

Phase 2 Engagement Monitoring Procedures

School of Medicine

April 2024

Context

The purpose of this procedures document is to define the processes related to monitoring attendance and engagement in teaching and learning events within placement sites participating in Phase 2 of the University of Buckingham MB ChB course as a tool to identify students who may be facing difficulties with their studies and to support student wellbeing.

Definitions

“Attendance” refers to a student and/or group of students being present in the allocated location of a course activity.

“Engagement” relates to the proactive involvement of a student and/or group of students in their learning activities. Unless communicated otherwise, engagement will be assumed to require attendance.

“Unauthorised absence” is where a student is not in attendance as expected and either the absence notification and/or certification procedure has not been followed or the reason for absence doesn't meet the medical school's criteria for authorisation.

“Placement provider” refers to any organisation external to the University that is providing an educational experience for students on behalf of the medical school. This includes hospitals and GP surgeries as well as a variety of other organisations relevant to health and/or social care.

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1. Monitoring of engagement in Phase 2 across all placement providers

The placement provider will monitor student attendance on site and engagement with the learning activities using several metrics of their choice including, but not limited to the following:

- Attendance registers
- Swipe card systems
- QR code sign in systems
- Spot checks
- Reporting to a named individual
- Patient logbooks
- Completion of specific mandatory learning or assessment activities
- Portfolio activity

The specific metrics used may differ between blocks and placement providers and between individual sessions or locations within blocks. Individual staff involved in teaching/supervision of students will report student absence or non-engagement using the placement provider's local mechanism. A template for recording the local monitoring mechanism is available in the appendix.

2. Authorised absence

The medical school processes for requesting, reporting and authorising absences are described separately within the absence and leave policy. This covers notification of sickness absence as well as requests for planned absences (e.g. to attend a conference, funeral etc.) which must normally be made at least 2 weeks in advance. Please note that these processes are generally for unavoidable absence or educational reasons and should not be considered as student holiday entitlement (student holidays fall outside of the scheduled placement periods). Students should make themselves available to attend placement activities every weekday unless they have absence authorised by the medical school.

In addition to authorisation via the University, if a student needs to be absent from placement for any reason, they must also notify their placement provider at the earliest opportunity. For planned absences, this should be as soon as possible after the absence is authorised by the medical school. For sickness absence, this should be as soon as possible after a student realises, they will be unable attend and before the relevant activity is due to begin unless the circumstances make this impossible. Placement providers will notify students of a local route to report absences and these reporting mechanisms may vary between placement providers and between blocks. To ensure consistency across placements, any requests for absence made directly to placement providers should be referred back to the medical school.

3. Unauthorised absence

Placement providers will liaise with the Medical School through an agreed mechanism (that may be different for each placement provider) to cross reference local absence notifications from students and staff with authorised absences on the medical school database to identify and log any individual incidences of unauthorised absence. All individual incidences of unauthorised absence within any block should be added to the medical school database and reported to the Deputy Phase 2 lead at the student's base hospital through a locally agreed mechanism.

A student's first instance of unauthorised absence should result in an informal conversation (or other communication) with the student to ensure they are aware of the requirement and mechanism for reporting absences. Students should also be notified that any further instances of unauthorised absence will result in a professionalism concern being raised. Students should be signposted to support for any known barriers to engagement. Any further instances of unauthorised absence after the initial conversation should result in a professionalism concern being raised for the student. The concerns triage process will consider any contributing pastoral circumstances.

4. Non-engagement

If a student is present on site but not engaging appropriately in the learning activities, this should be discussed with the student at the time wherever possible or notified to them as soon as possible afterwards. The student's educational supervisor should also be notified. Any further instances of non-engagement or inappropriate engagement should result in a professionalism concern being raised for the student.

If a student has not engaged with a required online learning activity (e.g. training course, formative assessment), it would be appropriate to send at least one reminder that includes a final deadline for completion. If the activity is still not completed by that deadline and the student hasn't been in contact to provide an explanation/request a new deadline, the educational supervisor should be notified and a professionalism concern should be raised.

5. Overall engagement per block

Placement providers will develop a mechanism for block leads and educational supervisors to view the attendance and engagement record of individual students across the whole block. Educational supervisors will use this data to inform completion of the educational supervision reports.

5.1 Engagement section of the portfolio block reports:

The following options are available:

1. Excellent: Excellent engagement and no absences or minimal absences that were correctly reported.
2. Satisfactory: There were fewer than 5 absences that were correctly reported.
3. Unsatisfactory: Absences of 5 or more days that were reported correctly and/or good attendance but generally poor engagement.*
4. Unauthorised: Two or more absences were unauthorised.
5. Unsatisfactory and unauthorised: Absences of 5 or more days with 2 or more unauthorised*

*Some individual blocks may have additional criteria for satisfactory attendance, such as attending a number or proportion of sessions in individual components of a split block. In those cases, it may be possible for students to receive an unsatisfactory category even if their absences fall below the threshold numbers indicated here.

The attendance criteria above apply to the engagement section of the portfolio block reports regardless of whether or not all of the academic/portfolio block requirements have been completed (these are considered in other sections of the report). If unsatisfactory, a catch up plan for missed learning should be discussed and included in the comments. If unauthorised, a professionalism concern should be raised and this should be considered when completing the professionalism

section of the report. These processes will trigger mechanisms that consider potential support needs.

5.2 Overall performance in the end of block report

Attendance and engagement are not the only criteria for successful block outcomes so it is possible that some students will have satisfactory attendance but still not meet the outcomes for the block. This section of the block report is therefore independent of the attendance/engagement section and should consider all outcomes required for the block. However, if the total number of absences within an individual block exceeds 10 days, whether authorised or not, the overall outcome for the block should normally be recorded as unsatisfactory.

An unsatisfactory end of block report in itself is not a requirement to repeat the block or fail the course. This will trigger notification to the Deputy Phase 2 lead that there is a need for academic support and catch up activities. To facilitate this, any unsatisfactory end of block report (for any reason) should include the remaining requirements to achieve satisfactory status (e.g. additional clinic/ward time, exposure to specific presentations/practical procedures, CBDs etc.). End of block reports should also be completed on time (as unsatisfactory if necessary) even if a student hasn't done everything yet. Any proposed exception to the principles described above should be discussed with the relevant Deputy Phase 2 lead at the student's base hospital or the academic support lead at the medical school.

Students with unsatisfactory end of block reports will create a personal development plan to address the outstanding requirements and a new end of block report can be completed later when the agreed catch up work has been completed. Both the PDP and a new satisfactory end of block report will be required for the student to pass the relevant ARPP assessment. The new end of block report will normally be completed by the original educational supervisor or the person overseeing the student's academic catch up such as the block lead, deputy phase 2 lead, phase 2 lead or academic support lead.

6. Overall engagement per year

The medical school will monitor the total absence from the course across the academic year using the notifications made by students alongside any unauthorised absences reported by placement providers. The principles for allocating an overall engagement status and the support and escalation processes in relation to this are described in the absence and leave policy. In line with the national foundation training programme for medical graduates, even where absences are for reasons beyond a student's control, significant absence from the course may have an impact on a student's academic progress and therefore may require a student to extend their training.

7. Document Control

Date policy approved: 27th March 2024

Date of policy review approval: n/a

Date of next policy review: Academic year 2024/25

Appendix:

Template for local placement provider engagement monitoring processes

For students

Key staff contacts:

- e.g. lead administrator, Deputy Phase 2 lead, lead engagement contact

Mechanism for students to access their timetable:

- e.g. Web link, paper copy etc.
- How they will be notified of any changes
- What to do if a session is cancelled or they can't find the person they are due to report to

Engagement expectations

- Overview of what they are allowed, expected and not allowed to do proactively in different types of setting.
- How lateness etc. will be dealt with
- Any relevant local rules/requirements relating to the meaning of "engagement" e.g. clothing/equipment requirements, acceptable use of devices, cameras on/off for Teams sessions etc.

Local route for students to report absences

- e.g. designated email address/phone number, specific contact person or role, online form

For staff

Key staff contacts:

- e.g. lead administrator, Deputy Phase 2 lead, lead engagement contact

Mechanism for clinical supervisors and teaching staff to know which students to expect where and when

- e.g. Web link, email etc.

Route for clinical supervisors and teaching staff to report missing or poorly engaged students

- e.g. designated email address/phone number, specific contact person or role

Process for collating and analysing attendance and engagement data

- e.g. who is responsible for collating information, when, how often etc.
- where information is stored
- Process for cross referencing against EMER
- Process for reporting unauthorised absences and non-engagement with significant activities (e.g. formatives) to medical school

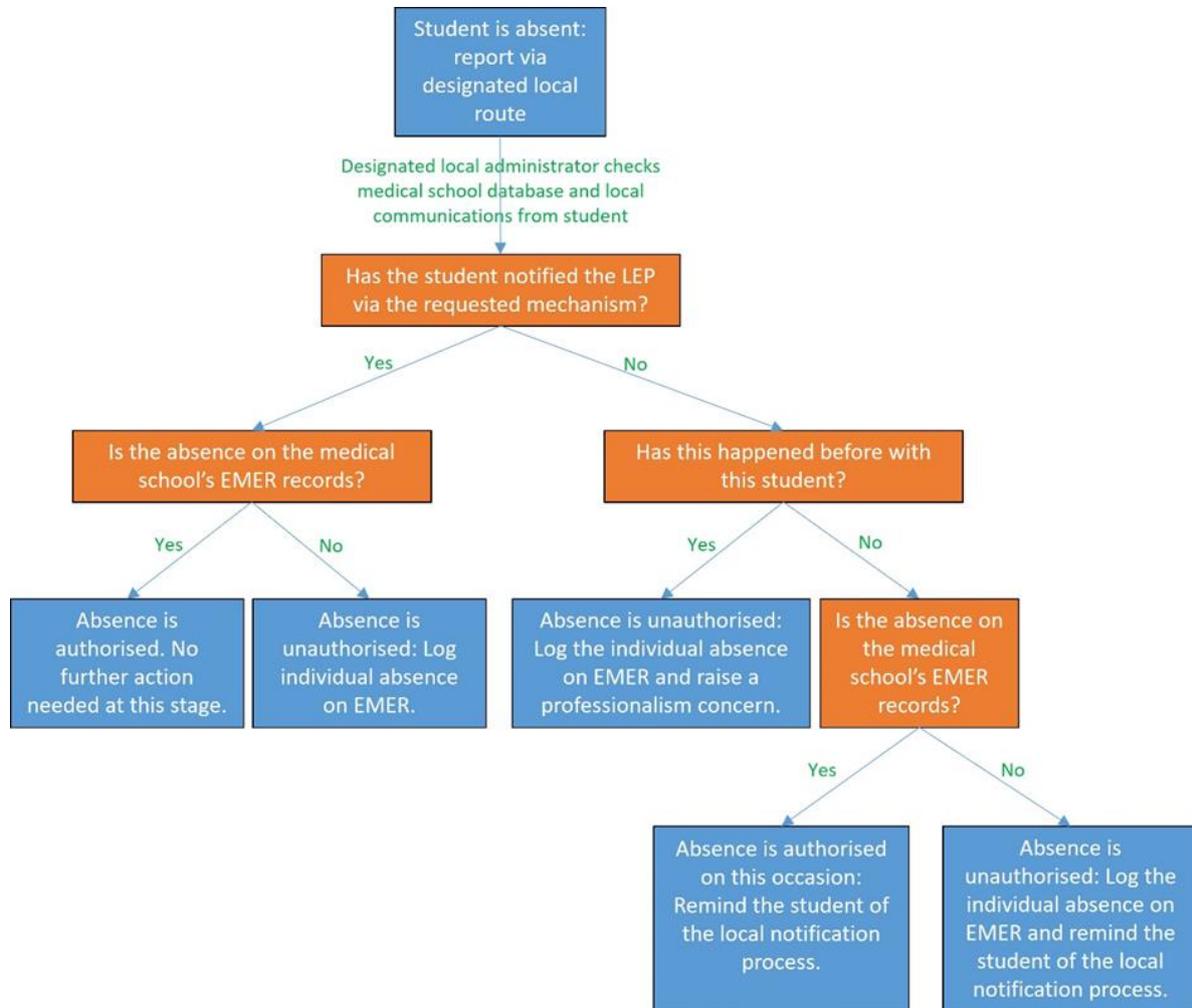
Route and guidance for educational supervisors to access and use block level attendance and engagement data

- e.g. Web link, email, sharepoint folder etc.
- Guidance around block specific thresholds or processes around conversations with students

Route for Deputy Phase 2 leads to access attendance and engagement data across blocks

- e.g. Web link, email, sharepoint folder etc.

Phase 2 absence flow chart: Individual absences



Phase 2 absence flow chart: End of block reports

NB: The educational supervisor will need to check engagement data for the ENTIRE BLOCK via the agreed local route.

