



THE UNIVERSITY OF
BUCKINGHAM

MEDICAL SCHOOL

MB ChB

Guidance for Personal Tutors

1 Introduction

Firstly, many thanks for deciding to act as a Personal Tutor for our students on the MB ChB course and we hope you will find this a positive experience that will help to support our students as Tomorrow's Doctors. The aim of this scheme is for you to become a "professional friend" to your tutees, helping them to navigate Medical School, University and Trust processes and give help and improvement when needed. Every student in Medical School is allocated a Personal Tutor, who is responsible for overseeing their general welfare and helping them to prosper on the course. As a Personal Tutor in Phase 1 you will be allocated a group of 8-9 1st year students for the duration of Phase 1. When your tutees progress into Phase 2 you will be allocated a new group. In Phase 2 you will have 8-9 students in the clinical rotations.

This document is intended to provide guidance and information on the roles and responsibilities as a medical student Personal Tutor, as well as sources of support for both you and your students within the Medical School. Please also refer to the University of Buckingham Medical School Student Support Guidance and the website for additional information. We hope that this Personal Tutoring system will be of great benefit to our students in their progress through Medical School and to help them fulfil their true potential. We also hope that our students will identify with the Medical School and their Personal Tutor and feel a sense of belonging. However, for this to work effectively, we must develop a real partnership between both students and staff, the full engagement of both as well as the constant review and improvement to the system.

2 Being a Medical School Personal Tutor

Our Personal Tutoring system aims to provide every student with a supportive mentor; someone whom they get to know and who maintains regular contact with them, who is accessible and to whom they can turn for support in times of difficulty. A good relationship between a Personal Tutor and their tutee encourages students to talk about both achievements and any difficulties they are experiencing. The majority of medical students will cope well with the demands of university life and the MB ChB programme, however, inevitably there will be periods when some students experience problems or encounter situations that undermine their confidence and capabilities. It is the Medical School's responsibility to provide Student Support services to assist students with academic, personal and practical problems and the Personal Tutor is an important part of this overall support system. The University of Buckingham requires that all students have access to personal tutorials throughout their study and to meet with their Personal Tutor on regular occasions in both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of their studies.

The Personal Tutor is however only one part of the overall support system, which is multi-layered and designed with referral pathways to manage students experiencing different types and levels of difficulty. Your role is to be a non-judgemental mentor supporting students however well or badly they are doing and even when they are in major difficulties, and may be the subject of disciplinary or other procedures in the Medical School or University. You will not be required to provide specialist counselling or academic support, though may play a part in directing students to that. You will also have no role in assessing your individual tutees other than the examiner responsibilities that you will have for the whole cohort. Unlike on other taught programmes, medical students will be placed in University, clinical and General Practice locations and the Personal Tutor system is designed, such

that, the most appropriate Personal Tutor support is provided at each stage of their undergraduate course.

In years 1-2:

Students will be allocated one Personal Tutor to support them for the first two years of the programme. Personal Tutors who do not directly supervise patient care in wards and clinics will tutor students in Phase 1 and each Personal Tutor would usually, but not exclusively, be an academic involved in the delivery of the MB ChB programme. Each tutor will be allocated approximately 8-9 first year students and 8-9 second year students (although this will be negotiable between Tutors). There will be a clear written handover of each student to their third year clinical Personal Tutor, although students may still wish to contact their Phase 1 tutors even when in Phase 2.

In years 3-4.5:

Students will be allocated a new Personal Tutor in Phase 2 of the programme. This tutor would usually, but not exclusively, be a ward/clinically based doctor from one of the Trusts that are involved in delivery of the MB ChB programme. Each tutor will be allocated approximately 8-9 students in each year (although this will be negotiable between Tutors). They will meet with their students, and some meetings may need to be by email, and in conjunction with the educational supervisor, when students are in different Local Education Providers (LEPs).

NOTE: Where students do not progress to the next year of study, Personal Tutors should continue to provide support to that student until they successfully progress or leave the programme.

3 Roles and Responsibilities of Personal Tutors in Medicine

- Personal tutoring aims to provide continuity and advice based on experience and understanding of individual students and covers four principle dimensions:
- Academic support (providing general guidance to help students improve their academic performance and progress)
- Pastoral support (provide opportunities to discuss personal health and well-being, helping students if they are in difficulty, and directing them to specialist support services)
- Personal and professional development using the ePortfolio (helping students to develop as a future doctor, reflect and plan a career)
- Signpost students to appropriate support services and learning opportunities for development
- Community of learning (helping students to identify with the Medical School and the NHS and feel that they are an individual)

You are not expected to

- Provide personal teaching or academic remediation
- Manage conduct or disciplinary issues
- Provide any direct healthcare to a tutee who is unwell
- Provide in depth knowledge and assistance with accommodation, finance and welfare issues

Specifically the main responsibilities are:

- **Academic supervision and advice:** Tutors should review the academic progress of each of their tutees, including discussion of examination results and feedback. Students should bring their assessment results and feedback on assessment performance to meetings to discuss. Tutors will be informed of their students' results in examinations and they may wish to discuss work and revision patterns with their tutees. A student may need to be set clear objectives for the coming months to remedy identified difficulties or deficiencies. Students whose academic progress is causing concern will also be referred automatically to the Concerns Group by the examination boards. The Concerns Group will make appropriate referrals and require action plans from students, and the tutor should support the student in responding to these requirements in a non-judgemental way. Personal tutors have no role in assessing their individual tutees, though will of course act as examiners for the whole cohort.
- **Personal and professional development through the E-portfolio:** Tutors will advise their tutees on the construction and development of their e-portfolio, but not assess it either formatively or summatively. Students should bring their e-portfolios and feedback on performance to meetings to discuss.
- **Pastoral care:** A student's personal issues will have a direct impact on their academic performance and pastoral care is a principal objective of the Personal Tutor scheme. Any personal problems which may be affecting a student's performance should be explored. Student self-referral on to the Student Support service is encouraged (and must be recorded) or for more significant problems reported directly to the Concerns Group with the student's knowledge. Tutors should not enter into a therapeutic relationship with their students even if they are medically qualified to do so.
- **Career and course advice:** Other areas often raised during meetings include advice on student selected components, application for foundation year posts, electives, career decisions and requests for references. In depth knowledge of these areas is not required, rather a Personal Tutor's experience and knowing to whom to direct students to for further advice, for example the local Deanery.
- **Community of learning:** Students should be encouraged to be proactive in arranging both sessions of peer tutoring/mentoring, as well as other self-supporting activities in the University and Trust. This will promote a sense of community and belonging.

4 The Personal Tutor role Specification

All Personal Tutors are accountable to the Student Support Lead and ultimately the Director of Medical Education and will undertake this role in accordance with the guidance from the Medical School. Personal tutor workload, responsibilities, number of tutees and current contact hours will be recorded and reviewed.

Personal Specification:

- Committed to the process and to providing the best possible support to the MB ChB students.
- A good communicator able to develop a supportive relationship with their tutees.
- Accessible in relation to geography, capacity and outlook.

Roles and Responsibilities:

- To undertake the required number of meetings with each tutee.
- To use each meeting to support the students in their study skills and educational progress and preparation for assessments.
- Monitor and record generic skills acquisition, and engagement with the programme through completion of the e-portfolio.
- Provide Pastoral Support and referral where necessary to additional support and guidance networks.
- Be aware of, and monitor any reasonable adjustments in support of the tutees learning.
- Produce a report of each meeting that is recorded securely in the relevant system (the student's e-portfolio).
- To identify any student issues affecting progression and to promptly alert Student Support where this is the case, with the student's consent.
- To report to the Concerns Group any issues that may affect student progression that the tutor and student agree should be shared.
- To exercise an over-riding duty of care and report to the Concerns Group immediately any issues that may affect student safety, the safety of others or where Fitness to Practise may be called into question, irrespective of the permission or confidentiality of the student.
- Will continue to support in an unconditional and non-judgemental way students who are giving cause for concern and being managed by the Concerns Process, or who have been referred to fitness to practise proceedings.
- To act as an advocate for students who are going through appeals or other processes.
- To provide a written handover of students to subsequent personal tutors.
- To accommodate any development needs, for example attendance at training events as requested, career progression.
- To promote sessions of peer/tutoring and mentoring and other self-supporting activities.
- To undertake the appropriate training for the role.
- To report on quality of the provision, to be audited and managed annually.

Reviewing the e-portfolio:

Personal tutors have **NO** role in the summative assessment of their individual tutees e-portfolios, but will advise their tutees on the development of them.

Portfolios will be graded (See Code of Practice for Assessment for further details if needed) as excellent, satisfactory, needing work or needing major work and the Tutor should advise the student of their portfolios are developing in accordance with these grades.

Structure of the Portfolio

The portfolio structure is designed with Categories of Evidence for revalidation on one axis, and the Domains of Good Medical Practice on the other. The student will continually update a 'dashboard' indicating their estimate of the extent to which they are currently meeting the outcomes defined in Tomorrow's Doctors 2009. Students may also choose to provide evidence of wider activities, such as charity work, or exceptional contribution to the life of the Medical School and University. It is this dashboard that the Personal Tutors should review.

Monitoring Concerns & commendations

If a tutee has been referred to the Concerns process as a result of academic progress, health, conduct or attitude which are causing concern this is recorded in the portfolio. Any student who is being managed by that process must incorporate into their portfolio their action plan, reflections upon the circumstances which led to the concerns, the way in which they reacted to the concerns process, and the way in which concerns were mitigated. This may include reflective written pieces where these have been required as a part of the management of professional concerns.

Students should also incorporate into their portfolio any commendations from staff, fellow students, or patients, and any other evidence of exceptional achievement in any aspect of their life.

5 Meetings Guidance

In years 1-2

In Phase 1 it is anticipated that the tutor and their students will meet for an introductory 'Meet your Group' meeting in January during the Induction week. In the first instance this will be between the Personal Tutor and all of his/hers tutees in Phase 1. The aim of this first meeting will be familiarisation, communication and socialisation. This initial meeting should be used to explain the scheme, the preparatory and follow-up work expected, and to outline the objectives for the years ahead. The tutor may indicate what is expected in terms of academic progress and give guidance on work patterns, study skills and completing their e-portfolio as well as peer tutoring and other student-led group activities. Tutors should agree a way of working with tutees in subsequent individual meetings including how the e-portfolio will be shared. He/she should indicate how they can be contacted if the student experiences academic or pastoral difficulty. As a guide, this first group meeting may be expected to last one hour. This initial meeting should be followed up by 1:1 meetings as set out in a meeting schedule. A meeting or email/telephone contact should also be arranged at the beginning of the final term each year to allow the tutor to complete a final Personal Tutor meeting record when the student progresses to the end of year assessments. The e-portfolio will be fully assessed formatively at the end of year 1 and at the end of year 2, by an independent Tutor, to identify reliably, those students whose progress is cause for concern. The Medical School requires a minimum of three contacts between student and tutor per year. Where a student fails a summative assessment, the tutor should offer further meetings for additional support.

In years 3-4.5

In Phase 2 the timing of the meetings will be at the discretion of the student and their Personal Tutor. The Medical School requires a minimum of three contacts between student and tutor per year. Personal tutors should offer students general advice and assistance in the ongoing development of their e-portfolio. In Phase 2 the e-portfolio will be assessed summatively on three occasions through a formal appraisal interview with other tutors, and this will occur independently from the review by the Personal Tutor. In Phase 2, tutors may conduct email or telephone meetings, but should aim a face to face meeting at least once in this year. The aim is for each Personal Tutor in Phase 2 to be supported by a doctor in training who will be an integral part of their Personal Tutor Group. Working closely with the students and their Personal Tutor, they may provide additional

tuition which may include bedside teaching with formative assessment and provide helpful feedback. They will liaise with the Personal Tutor regarding student progress and record the feedback provided. The Medical School recognises that there will be a need for flexibility in the frequency, timing and duration of meetings in order to accommodate the needs of students and Personal Tutors, including, for example, evening sessions. All meetings must, however be recorded in the Personal Tutor meeting record and make up part of the student's e-portfolio.

6 General Guidance

1. One to one meetings should be long enough to achieve the objectives of each session, and will usually include a review of the tutee's performance (drawing on evidence and possible a review of their e-portfolio) and reflect and plan their priorities for the following 6 months. These meetings will be used for the review of relevant career or pastoral advice and any specific areas that may have been highlighted for discussion from previous meetings. There should be time to allow students to raise any concerns and discuss alternative support networks (University GP or through family). All meetings will be recorded confidentially in the student's e-portfolio.
2. Personal Tutors should meet their students at least once per term, but should always remain accessible by phone or email, as required. The Personal Tutor will also be available to communicate with and/or meet students on a "needs" basis, out of the meeting schedule, and respond promptly (normally within 3 working days) to such requests. Where this is not possible, the Student Support Lead should be alerted so that alternative arrangements can be made.
3. Personal Tutors should clearly explain that these meetings are compulsory and recorded. If there is a good reason why students cannot attend an arranged meeting, the student must contact their Personal Tutor in advance of the meeting date to explain.
4. A Personal Tutor report form **MUST** be completed after each meeting. The tutor should retain a copy for their own records. The tutor is representing the Medical School at the same time as trying to provide help and support. It is usual for issues raised during meetings to be included in the report form but (except where Fitness to Practice or danger to self or others is concerned) this must be by mutual agreement. If the tutor feels unable to deal with any of the issues raised he/she **MUST** refer the student for further advice to Student Support or the Concerns Group. These reports will be completed and logged in the e-portfolio of each student, with the student's knowledge.
5. Personal Tutors must keep in touch with all tutees. A seemingly confident or successful student may not be problem-free and they will benefit from and appreciate support and interest in their progress.
6. Personal Tutors must be aware of cultural diversity of communication between different groups of students. Students from some backgrounds may present with a lack of assertiveness, deference to authority or inability to ask for help if this is deemed to be inappropriate in their culture.
7. Personal Tutors must keep a professional relationship with their tutees. Be mindful that there is a difference between being friendly and befriending a student. Avoid socialising with particular students or becoming caught up in their problems.

8. Personal Tutors must give students their undivided attention in personal tutorials and avoid any interruptions. Allow students to talk about their situations freely and openly, avoid telling a student what to do.
9. Personal Tutors must make a record of each discussion with each tutee, as these will serve as pointers for the next meeting and these may provide information that could be used in a reference or some other supportive statement you are called upon to write for the student. It is a course requirement for students to complete the Personal Tutor meeting section of their e-portfolio. An additional private record of any issues that both parties feel are not suitable to commit to the e-portfolio may be kept unless this is in contradiction with 4 above.
10. Personal Tutors must regard all conversations with individual tutees as confidential and should not discuss their problems with anyone else without the student's permission, including parents. However it is important to stress to students that this confidentiality is conditional and that if there are issues where the student, other students, members of the public or patients are being put at risk, it is your duty to report this information to the Concerns Group, which over rides this duty of confidentiality.
11. Personal Tutors may be expected to be asked for a reference. Encourage tutees to provide an up to date CV and details of their academic progress in their e portfolios, with any request.
12. Whilst personal tutors have an over-riding duty of care to report concerns about their tutees to the Concerns Process, should this occur the student may request alternative personal tutorial support if they feel the existing tutorial relationship will compromise their position.

7 Further training and support

The Medical School will provide training for all Personal Tutors at the beginning of each new academic year which will cover all the basic aspects of the role in accordance with Tomorrow's Doctors Fitness to Practice. Further advice and support on individual student issues can also be given by the Student Support Lead (med-studentsupport@buckingham.ac.uk) 07715 371354.

Frequently asked questions

How do we contact each other?

At the beginning of the academic year, you will receive a list of your tutees and email addresses. Communication by email seems to be the most effective as students frequently change home/postal addresses. On the first meeting double-check that the students are receiving emails and that their email address is correct. Encourage them to use their University email account when contacting you and to check it very regularly. It is worth stressing to them that e-mail is the primary route the Medical School will use to communicate with them, and that the School will assume that any e-mail sent will have been read and will not accept excuses as to why this did not happen.

How are meetings arranged?

Students have up to 4 half-days each week free from scheduled teaching and therefore can fit around your schedule. You should contact your students to arrange a mutually convenient time for meeting. It is often helpful to suggest available slots from which the students can choose and confirm. If a student does not take up offers of suggested meetings, you should record your attempts to arrange a meeting.

Where should the meetings occur?

We prefer it if scheduled meetings occur in the Medical School Building, with which the students are familiar, rather than an NHS office or department. This does not have to be the case for ad hoc meetings; you can meet in other venues agreed between you and your tutee.

What if my student does not turn up?

The Medical School has allocated space during the academic week for tutors to meet students and there should therefore not be an academic reason for a student to fail to attend. Attendance at Personal Tutorial meetings will be recorded. If your Personal tutee fails to attend a pre-arranged meeting it will be considered an absence from the programme and will be recorded as such. Some students may not wish to make use of the Personal Tutor system and may not contact you except when required by the School. It is important to stress at the outset that your role is to be a “professional friend” who may be helpful in supporting them with mitigation and to be a guide through University processes.

What if my student has problems?

Occasionally your tutee will develop a major problem (financial or accommodation difficulties, physical or mental illness, harassment) and as a Personal Tutor you may be consulted by the student for advice and help outside the scheduled meeting system. There is no expectation that you have specialist counselling skills but you need to be aware of where to direct the student for help. Within the Medical School, your tutee can be directed to the Student Support Team who will be able to advise about particular problems or to suggest who may be able to help, for example health and well-being, practical matters and learning and career development.

You may find the following document useful: Supporting medical students with mental health conditions GMC (2013) <http://www.gmc-uk.org/education/undergraduate/23289.asp>

It is unusual for students to develop major problems, but the aim of the Personal Tutor system is to act as a safety net if other structures fail. You are not expected to become an expert in all the various ways students sometimes need support, just to be a single point of contact and to be able to refer students to the appropriate service if you cannot help.

From the outset of the course your tutees will be introduced to the importance of looking after themselves and the role this has in their practice as a doctor. They will need to demonstrate an understanding of issues relating to personal health and well-being and why doctors are at risk and describe how personal health and well-being can affect their fitness to practise.

Given the professional nature of the MB ChB programme it is important that all Personal Tutors familiarise themselves with the General Medical Council and Medical Schools Council's 'Medical students: professional values and fitness to practise' guidance. Should you have any concerns you should contact the Student Support Lead for further advice. Concerns regarding professional conduct or behaviour can be reported to the Concerns Group by completing a "Concerns Form" which is available on Moodle or electronically from med-studentsupport@buckingham.ac.uk.

How do I find information on academic support?

You may be asked to give general academic advice. An appropriate role is to keep under review the development and progress of the student's academic development. Students should be encouraged to use the study skills information provided by the Phase 1 unit leads. Students should also be encouraged to make full use of Moodle. Student progression will be closely monitored throughout Phase 1 and it is our aim to identify those students who may be considered at risk of academic failure or in need of additional help, support or advice. Students who are experiencing academic problems or feel they are under-performing should be referred to the subject-specific Phase 1 Unit academic leads or Phase 1 Lead for advice and support. In this situation an email from you to the relevant member of staff may assist the struggling or shy student.

If your tutee's academic performance is not what is expected, they may be enrolled on an action planning programme. This offers a series of structured activities carried out by the student and allows the student the opportunity to reflect on feedback given to encourage the development of more effective study skills. Personal tutors are not expected to provide individual teaching or academic remediation for their tutees and such requests can be directed to the subject-specific Phase 1 Unit academic leads or Phase 1 Lead. Curriculum, timetable and workbook information can be found on Moodle or from the Curriculum Manager.

How do I advise on careers and specialties?

The Medical School recognises that Personal Tutors cannot provide extensive careers guidance. The Oxford Deanery will assist, providing workshops and lectures on medical careers, as well as will incorporate opportunities for the student to experience different specialties, develop skills, and explore career options in an increasingly competitive environment for Foundation posts. This will be approached in a number of ways. In Phase I we will introduce the student to the diversity of medical careers and training pathways, and encourage them to explore what medical career might be

appropriate based on their personal interests, characteristics and attributes. In Phase 2 workshops will focus upon specialisation, attributes and applications.

Document meetings

Personal Tutors **MUST** complete a PT report for individual scheduled and ad-hoc meetings. A template for the report is provided and is available electronically. Reports can be submitted electronically to med-studentsupport@buckingham.ac.uk and will be included in each student's file.

There is also a mechanism to report personal or health concerns directly to the Student Support Team. PT reports concerning details of personal or health issues can be marked "sensitive" and be sent to claire.stocker@buckingham.ac.uk with a note of meeting held on the student file.

Any Concerns regarding professional conduct or behaviour can be reported directly to the Concerns Group by completing a "Concerns Form" available on Moodle or electronically from to med-studentsupport@buckingham.ac.uk.

Contacts for the Personal Tutor Programme

Head of School	Professor Mike Cawthorne	mike.cawthorne@buckingham.ac.uk
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Programme contacts			
Director of Medical Education	Overall responsibility for the MB ChB Course	Professor Stewart Petersen	stewart.petersen@buckingham.ac.uk
Student Support and Pastoral Lead	Assists the Director and responsible for Student Support	Dr Claire Stocker	claire.stocker@buckingham.ac.uk
Phase 1 Lead	Assists the Director and Curriculum Phase 1 Lead	Dr Kenny Langlands	kenny.langlands@buckingham.ac.uk
Phase 2 Lead	Assists the Director and Curriculum Phase 2 Lead	Professor Doug McWhinnie	doug.mcwhinnie@buckingham.ac.uk
Equality, Diversity and Opportunities Lead		Dr Joanne Selway	jo.selway@buckingham.ac.uk
Student Welfare		Student Welfare	dee.bunker@buckingham.ac.uk

A list of Phase 1 and Phase 2 Unit Leads contact details can be found on Moodle.

Personal Tutor Report

<i>Please indicate:</i>	Sensitive *	<input type="checkbox"/>
	For School File	<input type="checkbox"/>
	No issues raised	<input type="checkbox"/>

Student name: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Year of study:

Cohort:

Group:

Tutor name: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Reason for meeting: [Choose an item.](#)

Date of meeting: [Click here to enter a date.](#)

Health / welfare concerns raised: [Choose an item.](#)

Summary of meeting

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