



Hull York Medical School

### Policy on Student Welfare and Support

Approval Process:	
<b>Committee</b>	<b>Outcome/Date of approval</b>
HYMS Board of Studies	Approved on 23 <sup>rd</sup> August 2018
HYMS Joint Senate Committee	Approved on 4 <sup>th</sup> September 2018
To be implemented from:	1 <sup>st</sup> August 2018
Next due for review:	2019-20, or as required
Responsibility to update:	Director for Student Support
Date Modified	May 2018 (Minor Revisions)

<b>Publication:</b>	
<b>Location</b>	<b>Date</b>
HYMS website	25 <sup>th</sup> October 2018

To obtain this Code of Practice in an alternative format please contact [governance@hyms.ac.uk](mailto:governance@hyms.ac.uk)

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## 1. Overview

- 1.1. Hull York Medical School and the Universities of Hull and York have a responsibility to provide pastoral support to students who are registered on any School degree programme.
- 1.2. Pastoral support for Hull York Medical School students is provided by staff of the School and the two Universities, including honorary teaching staff based in NHS and other associated organisations. Hull York Medical School 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. Hull York Medical School students who are registered at one University but whose programme involves periods of studies closer to the other University will by mutual agreement have access to Student Support services at that other University (e.g. students registered in York but on placement in or near Hull), with the exception of financial support and visa/immigration advice, which is only available from the student's university of registration.
- 1.4. The Student Support Services of the Universities of Hull and York are listed on the website of each University.
- 1.5. The Hull York Medical School Director for Student Support is responsible for provision of pastoral support within the School. Usually the primary contact for a student will be their designated Personal Mentor (see below), or other members of the Hull York Medical School Student Support Team as listed in the relevant course handbooks and on the School's VLE (Blackboard). Students unsure about the appropriate source of support should, in the first instance, contact the Hull York Medical School Student Support team ([student.support@hyms.ac.uk](mailto:student.support@hyms.ac.uk)) or the School's Postgraduate Office ([postgraduate@hyms.ac.uk](mailto:postgraduate@hyms.ac.uk)) as appropriate.
- 1.6. Although the formal obligation for student support is limited to currently registered students, the School 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. Hull York

Medical School 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 Hull York Medical School.

## **2. Health**

- 2.1. Hull York Medical School students must register with a local GP practice in order to obtain health advice from the NHS in the usual way. While some School 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 the School requires medical advice about a student e.g. advice on adjustments to study; granting of leave of absence, or where there are concerns a student's health could create a risk to patients, the School will obtain this advice from their Occupational Health advisors (University of Hull Occupational Health Team or the York NHS Trust service). The School might also seek guidance from other appropriate services, independent of staff, and who can maintain appropriate clinical confidentiality.
- 2.3. 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 Hull York Medical School Student Support team to seek referral to the appropriate Occupational Health service or other appropriate services. The Director for Student Support (or deputies) may recommend a referral to Occupational Health in discussion with the student.
- 2.4. In those cases where a member of the School's staff is the appropriate person to provide medical care to a Hull York Medical School 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. The School 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, the School will make reasonable adjustments to study arrangements for students for whom Occupational Health and/or University Disabilities teams advise that these requirements apply. Students should contact the Hull York Medical School 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 a relevant programme. 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 Hull York Medical School 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 students may, for reasons of their own, prefer not to use their designated Personal Mentor. Students may contact the Hull York Medical School Student Support team or the School's Postgraduate Office to request a change of Personal Mentor, or they may use another member of the School's support network in relation to a particular pastoral issue.

4.3. In other instances where a Hull York Medical School 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 Hull York Medical School's Student Support team or the School's Postgraduate Office to obtain appropriate support.

4.4. Hull York Medical School undergraduate students:

4.4.1 Students in 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.

4.4.3 Other sources of local pastoral advice and support will be available. Students should contact the local Student Liaison office for information.

4.4.4 Support will also continue to be available from members of the Hull York Medical School Student Support Network and University services whilst students are on placement in NHS sites.

4.5. Hull York Medical School MBBS students intercalating on a Hull York Medical School degree programme:

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

4.6. Hull York Medical School MBBS students intercalating on an external degree programme:

4.6.1 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 Hull York Medical School Student Support team for advice and support, especially with regard to their return to the MBBS course.

4.7. Hull York Medical School students on the MSc Physician's Associate Programme:

4.7.1 PA students will be allocated a Personal Mentor, normally the tutor facilitating their PBL group, who can provide guidance and support on academic professional and personal matters.

4.8 Hull York Medical Students on postgraduate taught and research programmes:

4.8.1 Personal mentors for students on postgraduate programmes will normally be their course supervisor or research supervisor. Hull York Medical School have Postgraduate Senior Advisors, who are the appropriate members of the School's Student Support Network to approach for further guidance. Postgraduate students can contact the School's Postgraduate Office or the Hull York Medical School Student Support team for advice about access to other support networks. Hull York Medical School postgraduate students are eligible to use the student support services of the Universities, including the specific provision for graduate students.

## **5. Absence**

5.1. The requirements in terms of attendance and engagement are set down in the Hull York Medical School's MBBS and Physician's Associate Conditions of Training documentation, and the Postgraduate 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, MBBS and PA students experiencing illness or other urgent reasons for absence must contact relevant the School offices as detailed in the Student Guidelines on Absence and Absence Reporting. 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. Permission for planned absences should be sought in advance as detailed in the Student Guidelines on Absence and Absence Reporting, accessible to students via Blackboard > HYMS for All > Information for All ([https://hymsvle.york.ac.uk/webapps/blackboard/content/listContentEditable.jsp?content\\_id=1705459\\_1&course\\_id=74434\\_1&mode=reset](https://hymsvle.york.ac.uk/webapps/blackboard/content/listContentEditable.jsp?content_id=1705459_1&course_id=74434_1&mode=reset)). 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 an extension to the deadline can be made by submitting exceptional circumstances. Further information regarding Hull York Medical School Policy on Exceptional Circumstances can be accessed at: <https://www.hyms.ac.uk/staff-and-students/regulations-policies-and-codes-of-practice>
- 5.6. Hull York Medical School MBBS, Diploma in Health Education and MSc Physician's Associate students:



5.6.1 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, e.g. where assessments and learning outcomes will not be achieved, hence progression requirements not met. 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 Hull York Medical School 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'). The Hull York Medical School Policy on Leave of Absence can be accessed at: <https://www.hyms.ac.uk/staff-and-students/regulations-policies-and-codes-of-practice> .

## **7. Pregnancy, maternity, paternity and adoption**

7.1. Following a consultation with their General Practitioner (GP) and/or other appropriate services, applicants and students are encouraged to notify the School about their pregnancy through their Academic Supervisor or other member of staff. If a student is uneasy about discussing their pregnancy with

the School, they could seek advice and support from University of Hull or York Student Support Services at or the Student Union<sup>1</sup>.

7.2. Students who notify us of pregnancy will be supported on an individual basis to meet course requirements and graduate successfully. The School will be flexible in identifying solutions which best meet the student's needs and also the requirements of the course of study. 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. Students can expect to have similar maternity, paternity and adoption rights as those laid down in university guidelines (in line with Equality Challenge Unit guidance). However, students should be aware that options need to be discussed individually, since they will vary with the specific needs of the course of study and the dates involved.

7.3. The School 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 leave may prevent the student being supported to meet the requirements for successful progression or graduation unless they return to their studies the following academic year, in which case a Leave of Absence application would be processed ( <https://www.hyms.ac.uk/staff-and-students/regulations-policies-and-codes-of-practice> ).

7.4. Financial support arrangements may be affected, and those are matters for the relevant funding body and not for the School. International students with visas still need to meet the conditions of their visa.

## **8. Privacy, Confidentiality and Data Protection**

8.1 Any information submitted by a student will be treated with the highest level of confidentiality that can be maintained. Hull York Medical School, the Universities of Hull and York, and any other relevant bodies will only disclose

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<sup>1</sup> Reference to Students' Union throughout this Code means Hull University Union (HUU), York University Students' Union (YUSU) or the Graduate Student Association (GSA) – all of which are available as a source of support and advice dependent on the student's programme of registration.

confidential information to members of staff who are directly involved in the administration and consideration of formal processes as necessary to allow open and fair consideration.

- 8.2 In supporting students, information gathered may include third party data, opinion and information, which was provided in confidence. This information needs to be handled consistently and fairly and in accordance with common data protection principles, making it clear to all parties that the sharing of this information is agreed for the purposes of reaching informed and fair decisions.
- 8.3 The relevant laws covering the processing of personal information are the Data Protection Act 2018 (which incorporates the UK's implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)) and the Equality Act 2010.

## **Appendix**

All regulatory documents can be accessed via: <https://www.hyms.ac.uk/staff-and-students/regulations-policies-and-codes-of-practice>

Student Handbooks can be accessed via Blackboard:

[https://hymvle.york.ac.uk/webapps/portal/execute/tabs/tabAction?tab\\_group\\_id=736\\_1](https://hymvle.york.ac.uk/webapps/portal/execute/tabs/tabAction?tab_group_id=736_1)