

Programme Specification¹ (2026-27)

Medical Sciences Tripos

Programme title	<i>Medical Sciences</i>
Name of final award	<i>B.A. (Hons) (for all students)</i>
Awarding Body	<i>University of Cambridge</i>
Teaching institution	<i>University of Cambridge Faculty of Biological Sciences</i>
PSRB/Accreditation details and date the course was last accredited	<i>General Medical Council</i>
UCAS code	<i>A100MB/ BChir</i>
HECoS code(s)	<i>100276 (pre-clinical medicine); 100267 (clinical medicine)</i>
ATAS code	
Relevant QAA benchmark statement(s)	<i>Medicine</i>
Qualification framework level	<i>Level 6 (Honours)</i>
Date specification approved	
Linked course	

Brief overview of the course

(Please explain the purpose of the programme in a brief paragraph of no more than 5-6 sentences.)

This course prepares students to become one of tomorrow's doctors, reflecting the latest advances in medical sciences and practices. Students study medical sciences for the first three years, then apply their knowledge as a clinical student on a placement for the last three years.

¹ Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information in this programme specification. At the time of publication, the programme specification has been approved by the relevant Faculty Board (or equivalent). Programme specifications are reviewed annually, however, during the course of the academic year, any approved changes to the programme will be communicated to enrolled students through email notification or publication in the *Reporter*. The relevant faculty or department will endeavour to update the programme specification accordingly, and prior to the start of the next academic year.

Educational Aims

What are the educational aims of the programme?

The programme aims to:

- provide high quality education in clinically relevant biomedical, psychological and social sciences leading to intellectually self-reliant graduates of the calibre sought by the profession.
- provide a stimulating and challenging learning environment where teaching is informed and enhanced by research to international standards of excellence.
- provide training and experience in the scientific principles and practice of research and its evaluation.
- continue to attract outstanding students from a variety of backgrounds, and to develop their potential to enable them to contribute fully to the cultural and intellectual base of society.
- contribute to the national and international needs for practitioners and leaders in the medical professions.

Learning Outcomes - *What is a student expected to learn from the programme? These should have been included on the new course proposal when the course was first approved.*

(Please refer to the guidance on [Learning Aims and Outcomes](#) and the [Office for Students](#) sector-recognised standards for sector expectations of the graduates of higher education qualifications)

By the end of the first two years (MedST Part IA and IB), preclinical students will have:

Knowledge and understanding:

- Of the basic principles and processes of biomedical, psychological and social sciences.
- Been introduced to common forms of disease and the contribution made by biomedical science to understanding their basis.
- Become aware of the standards of competence, care, conduct and responsibilities expected of a member of the medical profession.
- An understanding of how normal human structure and function and physiological processes apply in clinical medicine.

Skills and other attributes:

- Begun to develop observational and deductive skills in associating molecular and cellular events with the outcomes of disease.

- Acquired basic laboratory manipulative skills and begun to develop skills in analysis and interpretation of experimental data; acquired basic information technology skills in searching for and retrieving information.
- Begun to develop skills in listening to and dealing with patients.
- Become enabled to progress to clinical training.

Programme structure

Please give a brief outline of the course structure and how it supports progress. Please note details of individual papers/modules are not needed. What elements does the programme contain? If you have a part-time route show how this is aligned with the full-time course.

Students study medical sciences for the first three years, then apply their knowledge as a clinical student on a placement for the last three years.

In the first two years, medics study for both the Tripos and for the professional qualification of 2nd MB. This is the pre-clinical part of the course where students study core medical science and clinical medicine. Some courses are assessed for both qualifications; some are for professional purposes only. Courses include: Functional Architecture of the Body, Homeostasis, Molecules in Medical Science, Biology of Disease, Mechanisms of Drug Action, Neurobiology and Human Behaviour, Human Reproduction, Head and Neck Anatomy, Foundations of Evidence-Based Practice, Social and Ethical Context of Health and Illness and Preparing for Patients.

For the first three years, students focus on scientific principles underlying medicine, alongside a clinical strand. They will also get to conduct a full-body dissection, which very few medical schools offer.

In the third year, a range of courses is available. Students may take in-depth courses in many of the subjects studied in their first two years. Alternatively, they may choose to take courses in something rather different, such as Anthropology, Management Studies or Philosophy, subject to approval by the relevant Director of Studies, College and Department.

For the last three years, students apply their knowledge to medical practice as a clinical student, spending much of their time learning directly from patients in GP surgeries and hospitals. This is where core, specialist and applied clinical practice will happen.

If students successfully complete the first three years of the course, they will graduate with a BA (Hons) degree.

If they successfully complete the full course, they will graduate with a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MB, BChir).

Teaching and Learning

Please indicate which methods are used, i.e., lectures, seminars, practical sessions etc. Include any activity that does not lead to summative assessment. How is the programme taught? How do students learn?

At the beginning of the year, there are introductory sessions.

Each subject within Part I of the course employs a variety of teaching and learning methods, including lectures, small-group teaching sessions (supervisions), computer work, practical classes, and problem-based learning.

Self-directed learning modules and other additional audio-visual resources are provided in the Virtual Learning Environment (Moodle) as part of a blended learning programme.

In addition, medical students undertake a programme of patient contact (PfP).

During Part I, individual courses focus on the “core” scientific knowledge, which doctors need to have to cope with clinical practice.

At Part II, in addition to lectures, students undertake a dissertation, based on literature review or laboratory project work.

Clinical teaching is delivered on the wards and in general practice. There are also additional opportunities to attend general and specialist outpatient clinics. Teaching is supported by seminars, tutorials and discussion groups.

The course is based in Cambridge. Some of the course is also delivered in regional hospitals or practices, to take advantage of the different educational opportunities they offer.

Students’ ongoing progress is reviewed each week and term by their college supervisor.

Assessment

Please list below summative assessments for the course and how they meet the learning outcomes listed above. Ensure these are aligned with your course regulations ([Statutes and Ordinances](#)).

Assessment	Learning Outcome
The examination for most subjects of MedST 1A and 1B is divided into three sections. Sections I and II are assessed for both the Tripos and the 2nd MB. Section III is assessed for the Tripos only. In some subjects the section I and II papers are combined into a single paper.	Assessment will focus on the following key learning outcomes: <u>First two years</u> • Knowledge and understanding of the basic principles and processes of biomedical, psychological and social sciences.

• Section I is a theory paper and is assessed either by MCQ or short notes. • Section II is a practical or data handling paper and is usually assessed by MCQ or short notes. • Section III is an essay paper. For some 2nd MB only subject's assessment is via a single section MCQ paper or submitted course work. Practical work is undertaken and assessed in all years of the degree programme.	• Been introduced to common forms of disease and the contribution made by biomedical science to understanding their basis. • Become aware of the standards of competence, care, conduct and responsibilities expected of a member of the medical profession. • An understanding of how normal human structure and function and physiological processes apply in clinical medicine. • Begun to develop observational and deductive skills in associating molecular and cellular events with the outcomes of disease. • Acquired basic laboratory manipulative skills and begun to develop skills in analysis and interpretation of experimental data; acquired basic information technology skills in searching for and retrieving information. • Begun to develop skills in listening to and dealing with patients. • Become enabled to progress to clinical training.
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Progression and Career Destinations

Please describe the opportunities for the students' personal and professional development (including transferable and employability skills). Please include information relating to successful graduates' prospects for employment.

Preparation for employment is provided in the opportunities for acquisition of relevant and transferable skills outlined above.

As a graduate, students will be able to get provisional registration with the General Medical Council (GMC). The GMC has certain expectations about attitudes, behaviour and performance of medical students.

They can then go anywhere in the country to complete two years as a junior doctor. These are known as Foundation Years. At the end of these two years, graduates can register with the GMC as a doctor.

The programme enables students to develop the excellent communication, clinical, interpersonal and professional skills required for good medical practice. As a graduate,

they will be ready for a range of careers across general practice, medicine, psychiatry and other specialities.