The medical profession is working hard to improve the diversity of those choosing this career path. The Medical Schools Council set up the Selecting for Excellence project in March 2013, with a particular focus on widening participation and identifying candidates most suited to becoming the excellent doctors of the future. In support of this agenda the University of Birmingham has been developing a new suite of widening participation activities to enable students to increase their knowledge and understanding of a career as a doctor, and develop the skills and experience needed to make a successful application to a medical course. We hope that students who engage in these opportunities will be able to benefit from the new A2B offer (commencing 2015 entry), which is a bold step to increase diversity. We are delighted that students who have already joined the medical school through our A2B programme are already taking advantage of exciting new opportunities and progressing to rewarding medical careers.
Widening Access to Medicine Outreach Activities

Your Future Your Choice – Health Professions Summer School for Year 10

Your Future Your Choice is a 2-night, 3-day residential event. Each event involves academic sessions alongside exciting social and general development activities, which showcase opportunities available at university. Students following the Health Careers programme attend taster sessions in medicine and the other health-related disciplines that the University offers. In addition to the academic sessions, there are also talks on healthcare careers and advice on making a successful application.

www.birmingham.ac.uk/summerschools

Year 10 Insight Day

The Insight Day – Medicine introduces Year 10 students from schools in the West Midlands to careers in medicine. It aims to raise the aspirations of under-represented groups of students to study at university and to pursue a career as a doctor. During the Insight Day, students will visit the University campus and the Medical School and attend a number of sessions aimed at giving them an understanding of life as a medical student and as a doctor. They will also participate in a number of workshops, which will help them find out about the research and disciplines associated with medicine and healthcare.

R2P Year 12 Programme

The Routes to the Professions: Medicine programme offers students valuable preparation during post-16 studies and help with their application to Medical School. The programme provides students with opportunities to develop non-academic skills and capabilities that are important for professional careers in Medicine. Successful applicants join the programme in year 12 and receive a range of support including tailored careers advice, UCAS application and interview support, guidance on relevant work placements and mentoring by and shadowing of current medical students.

www.birmingham.ac.uk/routes

Masterclasses

The University of Birmingham runs a series of masterclasses on Wednesday afternoons between October and Easter. Classes are designed to stimulate enquiry and broaden knowledge of the subject area covered. Each year there will be a number linked to medicine and medical related careers, which students can attend. Recent examples include ‘Why do we breathe?’ and ‘Your body’s surveillance system’. In addition to this are the Medical Christmas Lectures, which combine interesting lectures on medical related topics with a Christmas theme, and further insight into life as a medical student.

www.birmingham.ac.uk/masterclasses
The Academic Enrichment Programme (AEP) aims to support gifted and talented students currently under-represented within higher education to secure a place at a research-led university such as the University of Birmingham. The AEP provides students with greater knowledge of teaching and learning methods at research-intensive universities, along with an insight into university life as an undergraduate. The summer school is a core activity of the AEP. During the residential, students experience academic learning at the University and ‘live’ in the University halls of residence – replicating the experience they would have as enrolled students. The Biological and Health Sciences stream (includes Physiotherapy, Medicine, Dentistry, Nursing and Biology) is one of the academic streams offered to students. Students attend lectures, workshops and lab sessions on medicine, medical science and other health related areas.

www.birmingham.ac.uk/aep

Academic Enrichment Programme – Year 12 (Health Stream)

To apply for the scheme, students must be recommended by their sixth form or Year 13 teacher, who should recognise the student’s potential to study successfully at the University of Birmingham. Applicants also need to meet the following criteria:

- Their parents have no experience of Higher Education in the UK or abroad.
- The main income earners in their family are not in professional occupations, eg. not teachers, doctors, solicitors or similar.
- Their annual household income is £42,600 or less.
- Their home postcode shows that they live in an area with low levels of progression to Higher Education.
- They attend a non-selective state school or college, which is a partner in the A2B scheme. If they are in the sixth form at a selective state school (such as a grammar school) we will take into account the context in which they achieved their GCSEs.
- They must be classed as a Home/EU student for tuition fees.

Access to Birmingham (A2B) Scheme

In order to receive the A2B alternative offer, students must complete the A2B module, which is designed to help students make the transition from school to university. The A2B module consists of three elements:

- An online study support module to help with academic writing.
- The mock interview, which gives applicants the opportunity to practise the multiple mini interviews with current medicine undergraduates.
- An assignment set and marked by a medicine university tutor.

A successful A2B applicant will receive two offers from the University of Birmingham, the standard one and an alternative A2B offer. We are delighted to announce that for students entering the University via A2B in September 2015 the A2B Medicine offer will be A level grades ABB (including Chemistry and Biology) and, for the International Baccalaureate, an overall score of 32 points, excluding core points, to include a minimum of 16 points at Higher Level (including Biology and Chemistry), with no grade less than 4. In addition, students applying through A2B will need a minimum of eight GCSEs with a minimum of three at grade A, including two As from English, Maths or Science and a minimum grade B in these three subjects.

To apply, students will need to type A2B in the Further Details box in the Choices section of the UCAS application and complete the A2B application form by 15 October and email it to a2b@contacts.bham.ac.uk.

www.birmingham.ac.uk/a2b
‘I have had the privilege of spending six years at university and it was the A2B scheme that helped get me on the right path. I’ve always been ambitious, but when you’re at college with a desire to become a doctor, it seems a long way off and an extremely difficult distant dream. As well as helping financially every year of my course, A2B offered me first-hand valuable experience into the process of getting into Medical School and putting me in touch with other students and faculty members who have been through the process.

The last six years have been hands down the best years of my life so far. I’ve achieved so much in my time here from being part of a number of sports clubs and charities, attending a second university and graduating, attending international conferences, presenting projects at renowned events and above all meeting so many new friends!

None of this would have been possible if I hadn’t been a part of the A2B. It gave me the courage to apply to University of Birmingham Medical School. Six years on I will be graduating with two degrees and from this coming July I will be starting work as a Junior Doctor in Heartlands Hospital in Birmingham.’

Shayan from Cadbury Sixth Form College, Medicine graduate 2014

‘As no one in my family could advise me about how to pursue a career in medicine, doing A2B really helped. The mock interview practice gave me insight into what would be expected and gave me greater confidence to do my best when I got the real interview. Having to do the summer academic assignment for A2B was great because I got the chance to discuss ideas with a university tutor and do my own research before working on the task, so I felt that I really knew my way around before I got into the Medical School. Studying medicine is a real challenge but I’m really glad I chose the University of Birmingham.’

Liam from CTC Kingshurst Academy, Medicine undergraduate