FAQs re Intercalation for University of Bristol students in Academic Year 2025-26

1. *Why do students intercalate?*

Students intercalate for a variety of reasons. For many students, intercalation offers the opportunity to study a subject area in greater depth. Intercalation can also provide the chance to explore current trends in research alongside international experts, as well as focus on a research project that can lead to opportunities to present your work at conferences or result in a publication. In addition to these academic benefits, intercalation will allow you to further develop transferable skills such as critical thinking, evaluating evidence, researching literature and academic writing. Intercalating will also enable you to make friends away from your professional programme and experience life as a student away from the extensive timetable.

1. *When can I intercalate?*

**Medical Students** can only intercalate between Year 3 and 4. **Veterinary students** can only intercalate between Year 3 and 4. **Dental students** can intercalate between year 3 and 4, and between year 4 and 5.

1. *Will everyone who applies get to intercalate?*

We cannot guarantee a place to every student who applies for intercalation.

The number of Bristol MBChB students who can be released to intercalate is 135, and if applications exceed this number some students will not be allowed to intercalate. In addition, programmes that are oversubscribed will select which students they will make an offer to. Programme directors may do this by looking at your past academic performance, your supplementary application form, or by a simple lottery (in the absence of any robust measure for differentiating between applications). Some programmes may adopt a lottery approach because they feel past academic performance, or a scored personal statement, is not a good indicator of who will benefit from and/or succeed on that programme.

1. *What are the grade requirements (and/or any other requirements) for each programme?*

There are no specific grade requirements, and the requirements will vary from programme to programme. Schools offering intercalated degrees may want to consider your unit or year marks to date. For example, some programmes offered by the Faculty of Life Sciences make their decisions based on marks and will offer places to the highest scoring applicants. Some programmes require a supplementary application form to be completed – these are specified on the intercalation website (see Section 20). Some programmes, if oversubscribed, may operate a lottery system if they have no robust way of differentiating between applicants.

1. *Do any courses comprise intercalators only?*

Some programmes are unique to intercalation. These are 1-year programmes and only have intercalating students on them. They are: Global Health, Healthcare Ethics and Law, Medical Humanities, Functional and Clinical Anatomy, Clinical Sciences & Child Health Research.

1. *How many students can intercalate? How many students does each intercalation programme take on average?*

There is a cap of 135 on the number of University of Bristol Medical students that can intercalate. This is essential to ensure a steady rate of intercalators leaving the programme after year 3 and returning in year 4, to allow the planning of year 4 clinical placements

There is a wide variation in numbers per intercalation programme and it isn’t meaningful to calculate an average. It can also vary from year to year. For one-year entry onto the 3-year courses it will depend upon how many of their current students are progressing from Year 2 to the final year. Courses may also have applications from external students. For the single year courses numbers tend to remain more stable but may vary year on year according to staff availability and course popularity.

1. *Do I need to write application essays or be interviewed for all the courses?*

Some programmes have additional requirements which might include review of written work you have submitted, or a short personal (or other) statement as part of a supplementary application form. Please refer to the intercalation website for which programmes require this, and download the relevant supplementary form. Applicants are not routinely interviewed but a Programme Director may contact you to discuss your application if there are any questions arising from your application.

1. *How many applications can I make? Do I need to list them in order of preference on the form? What happens if I change my mind about my first choice later and want to switch them around?*

You can make up to three applications, which include internal and external options. Applying externally counts as one application even if you are applying to more than one external course. You must list them in order of preference on the application form. It is not possible to change your preferences after the deadline unless there are exceptional circumstances, in which case you are advised to discuss this with the intercalation administrator by emailing [intercalation-admin@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:intercalation-admin@bristol.ac.uk).

1. *Can I intercalate externally? How many external applications (to other universities) can I make? How do I make an external application? What if I apply externally but do not get an offer?*

You are permitted to apply to intercalate at another university provided the course you are interested in is **not** also offered at Bristol, and you can show the benefit of external intercalation by completion of a supplementary application form.

If you are a medical student, the number of students who can leave the Bristol MBChB to intercalate externally is limited to 20, and if applications exceed this number they will be assessed on the basis of the supplementary application form and ranked. To apply for permission to intercalate externally, you will need to select ‘external as your first-choice intercalation option in the online application form, and submit a supplementary form. On the supplementary form you can provide details of up to three external programmes you wish to apply for. If you are successful, you will be provided with a letter giving permission to intercalate externally on ‘X’ programme(s).

If you are a veterinary student, detailed information will be made available through Blackboard and you will have the opportunity to talk with the administrative team and the local head of intercalation, Jan Kuipers, if you wish.

For Dental students, please discuss your plans with your programme director.

Once you have permission to intercalate on an external programme, it is up to you to manage the application process to your preferred programmes. You are required to keep the intercalation administrator informed about your progress.

You will need documents to support your application.

* + Ask the intercalation administrator for a transcript of your marks.
  + A letter of permission to study elsewhere. You will be sent this automatically if your application for permission to apply externally is successful.
  + You may need to ask your academic mentor or personal tutor for a reference.

Once you accept an offer from another university, you will be required to suspend your studies at Bristol for one academic year. This will require the signature of the appropriate Programme Director.

If you are unsuccessful in getting an offer from your preferred external programme, you are welcome to speak to us about intercalating on one of the internal programmes at Bristol. Choice may be more limited at that stage, but we will do everything we can to support you and help you to intercalate if that is what you want to do.

1. *Can I apply to Bristol programmes and externally at the same time?*

You may make internal and external applications at the same time, by putting ‘external’ as your first choice in the online application form (this counts as one application even if you are applying to more than one external course), we strongly recommend you also select Bristol programmes for your second and third, in case you do not receive an offer from your external courses. If you are not successful in obtaining permission to intercalate externally, you will be considered for your second, and then third, choice programmes if space allows.

1. *What if I accept an offer to intercalate and then decide that I actually don't want to do it?*

By signing the acceptance form on an intercalation programme, you are **committed** to intercalating and may forgo your place on the fourth year of the medical programme for that year. Once you have accepted a place on a University of Bristol intercalation course you will not be allowed to switch to a different University of Bristol course until the start of the academic year, when you will be allowed to request to change onto another course during the first two weeks of your course starting.

1. *Can I intercalate and get a Masters degree?*

Students need to have completed the third year of their programme to be eligible for Masters degree programmes. The one-year masters degrees available to intercalators are:

* + Public Health (MSc)
  + Epidemiology (MSc)
  + Nutrition, Physical Activity and Public Health (MSc)
  + Health Economics and Health Policy Analysis (MSc)
  + Health Sciences Research (MRes)
  + Health Sciences Research (Renal) (MRes)
  + Health Sciences Research (Cardiovascular) (MRes)
  + Psychology (conversion) (MSc)
  + Translational Cardiovascular Medicine (MSc)
  + Health, Law, and Society (LLM)
  + Global Wildlife Health and Conservation (MSc)
  + Reproduction and Development (MSc)

The MRes/MSc degree will be awarded at the same time as the MB ChB, BDS or BVSc degree and not immediately after completion of the intercalation year. All of these degrees will finish in time to allow you to return to your clinical programme. If you choose to apply for a Master’s degree outside of Bristol, you are responsible for ensuring that it will finish in time for your return to your clinical programme.

1. *What bursaries/funding support are available?*

Please refer to the [Student Funding office](https://www.bristol.ac.uk/students/support/finances/med-dent-vet/intercalation/) for detailed financial advice (<https://www.bristol.ac.uk/students/support/finances/med-dent-vet/intercalation/>)

1. *Is it better for me career-wise to do X or Y?*

There is no evidence-based answer to this question and any answer would be personal opinion. Perhaps what is most important are the skills that you develop by undertaking the degree. You may wish to read the following articles:

[**Should an intercalated degree be compulsory for undergraduate medical students?**](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26434986)Philip AB, Prasad SJ, Patel A. (2015) Med Educ Online. 20:29392. doi:10.3402/meo.v20.29392. eCollection 2015. PMID: 26434986

**Intercalated degrees, learning styles, and career preferences: prospective longitudinal study of UK medical students.** IC McManus, P Richards, BC Winder. (1999) BMJ 319(7209): 542–546. PMCID: PMC28204

**Why I'd encourage every dental student to intercalate.** Black, E. (2020). BDJ student, 27,

32. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41406-020-0118-x>

**The benefits of intercalation.** Shiotnes, H. (2017). Vet Times. <https://www.vettimes.co.uk/article/the-benefits-of-intercalation/>

1. *What is an Academic Foundation Programme? Do I need an intercalated degree to apply? (Medical students only)*

Please see <https://foundationprogramme.nhs.uk/> for more information on this.

1. *How many points will I get for intercalation when I apply for FY1 jobs? (Medical students only)*

As of Wednesday 9th December 2020, the UKFPO announced the removal of additional points for successful completion of an Intercalated Degree under the Educational Achievements part of the application.

We are a member of the Medical Schools Council (MSC) and we fully support and endorse the MSC statement posted on the 10th Dec 2020. We will continue to work with the MSC to present our grave concerns about this move, in the hope that we can persuade the UKFPO to amend their decision.

The information below is relevant to when the FAQ was released in October 2023.

The best source of information on this is the UK Foundation programme website. They have an FAQ, which answers the question [“How many points are available for additional](https://foundationprogramme.nhs.uk/faqs/educational-performance-measure-epm-faqs/)

[educational achievements?”](https://foundationprogramme.nhs.uk/faqs/educational-performance-measure-epm-faqs/)

They also refer you to the [applicant’s handbook](https://healtheducationengland.sharepoint.com/UKFPO/Recruitment/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2FUKFPO%2FRecruitment%2FUKFP%202021%2FGuidance%2FUKFP%202021%20Applicants%27%20Handbook%20%2D%20FINAL%2Epdf&parent=%2FUKFPO%2FRecruitment%2FUKFP%202021%2FGuidance&p=true&originalPath=aHR0cHM6Ly9oZWFsdGhlZHVjYXRpb25lbmdsYW5kLnNoYXJlcG9pbnQuY29tLzpiOi9nL1VLRlBPL0VaOFk5bktPeFNkTXZtZDJEam1ROHlJQm9mRHUtQ2ZCYlFPaHdubXV5Q1dpTkE_cnRpbWU9d0JzVVFMQTYyRWc), which has detailed information on the difference points you get for different additional degrees.

1. *I've had to resit exams. Will that affect my application to intercalate?*

You can still apply to intercalate even if you have had to resit exams so long as you pass the resit(see also question 4).

1. *Further information?*

Please visit the intercalation website for further information on intercalating programmes that are available at Bristol ([**www.bristol.ac.uk/intercalate**).](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/intercalate)) Applicants are welcome to contact the intercalation administrator ([intercalation-admin@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:intercalation-admin@bristol.ac.uk)) to request further information.

1. *Deadlines?*

Deadlines vary depending on whether you are a Medicine, Dentistry or Veterinary student. You will be contacted directly by your School to detail the application process.

If you have any queries, please visit the [Intercalation Webpage](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/health-sciences/courses/undergraduate/intercalate/) or contact [intercalation-](mailto:intercalation-admin@bristol.ac.uk) [admin@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:intercalation-admin@bristol.ac.uk)

1. *Supplementary Forms*

Courses which require a supplementary form to be completed are highlighted in Section 21. Supplementary forms are available from the [Intercalation Webpage](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/health-sciences/courses/undergraduate/intercalate/). Once completed please email to [intercalation-admin@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:intercalation-admin@bristol.ac.uk).

1. *Programme Contact Details*

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Course | Supplementary form required | Course Contact | Email address |
| Biochemistry with Medical Biochemistry | No | Professor Jan Frayne | [Jan.Frayne@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:Jan.Frayne@bristol.ac.uk) |
| Health Care Ethics and Law | No | Dr Zuzana Deans | [zuzana.deans@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:zuzana.deans@bristol.ac.uk) |
| Cancer Biology and Immunology (BSc) | No | Prof Anne Pullen | a.m.pullen@bristol.ac.uk |
| Cellular and  Molecular Medicine (BSc) | No |
| Medical Microbiology (BSc) | No |
| Virology and Immunology | No |
| Child Health Research (BSc) | Yes | Robin Marlow | [robin.marlow@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:robin.marlow@bristol.ac.uk) |
| Childhood Studies | Yes | Dr Jessica Roy | [jessica.roy@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:jessica.roy@bristol.ac.uk) |
| Clinical Sciences (BSc) | No | Dr Liang-Fong Wong Dr Gavin Welsh | [L.Wong@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:L.Wong@bristol.ac.uk) [G.I.Welsh@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:G.I.Welsh@bristol.ac.uk) |
| Epidemiology | Yes | Dr Penny Whiting  Dr Kaitlin Wade | [penny.whiting@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:penny.whiting@bristol.ac.uk)  kaitlin.wade@bristol.ac.uk |
| External applications | Yes | Prof Sarah Lewis  Dr Nicola Taylor | s.j.lewis@bristol.ac.uk  nicola.taylor@bristol.ac.uk |
| Functional and Clinical Anatomy | Yes | Dr Scott Paterson | [scott.paterson@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:scott.paterson@bristol.ac.uk) |
| Global Health (BSc) | Yes | Dr Dan Magnus | [dan.magnus@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:bsc-globalhealth@bristol.ac.uk) |
| Global Wildlife  Health and Conservation (MSc) | Yes | Dr Nicola Rooney | [Nicola.Rooney@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:Nicola.Rooney@bristol.ac.uk) |
| Health, Law and Society (LLM) | Yes | Prof Judy Laing | J.M.Laing@bristol.ac.uk |
| Medical Humanities | Yes | Dr John Lee | [J.Lee@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:J.Lee@bristol.ac.uk) |
| MRes in Health Sciences | Yes | Dr Fiona Holmes | [healthsciences-mres@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:healthsciences-mres@bristol.ac.uk) |
| MRes in Health Sciences (Renal) | Yes | Dr Becky Foster | [healthsciences-mres@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:healthsciences-mres@bristol.ac.uk) |
| MRes in Health Sciences (TCM) | Yes | Dr Fiona Holmes | [healthsciences-mres@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:healthsciences-mres@bristol.ac.uk) |
| Neuroscience (BSc) | No | Ben Chant | Bc15666@bristol.ac.uk |
| Physiological Science (BSc) | No |
| Pharmacology (BSc) | No |
| Physical Activity, Nutrition and Public Health (MSc) | Yes | Prof Zoi Toumpakari | Z.Toumpakari@bristol.ac.uk |
| Public Health | Yes | Maya Gobin  Hannah Christensen | publichealth-pd@bristol.ac.uk |
| Social Policy | Yes | Dr Francisco Palma Carvajal | Francisco.palmacarvajal@bristol.ac.uk |
| Translational Cardiovascular  Medicine (MSc) | No | Dr Fiona Holmes | [F.E.Holmes@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:F.E.Holmes@bristol.ac.uk) |
| Psychology (conversion) (MSc) | Yes | Susanne Quadflieg | s.quadflieg@bristol.ac.uk |
| Reproduction & Development (MSc) | Yes | Gemma Ford | Gemma.Ford@bristol.ac.uk |
| Health Economics & Health Policy Analysis (MSc) | Yes | Patrick Moore & Joanne Coast | [patrick.moore@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:patrick.moore@bristol.ac.uk)  jo.coast@bristol.ac.uk |

Updated by RW & S.L Sep-24