



THE UNIVERSITY OF
BUCKINGHAM

MEDICAL SCHOOL

MB ChB

Policy for Monitoring Engagement with Online Learning

1 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to define the policies and procedures for monitoring and supporting online learning and engagement during exceptional periods of remote delivery of the University of Buckingham MB ChB course. This document **must** be read in conjunction with the MB ChB Policy for [Attendance and Leave 2019](#), and the MB ChB Policy for Volunteering 2020.

2 Scope

This policy applies in periods of unexpected exceptional circumstances and is only applicable when the University is acting in accordance with Government guidelines on social distancing during the COVID 19 pandemic. All students on the University of Buckingham MB ChB course must adhere to this policy and guidelines below.

3 Definitions

In this document, like other documents from the Medical School the terminology of the General Medical Council '*Standards for Medical Education*' applies.

The use of the word 'must' means that an activity is obligatory and will be monitored. The use of the word 'should' means that the activity will normally comply with the guidance but there is discretion as to how that is achieved. The use of the word 'may' indicates that an activity can take place if appropriate.

Attendance: In the context of this document the term 'attendance' refers to online attendance.

Online Learning: A method of studying in which lectures are broadcast or conducted by correspondence, without the student attending the traditional or clinical learning environment.

Learning Event: A session of structured learning such as classes, courses, and training programs.

4 Policy

The MB ChB degree is achieved following a programme of professional training and students **must** demonstrate professional attitudes and behaviour consistent with the high standards that are expected of a doctor by the time they graduate. This means standards of attendance and engagement appropriate for a practicing professional.

4.1 Online learning and engagement requirements

The Medical School stipulates that all students **must** meet the standards set by the MB ChB General Regulations and learning outcomes in accordance with the '*Outcomes for Graduates 2018*' defined by the General Medical Council, in order to successfully graduate.

- The nature of the MB ChB programme, the design of the curriculum, group work and self-

directed learning structure do not allow for repeated missed sessions.

- The University has general expectations about attendance and engagement of all students which are defined in the University General Regulations for First Degrees and all of these regulations are stipulated in the MB ChB Student Agreement that **must** be signed by every student in each and every academic year.
- These requirements are to ensure that students learn efficiently and collaboratively, but ensures that all medical students meet the legal obligations of 5500 hours of EU-mandated clinical training.
- Satisfactory online learning and engagement **must** therefore be **100%** of all scheduled learning events, due to the nature of the curriculum design, educational model and the required learning outcomes of all students.
- All students have scheduled periods of leave during the course (scheduled holiday) so online learning and engagement at all other times is mandatory.

4.2 Registering online learning and engagement

All students **must** register their online learning and engagement at all scheduled learning events using the online VLE systems provided by the Medical School.

4.3 Monitoring online learning and engagement

The Medical School will monitor online learning and engagement according to the terms below, and will reconcile recorded absences with self-certification of illness of approved absences (section 4.5). Patterns of self-certification of absence **must** be monitored in line with normal employment practice, and appropriate action taken.

4.3.1 Requirements in Phase 1

Phase 1 of the MB ChB are the first two years of the course and is currently being delivered through the Medical School VLE, eportfolio and a number of online educational platforms to students working within their group work groups.

- Students **must** attend all the online teaching that is scheduled through Moodle and Teams, including group work, workshops and sessions as required, dependent on their individual situation (*see below*) and **must** complete the formative tasks as required by each Unit.
- Students **must** be marked as unsatisfactory if they have not done so.

The Medical School Phase 1 Curriculum team will monitor weekly student attendance and engagement using a number of metrics including, but not limited to:

1. Moodle and Teams login and download of learning materials;
2. Individual participation with, and completion of, Moodle quizzes;
3. Participation in collaborative group activities and upload of assignments as stipulated in a timely manner;
4. Successful completion and upload, of all formative assessments;

5. Completion of external modules and upload of certificates, as required by the Unit on eportfolio.
6. Completion of relevant eportfolio entries in accordance with the ARPP minimum requirements;

Online learning and engagement will be dependent upon and monitored in line with student GMT time zone, parental or caring responsibilities or significant other personal working situation in accordance with the terms below.

4.3.2 Requirements in Phase 2

Phase 2 is a full-time course and **must** be considered the same as full time employment.

- During the period of remote learning in Phase 2 this is dependent on students being within the virtual clinical experience hosted through the Medical School VLE and supported by hospital clinical educational supervisors and Medical School clinical educators. Students **must attend** these particular opportunities.
- There are a large number of additional teaching sessions and online workshops and these are valuable and important, and students **must** attend these sessions. They form the basis of the learning and preparation of students to become competent doctors and integral to professional development. Online learning and engagement at all teaching sessions is compulsory.
- Students **must** attend through Moodle and complete the formative tasks as required.
- Students **must** be marked as unsatisfactory if they have not done so.

The Medical School Phase 2 Curriculum team will monitor weekly student attendance and engagement using a number of metrics including, but not limited to:

1. Moodle login and download of learning materials;
1. Length of time participating in required activities;
2. Individual participation with clinical quizzes;
3. Successful completion of formative assessments;
4. Two weekly completion of remote learning form on eportfolio;
5. Completion of external modules and upload of certificates on eportfolio.
6. Completion of all relevant eportfolio entries in accordance with the ARPP minimum requirements.

Online learning and engagement will be dependent upon, and monitored in line with, student GMT time zone, parental or caring responsibilities or significant other personal working situation in accordance with the terms below.

4.4 Attendance data

The Medical School Student Support group will reconcile recorded absences with self-certification of illness and approved absences (*sections* 4.3 and 4.5).

- Should a student wish to contest the accuracy of the record they should write to the Student Support Lead within 14 calendar days of receipt of the information.
- Students whose attendance is giving cause for concern will be referred to the Concerns

process that will attempt to identify and remediate circumstances related to the unsatisfactory online attendance.

- A student whose online attendance continues to give cause for concern will be deemed in neglect of their academic obligations and their studies put on hold or terminated in accordance with the MB ChB General Regulations.
- Unsatisfactory online attendance and engagement, for any reason, will not be considered as mitigation for poor performance in subsequent assessments.

All records of student attendance form part of the Student Data held by the Medical School and as such may be reviewed within the information reviewed by an Appeals Panel when considering appeals against course termination.

4.5 Reporting absences

The Medical School recognises that occasional absence because of illness or exceptional personal circumstances is unavoidable.

- All students **must** offer an explanation for any online absences (and complete a self-certification form or exceptional absence form) from taught sessions (live or recorded).
- Failure to do so will mean that repeated absence is registered as unauthorised, and **must** be considered to be evidence of unprofessional conduct and as such **must** be referred to the Concerns process.
- The Medical School expects all students to manage absences correctly.
 - For short-term illness (sick leave) students **must** use the electronic self-certification form on Moodle.
 - For all other absences, the student **must** complete the electronic exceptional absence request form on Moodle.
 - For all absences, students **should** also notify:
 - the relevant Unit Lead (Phase 1) or
 - Curriculum team (Phase 2)

4.5.1 Absences due to working or volunteering

During the COVID 19 pandemic, students who are studying the MB ChB in both Phase 1 and Phase 2 may be acting as healthcare volunteers. Students who have undertaken a Medical School volunteering role **should** consult the MB ChB Volunteering Guidance as published by the Medical School as well as any individual contract of working hours as provided by their employer.

Students **should** consider the following statements:

- Annual MB ChB Student Agreement; that a recommended number of 10 hours paid work per week is permitted for a medical student in full time education.
- Tier 4 requirements; that a maximum number of 20 hours paid work per week is permitted for any student in full time education.
- A maximum number of 20 hours paid work and/or volunteering per week is permitted for a medical student in full time education during the remote learning period.

All students **may** offer an explanation for any online absences through volunteering if needed.

Students who are volunteering **must** learn and engage in all online teaching and assessment requirements as detailed in this policy. Individual circumstances **may** be discussed with the Volunteering Lead, Local Provider or Student Support team as required.

4.5.2 Short term illness; sick leave

Students will be able to 'self-certificate' for up to one week (five working days) and complete a self-certification form (For further details see [MB ChB Attendance and Leave Policy 2019](#)).

- For all other absences, the student **must** complete the electronic exceptional absence request form on Moodle.
- Patterns of self-certification of absence **must** be monitored in line with normal employment practice, and appropriate action taken.
- The Medical School **must** keep a record of all sick leave.
- If the student is ill for more than one week, then he/she must obtain a sick note from the GP or consultant and complete the certification form.
- The 5 working-day ruling is suspended during assessment and qualifying examination periods, when it is the responsibility of students to seek medical help as soon as possible for any ill health experienced during, or near to, the examinations. A medical certificate **must** be produced to explain any absence from assessments.
- It is the responsibility of the student to produce medical evidence of fitness to sit the exams and to acquire such evidence by the date specified by the Medical School. Mitigating Circumstances must be presented to the Medical School.
- Evidence will only be accepted from the student's registered GP, Occupational Health or professional specialist and not from any family or friend irrespective of whether they are medically qualified.

4.5.3 Exceptional absence

The Medical School recognises that there may be unavoidable exceptional circumstances that may prevent online learning and engagement on a particular day.

- Circumstances such as volunteering, GMT time zone, parental or caring responsibilities or significant other personal working situations will not be considered by the Medical School as reasons for exceptional absence. Specific reasons that constitute exceptional absence are detailed below (see [MB ChB Policy for Attendance and Leave 2019](#)).

4.5.3.1 Medical appointments

4.5.3.2 Compassionate leave

4.5.3.3 Religious festivals

4.5.3.4 VISA/passport renewals

4.5.3.5 External educational activities

4.5.3.6 Professional development

4.5.3.7 Extramural activities

- Exceptional absence request forms submitted online will be assessed according to the circumstance, number of days of absences already recorded for the student, the time and nature of the request, and will be either approved or rejected at the discretion of the Medical School.

- Each request will be considered on an individual basis and will be discretionary depending upon the stage of study.
- Any requests must be supported by evidence where applicable.
- Exceptional absence is NOT additional holiday entitlement.
- If a request is rejected but the student takes the time off, this will be deemed as an unauthorised absence.
- The Medical School reserves the right to refuse requests for absence.
- Students are advised to discuss situations with their Personal Tutor or the Student Support team as early as possible if they are concerned about taking leave.

5 *Duration of absences*

Phase 1

In Phase 1, each teaching day is normally divided into lecture and a group work components, each part counted as a learning event. Satisfactory online learning and engagement is 100% of all scheduled learning events, and will be monitored. Because of the nature of undergraduate medical training, the longest time in total per calendar year that a student may be absent is two weeks (10 working days) or the equivalent of 20 learning events. Students who exceed this threshold will receive an official warning letter from the Concerns Committee and a concern will be raised. Further absences will result in a meeting with the Dean of the Medical School where a decision may be taken to withhold a student from examinations or require a student to withdraw temporarily from the course and to return at the beginning of the year from which they withdrew, in accordance with the MB ChB General Regulations.

Phase 2

In Phase 2, the longest time that a student may be absent from Phase 2 is three weeks in a calendar year (15 working days) in total which reflects that of Foundation training. The reason that the maximum time is 3 weeks is that the maximum leeway in the programme for a student to 'recover' lost clinical education is 3 weeks. Any student who exceeds this threshold will receive an official warning letter from the Concerns Committee and a concern will be raised. Further absences will result in a meeting with the Dean of the Medical School where a decision may be taken to withhold a student from examinations or require a student to withdraw temporarily from the course and to return at the beginning of the rotation during which they withdrew, in accordance with the MB ChB General Regulations.

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