



2022-2023 Academic Year

Important information on the Attendance Requirements for the Undergraduate Medicine (MBChB) programme

This document is important advice to accompany the [University Student Attendance and Engagement Policy](#) that all Undergraduate Medicine students are subject to. Information about this policy and the process for reporting your attendance are available from the [Attendance and Absence monitoring help page](#).

1. Introduction

We expect you to take responsibility for your own learning by attending and taking full advantage of the variety of learning activities which are made available to you. Unless there is a good reason for your absence, ***we expect your full engagement with the course***. That is, we expect your attendance at all timetabled sessions that you can attend. The School appreciates that sometimes you may be late due to unforeseen circumstances, such as illness, transport problems or because of carer responsibilities. In these cases, we expect you to be proactive in your engagement with the Keele App and/or course administration teams to ensure a correct and up to date record is maintained and contact with unit/block leads to discuss opportunities to remediate any missed learning.

The School expects you to demonstrate openness and honesty in requesting and recording absences – it is a means by which you can demonstrate meaningfully your commitment to, and understanding of, your professional obligations in training to be a doctor. The School will be as flexible as possible when considering any request for leave but may need to seek reassurance from you that reasonable plans can be put in place to cover any missed learning opportunities – plans which are in your own best interest. It is our intention that any reasonable request for leave will be approved, although you should note that you may well be asked to meet with your Year Lead/Hospital Dean to discuss your absence in more detail or help you plan how you will make up for missed learning opportunities.

To comply with regulations and criteria set by the General Medical Council (GMC), the University and UK Visa and Immigration, the School is required to regularly record attendance at teaching sessions each week. The School keeps a record of late attendance and/or absence from scheduled sessions as an indication of how you are engaging with the course as part of your professional development as a doctor.

Poor attendance, not declaring an absence, failing to provide medical certificates or complete the required absence/leave process or not notifying 'relevant people' are all examples of behaviour that would be considered a poor professional attitude towards your learning. Whilst we appreciate most students will follow the required process, please note that Year Leads will be advised of any who do



not attend and/or do not follow the correct reporting process. Persistent or repeated episodes of inappropriate behaviours could result in a meeting with a member of the School of Medicine staff (a Year Lead in the first case, with subsequent escalation if required), to discuss any issues underlying these behaviours, remediation of lost learning and/or whether additional support can be put in place. It may be that you will be required to attend a Support to Study Panel or Health & Conduct Committee meeting for a more formal review of your circumstances. In exceptional circumstances, ***persistent or repeated episodes of inappropriate behaviours and or absences may result in you being asked to interrupt or, in some cases, terminate your studies.*** Should you be required to see a Year Lead/Hospital Dean or attend a Support to Study or Health & Conduct Committee meeting, a record of your attendance will be made available to them to review. It is important that you note that whilst the attendance and engagement process have thresholds for reporting absences and contacting you, these reporting thresholds ***do not represent a minimum expectation of attendance on this professional course.***

We strongly encourage you to contact the Student Experience and Support service if you feel that your absence, or the cause of your absence, has affected or will affect your studies, or if you have any concerns over your health. We are keen to work with you to ensure that you can attend the course.

Your attendance information is used to:

- Maintain a Record of Attendance as evidence of your engagement with the course; The University is responsible for notifying a number of different stakeholders, including Local Education Authorities and NHS bursary providers, etc. of changes to a student's course including leave of absence, withdrawals, change of course or repeating a year;
- To identify and potentially remediate missed learning activities
- To meet UK Visa and Immigration requirements;
- To enable the School to consider engagement with the course and professionalism at School Health & Conduct Committees, Support to Study Panels and the Faculty Fitness to Practice Committee

1.1 How do we monitor attendance?

Attendance is actively monitored across all years of the course and across all learning environments. Attendance at most taught activities (online and *in situ*) is reported using the [Keele App](#) on your smart device or through the <https://app.keele.ac.uk> web portal. A short [user guide for the Keele App](#) is available and a comprehensive briefing is available on the [Attendance and absence monitoring sharepoint site](#) (available when you are on a University network or attached via a VPN). You can check in just before, during and just after a scheduled session. As well as providing your individual timetable, this app/portal provides you with the means to record your attendance as well as report absences (and their cause) as well as request a planned absence.

Attendance at some *in situ* activities is recorded using a "black box" scanner, particularly in facilities where you should not be bringing a mobile device. These scanners are primarily located in laboratory facilities for anatomy and practical classes as well as skills training. Scanners are located on walls adjacent to entrances to these facilities. You will need your Keele card to "tap" to record your



attendance. Scanner equipment is currently installed in the David Weatherall Building on the University campus and on some rooms in buildings on the Royal Stoke University Hospital campus, in particular the Clinical Education Centre.

If you forget your 'Keele card' and are unable to 'tap' to confirm your attendance for that session, you need to be aware that your record will record an absence – you will need to complete a reporting absence on the Keele app to report that you had attended but forgotten your card to ensure your record is amended. If you lose or damage your Keele card and require a replacement, please visit <https://www.keele.ac.uk/keelecard/replacementcards/>

The means of capturing engagement with on-line and *in situ* sessions in both clinical and non-clinical areas may be developed or adapted throughout the academic year, depending on options that become available or where possibilities exist with alternative online platforms. You may, therefore, be asked to take part in a pilot and your co-operation would be appreciated.

In Years 3, 4 and 5, where you will spend more of your time in clinical areas, your personal log of learning activities and skills will also be considered as evidence of your engagement with the course.

1.2 Reporting an absence from the course

There are many reasons why you may not attend the course. We consider these to be either **planned absences** (eg flexible leave, care leave, medical appointments) or **unplanned absences** (eg family emergency, illness).

Planned absences can be requested using the Keele App. These will be subject to approval by your year lead. You will be asked to account for how you intend to make up for this planned absence. It is your responsibility, where asked how you plan to remediate missed learning, to discuss this with relevant Unit/block/GP leads and report these plans on your request. Note that depending on the type of planned leave you are requesting, there may be different submission timelines. These differences reflect a process that will require course administrators to contact year leads or others for comment, as well as reflect the professional work environment you will be joining.

Students on clinical placement must inform their placement provider using the contact details provided at the GP / Trust induction (and also available from the Course Administration team at your base site) of any unplanned absence before 10am on the first day of absence. It is particularly important to be mindful of the fact that clinical staff and patients may be waiting for you and it is regarded as a professional courtesy to provide this notice of your unplanned absence. Subsequently, and for all planned absences, it is your responsibility to report your unplanned absence using the Keele App. You may be asked to provide a GP/Medical Certificate, where appropriate, for your absence.



1.3 Requesting a Leave of Absence

A leave of absence (LOA) is a longer-term absence that can be used to support a student's health and/or wellbeing. The School would strongly encourage any student that seeks to take a leave of absence from the course to speak to the [University's Student Experience & Support Team](#) as well as their year lead. Year Leads can advise you of the process for formally requesting a leave of absence from the course. Additional information is also available at the [Student Policies Sharepoint](#).

1.4 Attendance at Assessments

Should you be unable to attend an examination (whether it be a practical exam or a written paper) you should contact your Course Administration team **as soon as possible**. You will need to document your absence for the dates of the exams you missed with appropriate supporting information. Absences due sickness will require a sick note or letter from a GP or Hospital. You should also fill in a [University Exceptional Circumstance Form](#).

Students are required to have 100% attendance for clinical year student selected components (SSC) in accordance with their agreed timetable. In other non-clinical SSC placements (eg a humanities or laboratory-based project), students are expected to attend and engage in all sessions that they are assigned. Unauthorised leave will lead to failing an SSC and an overall capped mark. Poor attendance will be marked as a failure if not addressed and resolved during the SSC (please see relevant year of study 'SSC guide' document available via the KLE once finalized).

1.5 Arriving late for teaching sessions

You are expected to arrive in good time for any teaching session so that they can start as timetabled.

If you arrive more than 5 minutes late for an *in situ* session held in either the Multi-User Labs or the Anatomy Suite you could be refused entry as you will have missed the start of class introduction and safety briefings.

In all other teaching activities, it is the Lead Tutor's decision as to whether you are too late to enter a class, and their decision is FINAL. They will primarily base this decision on an assessment of the impact late attendees will have on the learning of others /safety and well-being of the late attendees.

It is your responsibility to contact clinical placement or third sector/community placement providers if you will be late for one of these sessions. Please contact your provider directly to let them know in line with instructions provided to you as part of inductions and/or handbooks, as well as contacting the Course Administration team at your base site. ***This professional courtesy is particularly important as these providers may have arranged for patients to be available to meet you during that session.***



How late after a teaching session starts that you register your attendance is recorded. Like absence information, consistent patterns of lateness could be discussed with you in the context of a potential lack of proper professional conduct in your studies.

2 Unplanned Absences

You are required where possible to report your absence by email to the Course Administration team at your base site by 10am on the first day of your absence. If you are unable to contact us yourself (for example, where you have been admitted to hospital) we ask that you try and arrange a family member, clinical partner or student peer to contact us on your behalf.

As part of this message to course administrators, please provide a brief explanation for your absence and the learning activities you will miss and, to mirror the reporting process in the workplace, please provide an approximate return date so that it can be recorded on your record of attendance.

It is also your responsibility to contact clinical placement or third sector/community placement providers if you cannot attend a teaching session with them. This is regarded as an important professional courtesy as it ensures that any patients or staff scheduled for this teaching session are not left waiting for you.

2.1 Absence due to illness

In accordance with normal working practice, for periods of absence up to and including 7 consecutive calendar days' duration (including Saturday and Sunday) **you must complete a "Self-Certification (Sickness)" Form** in order to 'self-certify' your absence. You are required to submit this form within five working days of your return to the course (we would prefer immediately you return to the course) giving details of the reason for absence and the sessions you have missed.

If you have been absent for 8 or more consecutive calendar days (including Saturday and Sunday), you should still complete a Self-Certification (sickness) Form **plus** provide an **original** Medical Certificate from a GP or hospital to cover your absence from day 8 onwards. If your GP or hospital Certificate covers the whole of your absence (from day 1) you do not need to also submit a Self-Certification (Sickness) Form. In line with General Medical Council recommendations, the School of Medicine does not accept General Practitioner certification where the General Practitioner is a relative of the student concerned

You should also note that the University will not allow a Self-Certification (Sickness) Form to be considered if it has not been submitted within five working days, unless as part of an extenuating circumstances case.



2.2 Emergency Compassionate leave

You can apply for compassionate leave if a close family member or close friend has a severe life-threatening illness, has had a serious accident or where there has been a bereavement of a close family member or friend. The amount of leave allowed will depend on the circumstances and will be considered on an individual basis. Please note that leave would not normally be granted for more than 5 days.

To arrange this, contact your Course Administration team at your base site by email. Be sure to include “URGENT: Compassionate / Carer’s leave notification” in your email header. You will need to record your absence on the Keele App.

Please keep in touch with your course administrator and/or year lead whilst you are away and let them know when you return.

2.3 Carer’s Leave

It is recognised that students who are parents or carers may need to request urgent leave to stay at home with a sick dependent. It is understood that although a dependent may not be ill enough to require a doctor, caring facilities have regulations restricting admittance of ill children or adult dependents.

The same process/requirements as if you yourself were sick need to be completed here (see section 2.1 above). The same requirements for an original Medical Certificate from a GP or hospital to cover your dependent’s illness and your absence from day 8 onwards also apply.

2.4 Adverse Weather Conditions

The School recognises that severe weather conditions, particularly snow and ice, can make it difficult for people to travel. Please consider carefully whether it is safe for you to travel, you should not put yourself at risk. However, as is the case with members of staff, students are expected to make their best efforts to attend, using alternative transport means if necessary. A longer than usual, but safe journey, is not an acceptable reason for absence.

After you have reported your absence to the course administration teams and any placement provider, you should report your absence using the Keele App. Your absence will be noted as “acceptable” if appropriately notified (correct process followed) and due to unsafe conditions.

It is recognised that students who are parents or carers may need to request urgent leave to stay at, or return, home to care for a dependent during adverse weather conditions. It is understood that caring facilities may close or have regulations restricting admittance of children or adult dependents



due to adverse weather conditions. Students should request this urgent adverse weather leave following the same process described for all students but should ensure they state the reason is to provide care for a dependent where additional details are requested on the Keele App.

3 Planned Absences

If you need to have time away from your studies, such as needing to have a planned hospital procedure (either as a day patient or one requiring an extended hospital stay) or need to attend a hospital or other clinic appointment, please use the Keele App to request permission for this planned absence. When planning an absence, you may need to consider whether you might wish to use some of your flexible leave entitlement, this is covered in more detail below.

When completing your Leave Request you will need to seek approval from any relevant member of staff for a period of planned absence. This discussion will allow you to discuss remediation for lost learning opportunities with the relevant Unit/Block Lead or Clinical Supervisor. If you will be absent from third sector/community or clinical placements, as well as contacting the Course Administration team at your base site it is your responsibility to contact your provider direct to let them know. You are not required to submit copies of medical appointment or medical communications to you as evidence, but you may wish to retain them in case you want to produce them at any point in the future.

It is expected that, in most cases, that you will submit this completed planned absence **at least 14 days in advance** of the planned leave. The person considering your request may seek reassurance from you or a member of staff that you have planned how to make up for any lost learning opportunities. The School is, however, aware that clinic and hospital appointments can occasionally be allocated at short notice. Should this be the case, you should mention this when asked to provide any details in the Keele App so that the Year Lead or the Hospital Dean is aware of this short notice when asked to consider your request for leave.

3.1 Planned leave to assist with School/University activities

There will be opportunities that arise where you can engage with the School or University, either to help with course development or as an ambassador for your peers. These activities may include recruitment activities (giving talks or acting as a student interviewer), supporting course development (in a focus group or on a staff/student away day), taking part in student society events or attending a conference where you are presenting a talk or poster.

If the School contacts you for these activities, they will explain how to record your absence. Where necessary, you will be expected to notify your Unit/Block Lead/Clinical Supervisor/Session Lead/Lecturer or Placement P that you will not be attending their session as you are assisting the



School or University with their activities. Please also contact your course administration team to confirm this activity – they will ensure that any corrections to your attendance record are made.

3.2 Participating in Sporting/Society Activities

Formal learning opportunities will generally not be scheduled for Wednesday afternoons for year 1 and 2 students to allow students to pursue sporting activities. In Year 3 and beyond, there is greater emphasis on learning within clinical placements. To maximise placement learning opportunities, formal learning opportunities may be scheduled on Wednesday afternoons, whether in-situ sessions or those delivered remotely. For year 3, wherever possible, students who take part in sports as part of a University or National team will be allowed to take leave during these sessions. Students in years 4 and 5 are expected to prioritise access to clinical learning opportunities throughout the whole of the working week. There are no protected sessions for recreation/sports and discussions with year leads and Hospital Deans to explore exceptional circumstances will be needed.

Students representing University or national level squads may request permission for time off to participate in matches (in advance) from the Year Lead or Hospital Dean. At least 14 days' notice of the dates will be normally required.

Students do not need to use flexible leave entitlement for University team sports events.

3.3 Jury Service

Undergraduate medical students are not excluded from undertaking jury service. If you receive a summons for jury service, you may decline the date offered. If you subsequently receive a second summons, you will unlikely be able to decline to complete your Jury service. You should particularly note the risk of the second offered date may fall during an examination period. If you are summoned to do jury service, **you are advised to contact your Year Lead before declining the first offered date.**

3.4 Requesting Leave for UK Armed Forces Activities

Depending upon whether you are currently going through the formal selection process for one of the UK Armed Forces or are interested in joining, leave can be discussed with your year lead. It may be the case that the most appropriate route for leave is to use your flexible leave. Please see the Flexible Leave Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document for guidance.

Where you do not need to use part of your flexible leave entitlement, you should make a request for leave using the standard Leave Request form and the process described in section 3 above.



4 Flexible Leave

The School of Medicine MBChB Flexible Leave Scheme was set up in response to student feedback. Students had commented that this would help promote the “*adult-adult, professional-professional dynamic*” rather than the “*teacher-student dynamic*” felt to exist previously. Student feedback in the past has shown this to be the case. The policy has been well received by students and staff, provided the rules are adhered to.

The policy is based on each student being given an allowance of 6 half days of flexible leave across the academic year. Whilst the leave is available to be taken at a student’s discretion, the main purpose of flexible leave is so that students have an opportunity to take time to attend notable events such as weddings, job interviews or conferences. The term flexible applies to the reason for the leave, not the process for requesting it. It is each student’s responsibility to note the contents of this [Flexible leave Policy](#) and the process for requesting this leave (Special School Leave on the Keele App),

The parameters for taking leave are:

- That the student has sufficient flexible leave entitlement available to them to take;
- That the student gives the required notice period of a minimum of 14 calendar days’ notice when submitting their flexible leave request;
- That the dates they would like do not fall within agreed and published “exclusion periods”;
- That the student follows the correct process* for applying for the leave.

‘Exclusion Periods’ which apply for 2022-23 (when you are not allowed to take flexible leave) are also available via the KLE, ‘Attendance/Absence’ section.

5 Religious Observance

The Medical School recognises that some students may feel unable to attend timetabled sessions due to religious observance and also understands that the dates of some religious festivals are not finalised until nearer the time, for example, in the case of Eid al-Fitr. One day of leave is normally available to students for observance of religious festivals. Where flexible leave is available to students to take, students can use some of their flexible leave entitlement to extend the time they take off on leave for the purpose of religious observance as long as the flexible leave element of their “extended leave” period does not occur during an exclusion period.

You are asked to inform the Course Administration team at your base site of any days when you feel you will be unable to attend due to religious observance. You should submit a Leave Request



using the Keele App listing any dates and planned remediation. The Year Lead/Hospital Dean will then be asked to consider your request for the leave. The Course Administration team will let you know the outcome, in writing, via your student email address.

The School recognises that the dates of some festivals are not finalised until nearer the time. For example, in the case of Eid al-Fitr where the actual date may not be announced until close to the start of Ramadan. If you are not sure of the precise dates when you apply originally, we ask that you provide approximate dates, for example “*likely between 21st to 23rd April 2023*”. It is your responsibility to submit the confirmed dates to the Course Administration team as soon as you are aware of them. This is so that the Year Leads/Hospital Dean can be informed, and your record of attendance updated.

If there is a possibility that a formal examination/assessment may fall on a date which conflicts with religious observance, you are required to discuss this with your Year Lead before making a request for leave. Please contact them as soon as provisional dates are known. Each will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Should you have any concerns that this situation may arise, you are advised to seek advice from your Year Lead/Hospital Dean and/or support from the University’s Student Experience & Support Team or other support services such as [Advice and Support at Keele \(ASK\)](#).

6 Absence from Study for a Full Academic Year or Longer

Undergraduate medical students who are absent from their studies for one academic year (either because they are intercalating or due to a leave of absence) will be required to complete the School of Medicine MBChB annual student DBS self-declaration form on their return. The University require Undergraduate medical students who are absent from their studies for more than one academic year to undergo a full enhanced DBS Check on their return.

Information arising from this DBS self-declaration will be considered by the Director or Deputy Director of Undergraduate Programmes (or nominee) who may refer the matter on, whether that be to Health and Conduct Committee or to another part of the Faculty of Medicine & Health Sciences Fitness to Practise process, if appropriate, to further consider the potential impact for the student, patients and others.