# St Mary’s to open international‑only medical school as campus investment focuses on sport and e‑sports



St Mary’s University, Twickenham, marks its 175th anniversary this year against a backdrop of selective expansion and campus renewal. According to the original report, the small, faith‑rooted institution — founded as a teacher training college in 1850 and now home to fewer than 4,000 undergraduates — is positioning itself as a distinctive London alternative: a compact campus with a strong pastoral ethos, consistently high student satisfaction in the National Student Survey and a reputation that leans heavily on sport.

One of the headline developments is the planned School of Medicine, which the university has announced will admit its first cohort in September 2026. St Mary’s has framed the move as strategic growth that will train internationally mobile professionals and contribute to workforce development. The university’s news release said the General Medical Council has given assurance that St Mary’s is progressing towards the standards required to open a medical school — but formal accreditation processes remain ongoing and the university has been careful to stress that approvals and partnerships are still being finalised.

Prospective applicants should note the school will initially recruit international students only, with applications scheduled to open in 2025 and the first intake due in 2026. The university’s course information confirms early patient contact, varied clinical placements and digital innovations will be central to the MBBS curriculum, and it also notes contingency arrangements with a partner institution should final General Medical Council accreditation not be secured in time. The university invites interested candidates to register for updates as planning continues.

Alongside academic growth, recent investment has focused on student life and digital facilities. The refurbished 1850 student venue opened in September 2024, offering flexible social space — a bar, pool room, snug, loft and roof terrace — and a separately opened student living room provides a screen‑free social area overlooking the running track. Those changes have been complemented by a high‑profile £3 million upgrade to computing and gaming facilities culminating in a purpose‑built E‑Sports Arena.

The E‑Sports Arena, which St Mary’s opened in September 2024, is presented as a multipurpose space for teaching, competitions, research and industry engagement. University material lists sixty high‑performance gaming machines, professional seating and a 217‑inch LED video wall, and the conferences and events information confirms the venue is available for external hire for tournaments, hackathons and teaching events — underlining the institution’s intent to market the facility beyond the student body.

Sport remains a defining feature of St Mary’s identity. The university’s long record in sports education and elite athlete support is one reason it continues to attract high‑profile competitors, including Olympic medallists among its alumni. To sustain that advantage St Mary’s operates a tiered sports scholarship programme: Gold awards for Olympic and Paralympic‑level athletes provide up to £2,000 in combined cash and in‑kind support, with Silver and Bronze tiers offering proportionate packages and access to performance services. The scholarships are explicitly tied to the ability and commitment to represent the university in competitive sport.

Financial support outside sport is more limited. The university offers a St Mary’s bursary of £2,000 per year for eligible home undergraduates — paid only to households with an annual income up to the low threshold reported by the institution — and a St Mary’s Cares Bursary of £3,000 per year for care leavers or estranged students. The institution also runs a hardship fund and states that availability and the terms of awards can vary year to year. Accommodation on campus is notable for being catered only, with 36‑week contracts cited at a starting point in the mid‑£7,000s and rising to the low five‑figure range for premium options.

Admissions and student support continue to emphasise widening participation and face‑to‑face contact. St Mary’s outreach teams work in London areas of disadvantage and the university applies contextual offers — typically a reduction of 16 UCAS tariff points for eligible applicants, a concession that can make entry requirements materially lower for those from underrepresented backgrounds. Teaching follows what the university describes as a face‑to‑face plus model, combining in‑person contact with digital tools such as lecture capture, and students are allocated personal tutors alongside access to counselling, mental health advisers and 24‑hour online services. Freshers undertake an induction module covering sexual consent and equality issues.

Taken together, the developments suggest St Mary’s is pursuing a careful balance: expanding into high‑profile, revenue‑generating territory with a medical school and digital facilities while preserving the campus‑based, student‑centred character that has driven its strong student satisfaction scores. The university presents the medical school and new facilities as investments in skills and employability; critics or regulators will watch closely as the institution moves through the remaining approval steps and begins recruitment for its first medical cohort.

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* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/university-guide/article-14914611/St-Marys-University-Twickenham.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/news/2024/st-marys-university-announces-plans-to-open-school-of-medicine)
* Paragraph 2 – [[2]](https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/news/2024/st-marys-university-announces-plans-to-open-school-of-medicine), [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/university-guide/article-14914611/St-Marys-University-Twickenham.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/courses/undergraduate/mbbs-medicine-degree), [[2]](https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/news/2024/st-marys-university-announces-plans-to-open-school-of-medicine), [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/university-guide/article-14914611/St-Marys-University-Twickenham.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/university-guide/article-14914611/St-Marys-University-Twickenham.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/news/2024/st-marys-opens-state-of-the-art-e-sports-arena)
* Paragraph 5 – [[4]](https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/news/2024/st-marys-opens-state-of-the-art-e-sports-arena), [[5]](https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/conferences/conferences-meetings-and-filming/e-sports-arena.aspx)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/university-guide/article-14914611/St-Marys-University-Twickenham.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[6]](https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/student-life/sport/sport-scholarships.aspx)
* Paragraph 7 – [[7]](https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/scholarships/scholarships.aspx), [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/university-guide/article-14914611/St-Marys-University-Twickenham.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 8 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/university-guide/article-14914611/St-Marys-University-Twickenham.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/courses/undergraduate/mbbs-medicine-degree)
* Paragraph 9 – [[2]](https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/news/2024/st-marys-university-announces-plans-to-open-school-of-medicine), [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/university-guide/article-14914611/St-Marys-University-Twickenham.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/university-guide/article-14914611/St-Marys-University-Twickenham.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/news/2024/st-marys-university-announces-plans-to-open-school-of-medicine> - St Mary’s University’s news release announces plans to open a School of Medicine on the Strawberry Hill campus, reporting General Medical Council assurance that the university is progressing towards required standards. The School will initially recruit international students and aims to welcome its first cohort in September 2026. Vice-Chancellor Professor Anthony McClaran frames the school as strategic growth that will train globally mobile professionals and support workforce development. The announcement outlines institutional ambitions, links to planned centenary building developments, and invites interested parties to follow updates as the university completes approval processes with regulators and develops curriculum and clinical partnerships.
3. <https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/courses/undergraduate/mbbs-medicine-degree> - The MBBS course page outlines St Mary’s University’s Medicine degree, confirming that the institution plans to admit its first students in September 2026 and currently can only accept applications from international (non‑UK) applicants. It explains that applications will open in 2025 and that contingency arrangements exist with a partner university should General Medical Council accreditation not be secured. The page details learning approaches including early patient contact, varied clinical placements, and digital innovations embedded in teaching. Prospective students are invited to register for updates, and the page emphasises entry requirements and advice on how to apply via UCAS or directly.
4. <https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/news/2024/st-marys-opens-state-of-the-art-e-sports-arena> - St Mary’s University announced the opening of a state‑of‑the‑art E‑Sports Arena in September 2024, designed for gaming, teaching, research and events. The facility features sixty high‑performance gaming machines, professional chairs and peripherals, and a 217‑inch LED video wall. The arena supports competitions, tournaments, game development workshops, hackathons, and high‑data processing teaching for Computer Science students, and is available for external hire. University staff highlighted the arena’s role in providing cutting‑edge facilities for students and industry engagement. The launch underlines institutional investment in digital and computing resources, with images, a launch video and technical specifications publicly published on the university website.
5. <https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/conferences/conferences-meetings-and-filming/e-sports-arena.aspx> - The St Mary’s conferences page describes the E‑Sports Arena as a hireable venue combining performance and presentation facilities. It lists a 2.5m curved stage, dynamic pixel lighting, full AV presentation equipment, and a 217‑inch LED video wall, and confirms the arena is equipped with sixty high‑performance gaming machines and professional seating. The page promotes the space for competitions, hackathons, masterclasses and research, and highlights its suitability for spectators, broadcasting and teaching. Practical information for booking is provided, including gallery images and contact details for esportsbookings@stmarys.ac.uk, indicating the university actively markets the arena to both internal and external audiences and partners.
6. <https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/student-life/sport/sport-scholarships.aspx> - St Mary’s sports scholarships page outlines a tiered programme offering Gold, Silver and Bronze awards tailored to athletes across many sports. Gold scholarships target senior international or Olympic/Paralympic standard athletes with packages worth up to £2,000 including up to £1,000 cash, free gym membership and access to strength, conditioning, nutrition and psychology support. Silver and Bronze tiers offer proportionate awards, free gym membership and support. Eligibility criteria focus on competition level and ability to represent St Mary’s in BUCS events. The page details application timelines, selection criteria, and encourages applicants to contact the Sport Performance Manager for further information directly.
7. <https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/scholarships/scholarships.aspx> - The scholarships and bursaries page summarises financial support at St Mary’s University, listing the St Mary’s Bursary and St Mary’s Cares Bursary. It states the St Mary’s Bursary is £2,000 per year for eligible home undergraduates and the St Mary’s Cares Bursary is £3,000 per year for care leavers or estranged students. The page outlines application periods, eligibility criteria and notes that availability varies annually. It explains that only one scholarship will be applied per student record with exceptions, and provides a student funding contact and links to full terms, guidance and application forms on the university website for applicants.