Access to Medical Studies

This programme is currently running at Edinburgh College (Sighthill campus).

Who is SWAP for?

SWAP is for adult learners who want a second chance at education and who aim to fulfil their academic potential by studying for a higher education qualification. Our programmes are designed to provide a supportive environment for adults returning to education and you don’t usually need any formal qualifications for entry.

SWAP Eligibility Criteria

SWAP access programmes are specifically aimed at adults who have been out of fulltime education for some time and who have not studied at university before. A SWAP access programme could be for you if:

- You don't have any qualifications above SCQF level 5 (Standard Grade/Intermediate 2, GCSE, National 5) and you have been out of full-time education for 3 years of more. OR
- You have qualifications at SCQF level 6 or above (Highers, A Levels, HN) and you have been out of full-time education for 5 years or more.

PLEASE NOTE FOR THE ACCESS TO MEDICAL STUDIES, RECENT STUDY IN THE SWAP ACCESS TO LIFE SCIENCES/LEVEL 5 SCIENCE PROGRAMMES DOES NOT AFFECT ELIGIBILITY

- You are able commit to college on a full-time basis (around 18-20hrs per week).
- You aim to progress to university or HNC/D level study.
- If you wish to apply for a degree in medicine you **MUST already have recent, experience of working or volunteering in health care.**

You are NOT eligible to be a SWAP student if you already have a university degree (Ordinary or Honours). If you previously only completed 1 or 2 years at
university, you may still be eligible but you MUST phone the SWAP office to discuss this further.

If you are unsure if you meet the SWAP eligibility criteria, please contact us for advice.

About the Access to Medical Studies programme

This programme consists of a number of SQA units at SCQF levels 5, 6, 7 and 8. The key subjects are Maths, Biology and Chemistry, but study in English and IT is also undertaken. You must pass each of the units in order to successfully complete the programme. Each SWAP programme includes:

- **Core units** in Communications and IT.
- **Academic units** – Study is undertaken in Maths and Chemistry at SCQF Level 6 and in Biology from levels 6-8.
- **Preparation for Higher Education**. Alongside academic units, you will work through a variety of personal development and study skills materials aimed at helping you develop the skills and confidence you will need to succeed at university level study.

At the end of the programme each student is awarded a SWAP profile grading ranging from AAA-DDD. These grades are a reflection of your performance in each of the key science subjects (Maths, Biology and Chemistry) throughout the year. In order to progress to Medicine, you must attain AAA in your profile grades and average more than 80% in all assessed work.

What does it lead to?

The access to Medical Studies programme leads on to hundreds of different degree courses at Scottish universities as well as HNC/D programmes at colleges. To find out what degrees you can study and where, and what you will need for entry, have a look at the [SWAP progression route search](#) on the SWAP East website. It currently has a
progression route to the University of Edinburgh and the University of Aberdeen for Medicine. It also has progression to Dentistry at the University Of Dundee.

Before applying to a SWAP programme we’d recommend that you do some research on the degree programmes you might like to move on to. It is a good idea to have a look at university websites, speak to university admissions offices and attend university open days. The UCAS search facility will help you find out which degrees are offered where.

There is no guarantee that you will be offered a place at university, however each year the vast majority of SWAP students who successfully complete the programme do secure a place on one of their chosen degree programmes. When applying for medicine, students must undertake the University Clinical Aptitude Test. More details on this can be found here. This test score, alone with your tutor’s reference and predicted grades will determine whether your application to a degree in Medicine or Dentistry will be considered further. Universities will also take into account the strength of your UCAS personal statement and, if applicable, your interview score, when deciding whether to offer you a place, and offers are conditional on your achieving specific SWAP profile grades at the end of the programme.

**Degrees in the health related professions**

As well as the opportunities to study Medical related degrees, the Access to Medical Studies also provides a route into a number of degree programmes in life sciences and the allied health professions, e.g. physiotherapy, occupational therapy, podiatry, radiography, and speech & language therapy. There are only a few universities in Scotland which offer these degree courses and entry is therefore highly competitive. Universities will want to see that applicants have researched their chosen subject area and have a good understanding of the role and responsibilities of the related profession. **Applicants who have gained relevant experience, for example, through paid employment, voluntary work or work shadowing, stand a much greater chance of success.**
**Funding**

The funding you are entitled to will depend on your individual circumstances. Course fees are fully funded for the vast majority of SWAP students, and most students are also entitled to a college bursary to help with living costs. We'd strongly recommend that you get in touch with the relevant college student funding team for advice on what funding support you will be entitled to. You don't need to wait until you apply before you do this - indeed it's probably best to know exactly what the situation is before you apply. In the first place, read our college and university funding guides.

**How do I apply for a SWAP access programme?**

Once you know which programme you want to join, you apply directly to the college you want to study at. Application is normally via the college’s online application system on the college website. You are likely to be invited for an interview at the college, which will also provide an opportunity for you to ask any questions you have about the course. Applicants are normally also given a short test to check that they have the level of communications and maths needed to cope with the demands of the programme. SWAP programmes tend to be popular so it’s a good idea to apply early as you can – colleges usually open for applications around Jan / Feb and aim to have courses filled by the start of the summer break in June.

If you have any questions or would like further information on anything SWAP related please get in touch with us at SWAP East:
Tel: 0131 650 6861 or email: swap.east@ed.ac.uk
Or have a look at our website www.scottishwideraccess.org