



University
of Glasgow

School of Medicine,
Dentistry & Nursing

UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW UNDERGRADUATE MEDICAL SCHOOL

Raising Concerns Policy





Introduction

The Undergraduate Medical School is preparing students for all aspects of professional life as a practising doctor.

A key aspect of professional behaviour is ensuring patient care, key to which is understanding when to raise concerns, the importance of doing so and how to do it.

Concerns raised under this policy are most likely to arise from events, circumstances, or experiences in clinical areas while you are on clinical placements. This guidance is designed to help you understand how to raise a concern and what will happen.

The GMC identifies raising concerns as an important responsibility of doctors holding GMC registration. There is information at “GMC: Raising and acting on concerns about patient safety” - <https://www.gmc-uk.org/ethical-guidance/ethical-guidance-for-doctors/raising-and-acting-on-concerns>

Confidentiality

We encourage you to avoid raising concerns anonymously as we will not necessarily need to name you as the source of the concern when the investigation takes place. Your confidentiality will, therefore, be protected in as far as is possible. The first part of any investigation is an interview with the person raising a concern to ensure they are safe, supported, understand the process, and have the chance to state their expectations of the outcome. We will provide feedback to you once the investigation is complete.

What sort of concerns might this Policy address?

The following list is not exhaustive, and is intended to show examples:

- Ill treatment of a patient by a member of staff
- Experiencing discriminatory behaviour as a student during teaching
- An unacceptable standard of patient/clinical care
- A criminal offence is believed to have been committed
- Suspected fraud, including falsification of documents, assessment grades, signatures, etc.
- Disregard for legislation, particularly in relation to health and safety at work
- Medical or psychological problems reducing the ability of other staff or students to deliver safe and efficient patient care
- Harassment, bullying, undermining, or discrimination affecting patients, staff or students

There are worked examples in Appendix 4

It is important to note that you will not suffer any detriment from raising a concern under this policy and the UMS will ensure that you receive support throughout the process.

False or malicious allegations, however, will lead to an immediate referral to the School of Medicine, Dentistry and Nursing Fitness to Practise Officer.

How to Raise a Concern

Reporting a concern when you are on placement

- Given that concerns vary in nature, context and severity, the guidance in Appendices 2 and 3 should be referred to and followed to ensure concerns are raised in the most efficient manner.
- The guidance in Appendix 2 should be used when the concern relates to a personal concern e.g., inappropriate/unfair treatment or conduct by staff member or fellow student.
- The guidance in Appendix 3 should be used when the concern related to a clinical concern e.g., concern about treatment of a patient or safety concern when on placement.
- Concerns can be raised electronically, or in person, to the relevant staff member. They will then determine the most appropriate next steps and will make sure that they have all the information they need from you.
- There is an online form that you should complete which can be accessed at **<https://www.mvls.gla.ac.uk/RaisingConcerns/Account/Login>**. You will need your GUID to log in. This form, when needed, helps you in the reporting process as it identifies all the information you need to provide. Once you have submitted the form, you will be sent an email confirming the School has received your concern, and a member of staff will contact you within 5 working days.

If your concern is urgent, you should contact your Year Director. Your Year Administrator will be able to provide you with the relevant contact information:

MBChB Year 1: **med-sch-y1mbchb@glasgow.ac.uk**
MBChB Year 2: **med-sch-y2mbchb@glasgow.ac.uk**
MBChB Year 3: **med-sch-y3mbchb@glasgow.ac.uk**
MBChB Year 4: **med-sch-y4mbchb@glasgow.ac.uk**
MBChB Year 5: **med-sch-y5mbchb@glasgow.ac.uk**

What happens next?

- 1) Depending on who you have raised your concern with, they should acknowledge your concern raised and determine the next best course of action and will be taken forward through the appropriate route (this will vary depending on the nature of the concern). It is hoped that all clinical issues will be resolved locally by the Local Education Provider and where appropriate or needed via the responsible Hospital Subdean.
- 2) When you submit the online concerns form, you will receive an email confirming the complaint has been received. A record of all concerns raised regardless of circumstance and outcome will be maintained by the Undergraduate Medical School.
- 3) The concern will be logged as necessary, and reviewed by the Head of the who will ask one of the Undergraduate Medical School Deputy Heads to discuss and review the concern and to take a decision on the next steps.
- 4) If no further action is being taken the Head of the Undergraduate Medical School will meet the student raising the concern within five working days of that decision being taken to explain the outcome.
- 5) In cases where an investigation takes place the Head and Deputy Head of the Undergraduate Medical School will invite an appropriate senior colleague to investigate and prepare a report. This colleague could be a member of the Undergraduate Medical School Quality Assurance Team or an MBChB Year Director. Normally the investigation will be concluded in ten working days and the report is submitted to the Head of the Undergraduate Medical School.
- 6) The Head of the Undergraduate Medical School will meet with the student raising the concern within five working days of the recommendations for action being made to explain the outcome.

You should note if your concern is about any of the staff named in the policy or you consider your concern has not been managed properly under the guidance. In this instance you should contact the Head of the School of Medicine, Dentistry and Nursing. Your Year Administrator will be able to provide you with the relevant contact information:

MBChB Year 1: **med-sch-y1mbchb@glasgow.ac.uk**
MBChB Year 2: **med-sch-y2mbchb@glasgow.ac.uk**
MBChB Year 3: **med-sch-y3mbchb@glasgow.ac.uk**
MBChB Year 4: **med-sch-y4mbchb@glasgow.ac.uk**
MBChB Year 5: **med-sch-y5mbchb@glasgow.ac.uk**

Appendix 1

There are relevant and related policies you should be aware of –

- Student Complaint Policy -
www.gla.ac.uk/connect/complaints/
- Student Conduct Policy -
www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/studentconduct/studentconductstudents/
- Student Fitness to Practise Policy -
www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/apg/policies/uniregs/regulations2023-24/feesandgeneral/studentsupportandconductmatters/reg36/#

The policies below are available within the MBChB Common Room (Professionalism section):

<https://moodle.gla.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=20711>

- MBChB Student Agreement
- MBChB Student Professionalism Concerns

GMC Guidance

- Medical students: professionalism and fitness to practise:
Professional behaviour and fitness to practise - GMC (gmc-uk.org)
- Raising and Acting on Concerns about Patient Safety (GMC, 2012).
<https://www.gmc-uk.org/ethical-guidance/ethical-guidance-for-doctors-raising-and-acting-on-concerns>
Raising and acting on concerns flowchart:
<https://www.gmc-uk.org/ethical-guidance/learning-materials/raising-and-acting-on-concerns-flowchart>
- Good Medical Practice (GMC, 2013).
www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/good_medical_practice.asp
- Promoting Excellence: standards for medical education and training:
https://www.gmc-uk.org/-/media/documents/promoting-excellence-standards-for-medical-education-and-training-2109_pdf-61939165.pdf
- Outcomes for graduates (2020)
<https://www.gmc-uk.org/education/standards-guidance-and-curricula/standards-and-outcomes/outcomes-for-graduates/outcomes-for-graduates>

Appendix 2

Raising a Personal Concern

If you have a personal concern, e.g., inappropriate/unfair treatment or conduct by a staff member or fellow student, you should check to see if this is covered by an existing University code or policy. If it is, you should follow the procedure set out in the relevant code or policy (refer to Appendix 1).

If the concern is not covered by an existing University code or policy, then you should escalate firstly to your (1) Educational Supervisor. If this is not possible or appropriate, then you should escalate to your (2) Placement Lead. If this is not possible or appropriate, then you should escalate to the (3) MBChB Year Director. Your Year Administrator will be able to provide you with the relevant contact information:

MBChB Year 1: **med-sch-y1mbchb@glasgow.ac.uk**

MBChB Year 2: **med-sch-y2mbchb@glasgow.ac.uk**

MBChB Year 3: **med-sch-y3mbchb@glasgow.ac.uk**

MBChB Year 4: **med-sch-y4mbchb@glasgow.ac.uk**

MBChB Year 5: **med-sch-y5mbchb@glasgow.ac.uk**

If the concern is resolved, then no further action is required. If it is not, then you must complete and submit your concern via the Undergraduate Medical School raising concern online form:

www.mvls.gla.ac.uk/RaisingConcerns/Account/Login

Appendix 3

Raising a Clinical Concern

If you have a personal concern, e.g., concern about the treatment of a patient or safety concern when on placement, you should check to see if there is an immediate threat to patient safety. Inform a member of staff on site immediately, if that is not possible, contact your MBChB Year Director or the Head of the Undergraduate Medical School. Your Year Administrator will be able to provide you with the relevant contact information:

MBChB Year 1: **med-sch-y1mbchb@glasgow.ac.uk**

MBChB Year 2: **med-sch-y2mbchb@glasgow.ac.uk**

MBChB Year 3: **med-sch-y3mbchb@glasgow.ac.uk**

MBChB Year 4: **med-sch-y4mbchb@glasgow.ac.uk**

MBChB Year 5: **med-sch-y5mbchb@glasgow.ac.uk**

If there is no immediate threat to patient safety, then you should escalate firstly to your (1) Educational Supervisor. If this is not possible or appropriate, then you should escalate to your (2) Placement Lead. If this is not possible or appropriate, then you should escalate to the (3) Hospital Subdean.

If the concern is resolved, then no further action is required. If the concern is not resolved, then you should escalate your concern to your MBChB Year Director. If this is not possible or appropriate, then you should complete and submit your concern via the Undergraduate Medical School raising concern online form:

www.mvls.gla.ac.uk/RaisingConcerns/Account/Login

Appendix 4

Examples of how to raise concerns

Shahid is in Year 1 of the MBChB programme at Glasgow. As a practising Muslim, Shahid didn't often go to the pub with his friends but he made an exception after the Semester 1 exams. In the pub a group of students who had been in his PBL group were making fun of a disabled anatomy demonstrator with specific reference to her disability. He felt very uncomfortable but didn't say anything. Later that evening when he was at home he saw on his Facebook page that the same students were repeating their comments on Facebook.

Options

Colleagues should be treated with respect and professionalism both within and out with the working environment. The setting of this unprofessional behaviour being extended to social media is serious. Shahid should report this to the Head of Year to ensure that the offending material is removed, and those responsible for it should reflect on the nature of this behaviour and its effect on others.

The Year Director had been able to view the material on social media and asked to meet with the students who had posted or commented upon this material. Three had been placed on the Professional Concerns register and had been asked to complete a reflective essay. A fourth student had refused to take part in these discussions and subsequently withdrew from the MBChB.

David is a Year 4 MBChB student in Glasgow. He is on an acute medical rotation in the QEUH. David volunteered for weekend shifts and at the end of a very busy evening shift on Saturday he saw the ST3 drink from a bottle of vodka in her bag in her locker. He watched her and over the next two hours she had four drinks. After that he noticed her hand was shaky when examining a patient.

Outcome

This clinician is demonstrating behaviour which is unprofessional and which is putting herself and her patients at immediate risk. This issue should be raised with a senior member of medical or nursing staff at the time. If there is any question that the doctor has been drinking on duty, she should be removed immediately from the clinical area. An investigation can be put in place later to determine the level of risk and allow for help to be provided.

In this particular case, the erratic behaviour had gone unnoticed by any other staff member. When David raised the concern in the ward the on call Registrar spoke to the doctor concerned and following discussion it became clear that drinking had become a problem after a marital break-up. The doctor was sent home and took time off for treatment of her health condition for six months, returning eventually to complete her training without incident.

Beth is a Year 3 MBChB student in Glasgow. She is on her first attachment in Phase 4 and has been really looking forward to it. She is attached to a Surgical Unit at GRI. She was working with the FY1 doctor and noticed that he failed to follow instructions from the consultant. This culminated in the FY1 doctor claiming to have requested investigations when he hadn't and subsequently falsifying results in the patient's notes.

Outcome

The difference between reported and actual activity should be raised with a senior member of the medical team. It is their responsibility to investigate this and ensure that patient care is not at risk presently or in the future.

Other colleagues had already noticed that there had been some failures in the past to honestly report what action had been taken, but that this had never had a material effect on patient care. In the other cases, the doctor had felt he was being asked to do things that were unnecessary.

The doctor took some further supervised training and has since been allowed to progress to FY2. There have been no similar concerns raised since then.


Hema is a Year 5 MBChB student in Glasgow. Her best friend was recently admitted to the area she was placed in. Hema found her very upset and on questioning she told Hema that the male ST6 doctor on the clinical team had touched her in a way that made her feel uncomfortable, and had made inappropriate comments. This doctor was due to do Hema's end of block assessment the following day. Hema is a good student who normally gets As/Bs. While being keen to fulfil her responsibilities and to raise a concern, Hema is worried that she might be victimised by the doctor if she does so. She would therefore prefer to raise her concerns anonymously.

Options

Hema's friend should be encouraged to make these issues known to one of the medical or nursing staff. If she is reluctant to do so, it is Hema's responsibility to raise the issues. If she feels that she would be vulnerable to repercussions as a result of reporting this, she should make either her Educational Supervisor, the Sub Dean, or her Year Head aware of the nature of her concerns. Investigation and remediation of such upsetting events is the only way to ensure patient safety.

In this case, other staff had already expressed concerns about the doctor's behaviour during some of his earlier rotations. Subsequent investigation by senior medical staff led to suspension of the doctor from his duties and he was reported to the GMC who suspended his registration. He was intending to reapply for registration after counselling and treatment for an addiction to prescription medication.

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Design: MVLS Marketing & Communications, University of Glasgow
The University of Glasgow, charity number SC004401

