

**EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES FOR
ADMISSION TO MEDICINE DEGREE PROGRAMMES**

1. The Medical School will not normally confirm an offer of a place on a medical degree programme (A100, A990, A101 ScotGEM) if the stated entrance requirements are not met. However, we appreciate that in some cases circumstances may have significantly impacted upon an applicant's ability to perform to their potential. Extenuating circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis, according to the information provided by the applicant and according to the guidelines given in this policy below. A Special Circumstances Committee for Medical Admission will consider such cases but only after an application has been made.
2. Although the information regarding extenuating circumstances can serve to contextualise the academic performance of an applicant, the final decision as to whether to offer or confirm a place on the programme, and under what conditions, will remain at the discretion of the Medical School.
3. At any point within the application cycle, applicants may submit information on extenuating circumstances to the Medical School as part of their application or seek advice prior to application by emailing: (for A100, A990): medical.admissions@st-andrews.ac.uk or (for A101): scotgem-admissions@st-andrews.ac.uk.
4. Guidelines are given below; each section indicates for which courses the information is applicable to. Some information is relevant to all courses and some is relevant to individual courses.

RELEVANT TO ALL MEDICAL DEGREES (A100, A990 AND A101 SCOTGEM)

Notification to examination board(s) (A-Levels, Highers, GCSEs or equivalent)

5. The applicant must clearly indicate whether the examination board(s) has been informed of the situation, and what action may have been taken as a result, including any appeals that may have been made and any further details the applicant considers to be relevant. If this information is not included, the Medical School will assume that the examination board(s) has been informed, and that the applicant's academic achievements reflect this.
6. The Medical School will respect the final award of the relevant examination body after Special Consideration has been given by the board; the Medical School will not consider giving academic credit for marks which have not been gained, once the Special Consideration by the board has been applied.

Applicants who are 'borderline' for fulfilling criteria to meet the conditions of offer (A-Levels, Highers, GCSEs or equivalent)

7. Applicants seeking consideration from the Medical School with regard to 'borderline' grades would be expected to have applied for examination board Special Consideration where relevant. The Medical School will not consider 'borderline' grades after any Special Consideration has been applied.
8. Consideration may be given to applicants with extenuating circumstances whose achieved qualification grades mean they are 'borderline' for meeting the entry requirements for the medical

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programmes at St Andrews, providing these extenuating circumstances did not fall within the scope of the relevant examination boards' Special Consideration policy.

9. Applicants whose grades are less than 'borderline' for meeting the entry requirements will not be considered.

10. Applicants whose examination grades are affected by extenuating circumstances resulting in achievement of 'borderline' grades for meeting entry requirements (taking into account point 7 and 8 above), will be required to provide details of the circumstances and an explanation as to how these circumstances have affected academic performance. Supporting evidence for the 'borderline' grades must be provided from a verifiable third party, such as:

- a. Letter(s) from doctor, hospital consultant, or other health professional.
- b. A police report, crime report or letter from a solicitor.
- c. Other relevant confirmation from a suitable third party.

Together with:

- d. Details from school/college/education provider verifying the academic potential of the applicant, the nature of the circumstances, the timescale and impact on academic performance, whether Special Consideration was requested from the examination board, and whether grade adjustment has been made as a result of examination board consideration.
- e. Attendance reports from school/college/education provider.

GRADUATE APPLICANTS

11. **Degree classification.** We do not consider applicants who have obtained a lower second class honours degree (or lower). Extenuating circumstances put forward for consideration in this respect would not be considered as we expect the university awarding the degree to have taken into account any relevant circumstances.

12. **Subject requirements over and above degree.** In the case of graduate applicants, extenuating circumstances that affected the qualifications required over and above the degree, will not be taken into account if they were achieved prior to application. Chemistry, Biology, Mathematics and English can be re-taken in order to meet the medical degree programme entrance requirements, where relevant. If extenuating circumstances affect the sitting of qualifications required as part of the conditions of offer for the medical degree programme (other than degree classification), then the policy on 'borderline' grades for fulfilling criteria to meet the conditions of offer (see section above) will be applied.

University Clinical Aptitude Test

13. We adhere to the guidance given on the UCAT website with regard to candidates who are not fit to take the test due to illness or other personal circumstances. See UCAT website:

<https://www.ucat.ac.uk/test-day/>

14. Candidates who present themselves for the UCAT test are declaring themselves fit to take the test.
15. Candidates not fit to take their test due to illness or other personal circumstances must reschedule their test to a later date, even if this means losing the test fee. Candidates who plan to take the test in the final weeks of testing but fall ill may not be able to reschedule within the test window. This is why the UCAT office recommends that candidates take the test early in the cycle.
16. The Medical School at St Andrews will not take into account any illness or personal circumstances that occur around the time of, or on the day of, the UCAT test, given that candidates can reschedule the sitting of the UCAT.
17. If a technical issue arises on the day of the UCAT test, applicants should follow the appropriate UCAT guidance: <https://www.ucat.ac.uk/test-day/test-incident/>. If an applicant receives an annotation as an outcome of a test incident report, this will be visible to the Medical Admissions team when UCAT results are received by us, and will be considered in the decision making process in cases where students are borderline in the ranking for invite to interview. No additional weighting or scoring will be added to an applicants UCAT global score as a result of a test day incident.
18. The Medical School at St Andrews would not exempt a candidate from the UCAT on the grounds of a significant or unforeseen medical or personal issue. All applicants must have sat the test in the appropriate testing cycle.

Interview Attendance

19. Candidates are expected to attend on the interview date they are offered. We will consider offering an alternative date if the candidate has an academic examination on that date, or has already accepted an interview for the same date at another university. In addition, we will endeavour to take account of illness or significant personal circumstances if that affects an applicant's ability to attend interview. The candidate should email medical.admissions@st-andrews.ac.uk as soon as possible to seek advice. The Medical School will decide if the circumstances are such that an alternative date should be offered.
20. If the interview offered is on the last day of scheduled interviews at St Andrews, and a candidate cannot attend due to circumstances outlined above, no further interview date for that cycle can be offered and the candidate would have to apply again in the following admissions cycle (having sat again whichever are required of: UCAT/UCAT SJT/GAMSAT).

RELEVANT TO A100 AND A990 ONLY

Taking more than normal number of years to complete school leaving qualification

21. The Medical School expects candidates to sit the examinations for their school leaving qualification only if they are fit to do so. Candidates experiencing ill health or adversity during their school/college study which is severely impacting on their ability to maximise their potential, should take advice from their school/college and consider taking absence from study and complete study/examinations at a later date, when they are fit to do so. If a candidate experiencing ill health or adversity decides not to take absence from study and continues with their study/examinations

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but does not achieve the required grades for entry to Medicine at St Andrews in the normal timescale, the Medical School will not consider the candidate for entry, unless the applicant is 'borderline' for fulfilling criteria to meet the conditions of offer (see section above on 'borderline' for fulfilling criteria).

22. Applicants who do take more than the normal number of years to complete their qualification due to extenuating circumstances will be required to provide details of the circumstances and an explanation as to how these circumstances have affected academic performance. Supporting evidence for the gap in studies/delayed examinations must be provided from a verifiable third party, such as:

- a. Letter(s) from doctor, hospital consultant, or other health professional.
- b. A police report, crime report or letter from a solicitor.
- c. Other relevant confirmation from a suitable third party.

Together with:

- d. Details from school/college/education provider verifying the academic potential of the applicant, the nature of the circumstances, the timescale and impact on academic performance.
- e. Attendance reports from school/college/education provider.

GCSE performance (or equivalent qualifications)

23. GCSE qualifications (or equivalent) form part of the entrance requirements for the medical degree programmes (A100 and A990) at St Andrews as individual subject requirements. In addition, assessment of GCSE performance is used to differentiate between many strong applicants who apply with predicted A-Level (or other school leaving qualifications). Guidance as to what level of GCSE performance might be classed as 'competitive' for consideration for interview can be found in the published entrance requirements.

24. Applicants to the A100 or A990 who experienced extenuating circumstances during the study/examination for GCSEs (or equivalent qualifications) should email for advice to: medical.admissions@st-andrews.ac.uk.

RELEVANT TO SCOTGEM (A101) ONLY

GAMSAT

25. We adhere to the guidance given on the GAMSAT website with regard to candidates who are not fit to take the test due to illness or other personal circumstances. There is no possibility of special consideration being given to GAMSAT test results. In no circumstances will GAMSAT scores be adjusted to account for any perceived disadvantage. See GAMSAT website:

<https://gamsat.acer.org/register/special-testing-conditions>

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26. Candidates who present themselves for the GAMSAT test are declaring themselves fit to take the test.
27. Candidates not fit to take their test due to illness or other personal circumstances must defer their test to a later date, even if this means losing the test fee. Candidates may defer the test date for the GAMSAT test sitting once only. No changes to the test sitting can be made once the deferral request has been submitted. All deferrals will incur an administration fee. See GAMSAT website: <https://gamsat.acer.org/register/deferral-terms>
28. ScotGEM will not take into any illness or personal circumstances into account retrospectively, as we are unable to predict how it would have impacted on the GAMSAT score.
29. ScotGEM would not exempt a candidate from the GAMSAT on the grounds of a significant or unforeseen medical or personal issue. All applicants must have sat the test in the appropriate testing cycle.