

Working with vulnerable individuals, criminal convictions and DBS Checks Policy

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1. Purpose.....	3
2. Scope.....	3
3. Definitions	3
4. DBS and Criminal Record Checking Requirements	4
5. Admissions Process	5
6. Duty to Refer	6
7. Disclosure to Local Education Providers	7
8. GMC Registration and Transfer of Information to Foundation Schools	7
9. Data Protection.....	7
10. Equality Statement.....	8
11. Contact Information	8

Version History

Version	Approved by	Revisions made	Date
V1	Faculty Executive Committee	Links updated, procedure split out into separate document, information about barred lists and data protection added.	September 2026

1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide clarity on the requirements relating to Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, overseas criminal record checks, criminal conviction declarations and associated fitness to practise considerations for individuals studying, or intending to study on the MB ChB programme

In accordance with GMC guidelines, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are required to be completed by all health care professionals and medical students as they will be undertaking regulated activity. This document should be read in conjunction with the [disclosure requirements](#) of the General Medical Council (GMC) and GMC'S [Achieving Good Practice](#) (2024).

2. Scope

This policy applies to all individuals applying for admission to, or enrolled on, the MB ChB programme at the University of Buckingham. It sets out the requirements for DBS checks, overseas criminal record checks, criminal conviction declarations, and the University's processes for assessing and managing information relevant to student fitness to practise and patient safety.

3. Definitions

DBS	A DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check is a type of criminal record check that provides information about an individual's convictions and cautions within the UK.
Disclosure	Describes the service provided by the DBS and the document issued to the applicant and Registered Body when a DBS check has been completed.
Fixed Penalty Notice	(FPN) a notice that offers the alleged offender the opportunity to pay a fine, in which case the matter is not prosecuted, thereby sparing the offender a conviction, and saving time and expense.
LOGC	A LOGC (Letter of Good Conduct) is an official document, issued by a police authority or other authorised body, confirming whether an individual has a criminal record in a country where they have resided. It is used to support criminal record screening for applicants who have lived outside the UK.

Regulated Activity	Work, which involves close and unsupervised contact with vulnerable groups and children. This covers the provision of health and/or social care by or under the supervision of a health professional, including triage services and medical advice provided over the phone. It covers the provision of personal care and / or household assistance to an adult who needs it because of their age, illness and / or disability.
Vulnerable Adult	The new definition of regulated activity relating to adults no longer labels adults as vulnerable; instead, the definition identifies the activities which, if any adult requires them lead to that adult being considered vulnerable at that time.

4. DBS and Criminal Record Checking Requirements

An enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check is required for all students on the MB ChB programme.

An Enhanced DBS certificate may disclose relevant criminal convictions, cautions and barring information. UK applicants are required to complete an Enhanced DBS check and subscribe to the DBS Update Service as a condition of entry to the programme.

Students must register with the DBS Update Service, an annual subscription service, which allows a student's status to automatically be updated by the DBS without them needing to complete another form.

Where an applicant completes an Enhanced DBS check before entry, the Medical School requires evidence that the DBS certificate has been registered with the DBS Update Service before commencing the programme. Where the Enhanced DBS check is completed after commencement of studies, evidence of DBS Update Service registration must be provided by the deadline specified by the Medical School. International applicants, and any applicant who has lived outside the UK for six months or more during the previous five years, will be required to provide a Letter of Good Conduct or equivalent overseas criminal record check from each relevant country.

Following the commencement of their studies, international students are also required to complete an Enhanced DBS check and subscribe to the Update Service.

Students are responsible for paying for the cost of their DBS check.

5. Admissions Process

The Admissions Team will provide applicants who firmly accept an offer of a place to study on the MB ChB programme with information regarding the DBS & LOGC processes, once their offer has become unconditional.

The Medical School does not wish to prevent individuals with criminal records or FPNs being considered for a place at UBMS, however the school has a legal obligation to consider its responsibilities to the public, to its students and to the regulatory bodies when considering applications from students who have criminal convictions, cautions, or other relevant disclosures.

Applicants are required to declare, in writing, any spent or unspent criminal convictions, cautions, Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) and Penalty Notices for Disorder (PNDs) as part of the admissions process.

All declarations will be reviewed in the first instance by the Professional Development and Conduct Lead, who is responsible for Fitness to Practise referrals. Consideration will be given to the nature, seriousness, frequency and pattern of any offences, together with any implications for professional conduct, patient safety and a future medical career.

Where a declaration is considered relevant, the matter will be referred to the Medical School's Fitness to Practise Panel for consideration. Following review, the Panel may recommend one of the following outcomes:

- Continuation of the medical school admissions process without prejudice; or
- A recommendation that the application for admission to the MB ChB programme be rejected.

Applicants have the right to appeal the outcome of the Fitness to Practise decision in accordance with the MB ChB Fitness to Practise Policy.

Failure to declare a relevant conviction, caution or other matter during the admissions process which subsequently comes to light, either before or after registration, may result in an offer of admission being withdrawn or, where appropriate, termination of studies on the programme.

Under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, it is a criminal offence for a person who is barred from working with children or vulnerable adults in regulated activity to apply for, or undertake, such activity. It is also an offence for the University knowingly to permit a barred individual to engage in regulated activity.

Individuals included on the DBS Children's Barred List or Adults' Barred List are not eligible for admission to the MB ChB programme. Where an applicant is identified as being subject to a barring decision, the application will be rejected, and no discretionary exceptions will be permitted.

Student Responsibility

All students on the MB ChB programme are required to complete an Enhanced DBS check and register

with the DBS Update Service. UK applicants are normally required to complete this before commencing the programme. International applicants are normally required to provide a LOGC or equivalent overseas criminal record check before commencing the programme and complete an Enhanced DBS check after commencing their studies in the UK. Students must also register their DBS certificate with the DBS Update Service and maintain an active subscription throughout their studies.

Students are responsible for retaining their DBS certificate and any related documentation. Where a DBS certificate is not received, students must contact the DBS directly and take any necessary action to obtain the certificate or arrange for any required reissue.

Students must immediately declare to the Medical School any criminal conviction, caution, conditional caution, Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN), Penalty Notice for Disorder (PND), or pending criminal investigation or prosecution that arises following submission of their application or at any point during their studies.

Students are responsible for ensuring that their DBS status remains valid for the duration of their enrolment on the MB ChB programme and that their DBS Update Service subscription is renewed annually.

Students who fail to maintain a valid DBS status, DBS Update Service subscription, or where applicable a valid LOGC, may be prohibited from undertaking clinical placements until the necessary requirements have been met. Where a DBS status expires whilst a student is on placement, the student may be withdrawn from placement until a new Enhanced DBS check is completed.

Students returning to the programme following an interruption of studies may be required by the Medical School to complete a new Enhanced DBS check, or provide other evidence of satisfactory clearance, before returning to study or placement.

6. Duty to Refer

In line with the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, the University has a duty to refer to the DBS any person, who may go on to undertake regulated activity, who has:

- Harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult;
- Satisfied the harm test; or
- Received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence.

Two main conditions need to be met to determine when a referral should be made:

1. Permanent removal from the regulated activity, this includes a student that withdraws before going through a Fitness to Practise hearing, as well as those who are terminated in the light of any such process.
2. The referring party thinks that the person has either:

- Engaged in relevant conduct i.e. conduct that endangers - can include verbal or financial abuse, or harm by omission
- Caused harm or poses a future risk of harm to individuals and vulnerable groups, including children.
- Received a caution for, or been convicted of, a relevant offence.
- Students should therefore be aware that the University has a duty, in law, to refer any events that can be considered as meeting the above conditions to the Disclosure and Barring Service. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-referrals-form-and-guidance>

7. Disclosure to Local Education Providers

The Medical School has an obligation to ensure that clinical placement providers and staff who are supervising MB ChB students are aware of concerns relating to fitness to practise issues, which might pose a risk to patient safety. In accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), placement providers will be notified on a case-by-case basis, and students will be informed of any such decisions where appropriate.

8. GMC Registration and Transfer of Information to Foundation Schools

All students in their final year are asked to disclose criminal record information to the GMC as part of their application for provisional registration and are also required to participate in the national Supporting Trainees Entering Practice (STEP) to Foundation Schools. This is a means both of supporting students as they move from Medical to Foundation School and ensuring that information that relates to patient safety is available to a nominated person in each Trust (e.g. the clinical tutor). Hence, it is appropriate to declare all ongoing significant health issues and repeated examination retakes. Students have ownership of the information they wish to disclose but are obligated to abide by GMC rules and provide information that may affect their ability to treat patients safely. Students with positive DBS records are advised to discuss their GMC and STEP declarations with the Professional Development team to ensure that appropriate information is provided. Guidance is provided by the GMC for medical students in their final year of study as part of the registration process.

9. Data Protection

All information obtained through the DBS process is handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).

Information obtained through DBS checks will be used solely for the purpose of assessing an applicant's or student's suitability to undertake regulated activity as part of the MB ChB programme, and to support the University's responsibilities regarding fitness to practise and patient safety.

Under the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, the DBS certificates are issued directly to applicants, who are required to present the certificate to the University for verification. The University will not retain a copy of the DBS certificate; however, the applicant's name, date of birth, DBS certificate number, issue date, and the outcome of the verification process may be recorded for audit and compliance purposes.

Information relating to DBS checks will be treated confidentially and will only be accessed by authorised staff with a legitimate need to know.

10. Equality Statement

The Medical School is committed to equal opportunities, and this policy aims to ensure that individuals with criminal convictions/cautions receive fair treatment, in accordance with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

11. Contact Information

Any queries about your DBS, LOGC or disclosure should be directed to FMHS-DBS@buckingham.ac.uk, who are responsible for managing and monitoring DBS records as part of the Medical School's Fitness to Practise procedure.