

The application journey (what you found hard, what you found helpful, and if you could go back in time what would you tell yourself?)

Response 1

During the application journey, I found it difficult to know if I truly wanted to study medicine. I had always wanted to be a doctor since I was 7, but I only thought about why I wanted it so badly during Year 12. I realised studying something on the grounds that 'I've always wanted to' was a weak reason, as up until this point, I had never considered studying anything else. It did scare me that I had such a myopic view, especially when I wasn't fully sure if I would even enjoy it. Personally, it was helpful to be aware of what is involved in a medicine career. Many of my peers aspired to do medicine but realised the huge time commitment, the prospective strains between balancing career and family, and countless other realities that are inevitable in the future. Personally, I read many articles and accounts of practitioners, particularly those that were female, which made me realise that despite this, I still wanted to do medicine because I had a genuine passion to help people who are unable to do so for themselves. If I could go back in time, I would tell myself to think about this earlier than the week before interviews (always a bad time to have an existential crisis). After one term of medical school so far though, I don't regret choosing it at all.

Response 2

After deciding I wanted to do medicine, I spent the early parts of year 12 researching the undergraduate medicine degrees at different universities all across Australia, and the entry requirements of each. After studying hard for the UMAT and completing my HSC trials, I spend the first half of September filling in my application forms. Some universities like Newcastle and Adelaide only required general information whereas others like UNSW and JCU required written components as well as general information. It's also useful to get a friend or family member to read over your answers- there's often minimal space and you want to be specific in what you say while showing them your personality! After the HSC, invitations came out about interviews. I was lucky enough to be invited to a few interviews, and if there's one thing I took from this, is to not be disheartened if you don't get certain interviews, and work hard towards making things e ones you got the best as possible. Before interviews, I found it extremely helpful to start thinking about my personality, my goals, my life and age-old question, 'Why do I want to do medicine?'. The best thing for interviews is to be yourself and answer questions honestly and truthfully- what you think, not what the interviewers want to hear. Also, knowing what kind of interview it was- whether it was just a chat like at UNSW, or had multiple stations that included problem-solving and role play like at Newcastle, is helpful.

What are the daily/ weekly routines of studying at your medical school?

Response 1

As a student, I'm a planner and not a crammer, so I study accordingly when it comes to medical school. A typical day would be going to lectures, where I will make notes whilst listening and then going over them once again after the lecture is over. During the time between classes, I'll revise lectures from a few days before or read material ahead to make sure I'm not forgetting any vital information. Making dot-point headings of the concepts learnt each week is helpful when it comes to exam time, because I structure it very similarly to the HSC syllabus. Because of this, I'm able to see key points raised in each topic and how they interweave with each other.

Response 2

Life as a UNSW medical student is really great. Living on campus at one of the colleges means getting to class is easy and quick. As first-year students, we're based mostly on campus, and every fortnight we get to visit a hospital and gain clinical experience. We have about 20 hours of class a week - with 2 hours of lectures every morning, a 1-3 hour break and then 2-4 hour sessions of a mix of practicals, tutorials, clinical skills and scenario groups in the afternoon where we learn about the health sciences, the healthcare system, how to treat patients and develop our communication skills. The classes are flexible, as all the lectures can be streamed online, and some practical classes can be moved around, meaning obligations such as working and long-distance travel are possibilities. The breaks in the day are great for catching up with friends, getting some study done in the many study spaces around campus, and for those who live on campus, getting to go back to your room and relax. The study is reasonably intensive, but as long as you're keeping up to date, the degree is really enjoyable and leaves plenty of time for other commitments outside of university.

What are the upsides and downsides of your medical school? (e.g. course structure, clinical exposure)

Response 1

I'm really lucky to be a UNSW Medical student as the degree is one of a kind. The way we learn all the health sciences is in an integrated manner, meaning we get to learn holistically about different body systems and the links between cause, effect and prevention becomes a lot easier. Being able to visit hospitals right from the first year allows us to develop our clinical skills right from the outset, and the research year in the 4th year of the degree allows us to pursue a specific interest in medicine and develop our researching, problem solving and clinical skills. Being in Sydney, we get access to some of the best hospitals in Australia, and the guarantee of a job at one of these hospitals when finishing our degree is exciting. There is also the opportunity to work in rural settings, as well as travel abroad later in the degree. However, there are some downsides to the degree. Being such an intensive degree, some of the holiday periods are shortened, and don't line up with some of the other universities. Also, the degree is over six years compared to other undergraduate medicine degrees that are only five years, meaning getting into the workplace takes longer. Overall, the degree is excellent and studying medicine at UNSW is fantastic.

Response 2

Typically, entering in a course such as medicine will result in like-minded people from relatively similar backgrounds studying together in a familiar environment. Boring! Fortunately at UNSW I have met friends from all across the globe with hobbies ranging from competitive skipping to professional gaming binded by their ambition for medicine. It is rare to find such a learning environment where so many people with different cultures and lifestyles combine to create a supportive basis on which top-quality education is built. So as well as the people who attend university with you, the major upsides of the UNSW medicine course consist of the structure of the academic curriculum and the accessibility to a variety of learning opportunities. The six year course, which is sometimes seen as a negative, is really a beneficial structure for transitioning students into the reality of the profession. With hospital placements beginning as early as 2 months into the first year, we are able to develop clinical skills unrivalled by other medical schools and an understanding of the

healthcare system we will eventually be a part of. Furthermore, the significant number and quality of additional experiences offered by the university and its medical society allow individual pursuit into the specialities within medicine, including unique conferences, workshops and information evenings. I truly believe that the pitfalls of the course are few and far between with the possible exception of one axiom: Self-directed learning. The reality of the medical degree is that while one can work with others to develop their skills and look to highly regarded tutors for help, the bulk of the learning is done alone and that is the major hurdle needed to be surmounted in order to truly succeed. Eventually you will see that this is not a downfall but an indicator of future achievement.

Uni life at your medical school (feel free to promote your MedSoc's activities)

Response 1

University life as a medical student is really fun. There are so many events run by the UNSW Medical Society that allow you to pursue your specific interests right from the get go and enjoy the social scene with all UNSW Med students. With events like MedCamp, Med Pubcrawl, Med Trivia and more being held, there is always fun to be had. The subdivisions of MedSoc, such as PathSoc, DermSoc, Peds Soc Surgical Soc etc. allow you to pursue your specific interests and specialities as well. UNSW MedSoc also offer countless volunteering opportunities that allow you to give back to society, with focuses on for example, rural, indigenous and refugee health, as well as participate in events like Be Brave and Shave and blood donations to help the community. University life as a UNSW Med student is enjoyable, exciting and rewarding all in one across all six years of the degree.

Response 2

Uni life is restricted by one thing and one thing only: time. There are always a plethora of sports or interest groups to pursue which accept all people of all skill levels and one is able to join as many as their heart desires. However, what makes UNSW unique is the size and sophistication of their Medical Society (MedSoc) which caters for the entire 6 year student population through a myriad of organisational sub-committees, leadership positions and student-run events which are created by and for medical students. For example, in first year, MedSoc runs a social sporting competition throughout the year which pits students against each other in allocated colleges. Social events such as balls and mentor nights bridge the gap between work and play, allowing students to network with professionals while also enjoying the freedom of university life and the new independent environment. It is truly hard to look back at the regimentation of high school after commencing medicine at UNSW as suddenly a new phase of development has realigned one's understanding of education and the learning process. Ultimately, life as a med student could not be better, as not only will the university offer me endless possible avenues to pursue my interests, but they will provide me with the space to continue with the interests I have outside of the university grounds.