

Policy on allocation of UG placements at Brighton and Sussex Medical School.

Much of the BM BS course is delivered via placement-based teaching, starting from half day GP visits and workplace-based training in Year 1 and gradually progressing to full-time clinical attachments in Year 5. BSMS placements take place in various settings across East and West Sussex and occasionally further afield. At BSMS we believe that every student should have an equal opportunity to acquire knowledge and prove their ability. We also recognise that some placement opportunities may challenge some students more than others due to personal circumstances. The aim of this policy is to set out how we allocate placements, where possible, to take such personal circumstances into account.

General principles:

All students must undertake clinical placements to achieve the capabilities described in Outcomes for Graduates and the standards to be awarded a UK primary medical qualification.

Placements are allocated as fairly as possible by the Curriculum Support team.

We assume all students have a term-time address in the vicinity of Falmer / Brighton. Those students who choose to live elsewhere accept that BSMS organises placements and makes placement allocations on this basis.

We have a travel and accommodation policy which seeks to reimburse students for costs incurred for travel to placements in a manner that is fair, sustainable and transparent, whilst ensuring that NHS funding is spent carefully and in the most economic manner possible. The travel and accommodation policy is reviewed on an annual basis.

Students in Phase 1 of the course are allocated to placements in pairs. This is to ensure well-being and safety, both at the placement and also when travelling, especially while students are getting to know the area. We recommend that student pairs should travel together wherever possible.

BSMS regularly asks students for information which might affect how placements are allocated. It is the student's obligation and responsibility to give this information when asked and to notify the relevant School Office when their situation changes.

Considerations and Priorities:

Some students have a Learning Support Plan (LSP). Where an LSP includes a recommendation which affects the allocation of placements, this information is available to the members of the curriculum support team who make the allocations. Recommendations in an LSP will be met where possible, but this is dependent on the placements available for the rotation and sometimes on the number of students with similar LSPs.

NB. Unless the student has specifically requested it, the curriculum support team does not have access to any diagnosis or recommended adjustments which do not affect the

allocation / location of the placement. The student is responsible for informing the placement provider of any details or recommendations from their LSP that they wish to be shared.

Some students have other circumstances which affect their ability to attend placements, particularly caring responsibilities – eg. for young children or dependent adults. Where possible we will take caring responsibilities into account – eg. we will try to allocate a placement which involves less travelling time, so that minimal time in addition to the actual placement is spent away from the home. We cannot take into account any responsibilities for caring for pets.

We recognise that many students undertake paid work to support their studies. It will not always be possible for BSMS to allocate placements which will enable students to continue a regular evening or weekend work commitment, but we will endeavour to take this into account whenever it is possible. Conversely students should not accept work commitments which could potentially clash with teaching or placement timetables, including residential placement periods.

If it is possible to take a term-time address outside Falmer / Brighton into account when allocating placements, without detriment to other students, then we will endeavour to do so where resources allow.

Some students are more able to undertake more complicated journeys – eg. if they have access to a vehicle. We collect this information and use it where practical.

For residential placements, wherever possible, we will allocate students with a nominated placement partner or “buddy” to ensure mutual support and well-being. Students can normally expect to be placed in the same accommodation (same flat, block or one nearby) as their placement partner. Students may request to be placed in same sex accommodation on residential placements to support religious observance.

Whilst we recommend that all students should take advantage of “out of hours” placement opportunities, these are optional.

Random allocation:

Once considerations and priorities are taken into account, other placements available are allocated randomly. Due to the number of students and placement partners involved in our course, it is not possible to have an overall strategy across the course regarding distribution of locations or types of placement.

Other related policies and key resources:

BSMS Travel and Accommodation Policy
BSMS Religious Observance and Planned Absence Policy
Lone Working Guidance in BM BS Student Handbook