Supplementary Guidance for UCL Medical School Personal Tutors

The information contained in this guide was correct at the time of going to press (August 2018) but may be subject to change before the commencement of, or during, the programme.
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The UCL Medical School Personal Tutor

UCLMS aims to provide every student with an accessible point of contact who can provide personal guidance and support relating to academic progress, personal & professional development and general well-being.

Summary of the role

Reporting to the MBBS academic lead for Personal Tutors, the UCLMS Personal Tutor is responsible for the support and pastoral supervision of undergraduate students on the MBBS programme. The role includes:

- Commitment to the personal tutor programme and to providing the best possible support to MBBS students at UCL;
- Development of a supportive and professional relationship with their tutee through regular communication and contact;
- Maintaining an overview of their tutees’ academic progress and development, as well as an overview of their tutees’ wellbeing;
- Offering advice and support where necessary and signposting students toward appropriate sources of additional support where needed or development opportunities where available;
- Accessible in terms of geography, capacity and outlook;
- Maintaining knowledge of the MBBS programme, including assessment, and an overview of the relevant GMCs guidance, including Good Medical Practice and Outcomes for Graduates;
- Participating in ongoing UCLMS training and development;
Duties & Key Responsibilities

- To provide tutees and the medical student support service with a reliable point of communication
- To undertake personal tutor contacts with allocated tutees as outlined in the UCLMS guidance
- To maintain an up-to-date record of contact with tutees as outlined in the UCLMS guidance
- To review tutee academic progress and achievement and support students in their study skills
- To monitor engagement with the programme including completion of the UCLMS / NHS portfolio, where applicable
- To provide pastoral support and where necessary to refer tutees to additional sources of support and guidance, including the medical student support service
- To report to the medical student support service any concerns about professional behaviour that may affect student safety, the safety of others or where a tutee’s fitness to practise may be called into question
- To provide an appropriate handover of tutees to subsequent personal tutors, where appropriate
- To maintain the skills and knowledge necessary to the role of personal tutor including attendance at training and/or completion of online training, as necessary
- To undertake all statutory and mandatory training as required by UCL

The role is undertaken in accordance with the UCL Personal Tutor Strategy. Roles and responsibilities are not exhaustive and may also be subject to change.
Person Specification

UCL Medical School is committed to fairness, consistency and transparency in selection decisions. Applications will be judged only against the criteria which are set out below and applicants should make sure that their application shows very clearly how they believe that their skills and experience meet these criteria.

The successful candidate will demonstrate the following:

Essential criteria

- Enthusiasm and a commitment to student support and mentorship
- An understanding of how the MBBS programme is delivered with an understanding of teaching, assessment and support
- Experience of teaching or supervision either in the early (years 1-3) or clinical years (years 4-6) of the MBBS programme
- Employed by UCL or holds a NHS contract in one of the UCLMS partner NHS Trusts
- Excellent interpersonal skills and record of collaboration, team work and motivating others
- Commitment to equality of opportunity and ongoing professional development

Desirable criteria

- Previous experience as a tutor or supervisor or training in medical education
- An interest in the area of student support, mentorship and professional learning
- Understanding of national issues around medical education, including the GMC’s Outcomes for Graduates
Meeting Schedules

Initial meetings with tutees in the first and fourth years (MBBS 1 / MBBS 4) must face-to-face. Otherwise, contact between Personal Tutors and tutees is according to each tutee’s preference and may be made via a face-to-face meeting, Skype, telephone or email. There is no ‘one-size fits all’ approach – students just need a reliable point of contact.

*Personal Tutor meetings take precedence over all other MBBS activities.*

A basic suggested schedule is shown below:

One-to-one meetings should last about 10-15 minutes; group meetings 30-60 minutes
Student Allocation

The MBBS student records and support team contacts all Personal Tutors at the beginning of term one with the names, year of study and contact details of their tutees for the academic year. Where applicable, handover notes from a previous personal tutor or student support are also provided.

Occasionally, there is a delay or last-minute alterations depending on the late-resit examinations and changes in joining or returning students. All students are asked to check their e-mail daily and this is the recommended form of communication.

Meeting Topics & Record Keeping

All contact should include a review of progress, specific topics highlighted in the Personal Tutor calendar, relevant pastoral advice, course and career progression and any follow-up from previous discussions. Students should be invited to raise any achievements or concerns.

A list of possible topics for discussion are included in appendix one.

Recording Contact

All contact must be recorded in accordance with UCLMS guidelines. This is an institutional requirement as there are statutory UK reporting requirements for some students holding Tier four visas.

- Years 1-3: students are to keep evidence of their personal tutor contacts in their portfolios. Personal Tutors should keep a note of contacts for audit.
- Years 4-6: a formal report should be completed in the student’s e-Portfolio. Personal Tutors are advised to keep a copy for their records.

Reporting arrangements are currently under review. It is hoped an integrated online portal will be rolled-out in late 2018.

Helping Students Reach Their Potential

Every student should have a point of contact who can provide guidance and support relating to academic, personal & professional development. Personal Tutors should help their tutees make the most of their time at UCL; developing study skills; exam preparations and; giving advice about SSC / iBSc options. Personal Tutors are well placed to encourage students to think of their own professional development though applying for prizes and awards, developing their curriculum vitae or participating in extracurricular activities.

Sometimes, Personal Tutors may need to help their tutees gain the right work-life balance. Some students need encouragement to make time for extra-curricular opportunities alongside their studies, while other tutees may need help in prioritising their studies.
Careers Advice

Being a medical student it is not as straight forward as some students would think: Students have a number of key decisions to make along the way. Personal Tutors can help students find the right path with accurate, up-to-date information and advice. Tutors should be prepared to offer planning tools, tips and information to help prepare for a career in medicine and the decisions for their future career pathway.

Careers events are timetabled in each year of the programme.

Dr Paul Dilworth is the lead Student Support Tutor for Careers & Foundation School Transition with appointments booked via: medsch.student-support@ucl.ac.uk

UCL offers careers advice is accessed via the UCL Careers Service. Elaine Denniss and Calum Leckie are the Medical Careers Advisors and appointments are bookable here: https://uclcareers.targetconnect.net/home.html

Students in Difficulty

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 academic or personal difficulties or encounter situations that undermine their confidence and capabilities. The Personal Tutor is often the first point of contact for students, and it is important that tutees are aware of the role of the Personal Tutor and the limitations to what a tutor can do before referring a student to a more specialised source of support.

Academic difficulties
Some students fail some things: This is not unexpected. They may ask your advice when they fail, get low scores or are ranked in a low decile. Personal Tutors should give accurate advice and support on assessment related matters; in these situations you may wish to help your tutee set some objectives for improvement and encouragement in developing an independent style of learning.

Personal tutors should be aware of UCLMS policy regarding students with disabilities and be prepared to discuss means of support and reasonable adjustments that could be made to help them better access the programme. Additionally, tutors should understand the UCLMS mitigating circumstances policy and should flag procedures to students as necessary.

Significant failure at summative examinations is identified by the Medical School. Interviews are arranged directly with each student and an academic member of staff from the student support team. You will be informed if this happens to one of your tutees. Where a student does not progress to the next year of study it is normal practice for the Personal Tutor to continue to provide support until they successfully progress or leave the programme. These students usually require additional supervision and support from the student support team,
especially in cases of interruption or withdrawal. In these circumstances you will be kept abreast of developments.

**Health & wellbeing difficulties**

Students may ask for help and advice for a range of personal problems. These can range from difficulties with accommodation and financial hardship to acute physical/mental illness. Clinical staff are often approached for confidential medical advice (for tutees and their extended family). Many issues can be successfully managed locally and Personal Tutors are encouraged to provide sensible advice, guidance and follow-up, if needed.

Where a tutee is struggling, Personal Tutors should direct the students to specialist support or guidance. UCL and UCLMS offer an extensive range of advisers and student support services including counsellors, careers advisers, disability advisers and migration/housing/money/welfare specialists.

Crucially, the Personal Tutor is in a unique position to signpost to all these services and can discuss how difficulties may impact on the student’s studies and progression.

Where there is a serious and urgent problem please contact student support office. The student support system operates daily and there is a Faculty tutor responsible for the welfare of students enrolled on the programme. If you have a serious concern contact you should contact medsch.student-support@ucl.ac.uk in the first instance, if necessary copying the Academic Lead for Personal Tutors, Dr Scott Rice (scott.rice@ucl.ac.uk) or the Faculty tutor direct, Dr Will Coppola (w.coppola@ucl.ac.uk).

Action cards for serious and urgent problems are included in appendix two.

**Step-down Arrangements from Student Support**

Where students have significant academic, personal or health difficulties they may be supported by the Student Support Team directly, under ‘Close Supervision’. Where possible, and with permission, the students support office with copy you into contact notes.

In cases where there is a sensible, workable plan in place or where the issue has been resolved the Student Support Team may choose to ‘step-down’ support back to the personal tutor. A comprehensive plan will be provided to support this.

**Writing References for Students**

Students often ask their Personal Tutor for a reference. This may be for part-time employment, volunteering, financial assistance, iBSc applications etc. Final year personal tutors will be asked to provide a reference for Foundation School (UKFPO) applications on behalf of UCLMS.

Personal Tutors receive copies of results from all formative and summative assessments and their tutees decile rank. Tutees should provide you with any further relevant information such as their CV, job description or any other application criteria.
UCL have a disclaimer that must be included on all references. Guidance and sample wording are provided in appendix three.

**Confidentiality**

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. Trust and sensitive handling of information is an important aspect of this relationship.

However, Personal Tutors are reminded they represent UCL Medical School and the relationship is not that of a doctor-patient or employer-employee. It is usual for issues raised through contacts to be included in meeting notes, but this **must** be by mutual agreement (except where fitness to practise or danger to self or others is concerned).

You must not to divulge student information to external parties (including parents) without explicit written consent from the student. All such enquiries should be referred to the Academic Lead for Personal Tutors.

Personal Tutors’ reports may be used by UCLMS in determining issues of progression and in considering in-course performance at Examiners’ meetings.

Where a tutor feels unable to deal with issues raised or has concerns about a student’s health or wellbeing the student should be referred to UCLMS Student Support for additional support. All referrals should be made to medsch.student-support@ucl.ac.uk.

If a tutor is unsure how to respond to a situation, they should discuss the matter with the Academic Lead for Personal Tutors.

**Training & Professional Development**

UCL and UCLMS provide a rolling programme of professional development for personal tutors. This is delivered across campus and online. All new personal tutors are required to attend induction training in September and it is expected that all Personal Tutors engage in a three-year cycle of professional development, including statutory and mandatory training.

Tutors should be up to date with current UCLMS rules, regulations, policies and procedures, including the key policies and procedures relating to the academic and examination regulations, discipline, complaints and appeals.

A schedule of training opportunities for 2018/19 is included in appendix four. All Personal Tutors are encouraged to contact Dr Scott Rice, academic lead for Personal Tutors, for advice or support. He holds a drop-in session 11am – 1pm weekly.
Support for Personal Tutors

Being a Personal Tutor is hugely rewarding, especially where your encouragement and informed views support academic progress and transition to becoming a new Doctor. Tutors are in a unique position to help develop confidence, independent learning and experience from a world-class Medical School.

However, there will be times when a tutor will notice changes in their tutees as a result of difficult or serious circumstances, sometimes resulting in concerns over the student’s safety, or that of others. Occasionally, tutors may encounter very challenging situations. This can be very stressful for all involved, particularly a personal tutor with an established relationship with the tutee.

Confidential support is available and tutors are encouraged to contact the academic lead for personal tutors for advice and support.

Funding

UCL Medical School funds the Personal Tutor programme directly. Payment is discretionary and is in addition to income otherwise received for MBBS-related teaching activities. The payment for each personal tutor is based on UCL Load calculations / the National Undergraduate Medical Education Tariff (formerly SIFT). This is paid to Divisions/Trusts, fixed to avoid fluctuation year on year.

The operational arrangement for funding is detailed in each faculty / NHS-partner institution service level agreement. The onward distribution of funds within faculties and Trusts is at the discretion of each organisation. However, there is a clear expectation that funding should be distributed to enable appropriate delivery of the personal tutor programme across all sites.

UCL Medical School retains the right to withhold funding where key duties and responsibilities have not been delivered.
Appendix One: Topics for discussion

UCL ARENA ‘THINGS TO TALK ABOUT’ BOOKLET

Permissions granted
Appendix Two: Action Cards for Urgent Problems

To include:

- Student in crisis
- Bullying / Harassment by a member of staff
- Bereavement
- Concerns about professional behaviour
ACTION CARD 1: STUDENT IN CRISIS

If you are very concerned about another student’s wellbeing or safety please contact the Student Support Service, providing as much information as you can.

Where a student is in immediate danger of hurting themselves or others, you should phone 999 or take them to the Accident and Emergency department

Think COPE:

C is for caring
Ask more and do not be afraid that talking about the issue will put ideas into the person’s mind. Encourage them to go with you to a comfortable and private environment to talk things over.

O is for optimistic
Most problems can be solved with time, care and expert help no matter how hopeless they might seem. However, do not let your optimism lead you to dismiss or make light of the person’s concerns.

P is for practical
Do not leave a person expressing serious self-harming intent alone, especially if the means of self-harm are at hand. Involve others, using the emergency services if necessary.

E is for expert
Perhaps most importantly, seek an Expert - if the person is in immediate danger and refuses to involve anyone else, consider calling 999 yourself or at the very least getting in touch with student support for advice.
ACTION CARD 2: BULLYING & HARRASSMENT BY A MEMBER OF STAFF

UCL has a firm commitment to equality and diversity and will not tolerate the harassment or bullying of one member of its community by another or others. All students need the confidence to complain about harassment and bullying, should they arise, in the knowledge that their concerns will be dealt with appropriately and fairly.

How to deal with allegations of harassment:

If a student considers that they are experiencing harassment by a UCL or NHS staff member there are a number of options available. Often a student may wish to talk to someone in order to obtain another perspective on the situation. In a majority of cases a Personal Tutors are able to resolve matters informally, sometimes in partnership with module, site or year leads.

Formal action may be considered where informal action proves ineffective, or where a student feels that an informal approach is not appropriate. These cases must be referred to the UCLMS Student Support Service.

- Find a quiet place to discuss the issue confidentially and without interruption
- Listen carefully to what they are being told and ensure that they understand the full facts
- Discuss the options open to the complainant

• There are a number of informal options available
• Encourage student to talk to the member of staff
• Facilitate a meeting between both parties
• With agreement, discuss the complaint with the UCL module/year or site lead

- A formal complaint must be registered in writing as soon as possible via the UCLMS Student Support Office
- A confidential appointment will be made with the Divisional Tutor
- Formal complaints involving academic members of staff may be referred to the Faculty Tutor
ACTION CARD 3: BEREAVEMENT

Bereavement can affect students in different ways. Personal Tutors should inform UCLMS Student Support who will contact the student and provide them with appropriate support and guidance.

- If a student needs to leave a session, clinic or placement permission should not normally be withheld
- Students should complete a leave request form as soon as possible (retrospective applications are accepted in these exceptional circumstances)
- UCL Student Support will liaise with Module or Year Leads where bereavement absence has been permitted
ACTION CARD 3: CONCERNS ABOUT PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR

Concerns about professionalism and fitness to practice should be reported to the Medical School. Examples which should be reported during the course include:

- significant unexplained absence or lateness
- repeated or unexplained absence from scheduled clinical activity or teaching
- disruptive behaviour or damage to property
- lack of probity
- patient safety issues
- unprofessional behaviour as set out by the GMC in Good Medical Practice

There are two mechanisms available to UCLMS Personal Tutors:

1. Informal Advice:

   Personal Tutors should contact the student and invite them to an informal meeting to discuss their concerns
   Informal advice may be obtained from UCLMS Student Support, the Academic Year teams or the Academic Lead for Personal Tutors.

2. Concerns over professional behaviour forms (CoPB)

   CoPB are submitted online [here](#)
   The Head of Student Support will liaise with the Divisional Tutor for investigation.
   Forms are used within the student support system to monitor behaviour(s) and to make appropriate interventions. This may include placing a student on close supervision.
Appendix Three: References

Personal tutors are expected to provide references, where practicable, for their tutees.

UCL has specific policy guidance for members of staff (and, by default, tutors from partner organisations) for providing references. The author of a reference owes a ‘duty of care’ to the person about whom it is written to ensure it is true and accurate and does not give an unfair overall impression.

All references should be marked "Confidential" to the addressee and should include the following statement:

“\text{This reference is strictly confidential and is provided to you only in connection with [NAME] and should only be used for that purpose. The above information is given in confidence and in good faith. No responsibility however, can be accepted for any errors, omissions or inaccuracies in the information or for any loss or damage that may result from reliance being placed upon it.}”

A full copy of the policy is included below.

If you feel ill equipped to comment use the phrase ‘to the best of my knowledge ’ as a preface to statements about whether a student is for example honest, trustworthy, etc. If a personal tutor has any concerns about writing a reference for a current student, he/she should contact the Academic Lead for Personal Tutors or Divisional Tutor in the first instance.

A copy of any reference provided on behalf of UCL should be kept on the relevant departmental file.

In the later years, Personal Tutors provide a reference for Foundation School (UKFPO) applications on behalf of the Medical School. These references are brief, online ‘tick box’ style forms requiring a general knowledge of ability based on knowledge of their progress, portfolio, results and personal and professional attributes. Students need to ensure that you can access this information and should be asked to provide you with an up to date CV if this is not easily accessible in their portfolio.

Any student who has Fitness to Practise or other issues will have been pre-allocated to the Divisional Tutor or a Medical Student Support Tutor and you will be informed if this is the case for one of your tutees. Sometimes FPAS applications ask for information about a student’s clinical abilities. As Personal Tutor you are unlikely to be able to answer this sort of question. Simply make this clear on any reference.
DATE

NAME
ADDRESS

CONFIDENTIAL

Dear:

NAME OF STUDENT

I am pleased to provide an academic reference in support of [NAME] application for an elective placement at your institution. I can confirm that [NAME] is registered with UCL as a medical student and is in good standing with the Medical School.

I have known [NAME] for three years in my capacity as [his/her] personal tutor at UCL Medical School.

[NAME] is an accomplished student. [S/he] has consistently ranked within the top decile of the medical school year and obtained a 2:1 in [his/her] intercalated BSc (Subject) in Year 3.

[NAME] demonstrates good clinical skills and professionalism and interacts well with patients, staff and fellow students. Comments from [his/her] clinical teachers have been uniformly positive, with particular strengths in interpersonal, organisational and communication skills. [S/he] is a friendly individual who is well respected by [his/her] peers. I have no health or probity concerns.

[S/he] will benefit enormously from this experience. I have no concerns about [his/her] ability to work well in this environment and support [his/her] application without reservation.

This reference is strictly confidential and is provided to you only in connection with [NAME] and should only be used for that purpose. The above information is given in confidence and in good faith. No responsibility however, can be accepted for any errors, omissions or inaccuracies in the information or for any loss or damage that may result from reliance being placed upon it.

Yours sincerely,

TUTOR NAME
ROLE / SITE / EMAIL ADDRESS
Appendix Four: Training & Professional Development

UCL Medical School runs an induction event for all new (and current) personal tutors. This will take place at 4:00pm – 6:00pm Thursday 20th September 2018. There is a drinks reception afterwards.

There is an ongoing programme of training and professional development run online, at the UCLMS Bloomsbury site and in conjunction with UCL Area.

There is an annual Christmas Drinks Reception in December.
Frequently Asked Questions

Do I get paid for this role?
There is no personal monetary reward for acting as a Personal Tutor but there is a monetary reward to your division or Trust as set out above.

How does all this get recognised in my job plan or appraisal?
Being a personal tutor is a responsible role and attracts both student load and national undergraduate tariff credit.

- UCL academics are expected to act at Personal Tutors. You should inform your line manager that you undertake this key role and ensure your workload allocation takes this role into account.
- NHS clinicians should discuss this role as part of their job plan. This activity attracts funding to back-fill programmed activities.

When are where do I meet with my tutees?
Most tutors meet with their students in a mixture of group sessions and one to one sessions. This should be timed around key points in the year, as outlined above. You should meet students in an appropriate environment, preferably in an office or meeting room. UCL academics can book rooms online; NHS clinicians should be able to access an appropriate venue on site as part of the institutional service level agreement. Students are expected to travel to you.

Can I change tutees?
Only in exceptional circumstances, for example if you leave UCL, change jobs or go on extended leave. Good personal tutoring is about relationships and it is best for tutor and tutee to have continuity. Where continuity cannot be guaranteed, you should contact the Personal Tutor team as soon as you become aware of this.

How do I access the eportfolio/the personal tutor report forms?
In years 4-6 students maintain an e-portfolio on the NES platform (the platform used for the Foundation Programme Portfolio). You should be allocated as a tutor on your students’ portfolio and be able to read all parts of the portfolio. Again if you have difficulty in accessing these documents you should contact medsch.personaltutors@ucl.ac.uk in the first instance.

Where you have difficulty in accessing the NES portfolio because of your role at UCL you should ask them to bring along a printed version of the relevant documents to you. The personal tutor report forms again form part of the student portfolio and are available on the student’s NES portfolio.