Quick reference guide for general practice placements

Background

General practice (GP) teaching sits at the heart of the BSMS curriculum and Year 4 is a chance for students to become integrated in a GP team for up to four weeks. At BSMS Year 4 students receive in-house GP simulation teaching and preparatory lectures just prior to and following their GP placement ("bookend days").

Learning approach

Through an “apprenticeship” model of learning on GP placement, students should be introduced to general practice in a supported environment by seeing patients with a range of problems presenting in primary care. As evidence of their learning on placement, core GP learning/activities should be signed off in the student logbooks.

Student led surgeries

We recognise that timetabling will differ from surgery to surgery, but should include at least two sessions of student-led surgeries per week, opportunistic presentations such as minor symptoms, chronic disease, multi-morbidity and basic prescribing.

We expect BSMS students will progress quickly in their ability to see patients independently and most are expected to start consulting alone within 3-4 sessions. We know that student-led surgeries are highly valued as they are well evaluated by students in feedback we receive from student surveys.

Please note that student attendance at non-NHS services may not be covered by state indemnity. This could include private providers (e.g., out of hours or care home medical services) that operate under NHS logos. If unsure, GPs should discuss with their medical defence organisation.

Supervisor sign-offs and student logbooks

Wherever possible students must complete all sign offs in the GP logbook. These record activities, discussions and learning on placement. Sign-offs in their GP logbook include: consultation skills progression, clinical skills (e.g., joint exam, immunisation, prescription writing), clinical experience (e.g., chronic disease clinic, mental health assessment, contraception, fatigue case), organisational tasks (e.g., fit note, social prescription, fitness to drive), referral letter, hospital discharge summary discussion, public health task and professionalism feedback.

During their GP placement, students are also encouraged to seek sign off opportunistically for other core activities listed in a separate practical skills and procedures logbook for Year 4. Examples include ophthalmoscopy, venesection, spirometry and ECG. Any member of the primary care team may sign off student activities. Please email us if you wish to receive a copy of the student logbooks in advance.

Payment

£1,200 per student for teaching is payable, plus a flat fee of £200 per practice in each academic year to purchase additional equipment to facilitate student activity.
Case in-depth presentation
Students are required to present one GP case from their placement after returning to BSMS. This should be based on a patient seen while on placement. Only basic details are required, and anonymity is paramount. This should not describe unprofessional behaviours or errors.

Induction
All students must receive an induction, much of which can be provided by the practice manager. This should cover core areas such as confidentiality, personal safety, documentation of consultations, timetable, contacting surgery if ill, etc. **It is essential that no patient who is seen by a student leaves the surgery without being seen by a GP.**

Individual research project/personal study
Students attending before Easter should have one day per week to undertake their Individual Research Project (IRP). This is supervised by BSMS, and typically takes place on a Monday. Surgeries may select an alternative day subject to agreement from the student’s project supervisor. After Easter, students will use this day for personal study/revision.

Student feedback
Each student is asked to provide feedback at the end of their placement, which will be collated and sent to you at the end of the year. The course is evaluated mid-way through the term and at the end. We ask the students for their views and opinions on their time in general practice and the teaching they received. We can then share this with you during the summer vacation period. This feedback will also form part of your structured reference should you request one from BSMS.

Immunisation clinic attendance
Students should not spend more than one half-day attending Covid/other immunisation services during their four-week placement.

Feedback from a Year 4 student
“I have been encouraged to become more proactive in the GP setting, taking histories, examining patients, formulating differential diagnoses. Teaching between consultations is excellent and the placements have been very useful.”

Sample weekly timetable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONDAY</th>
<th>TUESDAY</th>
<th>WEDNESDAY</th>
<th>THURSDAY</th>
<th>FRIDAY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AM</td>
<td>IRP/personal study</td>
<td>Student led surgery</td>
<td>Chronic disease clinic</td>
<td>Student led surgery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LUNCH</td>
<td>IRP/personal study</td>
<td>Home visit</td>
<td>Home visit</td>
<td>GP tutorial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM</td>
<td>IRP/personal study</td>
<td>Community visits</td>
<td>Student led surgery</td>
<td>GP surgery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Personal study</td>
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<tr>
<td>PM</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

We ask practices to develop a timetable to fit in with their routine clinical activities. The table above is just an example.

Year 4 contacts

- **Dr Max Cooper** Senior Lecturer in Primary Care
  m.cooper@bsms.ac.uk / 01273 643768
- **Dr Carl Fernandes** Senior GP Teaching Fellow
  C.Fernandes@bsms.ac.uk / 01273 643768
- **Dr Mena Jegatheesan** Senior GP Teaching Fellow
  m.jegatheesan@bsms.ac.uk / 01273 643768
- **Heidi Swain** Quality and Placements Officer
  h.swain@bsms.ac.uk / 01273 644563

This guide is intended to give you a brief overview of the teaching in Year 4. There is more information available in the Year 4 GP Teacher’s handbook. Please contact us if you experience problems or have any questions.