First Fast Track Medics To Graduate

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The first University of Birmingham students to complete their medical degrees on a new four-year fast-track course will graduate on Thursday 19 July . Forty three joined the Graduate Entry medical course when it was set up in 2003.

The four year version of the medical course was set up to allow students, who have already taken a degree in a related science, to enter the medical profession. Birmingham was one of the first UK Universities to develop a graduate entry course.

The course involves the same elements as the standard five-year medical degree, but students on the four year programme cover the first two years of the medical syllabus in one academic year. After this the students join the rest of the University's medical students for the remainder of their training.

Applicants for the course would be expected to have a minimum of an Honours degree in Life Sciences. The course is very popular and has had over six hundred applicants for forty places each year since starting, with many applicants having Masters or Doctoral degrees.

Dr Michael Gammage from the University's Medical School comments: 'As a medical school we are always looking at ways to open up the medical profession to more people with a passion to be doctors.

'Not everyone is ready to make the decision to become a doctor at the age of 17 and 18, so it is important that we don't exclude those people from taking up a medical career.'

'The students who will graduate in July have absolutely shown the benefits of the new course. They have shown tremendous commitment to their study and have achieved high standards throughout.'

Amongst the graduates in this years class is Leon Peto, who will be awarded the Chancellor's Prize on Thursday 19th July for his academic and personal achievements. Leon graduated from the University of Bristol before deciding to take a medical degree, a decision made after spending time observing emergency malaria treatment in Tanzania.

Leon has maintained this interest in tropical disease and spent his medical elective treating malaria patients in a refugee camp on the Thai-Burmese border. Leon worked with a team of five western doctors who would often see over 100 patients, who were mainly Burmese refugees, each day.

Leon comments: 'Deciding to become a doctor is a major step involving significant training and expense. For me it was valuable to be able to make sure that this was the right decision.

'It's very flattering to receive an award at the end of four years here, but primarily I have enjoyed the opportunities training here has offered to develop my interests in tropical medicine.'

Currently the University recruits around 40 students each year through the graduate entry route, although there are plans to potentially expand the course further.

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For further information

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