



Information Assurance and Governance
Office of the Principal

8 September 2020

Dear Brandon,

Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002
Our Ref: 248-20

I refer to your enquiry dated 11 August 2020 asking to be supplied with information as outlined below in relation to our Medicine A100 degree programme for undergraduate entry.

1. GCSE entry requirements: I understand you require five grade 7s, and GCSE biology. Are there any other GCSE subjects you require? Do you require a grade 7 in biology? If you require other subjects, what minimum grades do you require in each?

Information on entry requirements for the A100 Medicine programme can be found on our website, including GCSE and subject requirements: <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/subjects/medicine/medicine-bsc-a100/entry-requirements/academic-requirements/uk-qualifications/>.

2. Selection process: I understand you rank UCAT for interview, but your website says you look at academic performance, the reference and work experience on the personal statement. Do you routinely sift out applicants before ranking their UCAT if they don't meet these three terms?

Academic performance - do you decline applicants even if they meet your entry requirements? Reference and work experience - do you decline applicants based on these?

The recorded information that the University's holds relevant to your enquiry is as set out on our website at: <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/subjects/medicine/medicine-bsc-a100/selection/>.

Applicants who do not meet the minimum entry requirements relevant to them, will not progress in the application process. Applicants must have relevant work experience as outlined and this should be shown in the personal statement. The personal statement and reference must show an interest in and understanding of a medical degree and career. If an applicant passes these 'hurdles' they will then be ranked on their UCAT score and invited to interview based on this ranking.

3./

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3. Please could you tell me how many applicants you have declined for the reasons in point (2) - i.e. academic performance meeting entry requirements but not sufficiently strong (if you do this), poor reference and poor work experience? Please can you stratify this number for each individual reason i.e. X declined due to academic performance, Y poor reference and Z poor work experience? Could you provide this for 2018, 2019 and 2020 entry (2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20 admissions cycles respectively).

The University does not hold the information requested in a reportable format. To establish the position for each individual application would be complex requiring data to be pulled together for review on case by case basis. This process goes beyond data retrieval, involving a level of intellectual input, cross-referencing information from different sources resulting in the creation of new information which is out with the scope of the FOISA.

Section 17 of the FOISA requires that a Scottish public authority confirms in writing where information requested of it is not held and notice is therefore given to this effect.

4. Interview: Please could you outline your scoring mechanism for interview, and the number of points (or similar) you award for each SJT band? Please could you also provide the mean, median and minimum scores required for an offer for the entry years 2018, 2019 and 2020 (2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20 respectively?)

a) Scoring mechanism for interview

I can advise that interview for entry to the School of Medicine are in the format of multiple mini interviews (MMIs). In previous years these have consisted of 6 mini interviews held at stations which lasted about 6 minutes each. Each station assesses a mixture of different domains or competencies with each domain being scored 1 to 5, with 5 being excellent. Each year the MMI process is reviewed and a variety of domains for assessment are chosen. Previous domains have included:

- Communication
- Motivation/preparation/insight into medical career
- Moral reasoning
- Critical thinking
- Integrity
- Empathy
- Teamwork
- Leadership/negotiation
- Resilience
- Reflection
- Protocol compliance

To standardise the application of these criterion, interviewers are trained each year for score calibration purposes. Detailed statistical analysis is carried out each year on both the interview stations and the interviewers, for reliability purposes.

The threshold score that is required for entry to medicine at St Andrews will vary each year depending on the applicant pool and their performance at interview and the 'route' (Scotland, England or No Preference) to which applicants have applied.

b)/

b) **Table 1:** Number of points awarded for each SJT band

SJT Band	2018 and 2019 Entry	2020 Entry
Band 1	15	7.5
Band 2	10	5
Band 3	5	2.5
Band 4	0	0

Table 2: Mean, Median and Minimum scores

Interview Score and SJT Scores combined	2018	2019	2020
Maximum number of Points	106	106	81
Mean	82.5	82.5	63.4
Median	82	82	63
Minimum	69	69	51.5

Please note:

a) That due to a change in the:

- weighting of some of the domains measured;
- stations used; and
- weighting of the SJT;

the total number of points possibly awarded changed in 2020 application cycle.

b) The figures presented in Table 2 only include direct entrants to the A100 programme who interviewed in St Andrews and do not include those:

- Applying through the Gateway to Medicine programme;
- Applying from the International Foundation Programme; or
- Who interviewed overseas or through Skype?

Information otherwise accessible

In answer to questions 1 and 2 you are being directed to information that is readily available on our website and as such, section 25(1), *Information otherwise accessible* of the FOISA is applicable. The University has responsibilities to the taxpayer and other stakeholders to provide value for money. Where the University has expended resource to proactively make information available from its Freedom of Information publication scheme and the public interest is best served by referring an applicant to that alternative source, then it will do so. Please note that this exemption is absolute and does not require validation through application of the public interest test.

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Your right to seek a review of how your information request was managed

If you are not satisfied with the University's response and/or our reasoning set-out above, you have the right to request a review of our decision. The timelines in which this right is available are set out in section 20(5)(a) and (b) FOISA and regulation 16 of the EIRs. In broad terms the right to seek a review must be exercised within 40 working days of receiving this response.

The Information Assurance and Governance team are currently working remotely due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Any request for review at this time should be sent by email to foi@st-andrews.ac.uk stating:

- a) your name and address;
- b) details of your original request; and
- c) the reasons why you are dissatisfied with our response.

If you remain dissatisfied with how your request for information has been dealt with following Review, you also have the right to apply to the Scottish Information Commissioner (SIC) for a decision. In the event of an appeal to the SIC, the Commissioner will generally only be able to investigate the matters raised in the request for review.

Details on how to make an appeal online to the SIC can be found on their website: <http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/YourRights/Unhappywiththeresponse/AppealingtoCommissioner.aspx>.

This concludes the University's response.

Yours sincerely

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Information Assurance and Governance Officer