THE UNIVERSITY OF BUCKINGHAM

Standards for Intercalation

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Version History

Version	Approved by	Revisions made	Date
1	Programme Exec	New document	January 2025
2	Faculty Exec Committee	Job titles and dates updated	September 2026

1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to define the standards of intercalation at the University of Buckingham Medical School. This document relates to the individual programme specifications and outlines of intercalated degree options which should be read separately.

Nothing in these standards is intended to inhibit the motivation or creativity of those developing intercalated degrees.

2. Definitions

For the purpose of this document, intercalation is defined as "the pausing of the MB ChB programme to complete another one-year degree at Buckingham, before returning to the MB ChB programme."

3. Purpose of intercalation

An intercalated degree is an opportunity to learn more about a particular topic, to develop transferable skills and/or participate in a more in-depth research project than previously available as part of a medical degree.

Experience of the research environment and heightened research skills are desirable for students who wish to pursue a career that involves research. This could be as part of a dedicated speciality training programme, applications to the academic foundation programme, or a career as a clinical academic.

Completion of an intercalated degree may also help with speciality training applications. Research experience and presence of publications is considered within many of the competitive speciality training programmes. Applications often ask about research and publication experience, and intercalation is an opportunity to provide some specific and individualised answers to these 'white box' questions.

4. Timing of intercalation

The MB ChB course at the University of Buckingham Medical School runs from January for 4.5 years. Phase 1 ends after 2 years, and then full-time clinical education based at various LEPs begins.

Due to the difference in the Buckingham timetable to other UK medical schools, enrolling on intercalated degrees at other providers involves the pausing of studies during clinical education or missing multiple years of the MB ChB. This is not typically permitted, as pausing clinical education is an issue for the continued learning and rotation nature of the blocks in Phase 2 and can lead to detriment for the individual student due to a lack of capacity for revision and catching up from the blocks prior to intercalation.

The ideal time to intercalate and pause the University of Buckingham MB ChB studies would be between Phase 1 and Phase 2. To match the desire for Buckingham Medical students to intercalate and the optimum time to pause studies to complete these additional degrees, intercalation options need to run from January to January. Courses at Buckingham, whereby a January start to a degree to normal, are therefore ideal options for medical students.

Students will normally be introduced to the options for intercalation and should make applications for these courses during term 4 and term 5 of year 2 of the MB ChB.

5. Who can intercalate?

Intercalation is an additional year of study in a different discipline and pauses academic progress in the MB ChB, therefore it is not a suitable option for all students. The Medical school will permit students to pause their studies and pursue an intercalated degree, assuming they meet the following criteria:

- At the time of application, students must have already met a satisfactory level in all assessments and show no evidence of any disruption to their academic performance.
- Students can also only be eligible for intercalation if they have no outstanding concerns about their academic or professional behaviours.
- Fees for the MB ChB are up to date.

6. Applying for intercalation

Medical students should apply for intercalation by completing the application form for the desired course. A list of currently available courses can be given by the Undergraduate Education Lead.

The application information required for each course may be different but will likely include evidence of assessment performance and a statement of support from the Medical School.

Requests for transcripts and a statement of support should be sent to FMHS-quality@buckingham.ac.uk

7. Applying to intercalate at another institution

A student who wishes to undertake an intercalated degree at another institution may apply to that institution before a Buckingham decision is made. However, the student must obtain written approval from the Medical School before accepting an offer where this commits them to interrupt the MB ChB, enrolling on the external programme, or leaving their current phase of study. An application or offer from another institution does not in itself confer permission to interrupt the Buckingham MB ChB.

The student should submit the request to the Medical School as early as possible. It should include the institution and programme, proposed start and end dates, admissions deadline, reason for the request, and enough programme information to assess the impact on the MB ChB and the proposed return point. If the external institution requires a transcript or statement of support before making an offer, this may be requested from the Medical School; provision of such documentation does not constitute approval to intercalate.

In considering an external intercalation request, the Medical School will take account of academic and professional standing, the timing and length of the proposed interruption, continuity and recency of clinical learning, the feasibility of return to an appropriate cohort or block, placement and assessment capacity, and any relevant regulatory, sponsorship or visa requirements. The decision

will be made on the circumstances of the individual case and may be subject to reasonable conditions.

Where approval is granted, the written decision will specify the approved period of interruption, the expected point of return to the MB ChB, and any conditions that must be met before return. The student remains responsible for meeting the admissions, fee and academic requirements of the external institution.

8. Decision and return to the MB ChB

All intercalation requests require formal written approval from the Medical School. Approval should identify the intercalated programme, the agreed interruption dates, the intended return point and any conditions. Students must notify the Medical School promptly of any material change to the approved programme or dates, as a revised approval may be required.

Return to the MB ChB will normally be to the point or cohort specified in the approval. Before return, the Medical School may require evidence that the intercalated period has concluded and may put in place proportionate re-orientation, skills refresh or other support where this is necessary to support a safe return to clinical study.

9. Review and appeal of an intercalation decision

A student whose request to intercalate is refused, or who considers that conditions attached to an approval are unreasonable, may request a review within 10 working days of the written decision. The request should state the outcome sought and the ground(s) for review.

A review may be requested where there was a material procedural error, a material factual error, relevant evidence was not considered, or there is new material evidence which, for good reason, could not reasonably have been provided earlier. Disagreement with academic or professional judgement alone is not a ground for review.

The review will be considered by the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, or a senior nominee who was not involved in the original decision. The reviewer may uphold or vary the decision or refer it back for reconsideration. The outcome and reasons will normally be provided in writing within 15 working days.

This review concerns only Buckingham's decision to permit interruption and return. Decisions made by another institution must be challenged through that institution's procedures. Where a separate Buckingham academic appeal or complaints route applies, the student will be directed to it.