

# [Traditionally, examined the issue of widening participation within](https://assignbuster.com/traditionally-examined-the-issue-of-widening-participation-within/)

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Traditionally, in the UK, becoming a doctor and practicing medicine has been, predominantly, associatedwith the more privileged members of society, with medicine as a career conventionallyonly being accessible to those individuals attending the most elite schools andreceiving the best education. However, over the years and as society hasevolved, many efforts have been made to try and change this mentality anddiversify the population of doctors. It has long been felt that the cohort ofdoctors in the UK should represent individuals from all walks of life; backgrounds, ethnicities and gender, to be able to best understand and serve the generalpopulation and improve the quality of health care provided.  In 2014, the ‘ Selecting for Excellence Report’1 examined the issue ofwidening participation within medicine, in an attempt to establish strategiesto ‘ reach out’ to and encourage a wider population of students to considermedicine as a profession. The report concluded that over 75% of the students inmedical schools across the UK came from only 20% of schools2. Furthermore, the General Medical Council recently reported that over 60% of current traineedoctors were from affluent areas and attended fee paying or independent schools3, illustrating the prevailing unequal representation of differingbackgrounds within the medical profession4.  Therehave been various causes attributed to the under-representation of young peoplefrom lower socioeconomic backgrounds within medicine.

The 2012 ‘ Fair access toProfessional Careers’ report5 conveyed several important factorsthat they have found to likely be contributing to this under-representation suchas a lack of knowledge of the medical school application process and a considerablelack of outreach programmes5.  In lightof these findings, the ‘ Selecting for Excellence Report’ established asubject-specific outreach framework, to be implemented by medical schoolsacross the country, to engage with individuals from groups with lower involvementrates in medical education1. The guidance promotes the creation of programmes, targeting children at all stages of their education, to encourage and inspiremedicine as a career.

The framework also suggests that these programmes, to bemost effective, ideally should be run by medical student ambassadors whoreflect the social demographic of the target group to endorse the idea thatmedical school is ‘ for pupils like me’1.