



Leicester Medical School

**MChB**

**Occupational Health Services**

## **The Occupational Health Service**

The Occupational Health Service for Leicester Medical School is provided by the Occupational Health Team at the University Hospitals of Leicester. All of the doctors/nurses in the team have significant experience in healthcare student Occupational Health issues, some at national advisory levels and with the GMC.

Appointments can be made by contacting Ms Jane Doherty, PA to Prof. Harj Kaul (tel 2255431 or email to: [jane.doherty@uhl-tr.nhs.uk](mailto:jane.doherty@uhl-tr.nhs.uk))

## **The role of Occupational Health in the Medical School**

The GMC has stated that the benefits of an occupational Health Service to students include:

- It provides specialist advice about health issues that could negatively affect a student's studies or career.
- It can work with medical schools on health issues without disclosing the details of the student's health concern.
- It's impartial – it is there to give advice about students' health and well-being.
- It can help students to access other services to support their health and well-being while at medical school.

## **Services available to students considering applying to Medical School**

The Occupational Health Service can provide advice to potential applicants who have concerns about their fitness to practise. The applicant's concerns may be about their medical fitness or potential to fulfil the core competencies of the course. The service's advice may take a number of forms including simple reassurance, a formal assessment, or seeking further specialist medical advice. The service will be able to assess possible reasonable adjustments and offer appropriate advice to the applicant, which may include exploring alternative career options.

## **Services available during the appointment process**

It should be noted that occupational health screening, assessment and decision making on fitness to practise is *entirely separate* from the academic or aptitude selection process and that any medical information provided by students will remain confidential to the Occupational Health Service and will normally only be disclosed on a need-to-know basis and with the student's informed consent.

Students who have been invited for interview and have declared a health problem on either their UCAS form or their interview consent form may be required to attend for an Occupational Health assessment. The purpose of this assessment is to ensure that the student is medically fit for training. The Occupational Health Service will advise the student and Medical School regarding any potential adjustments (including deferred entry) that may be required to allow the student to enter the course. Occupational Health will only recommend to the Medical School that a student is not fit for training in the event that even with

appropriate adjustments the student would not be able to train successfully to work safely as a Foundation doctor.

Following the offer of a provisional place, the occupational health service will send out a health questionnaire to incoming students and review the completed forms. The health screening questionnaire used by the UHL Occupational Health team is at the following link [Health Screening Questionnaire](#). In the majority of cases, the school will be advised that the student is medically fit for the course. But if there is cause for concern, appropriate action will be taken, which may include seeking further specialist advice. If an assessment is necessary, it may involve a review in a clinical skills environment and will usually be undertaken in consultation with the disability support office and others where necessary. The service will then provide advice to the school, possibly following a case conference, on the student's fitness to practise.

### **Services available upon entry**

Once the applicant has entered medical school, the occupational health service will provide:

- Appropriate screening, such as for blood borne viruses, in line with current Department of Health/NHS guidance.
- Occupationally relevant vaccinations, if required.
- Advice to the Medical School and student regarding fitness to practise when necessary.
- Ongoing monitoring and support if it is considered necessary.

### **Services available after entry**

After entering medical school, students may be seen by the occupational health service as:

**(a) A personal referral** by the student ( if they were seen previously) if they are concerned about a medical condition and the impact it may have on their academic performance, career or fitness to practise

**(b) A school referral:**

- If there is concern that a student's medical condition could have a real or a potential impact on their academic performance or potential to fulfil the core competencies of the course – this will usually be at an early stage before any fitness to practise procedures.
- If there is concern that a student's medical condition may affect their fitness to practise. The occupational physician will be responsible for collecting and interpreting all the medical information, and for providing advice on the real or potential impact on the student's fitness to practise. In some cases it may be considered necessary to seek an independent specialist report before providing the advice. The report provided by the occupational physician will include an opinion on the student's fitness to practise, and may recommend a break in study or reasonable adjustments if appropriate.

***The occupational health service may also provide:***

- Ongoing monitoring of the student if requested by the school – the occupational physician, usually in consultation with the student's GP or an independent specialist, may consider that additional and independent monitoring is also necessary.
- Advice to the school and student on the student's suitability to return to the course after a break in study. All such advice will take into account the core competencies of the course and the appropriateness of reasonable adjustments. Preferably with the student's consent, the occupational physician will make sure that the student's GP and specialist remain informed of the situation.
  - Practical advice on reasonable adjustments.
  - Advice on policy and guidance documents, on issues such as alcohol and drug abuse, and undertaking practical action in support of them.
  - Practical advice and vaccination for periods of elective study, special study modules, and intercalated periods of study
  - Liaising with occupational health services in NHS trusts, or their equivalents in the devolved countries, to facilitate NHS entry, health clearance and support
  - Appropriate follow-up, screening and treatment following contamination, sharps, or infection control incidents.

## **What are the relative roles of the GP Student Health Service and the Occupational Health Service?**

### ***GP student Health Services***

It should be noted that the GMC states that medical students should register with the GP University Student Health Service so that students can access independent and objective medical care - [Supporting medical students with mental health conditions](#)

Students who need help with health problems should firstly contact the GP University Student Health Service. The role of primary care is to make a diagnosis, offer advice and to put in place appropriate treatment.

### ***Occupational Health Service***

If the student feels that the illness from which they suffer may affect their studies or career then students can self-refer to the Occupational Health Service so that they can receive additional specialist advice. Alternatively, the GP Student Health Service may refer the student to Occupational Health. Occupational Health can work with the Medical School to help students with health issues that have the potential to impact on academic studies/clinical placements fitness to practise and the student's future career. If deemed appropriate this can be done without disclosing the nature of the health problem to the Medical School. Occupational Health may also refer the student to other support services, having liaised with the GP.

## **Who can refer to the Occupational Health Service?**

1. A student can self-refer.
2. The Admissions Team can refer.

3. The Student Health Service can refer with the student's consent.
4. The Pastoral Support team can refer with the student's consent.
5. The Professionalism Concerns Group can refer.
6. The Head of Department or Director of Undergraduate Medical Education can refer.
7. The Medical School AccessAbility Tutor can refer.

## **Occupational Health and Confidentiality**

The Occupational Health team will operate under the Medical School's policy on Data Protection and Confidentiality. The following should be noted:

1. For the majority of students who directly seek advice/support from Occupational Health there will be no reason for the Medical School to be informed about the Occupational Health consultation.
2. If Occupational Health recommends adjustments to help medical students during their time at Medical School, this can normally be done without needing to tell the Medical School about the student's specific health condition.
3. In order to optimise the support that it offers to students, Occupational Health may liaise with the GP Student Health Service or other relevant Health Care professionals.
4. Students should be aware that Occupational Health may consult the student's GP or specialist/healthcare professional or any other Occupational Health Service to seek additional information or clarity regarding a student's fitness to continue on the course or their fitness to practise.
5. The Occupational Health Service may enquire of the Secretary to the Professionalism Concerns Group (PCG) whether there have been any professionalism or attendance concerns about a student. This enquiry will be by telephone, no record of the enquiry will be kept and the Secretary will not inform anyone in the Medical School about the enquiry.