



A guide to the UCLMS Personal Tutor Scheme for Personal Tutors and Students

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Introduction

Every student at UCL is allocated a Personal Tutor, who is responsible for overseeing their academic progress and general welfare. Full information is available on the UCL personal tutors' website which can be found at <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/personaltutors/>.

This is a brief guide to help staff and students in the Medical School: it is intended to provide guidance and information for both new and experienced Personal Tutors on the MBBS programme and for medical students participating as tutees. It outlines the aims, roles and responsibilities as well as sources of support for both tutors and tutees. This MBBS guidance outlines the way in which the UCL policy is modified to meet the complex demands of the medical school. There is also further information about medical student support and guidance on the UCL medical school website at <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/medical-school/staff-students/student-support>.

We hope that tutors and tutees will find the scheme to be an enjoyable and enriching activity that will help shape and support Tomorrow's *Doctors*.

We hope you will find this guidance helpful.

*Dr Deborah Gill
Dr Will Coppola
Dr Scott Rice*

*Director UCL Medical School
Divisional Tutor
Medical Student Support Tutor and Lead for Personal Tutors*

Contacts for Personal Tutors and Student Support:

Personal Tutor Team (for all communications relating to the personal tutor scheme):

Contact address: medsch.ptutors1-6@ucl.ac.uk

Student Support Team (for referrals to and appointments with Student Support Tutors):

Contact address for tutors and students: medsch.student-support@ucl.ac.uk

The personal tutor system at UCL Medical School

The personal tutoring system at UCL Medical School (UCLMS) seeks 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 trouble. A good relationship between personal tutors and their tutees encourages students to talk about both achievements and any difficulties they are experiencing.

For most of the time, the majority of medical students cope well with the demands of university life and the MBBS programme. However, there are inevitably periods when the going gets tough for some, when they get themselves into difficulties or encounter situations that undermine their confidence and capabilities. UCL and the Medical School provide an [extensive range of advisers and 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.

UCL requires all students to have access to personal tutorials throughout their study at UCL and to have contact with their personal tutor on regular occasions in each year of study. UCL guidance on Personal Tutors may be found at: www.ucl.ac.uk/personaltutors. In view of the six year duration of the MBBS programme and the location of teaching in the later years, the following arrangements have been put in place at UCLMS to ensure the most appropriate personal tutor support at each stage of undergraduate medical training¹:

Years 1-3:

On entry to the MBBS programme students are allocated a personal tutor to support them through the early years of the programme. The Personal Tutor will usually, but not exclusively, be an academic from one of the four faculties involved in the delivery of the MBBS programme. Each tutor will be allocated approximately five students, retaining this group at the end of the year, as they progress to their second year of study. In the following academic session the tutor is allocated five new students from the new intake, and so on.

In Year 1 it is expected tutors will meet with their tutees as a group at the start of session followed by a series of individual contacts, which may be in person if requested by the student or by email or by phone. The group meeting will be arranged by the MBBS Personal Tutor Team and tutors and students should agree their subsequent method of contact at this meeting. In Year 2, contacts may be in person if requested by the student or by email or by phone. In year 3, the integrated BSc (iBSc) year, students are allocated an iBSc personal tutor within their individual iBSc, but should remain in contact with their MBBS personal tutor during year 3 and may initiate contact or request meetings for advice regarding general MBBS matters and requests for references.

¹ Where students do not progress to the next year of study, but remain on the programme, it will be normal practice for tutors to continue to provide personal tutor support to that student until they successfully progress or leave the programme.

Tutors are asked to notify the Medical School Student Support Team at medsch.student-support@ucl.ac.uk of any concerns about the progress and/or wellbeing of any of their individual tutees and to take advice from the Divisional Tutor if further action or support might be helpful and to enable prompt action to be taken if there are issues likely to impact on a student's professionalism, performance or progression.

Students are advised to keep a record of their personal tutor contacts in their portfolios and are asked to notify the MBBS Personal Tutor Team at medsch.ptutors1-6@ucl.ac.uk if they experience difficulties in arranging contacts with their tutor or have any other concerns about the support they are receiving.

Years 4-6:

Students will be allocated a new personal tutor to support them for the final three years of the programme. This tutor will usually, but not exclusively, be an NHS clinician from one of the Trusts that are involved in delivery of the MBBS programme. Each tutor will be allocated approximately four to five students in each year. In Year 4 it is expected that tutors will meet with their tutees as a group at the start of session followed by a series of individual contacts, which may be in person if requested by the student, by email or by phone. The group meeting will be arranged by the MBBS Personal Tutor Team and tutors and students should agree their subsequent method of contact at this meeting. In year 5, mindful of the more distributed nature of the course, contacts are normally by email or by phone, but may be in person if requested by the student. In the final year the personal tutor role will be shared with the education supervisor in the district general hospitals (DGH) but personal tutors should provide at least one further contact, normally via email or phone. As the demands of being personal tutor reduces in years 5 and 6, year 4-6 tutors will normally take on five new year 4 students each year meaning each tutor has up to 15 students across years 4-6.

Records of contacts are maintained through the e-portfolio, but additionally tutors are asked to notify the Medical School Student Support Team at medsch.student-support@ucl.ac.uk of any concerns about the progress and/or wellbeing of any of their individual tutees and to take advice from the Divisional Tutor if further action or support might be helpful and to enable prompt action to be taken if there are issues likely to impact on a student's professionalism, performance or progression.

The tutor for Years 4-6 will be responsible for providing a reference on behalf of the Medical School for Foundation School applications.

Students who are admitted to the MBPhD programme are allocated to an MBBS tutor in Year 4 and return to the same MBBS tutor for Years 5 and 6. During their PhD, personal tutoring is the responsibility of the MBPhD Programme Lead.

Aims of the personal tutor system

Personal tutoring at UCLMS aims to provide continuity and enable the tutor to provide advice based on a relatively lengthy experience and understanding of individual students. There are several core functions:

- **Academic supervision and advice:** the aim is for the student to talk frankly about any difficulties. Students are encouraged to bring a portfolio of their work and assessment results to meetings to discuss with their tutor. Tutors will be informed of their students' results in formative assessments and examinations and they may wish to discuss work and revision patterns with their tutees. Occasionally a student may need to be set clear objectives for the coming months to remedy identified difficulties or deficiencies. Significant

failure at examinations will be identified separately by the School and appropriate interviews arranged with the student support service. You will be informed if this happens to one of your tutees.

- **Pastoral care:** personal issues have a direct impact on a students' academic performance and pastoral care is another principal objective of the scheme. Personal problems which may be affecting their performance should be explored. Common sense advice and reassurance may resolve many issues. Referral on to the Student Support medsch.student-support@ucl.ac.uk is encouraged for more significant pastoral problems. Tutors should not enter into a therapeutic relationship with their students.
- **Career and course advice:** other areas often raised during meetings include choice of student selected components, choice of integrated BSc's, application for foundation year posts, electives, career decisions and requests for references. In depth knowledge of these areas is not required, rather a common sense approach based on experience and knowing where to direct students for further advice.

Personal Tutor Contacts: some guidance for tutors and students

The contact schedule for each year is set out on the next page.

Year 1 & 2

In year 1 it is expected the tutor will meet their group for an introductory meeting as early as possible in term 1. The initial group meeting should be held to advise students, discuss subsequent methods and timing of contacts, explain the scheme, and to outline the objectives for the year ahead. The tutor should make clear what is expected in terms of professionalism, academic objectives and give guidance on work patterns or study skills. Tutors should agree a method of arranging subsequent contacts. He/she should indicate how they can be contacted if the student experiences academic or pastoral difficulty or is in need of help or advice. The initial group meeting should be followed by individual contacts with all tutees, as detailed in the schedule below. UCL policy recommends five personal tutor contacts in year 1 and three contacts in subsequent years. Where a student fails a summative assessment, ideally the tutor should offer a further one to one contact before the resit assessments.

In year 2, it is anticipated that initial contact will take place in term 1 in November/early December and in term 2 after the formative assessments results have been published. The third contact should take place at the start of term 3 as set out in the meeting schedule.

In year 3, the integrated BSc (iBSc) year, students are allocated an iBSc personal tutor within their individual iBSc. The timing of contacts in year 3 will be directed in line with the structure of the student's individual iBSc. Students should remain in contact with their MBBS personal tutor during year 3 and may initiate contact or request meetings for advice regarding general MBBS matters and requests for references. iBSc personal tutors are requested to notify the MBBS personal tutor and or Divisional Tutor regarding concerns of academic progress or wellbeing of their tutees. A meeting or email/phone contact between the MBBS personal tutor and year 3 tutees should be made at the start of term 3 as set out in the meeting schedule.

Years 4-6

Each tutor will be notified by the Medical School or the year 1-3 personal tutor of any specific issues or concerns from the early years which may need support. In Year 4 an initial group meeting should be followed by 3 to 4 contacts, usually after each module. In year 5, 3 contacts

should take place, again usually after each module. In the final year, much like the devolved role in year 3, the personal tutoring role will be shared with the student's named education supervisor in the DGH but personal tutors should provide one further contact, normally by email/telephone prior to finals and for resit candidates prior to the resit examinations.

Personal Tutor Contacts Schedule

Year 1:

- Group introductory meeting early in term 1
- One to one contact soon after the group meeting in early term 1
- One to one contact post formative assessments results publication in late term 1
- One to one contact post formative assessments results publication in term 2
- One to one contact or email/telephone contact in term 3 prior to summative examinations

Year 2

- One to one contact in late term 1
- One to one contact post formative assessments results publication in term 2
- One to one contact or email/telephone contact in term 3 prior to summative examinations

Year 3 (IBSc)

- Contacts at student request (in addition to meetings with iBSc personal tutor)
- One to one contact in term 3

Year 4

- Tutor group meeting during Introduction and Orientation Module
- 3 contacts at the end of each Integrated Clinical Care module

Year 5

- 3 contacts at the end of each Life Cycle module

Year 6

- 1:1 meeting(s) with educational supervisor during the DGH Assistantship
- 1:1 contact with Personal Tutor prior to final examinations and again prior to resit examinations for those candidate resitting the examinations