



**UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE**

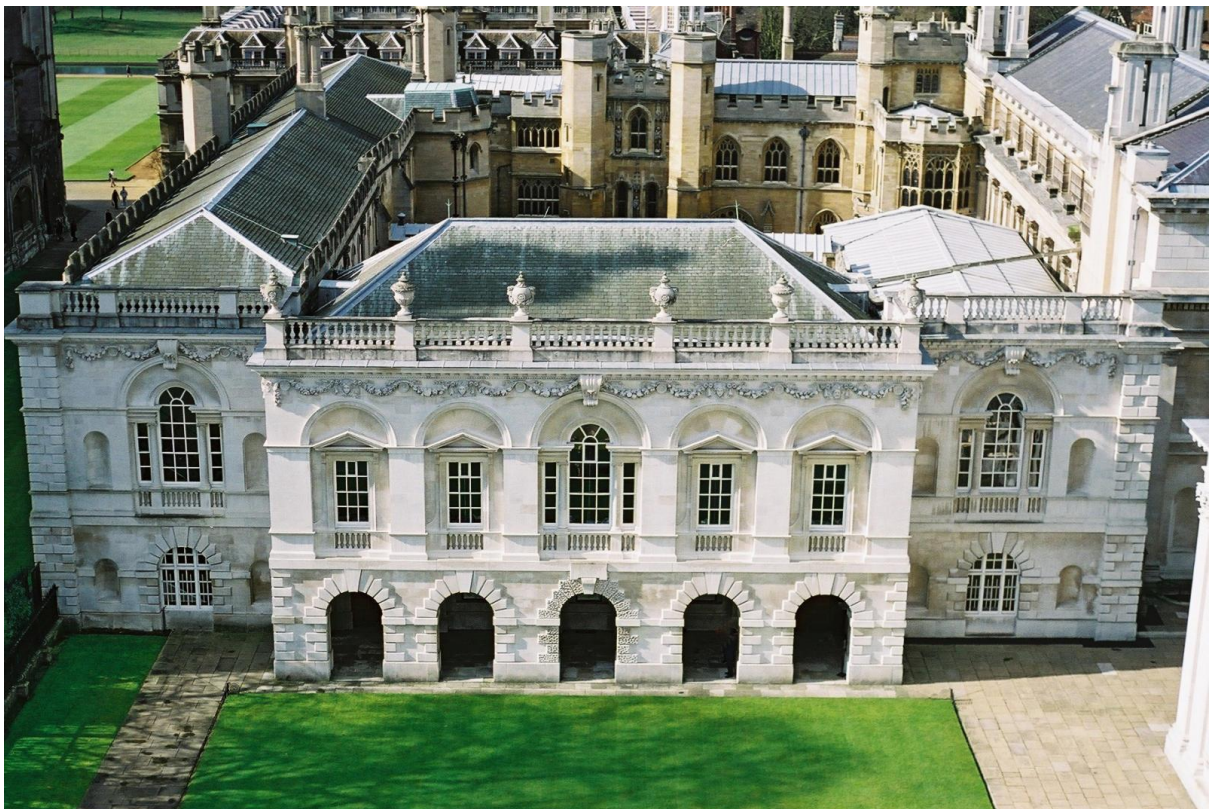
School of Clinical Medicine

# **Doctor of Medicine**

**by**



**Special Regulations**

**MD application guide**



**Academic year 2021-22**

# The Cambridge MD

<b>The Science Requirements</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The proposed research concerns the theory and/or the practice of medicine.</li><li>• There are at least 2 years ring-fenced research time.</li><li>• There is a clearly thought through, and well-structured project proposal which should include: hypothesis, aims, detailed research plan (including statistical analyses), methods and conclusions.</li><li>• There is current ethics approval in place for the proposed project, if required.</li><li>• If relevant, there is lab space available for the research with bench fees and consumables covered.</li></ul>	
<b>And</b>	
<b>The Supervisor</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A senior clinician or clinical academic, eligible to supervise a higher degree, has confirmed he or she will supervise the project, provide regular supervision or progress reports, and review the thesis prior to submission.</li></ul>	
<b>And</b>	
<b>Funding</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The applicant should provide evidence that the proposed MD project is fully funded for the duration of the research, including financial maintenance for the candidate.</li></ul>	
<b>And now apply for</b>	
<b>either</b>	<b>or</b>
<b>Will you be conducting the proposed MD project <u>within</u> and be employed by either the University of Cambridge or a CUHP Institution?</b>	<b>Do you have a primary degree from the University of Cambridge and will you be conducting the proposed MD project <u>outside</u> the University of Cambridge or a CUHP Institution?</b>
 <b><u>MD (CUHP)</u></b>	 <b><u>MD by Special Regulations</u></b>

## Before applying for the MD by Special Regulations

### Eligibility

You are eligible to apply to take the MD by Special Regulations if you meet the following criteria:<sup>1</sup>

- (a) You hold a medical qualification giving you provisional or full registration with the General Medical Council
- (b) You hold a primary degree of the University of Cambridge
- (c) Your proposed MD work will be undertaken outside Cambridge (i.e. elsewhere in the UK or overseas)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> You are advised to consult the full Regulations at the end of this document.

<sup>2</sup> If you intend to work in Cambridge you *must* apply under the standard regulations for the MD degree and become a registered student of the University of Cambridge.

### How to apply

You should email the following documents to the MD Committee Administrative Secretary, at [md-admin@medschl.cam.ac.uk](mailto:md-admin@medschl.cam.ac.uk) :

- (a) **an application on the approved form** (see last page)
- (b) **curriculum vitae (short form)**
- (c) **a description of the proposed work (your proposal) – see below**
- (d) **a brief abstract of the proposal**

This should not exceed 250 words and should include a summary of the research to be undertaken, information as to where it will be carried out and who the main collaborators and supervisor will be. This will be used by the Committee for quick reference whenever the proposal is under consideration at Committee meetings.

- (e) **a letter from your Adviser/Supervisor** assuring the MD Committee of his/her acceptance of the role of adviser, including confirmation that you have been interviewed.

### MD research proposal

The description of your work should contain sufficient information to enable the Committee, or experts approached by the Committee, to assess the suitability of the work for an MD thesis. As a general guide, sufficient information can usually be provided in 2,500–3,500 words (excluding references), though this will depend on the nature of the project and how far you have progressed with it (e.g. whether you have any results to report). A poorly constructed proposal will delay the application process and may result in your application being rejected.

Please include, where relevant, the following:

- (i) the significance and purpose of the proposed work
- (ii) a clear statement of the hypothesis/research question(s) being tested

- (iii) a clear description and explanation of the research techniques, materials and statistical analyses used (with reference to previously published methods and brief description of any new methods)
- (iv) the number of experiments to be undertaken, or number of subjects studied (in epidemiological investigations, information about the population from which subjects are drawn)
- (v) preliminary interpretation of any results already obtained
- (vi) ethical considerations (see below)
- (vii) department/unit where the work is to be carried out
- (viii) how much of the work is being carried out personally and how much with the help of others (specify the nature of any help); and how much of the work may already have been completed and what still remains to be done
- (ix) name of your main supervisor and/or other research collaborators.

*In addition, your Supervisor must counter-sign the proposal, declaring that “the proposal is of a standard suitable for external peer review”.*

### **Common pitfalls**

Your proposal will be reviewed first by the Committee and then, if appropriate, by experts in your field. If your proposal fails to meet the basic standard of being suitable for external peer review, it will be rejected by the Committee. We therefore draw your attention to the following common mistakes:

- **unrealistic aims** – MD research projects are often part of a larger ongoing research programme; the MD thesis must be a stand-alone piece of work undertaken by the applicant with aims that are feasible within a framework of 2–3 years’ full-time research (or part-time equivalent)
- **opaque experimental questions**
- **lack of hypotheses**
- **missing links between experimental design and hypotheses**
- **lack of clarity about your own involvement at each stage of the project** – the MD Committee will seek assurance that you have had input into the study design and will be undertaking the literature searches, experimental work and analysis yourself. You must be very clear about those areas of the work where you rely on the assistance of others.
- **failing to obtain adequate statistical advice**

### **The fee**

The fee for the MD by Special Regulations is a one-off payment of £1,866, which covers the entire programme. Should your application be unsuccessful, all but £500 will be returned to you. Should you fail to submit your thesis for examination within the maximum of 6 years allowed, you will be withdrawn from the programme and no refund will be payable.

## Payment

**Either** send a cheque for £1,866, made payable to the 'University of Cambridge', to Graduate Academic Training Office (MD), The Clinical School, Box 111, Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge CB2 0SP,

**Or** pay by electronic transfer to:

**Bank Code Number:** 20-17-68

**Bank Account:** 10921084

**Account Name:** University of Cambridge

**Swift Code:** BARC GB 22

**International Bank Code:** IBAN: GB 96 BARC 2017 6810 9210 84

**Reference:** MD by Spec Regs fee

The full amount £1,866 should be received and any bank charges/exchange rate differences paid for separately.

## Approval of proposed work

Having considered the proposal, the MD Committee, through the Assessor, may approve the work, suggest modifications or advise that the proposal is not suitable.

The process of approval of your proposal by the MD Committee and its referees is designed to be helpful to candidates in completing their thesis. For this reason you are urged to apply for approval as early into your research project (preferably at the planning stage) as possible. This will enable problems identified by the Committee and its referees to be considered before your work is too far advanced.

Please note that the refereeing process can take some time. Because the University does not appoint a formal supervisor (it is your responsibility to identify a suitable supervisor in your host institution) the MD Committee regards this initial stage as essential in sorting out any potential problems with the proposed work and usually seek the advice of expert referees. Candidates are expected to respond positively to any criticisms made by these referees before approval to proceed can be granted.

Following approval of the proposal, you are granted a maximum of six years in which to carry out the research and submit a thesis for examination.

## Ethical considerations

The MD Committee wishes to remind candidates that the design and conduct of research work proposed for the MD degree should conform to high standards of medical ethics. It is advisable to seek the approval of a local ethics committee where appropriate.

**Animal experiments:** candidates must provide a full description of their anaesthetic and surgical procedures. They must also provide evidence that they took adequate steps to ensure that animals did not suffer unnecessarily at any stage of the experiments.

**Human experiments:** theses describing experiments on human subjects involving procedures that are not therapeutic and carry a significant risk of harm must include (in an appendix) a statement that the experiments were performed with the understanding

and consent of each subject. We draw candidates' attention to the code of ethics of the World Medical Association (Declaration of Helsinki).

The MD Committee reserves the right to make a judgement on the ethical propriety of studies.

## **Your status in the University**

In doing the MD by Special Regulations, you do **not** become a *registered student* of the University and therefore are not eligible to use University resources other than those available to you as an alumnus. In particular, you are *not* eligible to apply for remote online access to journals held at the University Library. Candidates should instead ensure that their own research institution provides the necessary research facilities.

The College at which you matriculated for your primary degree will become the College that will present you for conferment of your MD degree.

## **The adviser / supervisor**

You should identify a principal supervisor who is willing to supervise your research throughout the duration of the programme

You are requested to show a copy of this guidance to the proposed adviser, who is asked to write a brief **letter of assurance of acceptance** of this role; this letter should be provided to the Committee when submitting the proposal.

## **The Thesis**

### **Standard required**

The thesis should consist of original work, carried out by the candidate, and set in the context of previous work in the field. The standard expected is that of a PhD. It should be specially composed and *must give evidence of independent research, observation and reflection*. New discoveries in medicine are not essential, but the substance of the thesis must consist of the candidate's own analysis, observations and experiments. Compilations from the work of others cannot be accepted. There is no objection to incorporation and use within the thesis of results of work already published by the candidate, provided that full reference is given and reprints supplied if possible.

### **Statistical advice**

Statistical planning by candidates is frequently inadequate. The MD Committee advises candidates to seek expert advice before they embark on their experiments. It is important for candidates to be able to defend the statistical treatment of data in the face of questioning by examiners at the Act.

### **Presentation of original data**

Sufficient original data should be incorporated into the thesis for the examiners to be able to gain a clear idea of what original observations and measurements were made in the work. If necessary, numerical data may be put into an appendix. Although it may be difficult to condense large amounts of data into the text or an appendix, the material given should be detailed enough to enable examiners and others to follow the working

out of results from the raw data, and to understand how the conclusions were arrived at. Detailed specimen calculations may be necessary. It is not acceptable, for example, to refer to a statistical computer program without describing the statistical methods used.

### **Deadline for submission**

The thesis must be submitted **within 6 years** of being granted approval to proceed, unless given special permission by the MD Committee to delay submission until a later date. It is essential that the work, on submission, is interpreted in the light of the latest developments in the field and that the reference list contains the most recently published work.

### **Examination procedure**

Examination is by thesis, which must be defended at a viva (the Act) at a location in Cambridge.

### **The MD Committee**

Chaired by Professor Richard Sandford with Dr Chris Allen as the Regius's Assessor (Academic Secretary), the MD Committee comprises of 16 members of the Faculty of Clinical Medicine and University and NHS departments, all of whom are leaders in their field of research and practicing clinicians.

**The Postgraduate Education and Clinical Academic Training Section** provides the administrative support for the MD degree.

Secretary to the MD Committee is Ms Jane Muir [md-admin@medschl.cam.ac.uk](mailto:md-admin@medschl.cam.ac.uk)

### **Data Protection – How we use your personal information (for applicants)**

<https://www.information-compliance.admin.cam.ac.uk/data-protection/applicant-data>

# Application Form

## MD by Special Regulations

<b>Name:</b>		<b>Date of Birth:</b>
<b>Title of proposed research</b>		
<b>Address at which your research will be carried out</b>		
<b>Name of supervisor(s) / advisor(s)</b>		<b>Email:</b>
<b>Your Cambridge degree(s)</b>		
<b>Your Cambridge College</b>		
<b>Date of award of Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery (e.g. MBBS or MB BChir)</b>		
<i>or</i>		
<b>Date of award of Bachelor of Medicine</b>		
<b>Date of award of Bachelor of Surgery</b>		
<b>Name of awarding institution</b>		
<b>Preferred address for postal correspondence</b>		
<b>Email Address</b>		
<b>Telephone Numbers:</b>	(w) (h) (m)	



**With this application form I also submit:**

- a detailed outline of the work on which my thesis will be founded
- a brief abstract
- my *curriculum vitae*
- a letter from my adviser/supervisor

**Send this form and all documents as email attachments to: [md-admin@medschl.cam.ac.uk](mailto:md-admin@medschl.cam.ac.uk)**

**Include a cheque for the fee of £1,866 payable to 'University of Cambridge'**

**Post the cheque to:**

MD Secretary, Postgraduate Education and Clinical Academic Training Office,  
School of Clinical Medicine, Box 111, Biomedical Campus, Cambridge CB2 0SP, UK.

**Or pay by electronic transfer to:**

**Bank Code Number:** 20-17-19

**Bank Account:** 10921084

**Account Name:** University of Cambridge

**Swift Code:** BARC GB 22

**International Bank Code:** IBAN: GB 96 BARC2017 19 10921084

**Reference:** MD Degree

The full amount £1,866 should be received and any bank charges/exchange rate differences paid for separately.

**I understand that my application will not be processed until payment has been received.**

**DECLARATION:**

**I declare that I am not currently registered for, nor have I concurrently applied for, or intend to apply for, any other higher degree in a similar subject area at the University of Cambridge or elsewhere and that the thesis will be specially written for the purpose of the Cambridge MD degree.**

Date..... Signature.....