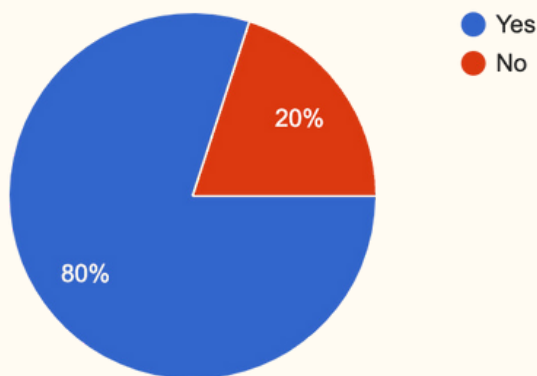


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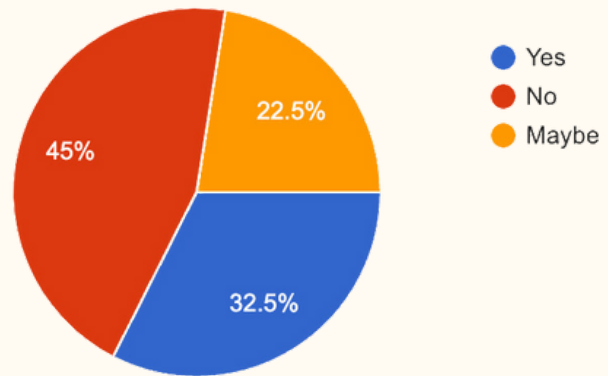
The Cost of Being a Medical Student: Part 2

In our previous issue we highlighted the harsh reality of how the cost-of-living crisis is impacting medical students. We brought to light the plight of medical students with regards to dealing with financial struggles on top of the demands of medical school. In response to this pressing issue, SURGO conducted a survey to gauge the impact on medical students here in Glasgow.

We received 40 responses from Glasgow medical students over the past 3 months and the findings were striking: 80% of respondents acknowledged that their studies had been affected by the cost-of-living crisis, with nearly half feeling inadequately supported financially by their university. While this revelation wasn't entirely surprising, delving deeper into the survey responses shed light on the underlying reasons behind this overwhelming sentiment.



Response to the question: Have your studies been impacted by the cost of living crisis?



Response to the question: Do you feel well-supported financially?

A primary factor disrupting students' studies appeared to be the necessity of working to finance their education. Many respondents voiced the struggle of balancing part-time or full-time employment with the demands of a full-time medical degree. Approximately 70% relied on income from employment, yet a significant portion still found it challenging to cover necessities such as groceries, utilities, rent, and even commuting expenses to attend lectures. Such financial strain not only hampers academic performance but also deprives students of the social aspects integral to the university experience.

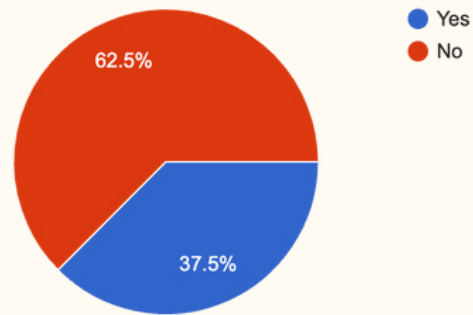
Lastly, while some respondents reported receiving support from family or personal savings, it raises concerns about those without such safety nets. This underscores the persistent financial barriers hindering access to education.

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The Cost of Being a Medical Student: Part 2

Despite these challenges, our survey yielded constructive suggestions for alleviating financial burdens. Many advocated for medical students to receive bursaries or grants comparable to other healthcare students, especially for those undertaking medicine as a second degree. Additionally, there were calls for enhanced support for travel expenses related to mandatory placements, particularly for those students ineligible for government travel assistance programs such as free or discounted travel for under 22s.

Moreover, respondents advocated for greater transparency in the university's hardship fund decision-making process, urging for a more streamlined and less intrusive application procedure. Finally, respondents emphasized the importance of compassion and understanding from the university regarding the necessity of working alongside full-time studies. Many felt that the stringent stance adopted by the medical school fails to resonate with the practical realities faced by students who rely on employment to finance their education.



Results in response to the question: Have you ever felt like dropping out of the course due to financial constraints?

Alarming, our survey revealed that nearly 40% of respondents had contemplated dropping out due to financial struggles, a substantially higher proportion than reported by the Office for Students (OfS). While this figure was derived from a relatively smaller sample size, it remains disheartening to witness individuals contemplating dropping out as a potential solution. However, it's heartening to note that the majority expressed resilience and commitment to their academic journey, reflecting the dedication inherent in medical students pursuing their future careers.

In conclusion, while our survey underscores the significant financial strain on students, it also highlights opportunities for intervention and support. As we navigate these challenging times, it's essential to foster a community of support and empathy. In a climate marked by heightened awareness of mental health, solidarity and support are more vital than ever. In the spirit of resilience, we've compiled some invaluable pearls of financial wisdom from our respondents to offer hope and guidance amid the adversity. Enjoy our pick of the bunch!

DOMINIQUE FORSON**The Cost of Being a Medical Student:
Part 2****“**

"Save up and work during summer and winter so that you don't have to work (as much) during term time. Oh, and electives will be expensive so save from first year."

"Had I known the financial burden faced in medical school, along with the increasing cost of living, I would have taken a year out to save beforehand."

"Split money between different accounts - it's a very foolproof way of budgeting which prevents you from over spending"

"...set aside a travel budget for placement."

Try to go to the big supermarkets for shopping once a week/fortnight instead of little Tesco because its so much cheaper. If all else fails, you can always make your savings back when you start working as a doctor..."

"The further into medical school you get, the less time you will have to work. Capitalise on the time you have now and save up because you will need it. Take every discount and freebie you can."

"Make use of the young scot card as much as possible!"

"Work when you can, especially via shift or bank-shift work as these are super flexible and can fit around your schedule very easily. Lastly, sometimes a bit of extra work is good because that way you can earn enough money to not just survive but to live your life fully!"

"Apply for funds and help from organisations and the university wherever possible."

"Tesco meal deals add up fast!"

Don't study medicine if you want to be able to afford life for the next five years

Better planning, and communicate with those you live with. For instance decide how long you will have the heating on etc to minimise bills and stick to that.

"That it's very hard for people to get into medical school who are not from an affluent background - they do tell you this. But what they don't tell you is that it's hard to STAY in medical school from a non-affluent background due to the sheer costs involved. Stethoscope, scrubs, appropriate smart clothing (and cleaning said clothing) and smart shoes, blood pressure cuff, tendon hammer - all these hidden costs really add up! Then add in the consequential loss of earnings due to the sheer intensity of the degree and clinical placements."

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