

## BMAT ESSAY

# 2016, Q3



TIMING ⌚ 30m

### STRIKE ACTION

The option of taking strike action should not be available to doctors as they have a special duty of care to their patients.

Explain what is meant by this statement. Argue that it should be possible for doctors to go on strike as other workers do. To what extent should doctors' duty of care to patients affect the conditions of their employment?



# ESSAY PLAN

BMAT ESSAY

**STRIKE  
ACTION**

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## EXPLAIN WHAT IS MEANT BY THIS STATEMENT

- Doctors have a responsibility to provide for their patients and prioritise their needs above their own and others.
- The statement is suggesting that striking or even just having the option of striking goes against this and seeks benefit for the profession and/or themselves and views patient care being compromised as a result.



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## FOR STRIKING

- Doctors like all members of society have the right to freedom of speech. They should not be exempt from this solely due to their profession
- Example: In 2017, doctors struck as they believed patient safety was compromised - they are therefore not abandoning their duty of care
- If strike action isn't carried out, doctors will lose morale and working conditions may be harmed therefore indirectly affecting patient safety
- The NHS is the main healthcare provider by over 95% - hard for doctors to transfer to another employer if they are unhappy therefore should be allowed to have a say
- Statement says "strike option" - They don't necessarily have to strike but can use it as a bargaining power



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## AGAINST STRIKING

- Doctors must follow the GMC Code of Conduct which states that they must be professional at all times and be responsible for patient safety - this could be compromised by striking as well as the ethical principles of non-maleficence and beneficence
- In terms of importance, patient safety is more important than working conditions
- Could affect confidence in the profession if the public views doctors as disinterested in the duty of care they should behold
- In other countries, striking would be acceptable as there it not just one employer however the healthcare system is reliant on the NHS

