

# Luke Granger

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A levels: Biology (A), Chemistry (A), Physics (A), Maths (A),  
Further Maths (B), General Studies (C)  
Left Chatham House 2009

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From 2009 to present:  
Studying medicine at Oxford University (Hertford College),  
currently in my 5<sup>th</sup> year of study, working mainly in the John  
Radcliffe hospital in Oxford.

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My advice would be that if you have the grades to apply for Oxford, you would be silly not to go for it! Everyone who applies is competent for the course as evidenced by the fact that you need however many As or A\*s to apply, hence the tutors simply judge who performs best at interview: their best differentiator. It's therefore open for the taking and an opportunity not to be missed! Go to an open day to find out more about the college system and whether it is right for you, but certainly don't be put off by stereotypes and rumours.

Oxford is an incredible city and there are some really unique experiences ranging from Harry Potter style dinners to punting down the river Cherwell. It's of course one of the most highly ranked universities not only in the country but in the world, and yet the tutorial and college system means that you feel important; not just a number in a very large university.

As for the medicine aspect: I wanted to be a doctor throughout most of school, although I'm not entirely sure why. I most likely felt that because I enjoyed the sciences and I was achieving good grades it felt the best thing to do. I was then able to test this theory a little with some work experience but even that doesn't really give you an idea of what it is all about. I believe that with most things in life you don't really know what they are going to be like until you actually do it; but given that a medical degree is a big life decision and will land you in university for 6 years, it's a decision that must be made as well-informed as possible so read as many books and do as much work experience as possible to try and decide if the job is right for you.

It would be great to give you a flavour of what happens on a day to day basis, however, it really is so varied that any account would be unrepresentative. There are many different specialities in medicine that as a student you find yourself frequently rotating between them with constant changes in your daily routine. Despite this, I will briefly explain my day yesterday to give an idea of what it is like to complete an attachment in A&E as a student:

- 9pm: start of night shift. Introduce myself as the medical student to the doctors and nurses in A&E.
- Soon after, I take a history and examine a lady with diabetic ketoacidosis (a potentially fatal complication of diabetes). Despite ludicrously high blood sugars she is very well and alert, and together with the doctors on the ward we arrange some fluids and insulin to bring her blood sugars down, and explain to her worried son that she will need to be watched overnight.



- Around 10.30pm I see another patient. He is a young man who experiences a sharp, shooting chest pain, with no identifiable triggers. I take a full history and examine the patient, especially his heart, and find no evidence of any pathology. I speak to the doctors and they say that despite an unremarkable examination we still need to perform blood tests to rule everything out, so I insert a cannula into the gentleman's forearm (desperately trying to remember how the equipment works) and take some bloods.
- Around 11.30pm I see a middle aged woman who has been brought in with excruciating abdominal pain. She has a history of endometriosis, which can cause very painful periods. After providing her with some pain relief, we refer her to the gynaecology team who take care of her thereafter.
- Around 1am the red phone rings (the trauma line), informing the team that two trauma cases are arriving: one lady had been sleepwalking and fell out of her window (from the fourth floor) and a young man was being transferred in cardiac arrest needing resuscitation.
- This latter patient absorbs most of the remaining shift. He is a young gentleman with a heart defect from birth; prior to his heart stopping he had been arrested by the police for being drunk and disorderly. The doctors were able to start his heart again and he recovered well, however, he was still blindingly drunk and violent. Security was called to restrain him but I sat next to him and tried to calm him down by hearing him out. Thankfully this worked and security did not need to get involved!
- 4am – leave the emergency department to go back to bed!

I would thoroughly recommend Hertford College as a place to study. Similarly I would recommend medicine to those who enjoy the sciences (especially human biology), are able to talk to people, and who want a job that I certainly believe gives great satisfaction!