Introduction

Student selected components (SSCs) represent one of the 'choice' elements of the MBBS programme, which, when added to the 'core' elements, enrich student learning and allow students to tailor what they learn to their individual needs and interests. SSCs are a core requirement of all undergraduate medical programmes and are an integral part of the curriculum, enabling students to develop and demonstrate mandatory competencies while also providing students with the choice to study an area of particular interest to them.

The aims of SSCs are to provide students with an opportunity to study additional optional topics which are not included in the core MBBS curriculum, or to study topics of interest to them in more depth, to engage in a more meaningful way in an area of practice that they have enjoyed, or to allow students to further develop skills or understanding. SSCs also allow students to develop one or more generic skills which will be useful in the practise of medicine, for example, team-working, essay-writing, PowerPoint presentations, research skills, teaching, or patient advocacy.

The type of activity involved will differ from one SSC to another, but they all share the common aim of encouraging active participation.

Our aim at UCL Medical School is to provide a range of stimulating, high-quality SSCs for our students that are varied in content, experience and assessment format so that students have the choice and opportunity to pursue a number of different areas of interest. We encourage students to select their SSC preferences from across the wide variety offered to ensure they develop a range of knowledge and generic skills.

Objectives of an SSC (not every SSC will fulfil all of these criteria):

- Enrich student experience through individual choice.
- Enhance student experience, be different from core topics, and provide time for reflection.
- Maximise the benefits of learning medicine at UCL.
- Encourage awareness of the context of medicine.
- Be beneficial for potential future careers (e.g. academic, research or clinical).
- Be broadly based with an element of creative thinking.
- Involve either interaction with others and/or team-work.
- Encourage personal development.
- Reflect on the needs of today's and tomorrow's patients.
- Create 21st century doctors able to thrive in modern healthcare environments.
- Provide a writing exercise that may include a presentation or poster for inclusion in their portfolio.
- Relate to the iBSc programme.

Teaching

SSCs are provided in half-day teaching sessions in years 1 and 2.
In year 1, SSCs are timetabled as a single block consisting of 8 weeks from January to March on Thursday afternoons for 3 hours.
In year 2, SSCs are timetabled as a single block consisting of 8 weeks from October to December on Friday afternoons for 3 hours.

Written objectives and a programme for the SSC should be provided during the first session. It is also helpful if students are informed as early in the SSC as possible of exactly what the required assessment will involve, e.g. marking criteria, word limits for written work and referencing styles, presentation dates and timings etc. Writing and presentation guidance should be provided as many students will not have written an essay, made a poster, or given a presentation before.

In advance of the SSC, students should be provided with clear instructions about the teaching venue, including arrangements for arrival if required. A simple map showing the location of the teaching sessions and information about public transport, if necessary, would also be helpful.

Student Attendance
Student attendance is compulsory. Students are required to attend every SSC session punctually and for the whole session. Students should report all unavoidable absences through the Absence Report section of the **Absence Report and Leave Request** online form. Failure to attend and engage in SSC sessions may result in a student failing their SSC and therefore being deemed 'not complete' in their end-of-year assessment; as a result, they will not be permitted to progress to their next year.

SSC leads are expected to monitor weekly attendance and immediately report all student absences via the Absence Report Online Form. The reporting of absent students is necessary in order to alert the Student Support Team of any students who may need additional support. The earlier we can arrange this for the student, the more beneficial this support can be. The SSC lead should also record this attendance on the *SSC Assessment Form.* This form is completed by the SSC lead and given to each student at the end of the SSC.

For further details regarding the MBBS attendance policy, please see https://www.ucl.ac.uk/medical-school/current-mbbs-students/z-policies-and-faqs#attendance.

Assessment

SSCs must be completed to a 'satisfactory standard' in order for students to progress to the next year of their course. Completion to a 'satisfactory standard' means an acceptable performance in the coursework and assessments associated with the SSC, as well as adequate attendance (see above) and engagement in the SSC. Students will receive a final grade for their SSCs; although these grades do not count towards their end-of-year examination marks, they are considered part of a student's overall achievement in the MBBS programme. Students who have not successfully completed their SSC will be deemed 'not complete' in their end-of-year assessment; as a result, they will not be permitted to progress to their next year.

Performance and engagement in SSCs require some form of assessment, and students should receive a written record of their achievement (and attendance). Therefore, we require all SSC leads to set their students a piece of work which may be an essay together with a PowerPoint presentation, a poster or a piece of artwork. If possible, it is recommended that a combination of assessment methods be used. This assessment should also reflect the contact hours of the SSC. An essay alongside another form of assessment, such as a presentation, is the most popular assessment method currently used by SSC leads. As a guideline, if setting **only** an essay, this should be a maximum of 1500 words. However, if using an essay **and** another assessment method, the word count should be reduced, for example, a maximum of 1000 words and a 15-minute individual presentation.

The SSC lead should offer students who fail the assessment for their SSC an additional alternative assessment. This reassessment will be a piece of work equivalent to the original assessment for the SSC and

may also involve an oral examination. If a student fails their SSC, the SSC lead should immediately notify the SSC Admin Team, including a description of the planned alternative assessment. This reassessment option is not available to students who fail their SSC due to poor attendance without valid (and documented) reasons; students in this situation may be required to take a year away from the course whilst becoming 'complete' for their SSC.

Students who have to sit an alternative or resit an SSC assessment will only be awarded a borderline pass (grade E).

Plagiarism
As an SSC lead, you will need to be aware of the problem of plagiarism; it is the responsibility of the SSC lead to report any suspicion of plagiarism to the SSC Admin Team immediately so that it can be investigated and appropriate action taken. Students are required to submit their coursework through *Turnitin*, and SSC leads should be concerned with a similarity score of 15-25%. SSC leads will need to warn students that they may need to resubmit an amended version of their work if they obtain a high similarity score. Anything higher than 25% means serious plagiarism, and the student will be required to repeat the coursework, covering a different topic. On the second attempt, the grade will be capped at E.

Word count
As an SSC lead, you will need to ensure that students are aware of the word limit you set, and they will need to adhere to this. Students also need to know what this limit includes, e.g. footnotes, references, tables etc. If you set a word limit of 1000 words, there is usually a plus or minus 10% leeway. If you set a word limit of, for example, 1000-1050 words, students will need to stay within this limit. Students who do not adhere to the word limit or are over or under the 10% leeway will be awarded a grade E.

Deadlines and Late Submissions
There is some flexibility for you to set a slightly earlier or later coursework submission deadline from the last day of your SSC session - **provided that this does not impact your ability to return a completed *SSC Assessment Form* to your students and to submit the final grade spreadsheet to the SSC Admin Team; <u>both of these documents must be sent within four weeks of the set deadline</u>.**

You need to ensure that students are aware of the deadlines you set and the necessity to adhere to them. Any late submissions are subject to a penalty (unless the student has submitted the required documentation). This documentation can be obtained from the Divisional Tutor (mbbsy1@ucl.ac.uk or mbbsy2@ucl.ac.uk).

UCL's standard deadline is *5pm on the day of submission,* and **SSC leads are expected to comply with UCL's standard**.

Unless *Extenuating Circumstances* have been approved, a late (more than one week) submission of coursework triggers a *Concern over Attendance and Engagement procedure*, and a failure to submit coursework triggers a *Concern over Professional Behaviour(s) procedure* and a meeting with the MBBS Student Support Team. The SSC Admin Team will submit these reports via the online reporting system. SSC leads **must inform the SSC Admin Team immediately of any late submissions.**

Students with *Statements of Reasonable Adjustments* (SORAs) may request a one week extension to written coursework deadlines. The student must request a SORA in advance via medsch.mbbs-tutors@ucl.ac.uk.

Graded coursework will be capped if submitted late without prior approval.

UCL regulations for component marks/grades of 40-100% / A-D:
  - Up to 2 working days late: Deduction of 10 percentage points or one letter grade, but no lower than 40% / Grade D.
  - 2-5 working days late: Mark capped at 40% / Grade D.
  - More than five working days late: Mark of 1% / Grade E

  Where a resubmission is required, marks are capped at E. Students have one week to resubmit work from the time their original grade is released (i.e. students cannot use the resubmission process to attempt to improve their grade).

For further details, please see https://www.ucl.ac.uk/medical-school/current-mbbs-students/z-policies-and-faqs#coursework-requirements

SSC Assessment Grade Scheme
SSC coursework should be graded according to the following A-F marking scheme. Please use this entire grade range when allocating marks. **The SSC Advisory Group will review SSCs resulting in consistently high (or low) grades.**

Grade	*Equivalent range of marks (%)*	Guidance notes
A Well above level expected	70 – 100	Clear distinction level work; virtually everything relevant covered. Well argued, to the point with no errors (slight errors can be forgiven if the work is otherwise excellent).
B Above level expected	60 – 69	A well organised piece of work which shows that the student clearly understood what was needed; a good number of correct facts with no major errors.
C At level expected	50 – 59	Undoubtedly a pass but not enough detail and/or not sufficiently well argued to be considered for a merit or distinction. Potential for a higher grade but with one or two detracting errors.
D Below level expected	40 – 49	Just satisfactory although below the level expected at this stage; the minimum amount of work completed without important errors.
E Well below level expected	< 39	Inadequate detail or some errors. No balance in respect of important and trivial information. Resubmission under a learning agreement required for a student to be eligible to progress to the next year of the programme. Resubmissions are capped at Grade D.
F Fail		Used in instances of failure to engage with the course and/or no meaningful attempt in submitted work. This triggers an automatic appointment with the Divisional Tutor as attendance or coursework do not fulfil the requirements

When awarding grades, please do not use terms such as A+ or B- as they have no relevance in the system used to record student performance.

A selection of SSC assessments will be moderated each year by the SSC Advisory Group to ensure continuity across all SSCs.

Feedback

The medical school considers feedback to be an essential part of all SSCs. A one-to-one meeting to discuss student performance and feedback is considered best practice; however, this may not always be possible due to the varying nature of SSCs. Feedback should also be supplied to students throughout the SSC.

As well as an overall final grade, SSC leads are required to supply individual written feedback for each student under 'additional comments' on the *SSC Assessment Form* (provided by the SSC Admin Team). The SSC lead should write this feedback after consultation with any other staff who have had an active part in teaching and/or supporting the student. **The SSC lead should email a copy of this final feedback (SSC Assessment Form) directly to the students.** Hard copies of student coursework should also be returned directly to students by the SSC lead.

UCL's service standards require that marks and feedback are provided *within **four weeks** of the deadline for submission (including weekends and vacations).* SSC leads are encouraged to provide this in a shorter timeframe, and MBBS students have asked if feedback could be provided *within three weeks,* wherever possible. If SSC leads cannot ensure that the one calendar month deadline is met (or for the MBBS, the three-week deadline), they must comply with UCL's requirement to indicate, by direct contact with students, when the feedback will be provided, and it is expected that the extra time will not exceed one week.

You will be provided with student feedback from the student evaluation of your SSC; this will be arranged by the Quality Assurance Unit. **Please do not arrange your own feedback; instead, please actively encourage students to complete the SSC feedback arranged via the online Academic Support Record (ASR) twice a term by the Quality Assurance Unit.** For quality assurance purposes, the SSC academic lead may be in contact as a result of this feedback to discuss your SSC. A selection of students each year will also be invited to an SSC feedback discussion session run by the SSC academic lead to ensure continuity across SSCs.

For further details, please see https://www.ucl.ac.uk/medical-school/current-mbbs-students/z-policies-and-faqs#coursework-requirements.

Reporting Final Grades

The final grade, attendance, and individual written feedback, should be reported directly to the student via the *SSC Assessment Form* provided by the SSC Admin Team. **A completed copy of the final grades should also be sent to the SSC Admin Team on the Excel spreadsheet they will provide you. Marks must be returned to the SSC Admin Team within four weeks of the set deadline.**

Full details regarding the marking requirements and criteria will be sent to SSC leads at the start of the academic year

Practical Arrangements

SSCs are delivered to student groups of ~35.

Each SSC is timetabled as eight x three-hour afternoons (Thursday afternoons for year 1 and Friday afternoons for year 2).

Although the timetable shows three hours for each SSC session, we would not expect the whole three hours every week to be face-to-face contact. Most SSCs allow part of each afternoon, or a whole afternoon, for

students to research topics and prepare their coursework or presentations (obviously, we also expect students to undertake part of their research and preparation in their own private study time).

The SSC Admin Team can book rooms for your SSC. However, given the increased pressure on rooms, we are doing our best to access space via all possible avenues. Therefore, should you have space in your Department (that is not centrally bookable), it would be helpful if you could use this space for your SSC. The SSC Admin Team can book rooms for you if departmental space is unavailable. For SSCs occurring away from UCL premises and for SSCs that involve activities other than lectures/discussions, a risk assessment may be required (see *SSC Proposal Form* for more details).

Funding

SSC funding draws on different mechanisms and income streams depending on the SSC lead:

- SSCs led by UCL staff generate MBBS HEFCE and tuition fee income which is credited to their divisional budgets by SLMS Finance to cover salary and lab costs plus any consumables (which should be identified in divisional non-pay budgets and claimed by SSC leads via their divisional finance team). The proportion of SSC income allocated to divisional providers is calculated as part of the annual Student Load exercise in January each year and credited to budgets in the following academic session. Queries about student load calculations and divisional budgets should be directed to Melanie Hill (m.hill@ucl.ac.uk) in the Medical School Finance Team. Notification of estimated consumables/non-pay costs should be notified to divisional finance teams by early January at the latest.

- SSCs led by NHS staff or private providers (which may or may not include a contribution from University funded staff) generate University funding allocated via Student Load to the division most closely associated with the clinical specialty. In previous years, they also generated Department of Health funding allocated to the NHS or private provider as part of the annual NHS Undergraduate Tariff planning exercise, but this has now changed due to changes in HEE guidance. Alternative funding arrangements are being set up. Queries about funding for SSCs run by non-UCL staff should be directed to the Tariff Officer, Melanie Hill (m.hill@ucl.ac.uk).

Offering a New SSC

SSC leads will be expected to:

- Provide accurate and current details of their SSC, including a description, aims and learning outcomes, a weekly timetable, full assessment details including word limits, % weighting per assessment and a marking criteria.
- Provide supervision and support for teaching and learning of high quality, appropriate to the SSC and its location.
- Maintain an accurate attendance record and report all student absences after each session via the online Absence Reporting Form.
- Actively encourage students to complete SSC feedback via the online Academic Support Record (ASR) twice a term.
- Attend a Management Group (MG) meeting during the term that the SSC runs.
- Provide students with feedback on their progress throughout the SSC, including a final grade and detailed written feedback at the end of the SSC.
- Provide an appropriate assessment for the SSC and a resit assessment, if required. Each SSC must include an element of individual written work submitted via *Turnitin*.
- Ensure final grades are sent to the SSC Admin Team within two weeks of the stated deadline.
- Accept liability for all students allocated to you and ensure you can meet any liabilities through an adequate insurance policy, indemnity or other provisions.
- Complete an Off-Site Agreement if students are taken off of UCL premises.

- Thoroughly risk-assess all activities prior to the start of the SSC.

SSCs in years 1 and 2 focus on a wide range of areas, including clinical practice, underpinning science, and subjects more loosely related to medical studies, such as arts and languages. A list of example SSCs offered in previous years has been included below. Although we currently have a good spread of topics, we welcome proposals for new SSCs. If you can fulfil the above requirements and you feel you can offer an interesting new SSC that will add to the range of options available to students, please get in touch with the Year 1 and 2 SSC academic lead, Dr Wendy Birch (w.birch@ucl.ac.uk), to discuss your ideas. You will need to complete an **SSC Proposal Form**, which will then be submitted to the SSC Advisory Group for discussion.

Please ensure that your proposal is submitted by the <u>1st February</u> in order to be considered by the SSC Advisory Group for inclusion in the next academic year.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Wendy Birch
Year 1 and 2 SSC Academic Lead

Example Year 1 SSCs Offered in Previous Years

- Anatomy from Rembrandt to Grey's: Learning Medicine Through the Arts
- Antibodies and Rheumatological Diseases
- Art and Medicine: Exploring the Experience of Illness Through Art
- Basic Molecular Techniques in Clinical, Diagnosis and Research
- Birth to 6 weeks: Care and Development of Babies
- Blood, Bugs and Pus: Painting, Poetry, Prose and the Good Doctor.
- Cardiovascular Medicine: From Bench to Bedside
- Crime Prevention and Public Health
- Death and Dying in Society, Theory and Practice
- Exercise, Physical Activity, and Health
- Expedition and Wilderness Medicine
- Health Technology and the Body
- History and Philosophy of Medicine and its Contemporary Relevance
- How to Live Forever: Research to Prevent Ageing
- Infectious Diseases in Developing Countries
- Introductory British Sign Language
- Life in the Frozen State – The Impact of Cryobiology in Medicine and Biology.
- Maxillo Facial Surgery
- Medically Important Proteins in Disease
- Medicine and the Law Issues at the End of Life
- Open Minds - Student Led
- Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) - Bringing Patients Back to the Centre
- Pre-Hospital Care: Acute Medicine in the Community
- Psychoanalysis: A Psychological Therapy for the 21st Century?
- Radiological Anatomy
- Speak Up for Asthma Schools Programme
- Taking the Lead – Medical Management and Leadership
- The Challenge of Alois Alzheimer
- Viva La Vulva: Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights
- Volunteering and Your Personal Development

Example Year 2 SSCs Offered in Previous Years

- Academic Pre-Hospital Care
- Are We Failing our Children and our Future?
- Culture, Ethics, and Religion in the Clinical Encounter
- Epithelial Function in Health and Disease
- Evolution: What Every Doctor Needs to Know
- History of Medicine
- Introduction to Children's Language Development
- Maternal Health Culture and Risk
- Medical Policy and Management: What is it, and why should you care?
- Nanotechnology and Regenerative Medicine
- Peer Tutoring at City and Islington College 6th Form Centre
- Physiological imaging with nuclear medicine
- Pre-hospital Care and Stadium Medicine
- Psychoanalytic Approaches to Emotional Disorders
- Surgical Pathology in Practice
- Target Medicine
- The Hitchhiker's Guide to Global Health
- The Sick Role: Patients in the Movies
- Transplantation Sciences: The Pieces of the Jig Saw Puzzle: (Organ Procurement, Immunology and Intervention).