



Hull York Medical School

Policy on Student Welfare and Support

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To obtain this Policy in an alternative format:
Contact governance@hyms.ac.uk

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1. Overview

- 1.1. HYMS and the Universities of Hull and York have a responsibility to provide pastoral support to students who are registered on a HYMS degree programme.
- 1.2. Pastoral support for HYMS students is provided by staff of HYMS and the two Universities, including honorary teaching staff based in NHS and other associated organisations. HYMS students have access to the student support services available through the student's University of registration (including that available through the Students' Unions).
- 1.3. HYMS students who are registered at one University but whose programme involves periods of studies at the other University will by mutual agreement have access to Student Support services at that other University, with the exception of financial support and visa/immigration advice which is only available from the university of registration.
- 1.4. The Student Support Services of the Universities of Hull and York are listed in HYMS student handbooks and on the website of each University.
- 1.5. The HYMS Academic Lead for Student Support is responsible for provision of pastoral support within HYMS. Usually the primary contact for a student will be their designated Personal Mentor (see below), or other members of the HYMS Student Support Network as listed in the relevant course handbooks. Students unsure about the appropriate source of support should in the first instance contact the HYMS Student Support team (student.support@hyms.ac.uk) or the HYMS Postgraduate Office (postgraduate@hyms.ac.uk) as appropriate.
- 1.6. Although the formal obligation for student support is limited to currently registered students, HYMS acknowledges the need to provide appropriate advice to students while not registered (for example, those on leave of absence) although access to University services may be limited. HYMS recognises the responsibility to continue certain elements of support (e.g. provision of academic references) will extend to those who have graduated or otherwise ceased to study at HYMS.

2. Health

- 2.1. HYMS students must register with a local GP practice in order to obtain health advice from the NHS in the usual way. While some HYMS staff are medically qualified and thus have appropriate expertise it would be an unacceptable conflict of interest for them to provide personal health advice to students they encounter in their academic role; and similarly it would be inappropriate for students to seek such advice.
- 2.2. Where HYMS requires medical advice about a student, for example to make adjustments to study including granting of leave of absence or where there are concerns a student's health could create a risk to patients, HYMS will obtain this advice from their Occupational Health advisors (University of Hull Occupational Health Team or the York NHS Trust service) or other appropriate services independent of staff and who can maintain appropriate clinical confidentiality.

Students who are concerned that a health condition may be affecting their academic studies or their ability to work with patients on clinical placement should contact the HYMS Student Support team to seek referral to the appropriate Occupational Health service or other appropriate services. The Academic Lead for Student Support (or deputies) may recommend a referral to Occupational Health in discussion with the student.

- 2.3. In those cases where a member of HYMS staff is the appropriate person to provide medical care to a HYMS student presenting with health problems in an NHS setting (e.g. for reasons of specialist expertise or service organisation) those staff are expected to follow professional guidelines in preventing conflict of interest between their clinical and academic interactions with the same student. HYMS will continue to use normal mechanisms for seeking medical advice if required.

3. Disabilities

- 3.1. In line with disability legislation and the published policies of the University of Hull and University of York, HYMS will make reasonable adjustments to study arrangements for students for whom Occupational Health and/or University Disabilities Officers advise that these requirements apply. Students should contact the HYMS Student Support team in the first instance to discuss any such adjustments.
- 3.2. However under the law, while reasonable adjustments can be made to the course of studies, and to the manner of assessment (e.g. extra time in written examinations) they cannot be made to any competence standards that must be demonstrated for successful progression or graduation. In particular, and in line with advice from the General Medical Council and the Medical Schools Council, the ability of medical students to carry out on the appropriate timescale tasks required for assessment of practical clinical skills (including all aspects of patient consultation and examination, as well as procedural skills) are competence standards required for qualification for the profession of medicine and cannot be adjusted.

4. Personal Mentors

- 4.1. All HYMS students will have someone who acts as their Personal Mentor, someone who they have the opportunity to meet regularly and who is their first contact for discussions about their personal pastoral and academic issues.
- 4.2. It is recognised that individual HYMS students may for reasons of their own prefer not to use their designated Personal Mentor. HYMS students may contact the HYMS Student Support team or the HYMS Postgraduate Office to request a change of Personal Mentor, or they may use another member of the HYMS Support Network in relation to a particular pastoral issue.
- 4.3. In other instances where a HYMS student cannot easily gain support from their designated Personal Mentor, for example if taking re-sit examinations at a time when the Personal Mentor is unavailable or when a student is no longer registered but awaiting the outcome of an appeal, the student should similarly consult the

HYMS Student Support team or the HYMS Postgraduate Office to obtain appropriate support.

4.4. HYMS MBBS students:

4.4.1 Students in MBBS Phase 1 will be allocated a Personal Mentor who will normally be the tutor facilitating their PBL group, who can provide guidance and support on academic professional and personal matters.

4.4.2 Students on placement in clinical sites in MBBS Phases 2 and 3 will have a designated Personal Mentor, and should contact the local Student Liaison Officer for information on other sources of local pastoral advice. Support will also continue to be available from members of the HYMS Student Support Network and University services.

4.5. HYMS MBBS students intercalating on a HYMS degree programme:

4.5.1 Students registered for a HYMS intercalated degree retain the same access to HYMS and University student support as any other HYMS registered student. Their Personal Mentor will normally be their course supervisor or other designated staff member within the Department hosting their studies.

4.6. HYMS MBBS students intercalating on an external degree programme:

4.5.2 Students registered for an intercalated degree at another institution are expected to use the student support services provided by that institution. However they may still contact the HYMS Student Support team for advice and support, especially with regard to their return to the MBBS course.

4.7. HYMS students on taught and research postgraduate programmes:

4.7.1 For HYMS students on postgraduate programmes their Personal Mentor will normally be their course supervisor or research supervisor. The HYMS Postgraduate Senior Tutor is the appropriate member of the HYMS Student Support Network for further support, and they can contact the HYMS Postgraduate Office or HYMS Student Support team about access to other support. HYMS postgraduate students are eligible to use the student support services of the Universities, including the specific provision for graduate students.

5. **Absence**

5.1. For all HYMS degree programmes the requirements in terms of attendance and engagement are set down in Regulations and Codes of Practice. In general students are expected to attend all study opportunities specified including not only timetabled interactions with tutors but other sessions as required to gain appropriate experience, learn requisite skills, and achieve necessary outcomes.

Nevertheless it is recognised that there are various reasons why absence might occur.

- 5.2. To ensure members of staff are informed of the absence, students experiencing illness or other urgent reasons for absence must contact relevant the HYMS offices. Illness should subsequently be recorded by submitting a self-certified absence form, valid for up to seven days. Longer periods of absence should be certified by providing evidence of illness from a medical practitioner or other appropriate healthcare professional.
- 5.3. For any other absence permission should be sought in advance from the appropriate office. It is accepted that there are various reasons why absence might be justified (including medical appointments, certain major religious festivals, major family events such as funerals of close relatives, care responsibilities, maternity and paternity leave, compassionate leave) and permission for a limited number of absences will not be unreasonably withheld.
- 5.4. In the case of absence for which advance permission has been gained, students have the responsibility of notifying staff and colleagues affected by the absence. In all cases they must accept the responsibility of making up work missed through absence.
- 5.5. Special requirements may be specified for absence from scheduled examinations and other assessments. It may not be possible to take an examination on an alternative date within the same academic year. In the case where illness prevents submission of assessed work by the normal deadline, a request for variation of the deadline can be made by submitting mitigating circumstances. Further information regarding HYMS Policy on Mitigating Circumstances can be accessed at: <http://www.hyms.ac.uk/docs/default-source/policies/policy-on-mitigating-circumstances.pdf?sfvrsn=12>
- 5.6. Concerns about poor attendance for any reason will be recorded and discussed during reviews of student progression. Although these discussions will be primarily around support of the student (since absence is often an indicator of health or personal problems, as well as being strongly correlated with poor academic engagement) evidence of insufficient attendance may result in a student being determined not to have achieved or be able to achieve the requirements of the programme of study. In these cases levels of absence may affect whether a student can progress within the course, or can be examined, or can be awarded a qualification.
- 5.7. Students requiring visas to study may have to meet additional attendance reporting requirements as part of the visa conditions, and these will be monitored by HYMS on behalf of the University sponsoring the visa. Advice on current requirements can be obtained from the relevant administrative offices of the Universities of Hull and York.

6. Leave of absence

- 6.1. If students need to take extended absences, for example maternity and paternity leave, or to resolve serious illness or other welfare issues, they should apply for formal leave of absence (also known as 'interruption of studies', 'suspension of registration', or 'intercalation'). This needs agreement at Board of Studies level and enables their student registration status to be suspended for a period of time and subsequently resumed. While registration is suspended a student will no longer have access to University resources except where specific permission is granted as part of the conditions of leave of absence. HYMS Policy on Leave of Absence can be accessed at: <http://www.hyms.ac.uk/docs/default-source/policies/policy-on-leave-of-absence.pdf>
- 6.2. Depending on the programme of study there are slightly different arrangements for application for, and programme level approval of, leave of absence. Applications will be expected to be supported by relevant documentation and in the case of illness the advice of Occupational Health or other appropriate services may be sought. Students in a situation that may require leave of absence should contact the appropriate course administration at an early stage (usually either the HYMS Student Support team or the HYMS Postgraduate Office).
- 6.3. As part of approval of leave of absence conditions will be set on arrangements for return, to ensure the student can at that stage meet requirements for successful progression and graduation. In cases of leave of absence due to ill health, it is normally a condition that HYMS receives medical advice that the student is fit to resume studies before return will be confirmed.
- 6.4. Although in principle leave of absence can be approved for any period up to one year, it should be noted that, depending on the programme of study, it may in some cases be necessary for the student to return to studies in the following academic year in order to achieve all course requirements.
- 6.5. When leave of absence is granted HYMS and the Universities of Hull and York have obligations to inform bodies providing financial support about the suspension of registration. Students should be aware of the impact on funding including scholarships, maintenance grants, and loans.
- 6.6. In the case of international students requiring visas to study, the Universities of Hull and York have an obligation to inform UK border authorities about the suspension of registration. Students should be aware this may impact their entitlement to remain in the UK and they should seek advice from the relevant University immigration advisor before requesting leave of absence.
- 6.7. HYMS students who are on leave of absence, or for other reasons are not currently registered, may continue to contact the HYMS Student Support team or the HYMS Postgraduate Office for appropriate advice particularly around planning return to study. However they may only obtain welfare support from University services by special arrangement.

7. Pregnancy and maternity

- 7.1. Students who disclose pregnancy will be treated sensitively, and supported on an individual basis to meet course requirements and graduate successfully. HYMS will be flexible in identifying solutions which best meet the student's needs and wishes, and also the requirements of the course of study; keeping in mind the legal obligations under the Equality Act (2010) and guidance on its application to the higher education sector. There will normally be a meeting with an appropriate member of staff to discuss the following:
- Communication with the student and others;
 - Health and safety implications;
 - Impact on course requirements including assessment;
 - Impact on placements;
 - Planning of absence for appointments and maternity leave, including arrangements for return.
- 7.2. As a general rule students can expect to have similar maternity and paternity rights as those laid down in employment law, although that legislation does not apply formally. Students should be aware that the options need to be discussed individually, since they will vary with the specific needs of the course of study and the dates involved. HYMS will only approve arrangements which can be realistically predicted to lead to successful completion of the degree programme. Depending on the course significant periods of maternity leave may prevent the student being supported to meet the requirements for successful progression or graduation unless they return to the following academic year. Financial support arrangements may be affected, and those are matters for the relevant funding body and not HYMS. International students with visas still need to meet the conditions of their visa.

Appendix

This appendix is updated by the Student Office and the Postgraduate Office regularly to ensure accuracy.

All regulatory documents below can be accessed via:

<http://www.hyms.ac.uk/aboutus/regulations-policies-and-codes-of-practice>

Student Handbooks can be accessed via Blackboard:

<https://hymvle.york.ac.uk/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp>