

MEDICINE

I have grown hugely since being unsuccessful in my application to read medicine last year. Once the original disappointment subsided, I have only benefitted from the turn of events it presented. Initially it forced me to thoroughly and objectively consider the motivations behind my need to study medicine. I soon realised that no degree left me as inspired; the combination of endless intellectual challenge based on an assumption of altruism makes medicine the course for me. Not having that incentive of an offer to aim for, my hard work this summer relied purely on self motivation and my success proves determination and ability.

A now 'gap' year, beginning with 3 months volunteering in a Ghanaian orphanage, has provided a welcome opportunity to broaden my horizons and develop an understanding of people with very different backgrounds and expectations from my own. I feel the maturity and open mind I will gain from a year out of education will strengthen me as a medical student. Work experience in a variety of health care settings has allowed me to further my understanding of what a career in medicine involves. Despite their differences, the basic skills required of the doctor were the same. I witnessed how vital communication and building a trusting relationship is, in a minor surgery clinic; the reassuring nature of the doctor settled any pre-op angst the patient had. His calm and capable presence inspired me. In the very different atmosphere of a busy general hospital, team work skills were prominent to ensure that problems were dealt with quickly and effectively. Volunteering at a local nursing home for a year helped me appreciate the difficulty of the job. Despite their huge work load, the nurses worked with patience and respect. It was extremely rewarding as just an hour of my time, making tea, playing bingo or just talking to the residents created a great response. As well as the caring aspect of medicine I was able witness research and technology in a pathology lab, it was fascinating as I could apply knowledge from my A level courses to understand what I saw. I relished in the academic challenge of sixth form, and for my Welsh Baccalaureate Investigation looked into the arguments surrounding organ donation. It was a great opportunity for independent study and to gain an insight into a current ethical debate.

My busy life outside school has helped me develop qualities that make me a strong medical candidate. Completing my gold duke of Edinburgh, through horrendous conditions in the Outer Hebrides, was an adventure and a real test of determination and resilience. Not only did we complete the challenge but did so in high spirit. My team work skills grew further while sailing competitively; logical problem solving skills must come into play to recover a situation as quickly as possible. Maintaining part-time work as a waitress throughout my studies ensured I learnt to time manage effectively, it also gave me vital financial independence from my parents. I worked as a child minder as well this summer and really enjoyed getting to know the children; it relied on constant initiative to keep them entertained! It demonstrates that I am trustworthy, capable and responsible. I was also a valued member of my school; I was head of section in the renowned orchestra and proudly represented Greenhill as head prefect. My desire to become a doctor stems from my fascination with the intricacy of the human body, combined with the opportunity to use the skills I gain to have a positive impact on the community; I cannot imagine a more demanding yet satisfying job. Receiving no offers left me feeling lost and confused, I had to rebuild what I thought about my future and ambitions. I have not taken the risk of disappointment lightly, and know this is what I want to do. I recognise it is a difficult profession, but I believe I have the patience, empathy, interest and academic ability to become a good doctor.