrade their packages at any time.

Description of Packages

All packages include access to the LMS (Learning Management System) – an online, interactive system that provides immediate feedback. The LMS contains a wealth of information and resources, including 10 full-length practice exams (with an option to add an extra 5 exams), drills, guides, forums, an unlimited question trainer and more. All of our resources are regularly updated to reflect changes in the HPAT from year to year.

The Platinum and Diamond packages also include a two day HPAT course, which is run by experts in the field. The HPAT Courses provide a comprehensive approach to all three Sections of HPAT. The courses are engaging, interactive and enjoyable for students. Feedback from past students consistently state that the courses are useful not only for HPAT, but for high school study and life in general. An important part of the course is the opportunity to sit a simulated exam under timed conditions, and receive feedback on your performance, including predicted HPAT scores. This is helpful for planning your preparation in the lead up to the HPAT exam.

Distance package:

Suitable if

- You have previously attended a workshop and require continuous skill development online
- You are unable to travel to attend a two day course (for example, rural and overseas students). However, a Platinum Package is still highly recommended as there may be information provided in the two day HPAT course that is not available elsewhere. Many students from overseas fly in just to attend the MedEntry HPAT course because they find it so valuable.

***Choose from the
Distance Package,
Platinum Package, or
Diamond Package.***

In this package, you will receive online LMS access (please see above for what this includes).

Platinum package:

Suitable for most students, and also if:

- You have not attended a MedEntry two day HPAT Course before
- You would like to attend a two day Course again or sit another practice exam, as new information is often highlighted in our Courses

In this package, you will receive the following (please see above for inclusions):

- Online LMS access
- 2 day HPAT workshop

Diamond package:

Suitable if you require extra assistance with your HPAT preparation.

In this package, you will receive (please see above for inclusions):

- Online LMS access
- 2 day HPAT workshop
- Personalised HPAT tutoring sessions

SUGGESTED TIMELINE

A suggested timeline for students in their final year of schooling is displayed below.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Task</i>
As soon as possible	Research university subject requirements Consider enrolling in a MedEntry HPAT preparation course
November to January	CAO application Register for HPAT
Mid to late January	Deadline to register for HPAT
End of February	Sit HPAT
Late June	HPAT results released
August	Leaving Certificate Examination results released, University offers released
August/September	Seek advice from MedEntry on the appropriate course / university to select, if necessary

DISCLAIMER

Disclaimer

The purpose of this guide is to outline some important issues to consider when pursuing a medical degree. Recommendations are based on experience and aim to assist students and parents in their decision making. All students and parents are strongly encouraged to thoroughly research all aspects of admission themselves in order to make a fully informed decision. All information contained in this guide is accurate at the time of writing.

Additional questions?

If you have any additional questions regarding any matter relating to HPAT or university admissions, please get in touch with the MedEntry HPAT preparation team. All of our contact details are listed at www.MedEntry-HPAT.ie