



## CLOSE SUPERVISION POLICY

Reviewed: June 2017

### *Background:*

With around 380 students in each year of the medical course it is important that the School has a mechanism for identifying, monitoring and supporting those students who are in particular need or who are believed to be at high risk of academic failure.

**It is important to emphasise that this system is designed to support students. It is not in any way punitive and is meant to assist students who struggle with the course, for whatever reason.**

### *Who manages 'Close Supervision'?*

Our Medical Student Support Tutors provide this important service. The Medical Student Support Tutors meet regularly with students under close supervision and direct them towards appropriate sources of help and advice for particular academic or personal problems. The Divisional Tutor monitors students under close supervision through the monthly Medical School Support Tutors Meetings.

### *Which students are under close supervision?*

Students who are identified as being vulnerable to academic failure or who have other particular needs are placed under the 'close supervision' of the Medical Student Support Tutors. It is usually a Medical Student Support Tutor who identifies a student as requiring the support of close supervision but students are often referred by other teachers, or by Year or Module Leads.

There are many reasons why a student may be placed under close supervision including the student's own request for this level of support. No assumptions should be made about why a student is under close supervision, including the student's own request for this level of support: it does not necessarily mean that the student is academically weak. However, most students who are retaking a year of study will be placed under close supervision.

Students who are identified as being vulnerable to academic failure, or who require extra support to complete the course successfully are placed under the 'close supervision' of the Medical Student Support Tutors. It is usually a Medical Student Support Tutor who identifies a student as requiring the support of close supervision, but students may be referred by other teachers, by Year or Module Leads and in some cases, via self-referral. No assumptions should be made about why a student is under close supervision. The following list gives examples of situations where a student may be placed under close supervision but is not exhaustive.

- Students who fail 2 summative examinations on the course or who repeat a year will automatically go on close supervision and this should be highlighted as an action in the students welfare note when the student is seen following their second exam failure. They will stay under close supervision for 1 academic year initially, and this will then be reviewed and either extended or removed.
- Students who are sent to a Full Fitness to Practise panel will automatically be put on to Close Supervision and will be reviewed at the end of the academic year. It is likely that they may stay on Close Supervision for the remainder of their time in the medical school.
- Students who appear before an Initial Fitness to Practise panel will not necessarily go on Close Supervision and the placing of the student on Close Supervision will be at the Faculty Tutor's discretion.
- Students who take an interruption on health grounds will automatically be placed on close supervision and will be reviewed annually.
- Students who are referred for Close Supervision following the recommendation of a pre-exam board extenuating circumstances panel.
- Students who have personal learning agreements.
- Students who 'slip a grade' at A level but their place is confirmed.

### *What does it mean to be under close supervision?*

Being under 'close supervision' requires a student to meet with a Medical School Support Tutor more frequently than other students. Typically meetings will take place every 6 weeks or an intervals agreed by individual tutors and students. The Medical Student Support Tutor will discuss progress with the student and explore factors that may be hindering study or achievement. The Student Support Tutor may, for example, monitor attendance; review a student's portfolio to assess progress; request a written diary of programmed reading or revision; issue student support cards to provide reasonable adjustment; request particular placements when appropriate; liaise with Occupational Health or outside agencies and report back to FtP panels. Medical Student Support Tutors do not provide remedial teaching or counselling services but will direct students towards appropriate sources of help where necessary.

### *Who knows which students are on Close Supervision?*

The Divisional or Medical Student Support Tutors will liaise with Year Leads where appropriate to facilitate support and monitoring of students on close supervision. Information about why a student is on the list will be disclosed on a case-by-case basis within the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998:

- where a student requests that academic or personal information be shared
- where a student has a personal learning agreement that allows for approved absence or requires additional monitoring of attendance (learning agreements include explicit consent to share information to support specific learning needs);
- where there is any potential risk to patient safety (the Medical School has an obligation to notify concerns over fitness to practise and potential risks to patient safety to placement providers and students will be informed of any such decision)

*In turn, Year Leads may, at their discretion, disseminate names to Year, Module or Firm Leads or to Undergraduate Tutors at associated DGH Trusts where the information will benefit student support or protect patient safety.*

Wider distribution of the list through these channels improves the speed of communication which enables the Medical School to work more effectively as a team in identifying and solving the issues that arise for this small group of students. For example, if a student is known by the School to be a poor attender, their absence at an outside placement is likely to be reported earlier to the Student Office having been previously identified as a student under close supervision. We are often asked, particularly by clinical tutors, to give details of why a student is under close supervision. In these cases we suggest that the tutor has a discrete conversation with the student in order to establish whether the student is willing to discuss their previous difficulty or will accept appropriate additional support on the firm.

### *How long does a student stay under close supervision?*

Just as it is the role of the Medical Student Support Tutors to identify students needing close supervision, they are also responsible for discussing when a student should be taken off this level of support. This is usually discussed and agreed at Medical Student Support Tutor meetings. As a general rule, a student who is resitting a year will remain under close supervision for at least the whole of the resit year so that we can be sure that their studies are properly back on track.

### *Does this affect FY1 applications and transfer of information?*

In many cases the support of the Close Supervision process will have ended before students apply for FY1. Some students who have received the support of close supervision and who have on-going needs may choose to apply for FY1 posts under the Special Circumstances scheme and will discuss disclosure of information with a Medical Student Support Tutor as part of this process. For those who choose to apply without requesting consideration of special circumstances, a Medical Student Support Tutor will discuss disclosure of information with the individual concerned and reach an agreement to determine if personal information should be disclosed to the Foundation School. However, these students should be aware that if they themselves then fail to declare information, the Divisional Tutor may insist that a disclosure is made to the Director of the relevant Foundation School in accordance with national guidelines for transfer of information (see the Careers and Foundation School Transition Website at: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/medicalschoo/careers>)