

Medicine at University of Leicester-

Amardeep



Hey what's up you guys its Nicki Minaj! I wish. I'm Amardeep, I'm a second year medical student at the University of Leicester. I got in through a foundation year. This year before medical school was a more detailed recap of A Level content with an introduction to more things medicine. I took a gap year after college to figure out what course was right for me and to take a break from studies.

Why medicine?

Having grown up around animals, I wanted to be a vet for a really long time. That's why I picked Biology and Chemistry for my A Levels. I also studied Law because I have always been interested to learn about the legal system in the UK. (Also I just watched too much Judge Judy). By the time I was applying for university, I had done some work experience with animals and in healthcare. I remember watching animals being put to sleep and it really hit close to home, I just couldn't put myself through that again. I have always wanted to be able to know how I can help someone, whether human or animal and actually know how to give them some form of relief. From that point on, I fell back onto my healthcare experiences, so I started to look more into it. I would sign up to everything I could get my hands on, even things that had nothing to do with medicine. It's what you learn from the experience that's most important. My most fond experience was during the Gap Medics programme in Tanzania, where I saw a surgery while standing right next to body. I even got to hold someone's intestines! That should have traumatised me, but it just got me more interested to learn more.

When I first started?

I was absolutely bricking it. I thought I was not going to be able to keep up with everyone else as during my gap year I forgot most things I'd learned. In general, Medicine is made of lots of students from private and grammar schools, I went to a state school so I thought I might not fit in. Looking back, I cannot believe I thought like that! Uni brings all kinds of people together, and for me it has been nothing but positive experiences. Speaking with others about how they felt made me realise we have more in common than I thought and



that made me feel so much at ease. Top tip though, as someone who grew up in the Midlands it's not a good idea to bring up the conversation about who's better; the north or south of the UK!

What it's like?

I cannot sugar coat what I'm about to say, but Medicine is a tough course. There is a lot of content you need to get through, whilst having to improve your people skills when speaking with patients. My uni gave us iPads, and most of our learning is done from them. I used to spend hours trying to make my notes look like they're found on Pinterest, but going paperless saves so much time that can be used elsewhere. Although all you can hear in lectures is typing which does your head in at points.

Modules?

Although some points of my foundation year felt repetitive, the new content was worth the wait. I was so excited to learn about things other than photosynthesis! We had a module on psychology which was really interesting and different to what I am used to. Through this, I learned a lot about key skills to have at uni such as researching and referencing. It doesn't sound too fun, but trust me, it's so useful later in the course. I was even able to regularly visit a patient's home and find out more about them and their condition. Yes, they do chuck you in the deep end, but if they did not do so, I can confidently say that I would be struggling right now. After passing my foundation year exams, I finally got into the medical school as a first year student. We started our first year looking into things under a microscope that are found in the body and then worked outwards until we start looking at bigger things like the heart. As well as this, we would learn about medicines and their effect on the body, as well as looking at healthcare from a population based perspective. There was quite a big jump from my foundation year to my first year. I went from seeing 22 faces to 300 a day, and the amount of content increased a lot. There is so much support out there, such as revision clubs run by students, as well as being able to speak with your lecturers.

Timetable

My day usually starts at 9am, we would have 2 lectures (lasting around 2 hours with a break in between) followed by group work for 2 hours. Group work is where our study groups meet together and go through questions based off the lecture. Usually we would be free by 1 o'clock, sometimes we would have evening sessions. I either go the gym or do something with my friends after uni before I get home. I try to go over what I did on that day for a bit before binge watching a show later that evening. There's always an event in the evening at the med school for everyone to sign up to, give them a go.

Assessments?

There are a lot of exams at medical school. At my university one exam is paper based, either multiple choice or where you give a short answer. Another exam is where you work with actors and are put into a scenario, for example, you may have the role as the doctor to examine someone's breathing. This is where your people skills come in. Don't worry, you learn all about this and how to improve your own in good time. In med school, we work with dead bodies (called cadavers) to learn about bones and muscles and trust me, it looks

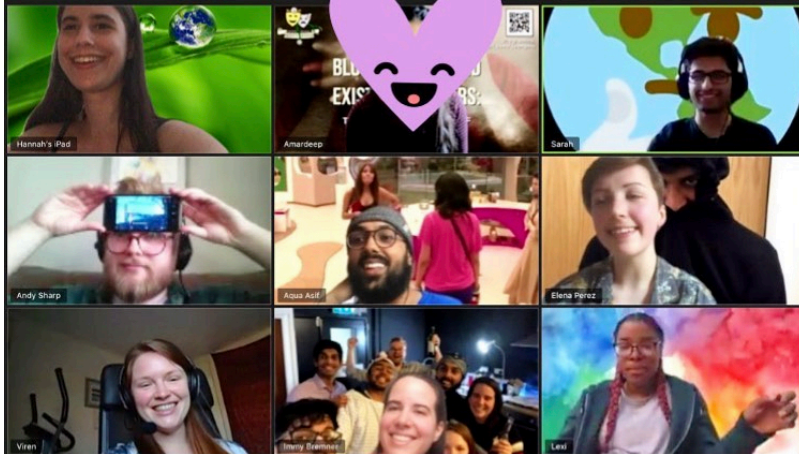
completely different to what you may think it will look like. One exam is where you have to tell someone what you are looking at on the body.

Facilities

As part of the course, on the first week you get to visit either a hospital or GP practice and watch things on the front line. This was a really good way to get some experience with real patients and what problems they may face. Although my beard got me mistaken for a doctor, I had to always emphasise I am just a student! The medical school has a silent zone and many rooms for you to work in. My favourite part has to be the atrium café in the middle of the building, its where I grab a quick snack, I have to go earlier otherwise the good stuff gets taken first! I like the dissection room because you literally get to see most things inside the human body which look completely different to those in a textbook. The uni also has a lot support available when it comes down to learning, the academic support unit is great to see how you can improve. For stuff not relating to the course, you can get support from your assigned 'medic parents', who are students in the year above who you can speak with.

Extracurricular activities

I regularly attend the gym that's on campus, but have switched to Chloe Tings home workouts during lockdown. I now play the ukulele and have started to learn French properly. Societies are like after school clubs, but there are SO many more than at school, you'll be spoilt for choice.



I am a part of Medics revue, a comedy sketch society where we put on a show for charity and Bhangra society, even though I have 2 left feet, its great fun! I trained with Project LIGHT, on organisation aiming to tackle homelessness. There is just so many opportunities available to you during your time at uni, try make the most of them. I like going to new restaurants and trying something random (yes that's a risk I take every time).



What I've learned?

- The most important thing I've learned is that you can have a social life outside of this course. Seriously, I don't know how I would have survived without time off. I used to take my free time for granted and not make good use of it (literally scrolling through TikTok for HOURS). Going out and making memories, be it a restaurant with friends or a club night kept me motivated.
- Asking for help or for something to be rephrased is the best thing for you. I've learned that there's no such thing as silly questions, someone in the room will be thinking the same thing.
- It is ok to say you do not know. You are not a doctor yet and are not expected to know everything. So next time an auntie asks for medical advice, reiterate your level of study. Their questions will come in the future!
- Your achievement really depends on what you put in, putting stuff off will bite you back in the long run. Seriously, cramming will not work after GCSE – start practicing revision regularly.

My advice

- Really think about whether a course like medicine is right for you. It is very draining when you're constantly learning new stuff. Take as much time as you need, that's what gap years are for!
- Use all the careers services available to you, be it at school or online. They really help you pick the right A Levels for you
- Don't pick a subject if you do not like it or don't have an interest in it! You'll grow up later to regret it. If you want, pick one subject that's slightly different to your others, like I did with Law. You'll be surprised to find the things that link with any subjects at A Level.