

Intercalation FAQs



OVERVIEW

We hope to answer your frequently asked questions here. Please see the website for details of available programmes and to make an application.

WHY DO STUDENTS INTERCALATE?

Greater understanding of a specialist area and professional practice

Intercalation offers the opportunity to study a subject area in greater depth. It's a chance to explore current trends in research alongside international experts, as well as

focus on a research project that can lead to opportunities to present your work at conferences or result in a publication.

Many students find that they return to their professional programme with a broader and more nuanced understanding of their discipline and the wider profession.

The transferable skills developed during intercalation are valuable for success in your professional programme as well as future work and study, for example:

- Evaluating evidence
- Researching literature
- Academic writing
- Critical thinking



intercalation-admin@bristol.ac.uk

Career benefits

Intercalating gives you an additional qualification, which can provide a competitive edge in future job applications. It may also help clarify your career direction by exposing you to new areas of interest or professional pathways.

It can open doors by connecting you with peers, academics and professionals in specialist fields.

Examples of opportunities our graduates have enjoyed, which may vary from course to course:

- Presenting at academic conferences
- Co-authoring publications with their supervisors
- Taking on short-term research roles
- Holding positions on a national student committee in the field

Intercalation gives you a chance to:

- Study independently
- Focus on a new area of interest
- Manage your time flexibly
- Pursue hobbies and personal interests

Personal benefits

Intercalating enables you to meet new people outside your professional programme and experience a different pace of student life. Many students choose to intercalate to take a break from the intensity of their main programme.

After intercalating, students often tell us they have a renewed energy for their professional programme.

WHEN CAN I INTERCALATE?

Medical students can only intercalate between Year 3 and 4.

Veterinary students can only intercalate between Year 3 and 4.

Dental students can intercalate between Year 3 and 4, and between Year 4 and 5.

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR EACH PROGRAMME?

There are no specific grade requirements, and the requirements will vary from programme to programme. Schools offering intercalated degrees may want to consider your unit or year marks to date. For example, some programmes offered by the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences make their decisions based on marks and will offer places to the highest scoring applicants. Some programmes require a supplementary application form to be completed – these are specified on the intercalation website. Some programmes, if oversubscribed, may operate a lottery system.

HOW MANY STUDENTS DOES EACH INTERCALATION PROGRAMME TAKE ON AVERAGE?

There is a wide variation in numbers per intercalation programme and it isn't meaningful to calculate an average. It can also vary from year to year. For one-year entry onto the 3-year courses it will depend upon how many of their current students are progressing from Year 2 to the final year. Courses may also have applications from external students.

DO ANY COURSES COMPRISE INTERCALATORS ONLY?

There are six courses that are unique to intercalation so only have intercalating students on them.

Courses just for intercalating students:

- BSc Global Health
- BSc Healthcare Ethics and Law
- BA Medical Humanities
- BSc Functional and Clinical Anatomy
- BSc Clinical Sciences
- BSc Paediatrics and Child Health Research

HOW MANY APPLICATIONS CAN I MAKE? DO I NEED TO LIST THEM IN ORDER OF PREFERENCE ON THE FORM? WHAT HAPPENS IF I CHANGE MY MIND ABOUT MY FIRST CHOICE LATER AND WANT TO SWITCH THEM AROUND?

You can make up to three applications, listed in order of preference on the application form. This can include internal and external options. Applying externally counts as one application even if you are applying to more than one external course.

It is not possible to change your preferences after the deadline unless there are exceptional circumstances, in which case you are advised to discuss this with the intercalation administrator by emailing intercalation-admin@bristol.ac.uk

CAN I INTERCALATE EXTERNALLY?

You are permitted to apply to intercalate at another university provided the course you are interested in is not also offered at Bristol, and you can show the benefit of external intercalation by completion of a supplementary application form.

External intercalation is limited to 20 students. If applications exceed this, they will be assessed and ranked using the supplementary form

HOW DO I MAKE AN EXTERNAL APPLICATION?

To apply for permission to intercalate externally, you will need to select 'external' as your first-choice intercalation option in the application form. You must also submit a supplementary form providing details of up to three external programmes. If you are successful, you will be given a letter of permission to intercalate externally on 'X' programme(s).

If you are a veterinary student, information will be available on Blackboard and you will have the opportunity to talk with the administrative team and your local intercalation lead. Dental students, please discuss your plans with your Programme Director.

If you choose to apply for a Master's degree outside Bristol, you will be responsible for ensuring that the course will finish in time for your return to your clinical programme.

Once you have permission to intercalate externally, it is up to you to manage the application process to your preferred programmes. You are required to keep the intercalation administrator informed about your progress.

Once you accept an offer from another university, you will suspend your studies at Bristol for one academic year. This will require the signature of the appropriate Programme Director.

If you are unsuccessful in applying externally, you are welcome to speak to us about intercalating on one of the internal programmes at Bristol. Choice may be more limited at that stage, but we will do everything we can to support you and help you to intercalate if that is what you want to do.

If applying to study externally, you will need:

- A transcript of your marks (ask the intercalation administrator)
- A letter of permission to study elsewhere. You will be sent this automatically if your application for permission to apply externally is successful.
- You may need to ask your academic mentor or personal tutor for a reference.

CAN I APPLY TO BRISTOL PROGRAMMES AND EXTERNALLY AT THE SAME TIME?

You may make internal and external applications at the same time, by putting 'external' as your first choice in the online application form (this counts as one application even if you are applying to more than one external course). We strongly recommend you also select Bristol programmes for your second and third, in case you do not receive an offer from your external courses. If you are not successful in obtaining permission to intercalate externally, you will be considered for your second, and then third, choice programmes if space allows.

WHAT IF I ACCEPT AN OFFER TO INTERCALATE AND THEN DECIDE THAT I ACTUALLY DON'T WANT TO DO IT?

By signing the acceptance form on an intercalation programme, you are committed to intercalating and may forgo your place on the fourth year of the medical programme for that year. Once you have accepted a place on a University of Bristol intercalation course you will not be allowed to switch to a different University of Bristol course until the start of the academic year, when you will be allowed to request to change onto another course during the first two weeks of your course starting.

CAN I INTERCALATE AND GET A MASTERS DEGREE?

Students need to have completed the third year of their programme to be eligible for Masters degree programmes.

The one-year masters degrees available to intercalators are:

- MSc Public Health
- MSc Epidemiology
- MSc Nutrition, Physical Activity and Public Health
- MSc Health Economics and Health Policy Analysis
- MRes Health Sciences Research
- MRes Health Sciences Research (Renal)
- MRes Health Sciences Research (Cardiovascular)
- MSc Psychology (conversion)
- MSc Translational Cardiovascular Medicine
- LLM Health, Law, and Society
- MSc Global Wildlife Health and Conservation
- MSc Reproduction and Development

The MRes/MSc degree will be awarded at the same time as the MBChB, BDS or BVSc degree and not immediately after completion of the intercalation year. All these programmes will finish in time to allow you to return to your clinical programme.

WHAT FINANCIAL SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE?

Please refer to the [Student Funding office](https://www.bristol.ac.uk/students/support/finances/med-dent-vet/intercalation/) for detailed financial advice (<https://www.bristol.ac.uk/students/support/finances/med-dent-vet/intercalation/>)

There are bursaries and awards available to help with intercalation study. Please see <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/health-life-sciences/intercalate/fees/>

For subject-specific bursaries available for some programmes, so please look at individual course information to find out more about this.

WHAT IS AN ACADEMIC FOUNDATION PROGRAMME? DO I NEED AN INTERCALATED DEGREE TO APPLY? (MEDICAL STUDENTS ONLY)

For information on this please see <https://foundationprogramme.nhs.uk/>

HOW WILL INTERCALATION HELP ME WHEN I APPLY FOR FY1 JOBS NOW THE POINTS SYSTEM HAS GONE? (MEDICAL STUDENTS ONLY)

The merit-based FPAS ranking model has been replaced with the Preference Informed Allocation (PIA) system, which does not consider academic performance in allocation decisions. However, this does not deplete from the educational value of an intercalation degree, which will give you an advantage when applying for specialist training, for example in relation to written application forms, interviews and evidence of publication where relevant.



We recognise the immense value of intercalation for students, the professions, and patients. Researchers at Bristol Medical School are conducting a study, funded by the Medical Schools Council, to investigate students' views on the incentives and disincentives, barriers and enablers to intercalation, with the ultimate aim of enabling more students to intercalate.

IS IT BETTER FOR ME CAREER-WISE TO DO X OR Y?

There is no evidence-based answer to this question and any answer would be personal opinion. Perhaps what is most important are the skills that you develop by undertaking the degree.

You may wish to read the following articles:

[Should an intercalated degree be compulsory for undergraduate medical students?](#) Philip AB, Prasad SJ, Patel A. (2015) Med Educ Online. 20:29392. doi:10.3402/meo.v20.29392. eCollection 2015. PMID: 26434986

Intercalated degrees, learning styles, and career preferences: prospective longitudinal study of UK medical students. IC McManus, P Richards, BC Winder. (1999) BMJ 319(7209): 542–546. PMCID: PMC28204

Why I'd encourage every dental student to intercalate. Black, E. (2020). BDJ student, 27, 32. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41406-020-0118-x>

The benefits of intercalation. Shiotnes, H. (2017). Vet Times. <https://www.vettimes.co.uk/article/the-benefits-of-intercalation/>

WHO CAN I CONTACT TO DISCUSS MY OPTIONS?

As well as talking to friends and family, you can contact the Programme Directors of the courses you are interested in. Their email addresses are listed on the website.

You can also talk through your options with the Intercalation Lead, Zuzana Deans.



Dr Zuzana Deans, Faculty of Health and Life Sciences Intercalation Lead

If you'd like to talk through your intercalation choices or have any questions, feel free to get in touch. I'm usually in my office, but it's best to email me first to make sure I'm available at a time that works for you. We can meet in person or chat over Teams, whichever works best for you.

zuzana.deans@bristol.ac.uk
Office 2.01a, Canynge Hall, Whatley Road, BS8 2PS.

For further information, and to apply, visit:

www.bristol.ac.uk/health-life-sciences/intercalate/

General enquiries:

Intercalation Admin Mailbox
intercalation-admin@bristol.ac.uk