Model Personal Statements

Here are 20 model personal statements of successful medical school applicants. The red text is commentary (by Ace Medicine) providing useful advice, not part of the personal statement.

Sample 1

During my secondary education I have tried to develop my interests in all my subjects but have always felt my greatest interest and aptitude to lie in the sciences, particularly enjoying the precision involved in practical and written work. Because of this, the prospect of medicine as a future career has been a distinct possibility for many years; the huge number of specialised subjects to which medicine can lead, and therefore the flexibility to move around in one's work, being particularly attractive to me. Consequently, since the start of my A level courses I have attended the Oxford PreMed Course 2004 and have done work experience at the John Radcliffe hospital and the Penang General Hospital in West Malaysia, speaking to various hospital doctors and GPs to gain a fuller knowledge of the requirements of being a good doctor and the hard but rewarding work involved. I learnt a lot from all this, most notably the procedures for endoscopy, angioplasties and post mortems. Of course, I found these tasters of what's to come fascinating, but what really gripped my interest were the different ways in which the doctors interacted with both patients and other hospital staff, empathising with the patients and communicating with all involved. I also spent some time at a home for mentally retarded children in Malaysia earlier this year, and was amazed by how much they responded to just a bit of time and care. I intend to do some more hospital work experience this October.

In a quest to find out about more than just A-level science I have done some wider reading including *Mapping the Mind* by Rita Carter, (the relationship between brain and mind has always interested me). I was particularly struck by just how specialised the different areas of the brain can be, such as an area that is connected solely with religious beliefs. (This unusual special interest and extra reading immediately makes this statement stand out as different and memorable). Coupled with this wider reading I have attended the school Biological Society lectures for over a year. A particularly fascinating lecture was on osteology, the ingenuity of the Ilizarov Frame method for regrowing bones further inspiring me to become an active member of the medical field which clearly has many more ground-breaking and life-changing discoveries to be made. (Attending special lectures is a great way of proving your interest in science beyond your school studies. Universities, libraries and museums often do lectures that are open to the public so it's worth enquiring). I have also spent some time on a tour around one of the Oxford University physiology research labs, guided by Mr. Stewart Judge. Scientific research definitely interests me and I look forward to doing some into new medical technology and techniques.

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Music has been an important part of my life from an early age. I achieved the level of Grade 8 Distinction, (ABRSM), in both the piano and 'cello in 2002, aged 13 and have been a Junior Exhibitioner at the Royal Academy of Music, attending every Saturday since year 6. I perform regularly in school and academy concerts as a soloist and chamber musician and feel that my musical commitments have stimulated my enjoyment for working in a team as well as independently. Music is obviously very important to me, but I am choosing to study medicine as I believe that I would find this vocation to be more satisfying. I want to use my strengths to help people rather than simply satisfying my own interests.
As regards my other interests, I enjoyed weekly rowing sessions at school for the past two years and am a Corporal in the school's RAF section of the CCF, responsible for eight of the more junior cadets.

Since birth, due to my father's profession, I have flown almost every summer holiday to many different countries and so have interacted with a variety of different cultures which I think will prove useful when dealing with patients from many different ethnic backgrounds as a doctor. (I think that this is an extremely well structured statement and flows very logically through all the major topics. It's very easy and interesting to read).

Sample 2

Watching the intense struggle of a sibling suffering from severe epilepsy and cerebral palsy has been a key factor in motivating me to study medicine. Not only have I been inspired by the unrelenting dedication of the many physicians involved in different aspects of his life, but also the great courage he himself has shown. I feel my first hand experience in this care setting has consequently heightened my aspiration to help ease this suffering for others in similar circumstances. (A powerful and personal opening. Don't lie, but if you have a similar circumstance or experience, consider using it in the introduction).

I have been fortunate enough to have had a great insight into hospital life, attributable to many members of my extended family who are already reputable physicians. Not only are they based in the UK, but also abroad in countries such as Syria and India where poverty has reduced sanitation conditions to a bare minimum, resulting in the frequent outbreaks of disease. Having witnessed the sheer impact the mere presence of a physician can have on the morale of people in these countries I have been hugely inspired to pursue a career which can have such a profound impact on others.

My work experience has included working for two weeks at the Bradford Royal Infirmary in the maxillofacial department, which gave me the unforgettable opportunity of hearing many a patient relive their experiences of such procedures as craniofacial implants and skin grafts. Furthermore I have much practical experience in a variety of caring professions, for instance working on a voluntary basis, when needed, with St. John Ambulance, dealing with non-emergency cases. This has given me a taste of the more pragmatic aspects of medicine

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one is often required to deal with. I also find great pleasure in working with children, which I hope to convey in a specialised degree in paediatrics. Recently I have been undertaking a part time job: the post of a care worker with the nursing organisation Active. This involves caring for individuals with various disabilities, predominantly varying degrees of autism, which necessitated the undertaking of numerous training courses. I consider this employment to be the most rewarding and beneficial to date. Through it, I have achieved the ability to implement many emergency first aid skills with confidence. Additionally, on a weekly basis, I attend the local St John Ambulance Cadets force where I have recently been promoted to the post of a young leader. (St John's Ambulance is a great way to combine some medical experience with teamwork/leadership skills and there are many local branches across the country so it's worth looking in to)
In my free time I enjoy reading, which I find to be a great form of escapism from many of the untimely stresses of teenage life! I have especially enjoyed 'A short History of Nearly Everything' by Bill Bryson, which poses many intriguing and consequential questions science endlessly seeks to answer... I also enjoy many practical activities; having already completed the bronze and silver Duke of Edinburgh award, I am now working towards the gold. I find great enjoyment in team activities and am a keen member of my school's badminton and squash teams. This joy of group activities has also been conveyed through such activities as the running of a junior science club (where I have handled such schemes as the designing of alarm clocks for the deaf) and also working as an editor for the school newspaper. Drama also plays a large part in my life as I find it gives me the strength to express myself to others much more aptly. Having succeeded in attaining the best actress trophy in the school annual drama festival and passing examinations with boards such as LAMDA and RADA, I am now concentrating on improving my public speaking and debating skills. I am also fluent in Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi and Arabic as well as conversational French.

In order to be a successful as a doctor I feel that not only must one be inquisitive and dedicated to the field of medicine, but also well rounded, caring person. I believe these are some of the qualities I possess and I hope that by studying medicine I can make a positive contribution to the society in which I live. (Another great conclusion – succinct and bold)

Sample 3

A career in medicine is an endless learning process, combining constant scientific and technological advancements with interpersonal interaction. As an avid science student with an interest in people, I believe that this aspect of medicine led to my passion in this field. I understand that by choosing this career, I will be starting a long and challenging journey of a rigorous medical life, which consists of heavy responsibilities and endless pressures. However, the opportunity of possessing the right diagnostic skills and the satisfaction from helping patients in need, reap invaluable inspiration that drives my pursuit of this career.

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(Often people shy away from saying they want to do medicine to help people because they are worried it will sound like a cliché but this writer has shown that you can say it in a sophisticated way which sounds very genuine. Be honest, if that is the reason you want to do medicine then say so).

My enthusiasm in medicine has been reinforced by my work experience at the Ophthalmology Department and Medical Assessment Unit of the Queen Alexandra Hospital in Portsmouth, and also at the Orthopaedic Department of the Alor Star General Hospital in Malaysia. Having the opportunity of experiencing medicine in two different parts of the world, it became apparent to me that the common goal in medicine is to improve the standards of care for patients. (An ongoing battle within the NHS. Doctors regularly undertake audits in order to assess areas of medical care which can be improved. A favourite interview question will ask how would you improve the NHS and focusing on improving patient care is essential to answering this well. Have a think about a few things which you would change if you had the opportunity that would benefit patients). During my attachments, I have come to realise the importance of inter-disciplinary communication and team work for the delivery of an effective service. I also gained awareness of the patients' anxieties and apprehension, and the privileged position that the medical profession holds.

As a corporal of St. John Ambulance in my school, I am trained in first aid, including CPR, and have provided first aid for students in school sporting events. I was given the chance to exercise effective delegation when coaching the junior teams of my division after completing the Non-Commissioned Officers course. Helping out in the welfare catering centre during holidays has also given me a great sense of contentment and provided me with a wonderful insight into my local community through working with people from all walks of life.

Being a violinist in the chamber orchestra of Kedah, Malaysia, I performed regularly in concerts for state events. Just as in the hospital, cooperation was vital for the success of the orchestra. I was also in the school tennis team and was crowned district champion for the Under-18 Doubles event in 2002. I cherish the successes I had in the state public speaking and choral speaking competitions which have boosted my confidence in articulating and expressing myself publicly. Presently, I am a sub-editor of my college editorial committee that regularly publishes the college newsletter to keep our fellow students up to date with current issues. I relish each moment of the absorbing discussions and animated debates during our meetings.

I understand, my reading medicine demands proper time management, as in the end, I am a normal young adult who enjoys her music and games. As I have been juggling my activities to suit my academic demands since young, I believe that it would carry over into my college and university life. My other extracurricular activities include playing golf socially and reading novels as this sets my imagination free. I have also been reading articles on the BMJ

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regarding medical reformations, breakthroughs and miscellaneous writings of medical students. This has broadened my outlook and views on medicine which I found, has built up my interest in it even more.

The interests and experiences I have had throughout my life have greatly influenced my choice of career. I believe, rest assured, they confirm my dedication to a lifetime of this endless learning process. (The ending to this statement mirrors the beginning re-enforcing that the main attraction for this candidate is "life-long learning." You could consider using this technique if there is a particular element which you want to stress. It's a stylish writing technique which makes the statement appear very polished).

Sample 4

I am full of questions about life, people, and my own potential. I appreciate that new experiences give me greater understanding and awareness. This is why Medicine appeals to me and also why I believe in the Rainbows Hospice cause. By volunteering for them, I help the terminally ill experience a higher quality of life. I value the opportunities life has given me and to study medicine would be a unique chance to use my life, knowledge and skills to aid others. Being a doctor has long appealed to me, but during GCSEs I focused on the ability and dedication required. I understand the importance of hard work as well as to study what I enjoy. Earning both academic and music scholarships at school, I have always strived for excellence. I chose Biology, Chemistry and Maths because they interest me. I enjoy the study of life, our origins and how things work together. French allowed me to study a culture, understanding people better whilst exercising my creativity and improving my oral & aural skills. It meant a lot to me receiving a Best Effort & Progress Commendation, which proved determination and 100% effort equals success.

_____* Work Experience, Activities & Hobbies*_____

*NURSERY: Cared for a group of 2-8 year olds, a day a week for six months. Testing at times, but intensely rewarding and fun! One of my aspirations is to become a paediatrician. *DENTAL SURGERY: Essential lessons on patient courtesy. Confirmed my chosen path. *GP: Fantastic experiences of the management, preparation and teamwork. Grasped an idea of a GP's job and learnt about the latest NHS. After contact with patients and having listened to opinions from people in varying places in medicine, I have not been deterred in the slightest. *DE GOLD: Gained invaluable experience in planning, dependability, endurance and leadership. Reinforced my determination and learnt that stamina and team camaraderie are crucial for success. *YOUNG ENTERPRISE: Communication & co-operation were skills vital in my role as Marketing Director. Built a good rapport with students across the community. Gained essential understanding of the mechanics of finance and business. Our efforts were rewarded in County Competition, winning Best Marketing Director & Company Report. *MUSIC, DRAMA & READING: Cello and Piano has brought many benefits (dexterity, discipline & de-stressing!). Contribute to orchestras and choir. Now pursuing my

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Piano Grade 8. Chosen for a backstage team. Involved in a BBC Radio programme - I welcome drama's capacity to build confidence and empathy. Comics - believe to maintain an inner child is vital! Mature side enjoys reading The New Scientist. *KICKBOXING, Sword & Bo staff studies - 6 years, 3 times a week: black belt by next year. *Recently elected as HOUSE CAPTAIN for dedication to the House and representation in Rugby, Athletics, Drama and Music. I aim to lead my House to victory! I intend to defer my entry and have arranged work in Hong Kong for 6 months at MusicNation, a PR company for artists. I hope to travel around China learning more about my roots and involve myself in aid work. Increasing maturity, responsibility and independence widening horizons away from family, friends and any comfort zones, these are my goals. Thank you so much for your attention, I wouldn't want to do anything else and I will give all my concentration, determination and patience throughout the course. Being a doctor is a future that I do and will enthuse about. It is a profession in which I can develop my knowledge of how we as humans work, and stay on the brink of medical frontiers; like future applications of nanotechnology. It is a profession with endless possibilities: the chance to bring the next generation into this world, support a community throughout their lives, or just make a person's life easier to live. I know it is a calling which I can believe in, that will stretch my potential to the limit. (This is a really unusual statement which makes it stand out from the crowd for its 'bullet point' structure and enthusiastic tone. It's a calculated risk when you decide to do something different but it works really well in this case partly because the content is so strong and the sections that are complete prose are well written. Beware of looking like you are trying to distract from lack of work experience or extracurricular activities by being 'quirky' or trying to get away with poor English).

Sample 5

I believe a person is most vulnerable when they are unwell and find themselves in an uncomfortable or unfamiliar environment such as a hospital. This belief has led me to realise what a tremendous gift it would be to be able to treat such a person, to relieve the illness and return them to good health, fitness and peace of mind.

Science, particularly chemistry, has always been a favourite subject. On passing my GCSE's I was awarded the school's achievement award for science. This love continues to grow and to my delight over summer 2006 I was granted a Nuffield Bursary. Placed in Manchester University Chemistry Department with an established research team I investigated reactions of atmospheric organic species with ozone. I have been invited to submit this project for a Crest Gold Award in science. In college I have completed a Valid Analytical Measurement project, achieving distinction. We are also beginning a BA young investigators course in the local primary school. This involves planning weekly lessons, then carrying them out with a class of year 5 pupils.

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For over 6 months I have volunteered in Stepping Hill Hospital on a respiratory ward helping staff and chatting with patients. Through this experience I have learnt the distress patients feel when they are uncertain about what is happening and therefore the importance of good communication. On work experience I spent a fantastic observational day in Accident and Emergency. I witnessed triage, the review clinic and a number of procedures in theatre. I saw for myself the unpredictability of the job and therefore how vital it is for all team members to be reliable. For 4 days I was placed on a surgical ward helping with the daily care of patients, which gave me the opportunity to talk with many different people including families, health care assistants and consultants. This has enabled me to develop strong interpersonal communication skills, in showing empathy and building a rapport. The annual pilgrimage to Lourdes with the Shrewsbury Diocese has been another opportunity to see a different aspect of medicine. The hospital in Lourdes is primarily a caring environment. As a young pilgrim and helper I spent time assisting and speaking with patients, as well as taking people to services and shopping or sight-seeing.

I attended the 6th Biennial Medical Conference at Manchester Grammar School where talks were given by a range of people, from student doctors to orthopaedic surgeons. Topics included applying to medical school and life as a doctor. This helped me make an informed decision about my chosen career path.

In St Peter's Church, Hazel Grove, I have taken part in setting up and running Youth CaFE and Alpha courses. This involves leading group discussions and mediating through differences of opinion. I have since been asked to be a catechist for confirmation candidates. This requires planning the course and carrying out sessions successfully to fulfil the aims of the course within the allocated time. Currently we are planning a DoSY (Diocese of Shrewsbury Youth) day in our parish. With the voluntary work I have been doing I have registered with Millennium Volunteers and completed the 200 hours required for the Award of Excellence, plus another 175 hours towards a commitment award.

In my leisure time I play the flute, presently working towards a performance diploma. Taking this exam requires self-motivation to practise regularly. I enjoy playing alone as well as for the past 5 years with Stockport Youth Orchestra where, for 3 years, I have led the wind section. For 4 years I have played with St. Peter's Folk group. Playing in different ensembles has taught me teamwork and required commitment to attend practises and concerts. My interest in music led me to take grade 5 music theory which I passed with merit.

I believe a career in medicine would develop my love of science, whilst bringing the challenges and surprises that I so much enjoy.

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Sample 6

Medicine is the career for me. I want to give patients and their families care and hope in a constantly changing clinical environment. I feel becoming a doctor will give me the chance to utilise my attributes to the greatest benefit of others and I know I will succeed. The profession requires a versatile person who is able to integrate, communicate and 'think outside the box'. My work experience, academic and other achievements demonstrate that I have these qualities. I am strong-willed, intelligent and relish a challenge.

During the first two years of my degree I studied biochemistry, physiology, anatomy, pharmacology, and microbiology. In my final year I chose to specialise in Clinical Sciences, a pathology based course provided for intercalating medical students. I was required to adapt to the structure of their course and practically apply what I had learnt. It gave me the opportunity to spend time in ITU observing patients and interacting with relatives whilst studying notes to produce case reports. Voluntarily, I spent time assisting with Post Mortems giving me an insight into the gruelling yet sensitive nature of this work.

The dissertation produced for my degree was entitled 'Screening for Pre-eclampsia in Early Pregnancy' and results produced by the meta-analysis were presented at the 6th International Down Syndrome Screening Group Congress, hosted by my supervisor Prof. H. Cuckle. There are still no comprehensive tests for Pre-eclampsia, although evidence-based assessment guidelines were recently published in the BMJ.

Since choosing this path, I have been passionately committed to enhancing my experience of the caring professions and gaining life skills to equip me for this rigorous career choice. My employment as a nightcare assistant was very challenging and humbling. I learned to gain the respect of the elderly, whilst remaining compassionate and not becoming patronising. My duties included personal care and socialising, plus ensuring all administered drugs were documented and the home was well maintained.

I sporadically provide childcare for four boys throughout their school holidays and after school. I have acted as mediator, mentor and entertainer, co-ordinated children's parties and been responsible for large groups of youngsters. Further experience within this domain includes volunteering at a youth group catering for both disabled and able-bodied children. I devised exercises to promote integration and initiated group singing and movement session, letting me use my musical skills and imagination!

I have shadowed Allied Care Professionals; a physiotherapist and podiatrist; their integration in Acute care and working in PCTs. I understood the challenges faced practically and in Administration, from my work at MDGH. Current topics I have come to understand include the NHS Plan, Disability Act, Discrimination, Obesity, CRB checking –issues that were also prominent during my work on the NPfIT. Working on this highly sensitive, Government directed project allowed me to learn about the technological side of the NHS. Liaising daily

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with healthcare and business management professionals provided an understanding of the implications of the initiative and the opinions of those who will be the recipients of this solution. It will be instrumental in the development of the service into the 21st Century, when I hope to be involved from a medical aspect.

I have recently spent five weeks in Ghana undertaking nursing care in a local hospital. I assisted in a variety of wards including maternity and recovery, giving me a valuable insight into the contemporary health issues facing this population. It was an amazing experience of a culture where any help makes a positive difference.

Aside from academia I love sport –skiing, dancing and outdoor activities. Whilst in Ghana, I inratroduced the sport of Ultimate Frisbee into the community. I began playing at University and have represented the UK at international level this year.

Sample 7

"Medicine is a way of life, rather than a job" is a phrase that has stuck in my head since the day I heard a junior doctor describe his experiences to me whilst on work experience at Bournemouth Hospital. During my time there I saw several aspects of medical life that appealed to me, namely the application of scientific knowledge, team work, leadership and patient contact. I observed in the operating theatres and shadowed consultants and their teams during ward rounds. It showed me the importance of teamwork in providing not only a good standard of care to the patients, but also support and education for the junior members of the clinical team. I also got an appreciation of the multi-disciplinary nature of medical teams which consists of not only doctors and nurses, but also physiotherapists, occupational therapists and managers. The diversity of challenges facing doctors in different specialties, combined with the continuous drive to learn more about disease processes, has attracted me to pursue a career in medicine. Doctors face the difficult task of seeing people when they are unwell and in some cases in their time of greatest need. Seeing the transformation of a patient from this state to one where their medical condition has been diagnosed and treated and they are being sent home is something that I could see doctors find very fulfilling, and it is this personal satisfaction that for me would be a great reward in this career. My interest in science is reflected by my achievement of the Bronze Award at the British Biology Olympiad 2005, where I proudly represented my school. Keen to learn more about medicine, I attended Medlink, a course for prospective students. I also read the BMJ online, which has made me aware of current issues with regards to not only the study of disease but also those surrounding junior doctor working hours, medical training and patient confidentiality. I also read the New Scientist regularly to broaden my perception of scientific advance.

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Patient interaction is a part of medicine that I find very enjoyable. In July 2005 I spent one month as a volunteer working in a rural town in Egypt. During my stay, I was responsible for arranging daily activities for patients in the Psychiatric Ward at St Barsoum Hospital. I also acted as an Arabic translator for the English-speaking volunteer doctors who were in this town treating patients. In addition, I visited elderly people in a nearby Nursing Home twice weekly, where I spent time talking and most importantly listening to them. During my gap year I look forward to travel to Kenya from March to May 2006 for missionary work, which will further broaden my experience of life in the third world and nourish my commitment of caring for people. I currently work weekends as a waiter at Avonreach Nursing Home. In October I will begin a Health Care Assistant job at Bournemouth Hospital where I will be part of a team and have contact with patients. In addition, I have organised two weeks work experience at a local GP surgery. I will also undertake a First Aid course from 26-29 September.

I am passionate about sports and play badminton and tennis regularly, as well as being a long distance track athlete competing at school house level. I am also a member of my parish football team. Being captain of 'Bournemouth Sports A' table tennis team is a position in which I have learnt a lot about leadership. Being a keen writer, I am co-editor for Grapevine, a magazine run for the Coptic Christian youth. My organisational skills and ability to act responsibly were recognised last year when I was appointed a School Prefect, where I supervised year 8 students.
I feel that my school, work, and life experiences have placed me in a position where I have the skills to begin an education in medicine. Organisation, ambition, responsibility and commitment are all attributes I pride myself on, and hope will stand me in good stead when it comes to applying for a place at medical school.

Sample 8

Caring for my grandmother through a terminal illness convinced me to try my utmost to pursue a career in medicine. Having developed diabetes and lung cancer, I supported her undergoing radiotherapy and learned to giver her insulin and adjust the dose. I saw how her wish to remain at home was made possible by her GP co-ordinating the practice nurses, Macmillan team and social services. Her problems drove me to learn more about diabetes through books and the internet, which gave me a better understanding of the pancreas, part of my mammalian physiology module in biology.

The study of Salter's Chemistry introduced me to independent learning and research using different reference sources and skills, then used in a project studying the kinetics of the reaction between invertase and sucrose. I found laboratory work stimulating as a member of a small group and more particularly the design of my own experiment for coursework, notably the excretion of aspirin in humans, which gave me an understanding of the pharmaceutical side of medicine. Philosophy and ethics was especially engaging when the debates centred on

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euthanasia, abortion and genetic engineering. The differing viewpoints helped me to develop as a more balanced person.

During two weeks working with a GP, I enjoyed taking patients histories and was impressed by the strong rapport between doctor and patient. Working on an orthopaedic ward at Basildon and in A&E at Oldchurch, for one week each, allowed me to compare primary and secondary care. Following the progress of patients having joint replacements, I saw how nurses and physios work closely as part of a larger team and in trauma how an efficient team approach can save a life. When working voluntarily in a charity shop, I valued the responsibility of working on the till; learning that older customers needed more time and consideration. When teaching cricket to primary school children, I found their attention span was often limited, requiring a more flexible approach compared to older children.

I have taken a gap year and am working as a theatre support worker in my local hospital. My duties include portering, cleaning theatres and setting up equipment. I try to provide a cheerful and caring service to patients, to put them at ease before surgery. I intend to train as a venopuncturist.

I achieved a prize for my GCSE results. Elected as a senior prefect, I benefited by learning better organizational and communicational skills, improving my effectiveness when dealing with pupils, parents and staff. As president of the Vth form council, I acted as a mediator in minor disagreements between pupils, quickly learning that listening to both sides and not prejudicing issues was the key to a successful outcome. My involvement in the Saracens England Rugby Academy for two years was particularly beneficial. I discovered that organization was keep in order to balance a busy training programme and education. I represented by county for five years, captained the school 1st XV and captained my local club side. As captain of the school 2nd XI cricket team, I encourage younger players to become more involved. In the CCF, I became Staff Sergeant, in charge of 60 cadets, developing a training programme, which was highly commended by my commanding officer. I attended four MoD camps; I hope the survival techniques I learned may come in useful in the future! Both rugby and CCF developed my survival skills and I discovered just how difficult it is to lead well, how to learn from mistakes, and how few will follow unless they respect you, and by trial and error, how to gain respect. I enjoy music and was a member of the Choral Society and Concert band, reaching grade five in recorder, clarinet and theory. Playing drums (inexpertly) in a band with friends helps me to unwind, and is a marvellous stress-buster. I know I would enjoy the lifelong learning involved in medicine and would throw myself wholeheartedly into its many challenges.

Sample 9

I have great determination to fulfil my ambition and have a career that is challenging yet so rewarding. Rewarding in a sense that I am able to apply my fascination for science and use it in order to work and care for people. I am sure there is no other career that is so right for me. This

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has been confirmed by a range of medical experience in hospitals as well as attending Medlink at the University of Nottingham.

I have organised work experience where The James Cook University Hospital (JCUH) and the Friarage Hospital allowed me to accompany medics on their ward rounds, observe the Outpatients Department, help nurses give out medication, food and accompany patients to the toilet. Viewing the day to day work that goes on in a hospital has resulted in me having great admiration for the medical staff, and I want to be part of this team. I am able to see a different side to JCUH and provide entertainment to the patients whilst working on Hospital Radio. I consider myself as quite a familiar face for patients and staff as I am regularly on the wards taking requests. Hospital Radio has allowed me to support 'The British Disabled Flying Association' and monitor their work.
My voluntary work has also included leaving Beavers, working at Cancer Research UK, and working for Ripon Council for Voluntary Service. I feel I have developed the communication skills to work with people of all ages.

Following on from Medlink, I was given the opportunity to research into Nanotechnology and its application to Medicine. As a result, my piece of research was published and awarded a merit. It is now on the internet and will be available on CD to prospective 2007 medical students.

Having completed the Bronze, Silver and Gold Duke of Edinburgh Awards, I have developed the skills for working in a team, which is how I work best. Sections of the award have allowed me to take part in activities I enjoy such as being part of the School Big Band where we raised money for Martin House at the Grand Opera House, York.

As a school prefect and a member of the Sixth-Form committee, I am responsible in performing school duties in order to keep the school running efficiently. My determination to work has been recognised by the school nominating me for National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth. As a result I am now an enrolled member of NAGTY.

I have been awarded a certificate for First Aid by St. John Ambulance. I have also been presented with an award from The North Yorkshire Police for raising awareness on ageism as part of the Awareness of Crime and Education of Safety Project. I was invited along with my winning team to The Great Yorkshire Show to give the presentation.

I enjoy swimming and have achieved Grades 1-6. I recently took part in a sponsored swim to raise money for 'Macmillan Cancer Relief' where I set my personal best of 5000m. I also enjoy Salsa and Drama which allow me to relax. For the past six years I have taken part in the 'Young Writers Poetry Competition' and each time had my piece of poetry published.

I have the passion, drive and determination to study medicine, and believe I have the personal skills to succeed.

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Sample 10

I am a determined individual who has always thrived on hard work and is fuelled by a challenge. I cannot think of any other degree course and career which would quench my intellectual thirst, sustain my interest as well as provide job satisfaction. I aim to be remembered, be it in a minor way but the one who makes a difference to people's lives.

By studying A level chemistry and biology I have become skilled at applying rational thinking and problem solving, I also study A level psychology. To be aware of how the mind works is immensely beneficial as I believe one of the crucial features of a good doctor is not only to assess and understand a person's physical health but their mental health too. At AS level I studied English literature which, like the rest of my selected subjects, I thoroughly get pleasure from. The one aspect of English I am particularly fond of is the fact that the freedom of interpretations is endless.

During the summer break I was successful in arranging work experience at the local hospital; the experience gave me great insight into the stimulating world of medicine. I was fortunate enough to watch certain procedures in theatre such as the removal of an unwanted wisdom tooth which was causing a young women a great deal of pain, it was a fascinating process as the tooth was growing at an angle was exceptionally close to a nerve. This experience as well as participating in the Enhanced Learning Portfolio scheme at Leeds University has only inspired me further. From countless discussions with doctors and medical students I have built up a realistic picture of medicine as a result of this I acknowledge the peaks and the lows such as watching people endure pain.

Charity work has always equaled fun for me. One particular occasion which springs to mind is a sponsored walk I helped organise. Being a team player was essential on this occasion in order to raise money for the local renal unit at which my sister worked and to ensure everybody enjoyed themselves.

Throughout my three years away from studying I worked for a national materials handling company, I regard this as a very valuable experience as it provided an excellent opportunity for me to adopt a mature attitude, build on my confidence, interact with a variety of people and take on board a position of responsibility. With the enjoyment of working with a busy sales team came the pressures of meeting sales targets and a heavy workload, consequently; I demonstrated my competence by completing this work successfully. Currently I have a part time job as a call centre operator which requires good communicating skills and initiative.

Along side regularly going to the gym for an intense work out I have developed an interest for painting. These interests, in addition to a variety music and good food are my tools for relaxing. I recognise maturity, motivation, academic ability and many personal skills are the raw ingredients for a good doctor I feel I have demonstrated these qualities in both my academic

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and personal life and on top of all this I possess drive and sheer determination thus feel fully equipped and able to be part of an interesting and challenging future.

Sample 11

I was born in Iraq and for the first five years of my childhood shelter was scarce and electricity and water were nonexistent. My arrival in Britain enabled me to see that I could have a better life. Watching the war on Iraq reminded me of those times and how desperate people were for medical assistance. Subsequent tragedies followed and all I could imagine was how our lives would be without any doctors at all. This reinforced how fortunate I am to have countless opportunities before me and how the most worthwhile path I can follow is that of a doctor.

In December 2004 I visited the Ibn Nafees psychiatric unit in Bahrain, where I spent some time with patients suffering from severe mental illnesses. I found myself developing a need to offer my help which strengthened my decision to study Medicine.

Attending an intensive medical course at Nottingham University has led me to strive harder for my aim. Living the life of a medical student for three days provided me with an insight into the highly demanding nature of the profession. We were given the opportunity to complete a Rapid Life Response course, and to practice phlebotomy, suturing and patient rounds. The depth of information given presented me with a realistic representation of the academic rigour involved in Medicine.

My work experience involved shadowing a nurse on an elderly care isolation ward at Northwick Park Hospital, which presented me with a challenge. Bathing, feeding, giving medication and taking blood pressure from the patients on a regular basis was very demanding, especially as a number of them were uncooperative. My communication skills improved greatly as I had to interact with many patients on a daily basis. This experience opened my eyes to how heavily patients depend on nurses and how much stamina is needed to maintain an acceptable standard of work, especially after enduring long working hours.

The more stressful elements of medicine became clear to me during my experience at Hemel Hempstead Hospital. I was able to shadow a junior doctor, a surgeon, an anaesthetics team and spend an afternoon at an Outpatients Clinic. The large number of patients I met made me appreciate how doctors managed to apply the same enthusiasm to every patient. The rapport built with the patients in such a short time increased my desire to become a doctor.

Volunteering for the Iraqi Welfare Association was a rewarding opportunity. My main responsibility was to befriend a disabled woman and her traumatised nephews who had

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recently arrived in Britain. I appreciated being able to use my second language, Arabic, to help them feel more comfortable and to trust me.

I was chosen to attend a medical genetics course organised by Imperial College. I especially enjoyed the ethical and moral considerations surrounding genetics, as I used the debating skills I obtained from my participation in the Cambridge Union debating competition on Stem Cell research. The distinction I was awarded for the Nuffield Titration Experiment increased my confidence in my practical abilities as it involved competent use of the equipment, critical analysis of the method and detailed calculations. Drama A-level required each individual to contribute equally or else the progress of the whole group is hindered. This allowed me to realise the indispensability of teamwork in medicine.

Becoming Head Girl of my school has been my most valued achievement. I know that the leadership and organisation skills I gain, and the ability to cope with the pressure of responsibility, will stand me in good stead for the future, regardless of what I do. My interest in writing serves as a method of relaxation from my other activities and I am grateful for being able to publish some of my work.

One aim I have set myself is to make a valuable contribution to a person's life in my own small way. I believe that becoming a doctor will provide me with the perfect opportunity to do this.

Sample 12

Medical care is something that many of us take for granted and, perhaps, do not appreciate enough. When my grandmother passed away two years ago, I realised how much medicine means. She was in a hospital during her last year and it was thanks to the doctors there that it was as pain-free and happy as it could be. I saw them work everyday when I came to visit, helping out when possible. The experience made me understand that medical doctors can mean a world's difference. And to be a part of it; to make a person smile or just give them hope, is I think, the most extraordinary profession.

Wanting to be a doctor of medicine grew within me gradually throughout my life. My father is a physician and so I could see first-hand what it takes. I was able to witness the cons as well as the pros. I came in contact with medicine in many other ways as well, whether it was my involvement in a voluntary course in CPR and emergency handling, or attending several medical conferences, where I helped organise the events and attended the lectures. The course was an excellent opportunity to gain experience in practical medicine and, above all, learn how to help in case of accidents. Additionally, the conferences gave me insight into how medical research is being conducted world-wide. The body's physiology, its healing, has always been fascinating and eventually, I realised that being a medical doctor is the best career for me.

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After completing my education, I would like to practice clinical medicine as well as pursue my research ambitions. When it comes to specialisation, I am leaning towards cardiology, surgery and psychiatry. However, I am planning to make the final decision during the course of my studies, when I will be more qualified to do so. After a lot of research, I became convinced that the United Kingdom can provide the best education for me and that is why I chose to apply in the UK. I am fluent in English, having spent a year in the United States, where I attended school in 1993, and completing the IB in Sweden. Coming from Slovakia, English became the language I used most over the last three years, be it at school (where all education was conducted in English) or with my friends, many of whom were students from all over the world.

As a student I am highly motivated, I enjoy gaining new knowledge, intellectual challenges and solving problems. Since elementary school, I have been a part of many competitions in natural sciences, mathematics, geography, reciting poetry as well as writing short stories and I have had success on a regional level. After moving to Sweden, I started the IB and enjoyed success in the final examinations, achieving 44 out of possible 45 points. I am a fast learner, for example in the Swedish language I am fluent and eligible to study at a Swedish university after only 3 years time.

My other interests are diverse. I have played both chess and tennis at a competitive level and practice other sports, such as skiing and table tennis, on a regular basis as well. Drama is another preoccupation of mine and I co-wrote a play and starred in three others during my high school studies in Slovakia. I enjoy spending time with people and being creative. Music is an abiding passion, I have played the violin for four years and am a self-taught guitar (both acoustic and electric) and piano player. Writing songs is something that I've been doing for four years and it's a pastime that has become a part of my life, a way to channel my creativity when writing the lyrics (mostly in English) and the music. Nevertheless, what I value the most is when I can help, even if it is just a little contribution, to make life better for people; those around me as well as those I will never meet. That is why I have done volunteer work, such as helping raise funds for cancer research and working for free in a store that promotes fair trade. And, ultimately, that is why I want to study medicine, because health is our most precious asset.

Sample 13

As one of many whose childhood continues to shape their later life, I would love to read medicine and be the 'last line of defence' against pathogens and other enemies of human health. Armed with my trusty stethoscope and prescription pad, I would be fulfilling repressed Batman fantasies in the ultimate good versus evil combat.

Naturally, I appreciate modern medicine is not as simplistic as this caricature and work experience at Barnet Hospital enabled me to witness the value of palliative care, whilst

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gaining a healthy respect bordering on awe for medics, who despite being constrained by tight schedules, treat patients as individuals. I also observed the number of different specialists in contact with the patient – not merely Batman, but Robin, Batwoman, Batgirl and his faithful butler. Hence, teamwork is essential for good medical practice, and I have enhanced my ability to work with others towards a collective goal while playing in my parish orchestra for the last six years.

Successfully completing six ASs has filled me with the confidence that I possess the vital foundation of perseverance and an ability to handle pressure via time management and prioritising, central to the daily work of medics. Two A level topics especially captivate me: firstly pathogens and their inherent paradox, initiated by reading 'Plague' by Malcolm Rose, which helped me appreciate the extensive effects of diseases, not only the tangible medical consequences, but the human costs as well. Obviously written before the outbreak of H5N1, there is an eerie resonance as the protagonist writes 'another epidemic with a new mutation is long overdue', shortly after mentioning H1N1 and H2N2. Just as Joseph Lister, first marvelled at the colossal effects of minuscule organisms 0.001mm in diameter, I cannot help but be in awe, which is partly why I chose a scientific career. (But rule number one: never underestimate one's enemy!) Indeed, it is hard to overestimate their role in the body; especially as ten percent of a human's dry weight is due to bacteria!

Organic Chemistry also intrigues me, where the identity of a substance has to be deduced from a series of clues – forcing superheroes everywhere to don their deerstalker hats. Fortunately, this is a skill directly transferable to diagnosis, where clues about the ailment's identity are elicited through skilful questioning.

Thus, accurate diagnosis hinges on good communication skills, which I have honed through learning BSL so communication would not be a barrier to treating one of the 8.7 million deaf or partially deaf people in the UK.

No aspiring medic worth their New Scientist subscription should shy away from responsibility and I, being no exception, assisted Year Nines' preparation for their Science SATs, improving my communication skills and reinforcing my belief that an altruistic career is for me. This year I graduated to be a Guardian Angel, a peer-mentoring scheme supporting new Year Sevens, where challenging issues like confidentiality, acknowledging the limits of power, moral issues, and costs-benefits dilemmas arise.

Not being blessed with extraordinary sporting prowess, it was therefore with great pleasure that I collected my second red sock after completing the 2006 Sports Relief Mile in temperatures topping 33C. The satisfaction of a physical workout coupled with the knowledge that someone's world is improved as a result, is an experience I hope to replicate at university. To relax, I love travelling – vicariously via volumes – Journeying to the River Sea, Capturing the castle, and being Kidnapped; experiencing countries glimpsed only on

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television, meeting a motley bunch of new people and all without any jet lag. In our modern world where little is definite, one thing is certain: the extra reading necessary for a career in this field will never feel like homework!

Sample 14

It is uncharacteristically difficult to put into a few words my interest, indeed fascination with Medicine. The fact that I come from a family where both parents are Medical professionals does not tell the full story. The Medical profession presents an ideal opportunity for me to express my communication and leadership skills which have been assessed as exceptional by my teachers and peers. My enthusiasm for education, intellectual development and fresh challenges requires the combination of scientific and social skills that only Medicine offers. I am attracted to the career's unique ability to provide ever evolving scientific challenges. In addition, I believe myself competent for this role as I am generally considered mature, reliable and compassionate. My background from a developing country has exposed me to making difficult decisions and taught me the importance of adequate medical care, delivered with empathy.

To experience aspects of Medicine first-hand and assess my ability to meet the demand of understanding care, I undertook a 4 month long voluntary affiliation in palliative care with the North London Hospice where I learnt to care for and support the terminally ill. Furthermore, over the summer months, I spent some time at the Hull Royal Infirmary and Castle Hill Hospital (an attachment which consisted of a rotation through various departments) where I learnt basic medical techniques, such as taking blood sugar and blood pressure readings, and received insight into the more complex procedures such as angiography, vascular surgery and CT scans. I was struck by the skill and precision necessary for these procedures. My work experience has banished all illusions of glamour associated with the profession and directed me to its burdens, yet I have only become more enthralled. It has also conveyed to me the importance of a doctor's simultaneous empathy and professionalism in not becoming too emotionally attached to even the most distressed patients. Presently, I work weekly at a local charity shop where I relish contact with various types of people sharing similar ideals. I am also due to commence further experience at the Royal Free Hospital in the week of the October half-term break to supplement my present work.

In addition to the commitment of 5 AS levels subjects which has taught me the value of effective time management under stress, I have dedicated myself to various other schemes within school which have boosted my leadership and communicative skills. As a deputy senior student, I head the environmental awareness committee and I am a prominent member of the Tsunami appeal society where I contribute by organising various events, ultimately raising over GBP 3000 for the cause. I have always been appointed in positions of responsibility throughout my schooling and subsequently I have sat on the school council

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and been captain of my school's basketball team in my first full year here. I also contribute by helping in various events such as acting as a guide on Open Evenings, assisting in concerts and in a master-class program for gifted primary school pupils. One of my major commitments in school is one-on-one mentoring and in-class support, in both English and Maths for younger pupils where I have observed the importance of individualism and specific attention.

Outside academic interest, I also enjoy and am accomplished as the captain of the 'Barnet Bulldogs' basketball team competing in the national league; a commitment which involves 7 hours of training weekly. I recently represented my borough in the London Youth Games where we achieved highly. The spirit of teamwork and discipline thus acquired has enthused me to undertake a Silver Duke of Edinburgh challenge which involves a first aid course including cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

I believe that I am a capable and well balanced individual who will commit himself fully to all aspects of undergraduate life.

Sample 15

I have a keen interest in science subjects, especially Biology. I consistently do well in this subject and have won the prize for the top performing student this year in school. I find the mechanism of the human body fascinating and this has kindled my interest to study medicine. In addition to the science subjects, I studied History at AS level. This has facilitated my analytical skills. To further my understanding of medicine in general, I have done personal research on 'History of Medicine' and presented a short talk at school.

I have had work experience in various health care settings – paediatric ward and clinic, acute elderly ward, stroke unit and a nursing home for older people. I am familiar with different types and presentations of acute illnesses in the very young and the elderly. Working in the stroke unit has made me aware of the importance of working as a multi disciplinary team, consisting of medical, nursing, therapy and other staff, to achieve the best possible outcome for the patients. I learnt about rehabilitation needs, feeding issues in stroke patients and the importance of appropriate 'end of life' care. In the nursing home, I learnt the aspects of comfort care involving attention to hygiene, nutrition and pain control. I was personally involved in feeding the residents and enjoyed listening to them reminiscing their experiences. The work experience has enhanced my enthusiasm to study medicine. I have had training and been awarded a certification in Basic Life Support.

I have the leadership and organisational skills to be an effective doctor. I am a senior prefect in the school and the deputy head of my house. I take assemblies, organise house teams and I am the tutor group prefect for year 8. I am a good team player and helped to organise a fund raising 5-aside football tournament in my school for over 100 participants, in aid of the

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Asian tsunami appeal. I personally collect money for the Malawi projects and for the Leprosy Relief association as part of the school charity programme.

I am involved in several extra curricular activities and achieved high standards. In school, I have been the house captain in football, athletics, basketball and chess and am a member of the rugby, squash, tennis and swimming teams. I have been awarded school colours for football. I play keyboard and have been successful in Grade 7 examination conducted by Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

I have good communication skills. I have won prizes in school speech competitions and achieved Bronze Medal qualification in speaking of verse and prose in London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art examination. I have also been successful in the senior exam of the English Speaking Board and have gained the medallion for acting with distinction.

I work as a part time sales assistant at Millets, a camping store. I have gained skills in customer care, which I feel would equip me for good doctor patient relationship.

I believe I have the necessary academic, practical, leadership, organisational and communication skills to pursue a fulfilling career in medicine.

Sample 16

My aim is to follow a career which is both fulfilling and rewarding and I believe medicine fulfils both criteria. A stay in hospital at the age of twelve stirred my interest and I have been working towards my goal of becoming a doctor ever since. I would like to have a career which presents academic and personal challenges and ultimately to be involved in research. I feel that an integrated undergraduate curriculum would be most appropriate for me and my university choices reflect this. (Make sure you know the type of medical course you are applying for – there is generally a divide between the 'pre-clinical' and 'clinical' years unless they are integrated. A BSc is compulsory at some places and optional at others so make sure you pick the one that is right for you. It's always good to have a few reasons up your sleeve in case they ask you why you want to go to *this* medical school in particular).

I gained insight from work shadowing which included a day in a pathology department. Here I was shown different types of cancerous cells and was able to compare these to normal cells. Two other days were spent with a general surgeon and I was allowed to see abdominal surgery, observe the recovery unit and post-operative care on the ward. A day was spent in general practise with my GMP and I attended a baby clinic. I found listening to mothers discussing their experiences and concerns very enlightening. In all areas it was clear that the doctor is part of a team and that relationships within the team along, with the doctor patient relationships are very important. Although very different I found all the disciplines fascinating and the experiences reinforced my desire to study medicine. During the

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Christmas holidays I have arranged volunteer work in a nursing home and am to spend a day with an obstetrician. (This is a very concise summary of a range of different medical experiences which creates an excellent impression on the reader).

At school I am a prefect and my duties include tutoring younger pupils who are struggling with science. I like the responsibility of being a prefect and always strive to set a good example. I am captain of the Girls Swimming Team and work with junior pupils preparing them for competitions. Recently I completed my gold Duke of Edinburgh Award and obtained my Bronze Medallion lifesaving qualification. Experience gained whilst working for these awards and from a CPR course has given me important skills such as first aid and resuscitation techniques. (First Aid and Life Saving are an excellent additional qualification to try to achieve to prove your interest in the practical aspects of medicine). During this summer holiday I worked as a Summer Scheme Leader and found working with children, some with learning difficulties, very gratifying. I organised a fund-raising walk for the Childline charity which was very successful.

Out of school my main activity is competitive swimming. I have been a member of a club for ten years and currently train up to fifteen hours a week. This huge commitment has taught me discipline, dedication, time-management, goal-setting and the importance of never giving up. I have learnt to deal with pressure, success and failure and that a good team ethos is vital to obtain good results. This year I was voted Club Captain and I really enjoy this role and the responsibility it brings. (Being elected for any position not only shows that you are capable of great responsibility but also that you are well liked and respected by your peers).

For three years I have done voluntary coaching with the younger club members to put something back for all the help I have received. Swimming has provided me with tremendous opportunities to travel for training and competition. To date I have been to Germany, Tenerife, Lanzarote, Florida, many places in the UK and Ireland. Highlights of my swimming career include winning individual and relay Irish schools titles, ten individual Ulster titles and membership of Bangor relay teams who set three Irish Senior Records. I enjoy running and have represented my school at 800 and 1500 meters. For relaxation I do yoga, enjoy listening to music and I love to read, particularly fiction and autobiographies (There are lots of very interesting medical autobiographies worth looking at – I particularly enjoyed 'The Knife Man' which was all about John Hunter. Any extra reading provides interesting topics for discussion at interview and may help to make you more memorable).

For two years I have worked as a part time waitress in a busy restaurant. Last year I passed my driving test and used my earnings to buy a second hand car. This has relieved my parents from the task of driving me to all my training sessions and increased my independence.
I feel I am suited to medicine as I am dedicated disciplined, eager to learn and determined to fulfil my potential.

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I was awarded interviews at Cardiff University and University of Dundee.

Sample 17

Studying Physiology at Newcastle was an excellent experience. It gave me a good idea of what I wanted to achieve in life and, after taking into consideration what I'd like out of a career, I decided on medicine as my best option. I enjoy learning and I think I would be well suited to the scope and variety of a medical degree, which in turn would lead to a stimulating working life where knowledge needs constantly updating. I like to see how science benefits people and chose chronic obstructive pulmonary disease as a subject for my final dissertation.

I have undertaken a number of work experiences that have given me an insight into the medical profession. For the last two years in the university holidays I have worked as a nursing assistant for United Lincolnshire Hospitals, where I currently work. I have worked in big and small hospitals and have experienced medical and surgical wards, X-ray departments, fracture clinics and day surgery. (Radiology is an often overlooked but vital medical sub specialist – make sure you understand that radiographers are not doctors, they *take* the pictures but radiologists are medically qualified and experts in interpreting scans. They are often very enthusiastic to teach and have a wealth of knowledge so its worth seeking them out if you spend some time in hospital)

I have played a part in various surgical procedures, been present at cardiac arrests and frequently thrown into new situations to which I have successfully adapted. I enjoy working as part of a multidisciplinary team and the large amount of patient contact my job requires. (Remember statements like this only work if you have backed them up with specific examples – as is the case here).

One university summer holiday, I worked in a geriatric residential home where I assisted with daily tasks; this increased my awareness of problems faced by elderly people and their carers. For my sixth form work experience I helped at my local GPs surgery where I worked alongside specialist nurses, drug dispensers and observed visiting paediatric consultant. It was interesting to see how primary and secondary healthcare work today. That same year, I arranged a month's hospital voluntary work where I helped several days a week in wards, talking to patients and shadowing junior house officers and physiotherapists. (I think that some shadowing of junior doctors is vital to really prove that you know what the job will entail).

Having gained general healthcare experience I felt I needed to experience working directly with a doctor. This summer I shadowed the general medicine consultant at my local hospital and was able to see the different stages of the disease and was able to undertake physical

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examinations. I chatted to the patients and their families which helped me understand how they coped with the impact of Parkinson's. Whilst working on my final year dissertation I was able to join a respiratory consultant at clinic at North Tyneside Hospital. My experiences have made me realise that I have a genuine interest in people.

I have always been very active and driven by challenges. I was the university athletics captain for two consecutive years, which involved decision making, choosing teams, organising transport and accommodation, taking responsibility for the team members and developing team spirit. At the same time I had to perform as an athlete and twice finished in top eight for discus in the British University Championships.

I am active member of Boston and District Athletic Club and have been twice selected to represent Lincolnshire in the national Heptathlon competition. I am a qualified Level One Athletics Coach where have gained teaching skills over a large age range. At school, I was voted head of Upper School sports and a prefect. I am a regular swimmer, rider and regularly run half marathons and 10km races.

Now that I have graduated I am working full time at the hospital until March, after which shall be travelling around South America. (Just like if you are writing a CV make sure there are no unexplained 'gaps' in your career it will make you look unmotivated. It doesn't have to be medically related, universities are just as interested to know that you are a keen traveller or sportsman as you are a medic. If you are working and saving money try to get something medically related and this will help you stand out).
In conclusion, I am highly motivated person who has a string interest improving other peoples' quality of life. I feel that I have the qualities to be a good doctor and that the medical profession will fulfil my career aspirations. (A succinct and punchy conclusion – a great way to finish).

I was awarded interviews at Glasgow, Dundee, Leicester and UEA.

Sample 18

I feel that a career in the medical field offers an exciting way of achieving a personal and professional satisfaction in life. The chance to apply scientific knowledge for the benefit of others and the challenge of maintaining between the fine line of the rights and wrongs of medical ethics are two elements of medicine which appeal to me. In practice, medicine entails a hands-on approach in helping others which demands good people skills and precision, and which involves coping with a steep learning curve, as doctors have to keep up with new findings that emerge from research. These are a few of the attributes which I have to assure me that I will succeed in medical school and enjoy work after.

Having arrived here from Malaysia in 2000, my home has been Wolfson College, Oxford, at which many medical doctors pursue a DPhil in their specialities. I admire them for the fact

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that their love for the vocation remains strong despite the challenges they face and the mistakes that they have made during their career. Stories of the miracles that they have seen, such as ectopic pregnancy, have been inspiring and I am now more realistic about the challenge of the subject and the profession as well as being aware of the various aspects of medicine that I might consider specialising in. This has driven me to arrange some work experience this year consisting of a week of shadowing a cardiologist in the Oxford John Radcliffe Hospital where I learnt the importance of teamwork, and doctor-patient skills such as bedside manner and patient history taking. I believe these skills are crucial, especially for new doctors to build a close relationship with patients, and to establish trust and a good reputation.

Chemistry has been my strongest subject for many years as I find it exciting to learn how chemical reactions vary due to the molecular structure of the reactants. Physics and Further Maths provide the development of my analytical and logistic skills.
At school, I am an all-rounder: I play various sports from rugby to basketball while specialising in badminton (I used to play for Oxford County's U15 & U17). I also enjoy acting and played the role of the head shopkeeper, Abdullin, in the school's production of The Government Inspector last year. My main past time is Taido, a Japanese martial art. Having started in 2003, my biggest achievement is attaining the brown belt together with an Instructors Certificate, which confers on me the responsibility and privilege of teaching Taido in college three times a week, developing traits that a good doctor needs such as empathy, patience, and character as well as initiative and leadership skills. (Doctors have a professional responsibility to teach the junior members of the team since much of your learning will be 'on the job' and there is limited time for structured teaching. Any experience you have of teaching will look great in a personal statement as it's a valuable skill. Doctors also have the difficult job of educating patients and explaining complex procedures without using jargon – both of which could be viewed as a type of 'teaching'). Next year, I plan to take the black belt in Portugal, where I will also be competing in the European Taido Championship. I believe that as a result of my teaching experience, my personality, and my academic achievements so far, I am the perfect candidate to study medicine. I hope that you will seriously consider my application.

I was awarded interviews at Dundee, Barts, Penninsula and Fitzwilliam College (Cambridge).

Sample 19

The main focus of my Politics degree has been the social and political challenges facing modern society. Whilst I have enjoyed considering issues such as healthcare from a purely strategic standpoint, it has helped me to refocus my perspectives on the career path I wish to take. Having spent a lot of time working with people from different disciplines in a variety of health and social care settings, I have developed a firm interest in the clinical aspects of healthcare. These experiences have inspired me to reassess what I hold to be important in

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life and my ambition now is to study medicine.

During my University holidays I have joined voluntary projects where I have demonstrated a caring attitude to people. In Slovenia I worked at a hospital which offered respite care for Muscular Dystrophy sufferers. Working in a multi-disciplinary team gave me a valuable insight into the effects of this illness and the impact it has on the patient and their carers. I was responsible for all aspects of their personal care as well as providing companionship to ensure they had a fulfilling holiday. In Turkey I looked after mentally handicapped and disabled children and adults, working alongside doctors as part of an international group. Our work involved providing 24 hour assistance as well as organising activities and excursions. This necessitated team work and initiative to develop ideas suitable for all ages and abilities with limited resources. (Especially as a junior, you will be working long and unsociable hours so it's worth hinting that you can cope with this type of pressure).

This summer I was employed as a Care Assistant at a Methodist Care Home where most residents had dementia or physical disabilities, all requiring different levels of care. This was my first exposure to dementia, which required patience, humour and compassion. Being responsible for a group of residents helped develop my organisational skills and time management. I focused on establishing good relationships with both the residents and staff and enjoyed the new challenges each day brought.

At University I have learnt valuable transferable skills (A key phrase - regardless of what you have done in the past, try and think of what you have learnt that will benefit you and the medical profession). through my courses and my year studying in France. I have focused on modules which are health related, such as Reproductive Politics and Policies, looking at infertility as a political issue. My dissertation will analyse the problems in creating an effective health care system in Africa. Through considering health as a political issue and its wider implications on society, I now wish to be involved in the clinical side.

I spent my Erasmus year at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques in Grenoble, studying politics in French. This counted towards my final degree grade - a huge linguistic challenge which required self-motivation and dedication. I learnt to interact with people from many countries and to value different perspectives. This improved my communication skills and gave me confidence in my ability to succeed.

I have done voluntary work at the Edinburgh University Advice Place, offering help and advice to students with varying problems, from financial to sexual health. (This type of advisory experience is excellent for proving that you have all the right qualities for a doctor as this is basically taking on the role of a healthcare professional). Currently I volunteer as a Play Assistant at the Royal Hospital for Sick Children in Edinburgh, keeping the children entertained and happy.

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I am also the fourth year Politics representative, which involves regular meetings with the Heads of School to discuss course issues and concerns of fellow students. Studying Politics as my first degree has provided valuable experiences and opportunities which have made me the person I am. My studies have taught me to think critically and to learn independently (Even though much of medicine is done in teams there is a lot of independent learning and self motivation required both as a doctor and through medical school so this is an excellent point) . I have developed vital skills such as team work and communication both at University and in the wider things I have done. I feel these skills will make me a stronger, more determined medical student with a greater sense of enthusiasm. It has given me the confidence to see that this is the long term career commitment that I wish to make and I look forward to the new challenges it will bring. (Always end on a positive note – an optimistic look to the future is a great device).

Sample 20

Attractive, optimistic cheerful 18 years old male – GSOH- looking for healthcare career of working with "mature" patients, handing out antibiotics like sweets, and being told off by charge nurses. If I was to sum myself up in a sentence, it would be something along the lines of an eclectic rock-climbing-guitar-playing-pubbing-clubbing-piano-playing-ex-scout-assistant-nurse with an eye for fashion and a very dodgy dance technique. According to one internet personality test, I'm a "hypersensitive-narcissist" which in my opinion neatly proves how useless they are. (This highly unusual opening may be considered too inappropriate by some assessors and could be instantly rejected. Remember, you want to stand out, but not for the wrong reasons!) I've seen firsthand three hospitals, a mixture of private and NHS, and have worked alongside a number of disciplines involved in healthcare from domestic staff to consultant surgeons and everything in between. You name it; I've probably been bossed around by them. Working for the nursing bank also gives me a fantastic opportunity to work on a plethora of wards, from trauma and orthopedics to acute elderly care. They haven't fired me yet, so I must be doing something right.

One thing I love about my job as a male HCA (or "murse" as my friends like to call me) is how I'm greeted by patients and relatives with something along the lines of "Ah, here's the doctor/physio/phlebotomist…" No one ever seems to consider the possibility that a chap would consider working in the nursing environment. It's admittedly a little unusual, but working as a HCA has given me a useful trait which I believe would translate into medicine smoothly, a near-immunity to fear. You name it, I've probably seen worse. Frankly, any member of staff that has helped to "freshen up" a clearly C. diff positive melena sufferer in an enclosed side-room on a 35 degree summers day surely deserves a little respect. Another useful skill I've learnt in my time patrolling the wards is the action of pulling on a pair of blue nitriles on in a single smooth movement for each hand. Sounds superficial I know, but I've

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always said you can see "Holby City" is a load of hokum because the "doctors" in it simply cannot do it most of the time much to my amusement.

You're probably wondering why anybody who has worked in a hospital would want to be a doctor…and trust me, in my first week I was thinking the same thing! Before I began working for the NHS, I would have given the standard "Because I like science and helping people", and I'm guessing you would have binned my application before you finished reading the sentence. Well, sorry to disappoint you but the same still stands I'm afraid. Wait! I'm not finished! The difference now is that during one shift on an acute elderly care ward I actually managed to pin down precisely what it was that drew me to medicine as a career…cue hazy flashback effects… One of the RGNs was showing me how to administer nasal specs oxygen. Knowing that oxygen has to be prescribed by a doctor, I asked her whether I was allowed administer it myself, and her response was "In some circumstances if we waited for them to prescribe that the patient would die, they are so slow." I can understand her frustration, the same day a new arrival needed to be prescribed insulin urgently at tea time, the doctor was phoned three times starting at 1200, and she didn't arrive until 1900 (two hours late) which is unacceptable, no matter how busy she might be. What it boils down to is that both the patients and nursing staff see a visit from a medic as a turning point where things go from a bad situation back to the norm, they allow things to continue as they should and prevent things from going wrong or worse (within reason, of course). All it takes is a signature on a drug chart to allow this, and it must give a great sense of satisfaction to see your name on that sheet of paper. That's my ultimate aim at the end of the day.

You might have heard of the book "Blood Sweat and Tea", a diary of a FRU EMT working for the London Ambulance Service; I'd recommend it to you as it gives a very interesting insight into the ambulance service. If you're too busy/lazy to go out and buy that, I'd appreciate it if you could take the time to read my equivalent version that will be in the post. I've been keeping a journal of my job since my early days, and when Steven Spielberg gets hold of my journals with a heavy dose of artistic license the end product will be a heady mix of "ER" and "Bridget Jones's Diary". (Although the applicant was successful, this was a highly risky personal statement to submit, and it should generally be avoided)

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