



Undergraduate GP Placements

FAQs for GP Teachers

Created and updated by
BSMS Quality and Placements Team

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Welcome and introductions

Dear GP colleagues

We have created this handy FAQ document which we hope will answer your most asked questions with answers that we have gleaned from the Clinical Academic GP team and the Quality and Placements teams at BSMS.

If there is anything that isn't covered in this guide, it could be that it's already outlined in the main GP teachers' pages of the website ([GP teachers resources - BSMS](#)) which includes the community GP teacher's handbook, the information sent to students (such as dress code) and also the resources that GPs may need to facilitate students.

If there is something that you can't find an answer to, or you wish to add something to this guide, we would be delighted to hear from you. Please email the BSMS GP Placements team – GPPlacements@bsms.ac.uk. For further details about contact people, including the GP academic leads, please see the 'contact us' section of this guide.

We are hugely grateful to all practice teams involved with the teaching and delivery of all community GP placements, thank you.

BSMS Quality and Placements Team

GP Teaching Experience and other HCPs

Q. I am not a clinical/educational supervisor, does that mean I cannot teach students?

A. To facilitate and teach undergraduate students, no formal teaching qualifications are necessary; we would love to hear from anyone who is interested in community GP teaching.

Q. Is there any training available to GPs before taking students?

A. Whilst there is no formal training for teaching undergraduate students, BSMS Department for Medical Education (DME) run a Teaching and Innovation in Medical Education (TIME) course, which all GPs are invited to attend. As well as this, we run a Y4 placement Zoom, because the block placement is a longitudinal placement, we cover the placement objectives, outcomes and what to expect from the 4th year visits. We also provide an extensive GP teachers handbook which covers each year-group and what students are expected to learn while on placement.

Q. Can Foundation doctors supervise students?

A. Foundation and trainee doctors can teach undergraduate students, but it must be a fully qualified GP who has overall sign-off (and responsibility for) the students on placement. The experience of foundation and trainee doctors can be very beneficial to undergraduates, and they often learn from each other.

Q. Can students spend time with other HCPs in the practice?

A. In all three of the year-groups, students benefit greatly from spending time with wider members of the healthcare team. We ask that this is no more than 50% of the time they are with you in Y1 and 2, and ideally with members of the team who are seeing patients.

Q. Can students triage patients over the phone?

A. Whilst telephone triage is a valuable learning opportunity for students, as with F2F appointments, all patients must still be reviewed by a fully qualified GP following the triage by students.

Q. Do students have an NHS/Smart card?

A. 4th year students are all issued with an NHS smart card to enable them access to the NHS systems and patient records, which they will need access to as part of their student-led clinic requirement of this placement.

Q. We have an unexpected shortage of supervising GPs/staff, what should we do?

A. Students can spend time with the MDT and could also benefit from spending an hour on reception, or in the waiting room talking to patients. Students are provided with instructions on self-directed learning opportunities/ideas while on placement. If, on the rare occasion, you cannot facilitate the students as scheduled, you may in certain cases be able to reschedule the students (4th years), but this is not often possible for earlier years.

Clinical skills teaching

Q. What do the students learn before they attend GP so I know what they can do while on

placement?

A. There is an extensive outline of the curriculum, and the clinical skills learned in each of the years available on the website, [please see this section for further details.](#)

Q. What is an Immersion Week?

A. To provide 2nd year students with a greater amount of clinical exposure within the BM BS programme, and to better integrate their learning, we provide students with immersive clinical experiences through week-long placements interspersed throughout the second year. Students are allocated one of the three Immersion Weeks for General Practice. The other weeks include BSMS-based GP teaching, community care placements and Interprofessional Education.

Phlebotomy

Q. Can students take bloods?

A. Students in Year 4 will have received training on venepuncture and students can take blood samples. BSMS does not provide insurance for medical students to undertake clinical procedures like blood taking. Appropriate practical procedures such as bloodletting can be undertaken under the direct supervision (and insurance) of another clinician, provided the patient is aware of the student's status (as a student). Practices can also ask students to undertake phlebotomy independently provided the practice is satisfied that the student is competent, i.e. to the same standard as they would for an employee. They may wish to keep evidence of that judgment (e.g. completing an assessment etc). If the student is then fulfilling that role again, the patient must be aware of their status as a student. The latter situation would need to be under the practice's insurance, as per an employee.

Students have been trained by our clinical skills team on models and are expected to keep a log of their experience, which they should be able to share with the practice. It should be covered by NHS indemnity.

Gynaecology and Intimate Examinations

Q. Is it appropriate for students to be involved in these clinics?

A. As one of their seven five-week rotations, 4th years have a specialist rotation in which they cover Obstetrics and Gynaecology. Students can carry out supervised examinations with patient consent. A speculum exam could be directly supervised, but a PV exam would be more difficult without repeating it. The supervising GP would need to make it clear to the patient beforehand as they would need to consent to have the examination done twice. And the student would need to be fully supervised for both the pelvic examination and speculum, as the supervising GP would act as chaperone.

Minor procedures

Q. Are Year-4 students able to carry out minor procedures under supervision?

A. Medical students can undertake treatments (such as Cryotherapy) and other minor

procedures if the following conditions are met:

- The patient must know the student's role (i.e. year four medical student) and provide consent for the student to undertake the procedure
- The student must be supervised appropriately
- The process above should be documented in the records
- If the treatment were higher risk (e.g. cryotherapy on the face) it would be an inappropriate situation for learning
- Medical students do not have any medical indemnity for clinical procedures and therefore procedures undertaken remain the responsibility of the supervisor

Indemnity and Insurance

Q. Are students insured while on placement?

A. Medical students working under the supervision of a clinician are normally covered by the supervisor's "crown indemnity" (NHS Resolution's Clinical Negligence Scheme for Trusts). See: <https://www.gmc-uk.org/education/standards-guidance-and-curricula/guidance/undergraduate-clinical-placements/guidance-on-undergraduate-clinical-placements/annex#indemnity-clauses-E8F878E2254D4526BBC12A72683A709E>

Medical students undertaking a placement within a GP surgery are covered under the CNSGP scheme, for further information, [see the GMCs FAQ page on Clinical Negligence Scheme](#).

Student attendance and absences

Because students are expected to be reliable, punctual and dependable with their attendance, we don't expect any absences from their clinical placements, unless there are exceptional circumstances, as placements in GP take priority. Where the student is ill, they are expected to notify the team in advance, before their expected start time.

We do not expect you to approve requests for 'cherry-picking' elements of the timetable that they prefer to do and drop other sessions that they select. Students should value all the timetabled sessions in GP.

Planned absences

Q. A student has asked for a reduced timetable for religious observation, what is the policy?

A. It is important that students of all faiths and beliefs feel welcome and included in medical education. Religion and belief are also classified as protected characteristics by the Equality Act (2010). We have the [BSMS policy on religion and belief](#) and the [Medical Schools Council guidance](#) on supporting students of different faiths is helpful, especially the section about clinical placements (pg.19). The main aim of these documents is to provide students with practical guidance to help fulfil their religious observances appropriately whilst meeting the training requirements of the medical school and the GMC.

Q. A student has asked for time off for their sporting commitments and we are not sure if this is approved by the school, or if there's anything we should know about?

A. If you feel that the time requested is reasonable and wouldn't impact on the overall learning objectives and outcomes of the placement, you are at liberty to approve (or deny) such requests.

Q. A student has requested time off for appointments. Do we need to check with the school before approving?

A. As some students do need to attend either regular or ad-hoc appointments, we ask students to minimise the impact to their GP placement provider and reschedule these where possible. If appointments are essential during the placement, you can either ask the student to catch up on any missed learning, and/or grant them time off where needed. We ask students to communicate this to practice teams in advance and not leave it until they are on placement. All practice contact details are provided to students at the start of term, along with instructions on communication.

Q. We have been advised that there are scheduled teaching sessions while students are on placement, and the student has asked for time off for this.

A. There are a very small number of BSMS-delivered teaching sessions and as always, we ask students to prioritise their clinical practice placements. Students can ask a colleague/friend to debrief them, and all sessions are recorded for students to view at a more appropriate time. If you feel that this is a reasonable request (and doesn't have a negative impact on their timetabled activities or create additional work for the team) you can authorise this.

Q. A parent has asked for a reduced timetable for their four-week placement, and it means they will miss a significant proportion of their timetabled activities.

A. Whilst we make reasonable adjustments to ensure that students can study for the course while maintaining their caring/parental responsibilities, we do stress that the course is intense and requires full time attendance. If the practice agrees that a reduced timetable can be offered, it is the responsibility of the student to ensure they can meet the necessary learning objectives and outcomes. If the requested timetable/reduction in placement time is not agreeable, please let us know so that we can liaise with the student to agree what would be acceptable, or discuss alternative arrangements.

Unplanned absences

Q. A student has not shown up today, but we don't know why, who should we notify?

A. If a student is unable to attend as expected, we ask them to notify the practice of their non-attendance, as soon as they know. If they have failed to attend but you haven't heard from them, please check with the reception team, as in a lot of cases, the student has used the main surgery number and isn't always put through to the appropriate person.

If they have not made contact and you have their contact details, you can contact them direct if you are happy to do so, alternatively please contact GPPlacements@bsms.ac.uk as we can forward this to the relevant school office and ensure they are ok.

Q. We have concerns about attendance / timekeeping, who should we speak to?

A. In the first instance please contact GPPlacements@bsms.ac.uk as we can ensure that the

appropriate module-leader or school office are informed, so that we can discuss and agree next steps.

BSMS Dress Code

Q. A student has arrived at the practice, and their outfit isn't appropriate to see patients, is there a dress code at BSMS?

A. An extensive 'dress code' is communicated and reiterated to students throughout the course. The BSMS dress code has been designed to:

- reduce risk of cross-infection (e.g. improved hand hygiene);
- to avoid an unintentional injury to patients (e.g. from wristwatches or jewellery);
- to reduce likelihood of injury to students (e.g. assault – neck chains);
- to respect the cultural values or beliefs of patients, visitors and staff and avoid unnecessary offence or distress.

All students should consider the patient group they work with, and dress to ensure that their appearance will not be distracting or distressing and will inspire confidence regarding safety and infection control. BSMS respects the right of students to adhere to religious and cultural observances or adaptations necessary due to disability. However, for clinical students, consideration should be given to infection control, safety, the operation of machinery, and clear identification and communication.

[The full policy can be found here](#). You can also review the section in the handbook/website which relates to 'information provided to students'.

Relatives working at the practice

Q. The student allocated to our practice has a relative who is a member of staff here, is it ok to facilitate them?

A. Yes, students can go to a GP surgery where a relative works, but the relative must not be the designated supervisor and should not sign off student activities in their logbook. We ask that relatives only clinically supervise the student where necessary, e.g. in an emergency and therefore the placement should normally be structured without timetabled clinical activities supervised by the relative.

Clearance for placements and immunisations

Q. Are the students DBS checked before their placements?

A. Yes, all students undergo an enhanced DBS check as part of their induction to BSMS and this is required before they are cleared to attend any clinical placements.

Q. Do students undertake safeguarding training?

A. Yes, students undertake the following e-learning training:

- o Safeguarding for Adults 1

- o Safeguarding for Adults 2
- o Safeguarding for Children and Young People 1
- o Safeguarding for Children and Young People 2

Q. Do students have any other clearance before attending our practice?

A. All students undergo occupational health clearance. As well as the above clearance and training, students are required to complete an annual self-declaration regarding professionalism and fitness to practice.

Q. Which immunisations are required of students in preparation for their clinical placements?

A. The students should have documentation to evidence the following vaccinations:

- Hep B - 1st Hep B or evidence and/or antibody test
- MMR - 1st MMR or evidence and/or antibody test
- VZV - verbal history or antibody test and/or evidence of 1st VZV
- Pertussis
- BCG scar check, or immunisation (if not already had it)
- EPP bloods - Hep B Antigen, HIV antibody and Hep B antibody

The above are the initial requirements for placement. All students would require further appointments to complete the course of Hep B (x 3), MMR (x 2), VZV (x 2) and the BCG for any that require these.

There is an extensive table of all student clearances, training and immunisations which forms part of the contract between BSMS and placement providers.

Allocation of clinical placements

Q. How do you decide which students are placed with us and can we ask for specific students?

A. Students are matched to their placement provider based on many factors, including their term-time address, if they have access to a vehicle, caring responsibilities, Learning Support Plans (LSP) and in some cases (but not a priority) where students have work commitments. 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. There are cases where practices have offered to teach specific students which is great and we will do our best to ensure that those requested are allocated to you.

Q. Please could you tell me what an LSP is and if we need to do anything at the practice?

A. For students with physical disabilities, long-term mental health or medical conditions, or specific learning requirements such as dyslexia, university services are available for advice, guidance and academic or personal support. Such support might include individual support tutors, assistive technology and Learning Support Plans (LSP) to recommend reasonable adjustments to teaching and assessment. If a student has an LSP and requires reasonable

adjustments while on placement, we encourage them to discuss this with you when they attend your practice. We do not discuss personal circumstances or LSPs with placement providers, usually it is for the students to disclose as they feel appropriate.

Q. We are quite far away from the medical school, is it still ok to teach BSMS students?

A. Due to the geographical nature of the area, we do work with practices in both East and West Sussex and some of the closer areas within Surrey and Kent. We are short of placements in the immediate area, and we try wherever possible to allocate students who have access to a vehicle to the more rural practices that are harder to reach by public transport, but this is not always possible due to the very few students who have cars/motorcycles.

Independent Placements

Q. I have been approached by a BSMS student about their GP placement, but our practice is not local to the medical school.

A. Students in Year 3 are provided with information about sourcing an 'Independent Placement' (IP) in GP. This is in preparation for their 4th year longitudinal 4-week block placement. An IP is a self-selected attachment in general practice which can be anywhere in England (or the wider UK if their non-term-time address is here).

Q. A student has applied to attend our practice for their four-week placement, and we are not local to BSMS. Do we have to find them accommodation?

A. Students attending out-of-area practices often select these practices as they have friends/family in the area that they can stay with, so students may not need accommodation. There is no requirement for practices to assist with this, as this is an Independent Placement (IP) and therefore students are responsible for their own travel and accommodation. However, some practices offer their own Airbnb-style properties, or have a preferred accommodation provider, in which case please do liaise with the student about this as they may want to factor this into their selection process.

Q. Is there any financial help for students who stay a long way from the medical school?

A. Students should only opt for an Independent Placement if they are able to make their own arrangements and independently manage their out-of-area placement. However, to ensure that everyone has a fair and reasonable opportunity to undertake a placement nationally, BSMS will reimburse some of the costs associated with this. The NHS bursary is also available to students who are in their 5th year of study (and have intercalated before completing Year 4).

An extensive travel and accommodation policy is available to students in their My Studies Ultra intranet.

Electives

Q. A student has approached us about doing an elective with us at our practice.

A. Unlike the undergraduate teaching, the elective doesn't attract tariff. However, if you are still interested, please [email the appropriate team](#) and they will be able to provide further

details about this.

Practice teaching delivery

Q. In the Year 4 teaching handbook it states that there is guidance on tutorials with suggested topics and materials, could we have this?

A. Tutorials are not an obligatory part of the placement, but if you feel you can offer tutorials, they are an excellent opportunity to identify and address student learning needs. We have a separate document which includes content ideas, please [contact us](#) for a copy. Other clinicians are welcome to attend these tutorials (e.g. ST3 or foundation doctor colleagues). Likewise, you are welcome to delegate tutorials to colleagues (including GP ST3 doctors), especially where they can offer knowledge or experience (e.g. diabetes or safeguarding in general practice).

Teaching fees and payments

Q. Is there any payment for facilitating students on GP placement?

A. Yes, we pay practices for the teaching they deliver, which is determined by the year groups and numbers. A fee statement is issued as part of the contract and will outline the exact payment you can expect to receive from BSMS* for the undergraduate teaching offered.

* BSMS is an equal partnership between the Universities of Sussex and Brighton. Your payments, although scheduled by BSMS, will be processed by the University of Sussex (often cited as US or SU on payment transactions).

Q. We have not issued an invoice but seem to have received a payment for teaching.

A. In response to feedback from practices who often found the payment process long-winded and tricky, we improved the way in which we pay practices for their teaching. This amount is now paid directly into practice accounts, without the need for a Purchase Order (PO) or invoice. This is confirmed via a remittance advice which is sent to the contact person we have for finance purposes.

Q. We are new to teaching BSMS students, how do we receive payment for students?

A. As part of our contract we ask you to confirm your practice bank details so that we can ask procurement to set you up as an approved supplier. Once you are set up on our finance database, you will be added to the payment schedule. All GP teaching payments are made in January* of each academic year, which is the mid-point.

* Subject to receiving practice bank details, otherwise payment will be made later in the year, once this has been confirmed and you are set up on the procurement system.

Q. When is payment made for the teaching?

A. Practice payments are processed at one point in the academic year, which means that it is in advance of some students going on placement, but in arrears for others. All payments are processed in January which is the mid-way point in the academic year, subject to us

receiving your practice bank details. For any new practices, this does mean that you will need to send us your practice bank details, ideally at the same time as signing and returning the contract.

Q. We used to be given a fee for equipment which covered any additional items that we needed to purchase to facilitate students.

A. As part of our rate-review, instead of giving you a separate amount to cover equipment, we increased the teaching fees overall, an element of which can be used to cover the costs of any equipment you may need.

Contact us

We are happy to be contacted by email, phone, WhatsApp/SMS. We also welcome meeting in-person/online, for anyone that would prefer us to come to the practice or meet remotely.

GP Placement Team

Quality and Placements Officer, Heidi Swain: 07823 516381, GPPlacements@bsms.ac.uk

Primary Care and Public Health Academic Team

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