Welcome to Medical Humanities

Medical Humanities is an expanding area of study which aims to provide an appreciation of the cultural and historical contexts of medicine, via an investigation of literary, filmic and historical texts which address connections between disease, the individual patient or practitioner, and the practice of medicine. At Keele it offers medical students the opportunity to intercalate and graduate with a BSc in addition to their medical degree. Intercalation normally takes place after two full years of the MBChB, but can take place after the second, third or fourth years of study. It cannot be added as a final year after the completion of a medical degree. Successful applicants to Keele must also have either successfully completed a medical-humanities SSC in the course of their medical training or possess equivalent experience (such as a grade C or above in a Humanities subject at A’ level) or be admitted following an interview and satisfactory completion of a written exercise.

Students taking the BSc in Medical Humanities spend one academic year acquiring 120 credits in Humanities (or specially-selected Social Science) modules, which includes 30 credits obtained by writing a dissertation. Your dissertation can be written in any humanities discipline that you prefer; students identify a topic, and then staff allocate them to an appropriate supervisor. The remaining 90 credits are secured via six, 15-credit taught modules in American Studies, English, Film, History, Music and Media topics. Taught modules in humanities are typically assessed via a range of written tasks including essays and examinations.

Humanities modules are taught via lectures and seminars. They also entail a lot of reading. There are fewer, hands-on practical sessions than you will be used to in clinical medicine. Much more of your time is self-directed. This means students of medical humanities must quickly acquire skills in academic time-management and fluent writing; however, tutors will be ready and willing to support you in making the transition from medicine to humanities.

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