



Quality Assurance visit to Whittington Health NHS Trust

Thursday 24 March 2022

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Introduction

Whittington Health NHS Trust (the Trust) is one of three central sites which provide clinical placements to UCL Medical School (UCLMS) students. The Trust provides placements in medicine, surgery, paediatrics, obstetrics and gynaecology and emergency medicine, for students in years 4 and 5 of the MBBS programme across multiple sites, many of which are in the community. In addition, the Trust also hosts popular Year 1 and 2 student selected components (SSCs), Clinical and Professional Practice and the iBSc in Paediatrics and Child Health, which were out of the scope of this visit.

The visit was undertaken in line with the [UCL Medical School MBBS Visits Policy](#). UCLMS has a responsibility to ensure that the General Medical Council's (GMC) standards for teaching and assessing MBBS students are maintained and the requirements of 'Promoting Excellence' and Health Education England's (HEE) Quality Framework are met. The visit structure followed the NHS Education Contract's Schedule Three 'Quality and Performance's Quality Domains'. The Service Level Agreement (SLA) (provided as an Appendix) was referenced to confirm adherence to agreed conditions.

The visit consisted of a series of meetings with a broad group of key personnel involved in medical education and representative medical students and foundation doctors, chosen by the

Whittington team. The meetings generated recommended actions listed below. A list of participants has been provided as Appendix 1. After the suspension of site visits due to the Covid pandemic the visit team would like to thank all of those who participated in these visit meetings, summaries of which have been provided below.

Presentation and Quality Domains and Service Level Agreement discussion

The key points of the discussion were as follows:

- Thanks were reciprocally given by UCLMS and Whittington for the planning and attendance of the visit and the hospitality shown by the Trust. A joint aim to work to help improve the quality of undergraduate education, celebrate strengths and formulate actions to address any concerns was expressed.
- Student feedback: a detailed analysis of student feedback from the past three years was presented by students.
 - The low Student Evaluation Questionnaire (SEQ) response rate was highlighted as a problem in gauging module feedback. Some placements have had to use feedback other than SEQs. A review of the SEQ process is underway in the UCLMS to improve utility.
 - Students reported feeling a strong sense of belonging to the Trust but had mixed responses to whether they felt supported. It was raised that this may be because the question is too broad and unclear as to what support is being referenced.
 - The assistantship, aka as apprenticeship, model was highlighted as a useful way of learning, with students feeling very engaged.
 - Timetabling issues were raised in some modules. Staffing issues may have played a part in this. The students were encouraged to report any problems with the timetables to the Medical School so they can be followed up with the relevant administrator.
 - Administrative support was generally praised.
 - Students valued immediate feedback and firm WhatsApp groups had been trialled in module 4B with a positive response.
 - Staffing levels were raised as a concern: some placements had struggled with not having enough staff available. There were also reports of low attendance in some instances from students and occasional confusion around when students were expected.
 - Specialities that are mostly outpatient based have been greatly affected by Covid-19 but simulated clinics were received well.
- The library: the library provides laptops and 24 PCs in a cluster area, Eduroam Wi-Fi, bookable study space and library resources during weekdays. Whittington Health Library has a separate Library catalogue, signposting from UCL Library pages & reading lists. Facilities were reported as in good working condition.
- Clinical skills: there is a focus on providing personalised support and an excellent relationship exists between students and the clinical skills team. In the early part of the pandemic home kits were sent out that were received well by students. Students have a relationship with the clinical skills team throughout their six years at UCLMS and often approach them for pastoral support as well as providing extra teaching if needed as a resource.
- Raising concerns: students are briefed how to raise concerns at their site induction. Concerns are dealt with by the Director of Undergraduate Education or a delegated individual in collaboration with the QAEU. Concerns raised about students are dealt with by the Divisional Tutor. The Trust highlights confidentially and promotes a culture of reflection and learning from mistakes. Complaint responses can be found on the UCL website.
- Top Teachers: the quality of undergraduate teaching in the Trust has been reflected in the award of multiple teaching prizes over recent years.

Year 4 & 5 students based at the Whittington and UCLMS graduates

The key points of the discussion were as follows:

- Culture: the students commended the Trust's culture, which fosters a sense of belonging and is a supportive and conducive environment to learning.
- The graduates echoed the students' feelings about the culture of the Trust. They had chosen to return as foundation doctors as the teams were supportive when they were medical students. They reported a culture of ongoing learning, constructive feedback and consultants enthusiastic about teaching.
- It was mentioned that sometimes there can be a lack of guidance for junior doctors on what they should be teaching medical students. The UCL MBBS Curriculum Map/intended learning outcomes were suggested as a source of information for this.
- It was noted that the assistantship model has meant being able to tailor learning to individual students. Longer placements/more days in a row were reported as more useful to the experience.
- Graduates and students agreed that the current practice of having students remain at the same main site for a whole year is having a positive impact on student experience. The previously model of constant moves sometimes led to feeling unmoored and isolated. It was recognised that it did have the drawback of sometimes inspiring a fear of missing out but learning outcomes were seen as a good way of making sure there is parity between sites.

The Whittington Undergraduate Medical Education Senior Management Team

The key points of the discussion were as follows:

- The Trust and UCLMS discussed the joint challenges to Healthcare and Higher Education that had been faced throughout the pandemic. The effort and commitment to teaching through adversity that has been shown by the Trust was praised. The invaluable input of students as medical support workers was also commended.
- Consultant job plans: the Trust is in the process of an electronic job planning project. The majority of consultants do not have an electronic record of their job plan and the Trust could not inform the visitors about the allocation of PAs for teaching. There is a basic plan of one PA allocated to clinical staff for teaching for each £40,000 given to trusts for teaching.
- Tripartite Agreement: work is underway to replace the current SLA with a Tripartite Agreement between HEE, NHS providers and UCLMS. The new agreement will be a reflection of the current agreement without any major changes.
- Funding: the SLA specifies the administrative support required for student placement activity. It was discussed that other sites fund an office manager and an administrative support position while the Whittington currently funds only 0.5 of a position. It was recommended the Whittington should fund two administrators in this role. Differences between sites were acknowledged and funding allocations will be investigated.
- Portfolios: the feedback reports are disseminated widely to relevant individuals and positive comments are generally shared with named colleagues for inclusion in their portfolios as a method to formalise achievements and recognise the long service of teachers.
- Timetabling: there was a concern raised over the consistency of quality of the timetables issued to students. It was agreed that this would be raised separately to the site visit to discuss possible solutions.

Summary

The visit team acknowledged the high level of commitment to medical education shown by many individuals in the Trust from foundation doctors to consultants and would like to thank those involved for their dedication and hard work.

There were no major areas of concern raised in the visit. The team would like to commend the Trust for its culture, which gives students a sense of belonging and supports them throughout their placements.

Another area of good practice to note is that the assistantship model at the Whittington has been recognised by the visit team as an example of good practice. The model has been praised as being responsive to student feedback and giving a realistic learning experience. Widespread dissemination throughout the medical school will be advantageous.

The visit team identified a potential risk area, in that the Whittington Education Centre (WEC) project is currently awaiting building control sign off and has no set completion date. Though it is hoped to be ready for use for the 2022-23 academic year, timetabling and bookings are completed in July and space may become a concern if there are any delays with opening.

The visiting team have made a series of recommendations below, which we hope will help to minimise any risk areas and improve the quality of medical education in the Trust.

Action Plan

Actions
Recommended actions for Whittington
The WEC is projected to be open for the new academic year. Whittington to continue to keep UCLMS informed, particularly regarding consideration of the 2022-23 timetabling deadline of July 2022.
Review room capacities in advance of the 2022/23 academic year (originally due to be reviewed for January 2023).
To review funding for Whittington Placement Administrators and increase Tariff Funded posts from 0.5 to 2 FTE's.
Continue to update the job planning system to reflect time for education and allocation of PAs.
To write a detailed account of the use of the apprenticeship/assistantship models for dissemination to other teaching sites.
Actions for UCL Medical School
Review SEQ question 'How would you rate the support systems available to you' as part of the ongoing SEQ Review.
As part of the current round of UCLMS site visits, investigate the funding parity between sites.
Ensure that the timetable information around where and when students are to be expected continues to be disseminated to Whittington Trust staff.
Joint actions for UCL Medical School/Whittington
Discussion to be had around timetabling and to facilitate the provision of the information needed to produce up-to-date and accurate timetables for students.
Continue to promote current Induction packs and Curriculum Map with learning outcomes. UCLMS offers roadshows around induction, clarifying curriculum requirements and placement outcomes.
Consult NCL providers to see if a NCL medical directors' meeting would be thought useful. If so, UCLMS will try to arrange at an agreed frequency.
Suggested actions for the Whittington
Consult with Royal Free Hospital for good practice implementing the SLA

Appendix 1

List of participants

UCLMS Visit team

Director UCL Medical School
Academic Lead for Quality Assurance
Head of MBBS Management
Deputy Lead for MBBS Programme (Year 4-6)
MBBS Placements Manager
Head of Management Yr 4-6
QAE Manager

Whittington UGME senior management team

Chief Executive
Medical Director
Director of Undergraduate Education
Finance Director
Undergraduate Site Administrator
Whittington Placements Administrator

UCLMS students

3 Year 4 Student Representatives
4 Year 5 Student Representatives

UCLMS graduates

5 FY1
1 Teaching Fellow
1 GPST1