

Career Profile: Medical Doctor

A medical doctor is licensed to practise the science of medicine. S/he needs a thorough understanding of the human body as an integrated organism and an in-depth knowledge of diseases and their symptoms in order to carry out effective diagnosis and treatment. Many medical doctors choose to further their studies and specialise in one or other of the many health disciplines, while others prefer to practise as general practitioners. As a general medical practitioner committed to caring for and healing patients, you would be expected to carry out typical activities such as:

- examining patients and diagnosing health related problems
- using appropriate techniques and apparatus to assist diagnosis, e.g. blood pressure gauges, X-rays and stethoscopes, and to gain a clear image of the disease
- prescribing appropriate medicines
- performing minor operations
- providing relevant treatment for injuries, diseases and other ailments
- advising patients on more healthy regimes to promote healthy living
- referring patients to relevant specialists when required
- compiling and maintaining clinical histories of patients.

Continuing professional development is essential for all doctors as they have to keep up to date with the latest medical developments to ensure that they provide the best medical care.

Education Requirements

National Senior Certificate (NSC)

For a career in medicine students are advised to select Mathematics, Science and English and to add to this a selection from the *designated* subjects. These are subjects that are particularly suitable for tertiary study.

Bachelor Degree

Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery – (6 years) MB BCh

A six year degree programme that focuses on developing knowledge and skills to become a doctor. This is followed by Internship and Community Service.

Offered at:

- [University of Limpopo](http://www.ul.ac.za/index.php?Entity=Faculty%20of%20Health%20Sciences)¹ (Faculty of Health Sciences - Medunsa campus)

¹ <http://www.ul.ac.za/index.php?Entity=Faculty%20of%20Health%20Sciences>

- [University of Pretoria](#)² (Faculty of Health Sciences, School of Medicine)
- [University of the Witwatersrand](#)³ (Centre for Health Science Education)

Possible Employers

- Government hospitals and clinics
- Private hospitals, clinics and nursing homes
- Research laboratories
- Private practice

Find out more

Find out more about this career:

- [Career Planet](#)⁴ offers a brief outline of a career in medicine.
- [Go Study](#)⁵ offers a long list of specialist paths that can be pursued after qualifying.
- The [Health Professions Council of South Africa](#)⁶ (HPCSA) provides the registration criteria for the medical profession.
- The website of the [South African Medical Association](#)⁷ includes a listing of patients and doctors' rights and responsibilities.

² <http://web.up.ac.za/default.asp?ipkCategoryID=1335&subid=1335&ipklookid=8>

³ <http://web.wits.ac.za/Academic/Health/Entities/CHSE/Students/>

⁴ http://www.careerplanet.co.za/_careers/medical_doctor

⁵ <http://www.gostudy.mobi/Careers/View.aspx?oid=220>

⁶ <http://www.hpcsa.co.za/hpcsa/default.aspx>

⁷ http://www.samedical.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=75&Itemid=176

Are you suited to this career?

This quick quiz can help you to identify whether you are suited for this career.

Quiz	YES	NO
Do people experience you as empathetic?		
Are you self-disciplined?		
Are you observant, paying attention to detail?		
Are you analytical?		
Do you respond decisively in crisis situations?		
Do you communicate well with other people?		
Do you have an aptitude for science and mathematics?		
Do you show an interest in new medical developments?		
Do people regard you as responsible?		
Do you have physical stamina to cope with long and irregular hours?		

If you have mainly yes answers it may be an indication that this is a career to consider.