

St George's, University of London  
Scheme of Assessment  
MBBS 5-year stream Year 1 (2023-24)

## Overview

1. The assessments of the first and second year of the 5-year programme are known as the Clinical Science Examinations.
2. This Scheme of Assessment specifically relates to the first year of the 5-year programme.
3. In accordance with the GMC assessment guidelines, assessment in the MBBS programme will be across three domains, namely:
  - Professional Knowledge (PK)
  - Professional Skills (PS)
  - Becoming a Doctor (BD)
4. A student may only have **ONE** discretionary 3<sup>rd</sup> attempt during the entire MBBS Programme. Under the *procedure for consideration for a final discretionary attempt at an assessment*, Boards of Examiners will have the authority to approve a discretionary third attempt if a candidate meets programme-specific fast-track criteria. For candidates who do not satisfy the programme-specific fast-track criteria, a Discretionary Panel of Senate will consider the student's application for a discretionary third attempt. Detailed information about the fast-track criteria, procedure and timescales is published on the Student Conduct and Compliance section of the St. George's website ([www.sgul.ac.uk](http://www.sgul.ac.uk)).

## Definitions

5. An **Assessment** may be comprised of a written exam, practical assessment or portfolio of assessed work. This section refers only to assessments in the Professional Knowledge domain (written exams including single best answer and short answer questions).
6. A **Sitting** refers to the set of linked assessments that are administered within a period commencing at the time of the first assessment within that set and concluding at the time of the final assessment within that set. The Scheme of Assessment indicates the linkage between assessment, and by extension defines the sittings within the course.
7. An **Attempt** is defined by any of:
  - 7.1 Full completion of the set of assessments within a sitting (or split between two sittings, if approved under the mitigating circumstances or appeals procedures), irrespective of outcome.
  - 7.2 Partial unsuccessful completion of any of the assessments within a sitting, regardless of how much of each assessment is completed.
  - 7.3 Non-completion of any of the assessments within a sitting, if this is not formally approved through the mitigating circumstances procedures or by discounting of an assessment attempt through the SGUL appeals process.
  - 7.4 Inability to complete an assessment within a sitting due to late arrival.

All attempts will stand unless the attempt is subsequently discounted following a formal decision reached through the appeals procedure.

## Split attempts

8. Candidates entering a sitting are required to undertake all assessments within that sitting. In exceptional circumstances (for example, an approved mitigating circumstances request due to acute illness arising within a sitting), a candidate may undertake some but not all assessment elements within the sitting. The candidate may then undertake the remaining assessment(s) at the next available opportunity, and this will be regarded as a single attempt at the sitting (split across two sitting periods). If the candidate is unsuccessful in any assessment within the split attempt, they may resit the assessment(s) in which they were unsuccessful at the next opportunity or repeat the year (subject to the provisions set out in the Scheme of Assessment). In either case, irrespective of whether any assessments within the previous split attempt were graded Acceptable, entry to the subsequent sitting will be a new (second or third) attempt.

For the avoidance of doubt, a candidate cannot have a different number of attempts for different assessments within a sitting. For example

- In the Clinical Science years, a student who fails Patients, Population & Society (PPS) but passes Basic Clinical Sciences (BCS) within the same sitting, has failed their first attempt at the Professional Knowledge domain.

The final decision on the number of attempts taken will be ratified by the Board of Examiners for each sitting.

## Some examples:

- i. A candidate sits the BCS paper at first attempt in the first sitting in M5 Y1 but has an acute illness precluding them from sitting the PPS paper. They pass the BCS, and following approval of a mitigating circumstances application, are allowed to take the PPS in the next sitting which they pass. They have passed all assessments at a first attempt, so this counts as a single (split) attempt at the set of assessments.
- ii. A candidate sits the BCS paper at first attempt in the first sitting in M5 Y1 but has an acute illness precluding them from sitting the PPS paper. They fail the BCS, and following approval of a mitigating circumstances application, are allowed to take the BCS and PPS papers in the next sitting. They pass both BCS and PPS in the second sitting, and as the BCS element is a second attempt within a sitting, they will have been deemed to have passed BCS and PPS at second attempt.
- iii. A candidate sits the BCS and PPS paper at first attempt in the first sitting in M5 Y1. They pass BCS but fail PPS which they opt to resit at the 2<sup>nd</sup> sitting that academic year. They fail PPS again on their 2<sup>nd</sup> attempt, meaning they have failed the Professional Knowledge domain at the 2<sup>nd</sup> attempt and are required to repeat the year in full for a 3<sup>rd</sup> Discretionary attempt.

## Mitigating circumstances and deferral

9. The ability to undertake an assessment is based upon candidate self-declaration of being fit to sit. If a candidate commences an assessment, they are deemed to have undertaken that assessment for the purposes of defining an attempt.
10. If a candidate submits a mitigating circumstances application in advance of an assessment, and that application is approved, the candidate can be withdrawn from the assessment (and other assessments within the sitting, as applicable), unless they request to sit but have their circumstances taken into consideration should they fail and need a 3<sup>rd</sup> discretionary attempt.

11. Once withdrawn, a candidate will not be able to re-enter the same assessment (or sitting, as applicable). Approved withdrawal from a whole sitting will not constitute an attempt at that sitting. Candidates who have unforeseen circumstances develop during the assessment (e.g. acute illness) that they believe may have affected their performance, should submit mitigating circumstances within 5 days of taking the exam, before results are released. The attempt will count, but if approved, the circumstances taken into consideration should they fail and need a 3rd discretionary attempt.

12. The Year 1 curriculum will be considered as forming **three curriculum themes**:

- Basic and Clinical Sciences (BCS)
- Patients, Populations and Society (PPS)
- Patient and Doctor (PD)

The curriculum themes map to the assessment domains as shown in the following table:

GMC Outcomes	Professional Knowledge		Professional Skills	Becoming a Doctor
Assessment Domains	Professional Knowledge (PK)		Professional Skills (PS)	Becoming a Doctor (BD)
Curriculum Themes	Basic Clinical Sciences (BCS)	Patients, Population & Society (PPS)	Professional Skills (PS)	Patient & Doctor
Assessments	Written exams	Written exams	Clinical Competency Assessments (CCA)	Attendance, professional behaviour, Student Selected Component (SSC)

13. In Year 1 of the 5-year programme, the Professional Knowledge domain will cover the BCS and PPS curriculum themes, and will be subdivided into two elements that must be passed independently from one another.

14. The Professional Knowledge (PK) domain is tested using written examinations and will to assess knowledge and application of knowledge.

15. The Becoming a Doctor (BD) domain will assess whether students are developing the ability to apply knowledge in the clinical workplace as well as the behaviours and skills required by medical professionals.

16. Assessment in Year 1 will normally comprise the following:

- For the Professional Knowledge (PK) domain, there will be a minimum of three written examinations. For the Professional Knowledge (PK) domain there will be a minimum of three written examinations. Two BCS papers (papers 1 and 2) and one PPS paper at the end of the year covering material from all the modules.
- For the Becoming a Doctor (BD) domain, assessments will be completed throughout the year across four main elements: attendance, other professional behaviours, clinical workplace portfolio and SSC/projects.

17. The written examinations will be comprised of questions that test the learning objectives from Year 1. Items will be distributed to ensure teaching across Year 1 modules is appropriately represented in the final mark scheme.

18. The length of the written examinations will be announced in advance of the assessment by the Chief/Responsible Examiner.
19. The content of the assessments in the Becoming a Doctor (BD) domain will be announced in advance of the assessment by the Chief/Responsible Examiner and/or Domain Lead.
20. There will be no compensation between the two elements of the Professional Knowledge (PK) domain (BCS and PPS).

### **Mark Distribution**

21. The Professional Skills grade will be determined by the end of Year 2 CCA.

### **Formative and Summative assessment – Year 1**

#### **Formative assessment**

22. Formative assessments are used to allow students to practise the main assessment methods that will be used summatively in the remainder of the programme. Please note that attendance of all formative exams is mandatory and if for any reason you are unable to attend you will need to complete a mitigating circumstance form which will be reviewed by a panel.
23. For the Professional Knowledge (PK) domain (BCS and PPS themes), there will be a formative written examination at the end of the Autumn term. Attendance at these examinations will be compulsory.
24. The Becoming a Doctor (BD) domain will be assessed throughout the year on a formative basis. There will be one formatively assessed SSC in this domain during Year 1 (namely Foundation SSC). The completion of the assessments in this domain will be compulsory.

#### **End of Year 1 Summative assessment:**

25. For the Professional Knowledge (PK) domain (BCS and PPS themes), there will be summative written examinations at the end of the year.
26. Grades for each of the two Professional Knowledge themes (BCS and PPS) will be calculated based on the results of the exams at the end of Year 1.
27. For the Becoming a Doctor domain, a number of portfolio items that are introduced in Year 1 must be completed to an acceptable grade by the end of Year 2. Any elements that are not graded acceptable will be assessed by the grading committee on a case-by-case basis.

#### **Progression:**

28. Progression from Year 1 to Year 2 will be determined by the results of the Professional Knowledge (PK) domain (BCS and PPS themes).
29. Students will need to pass both themes of the Professional Knowledge domain (i.e. pass both BCS and PPS in their own right) to progress to Year 2.

## **Marking arrangements and Standard Setting**

### ***Professional Knowledge (BCS and PPS themes)***

30. Candidates **at the end of the Year 1 examinations** will be graded as one of the following categories for each element (BCS and PPS):

- **A (Acceptable):** the numerical pass mark or above
- **U (Unacceptable):** below the numerical pass mark

31. The pass standard for the written examinations will normally be determined using an internationally recognised standard setting methodology (e.g. Cohen or Angoff).

32. In regard to the standard setting methods referred to in the above paragraph, it may not be statistically reliable to choose the method listed, given the variables (e.g. cohort size) of the particular assessment in question. In these cases an alternative, recognised, method would be selected to suit the variables of the assessment.

33. At the end of the year, candidates' unrounded marks will be combined for each component separately (BCS and PPS) and then converted to a percentage. This mark will then be rounded to one decimal place (e.g. 51.15 will be rounded up to 51.2 and 51.14 will be rounded down to 51.1).

### ***The Becoming a Doctor (BD) Domain***

34. This domain will be assessed on a summative basis in Year 2.

35. Feedback on the assessments that comprise this domain will be distributed to candidates.

36. The Becoming a Doctor leads will consider, and meet where necessary, students displaying poor professional behaviour (including attendance) or poor performance in relation to other aspects of the domain such as completion of workplace assessments. The Becoming a Doctor Grading Committee will allocate grades at the end of the academic year and report to the Board of Examiners any unsatisfactory performance within the domain via the allocation of a grade for all students, but this is not summative in Year 1. The Becoming a Doctor Progress Meetings and Grading Committees in all future years, may consider any evidence assimilated from the point of entry to the MBBS programme, including Year 1 where assessment is formative.

37. ***The Becoming a Doctor domain*** will be graded as follows:

- **A (Acceptable)**
- **B (Borderline)**
- **C (Cause for concern)**
- **U (Unacceptable)**

Details regarding how the overall BD domain grade is determined based on the individual grades obtained in each BD element are will be provided in the Becoming a Doctor Guidance.

### ***Interruption of Studies (IOS) and Becoming a Doctor (BD)***

38. If a candidate is on IOS or takes an IOS between the end of year BD grading decisions and the associated Board of Examiners (BoE) they will not receive a formal BD grade and it will not count as a BD assessment attempt.

39. If a candidate is on IOS at the time of an academic year formative feedback will be given to the candidate with an indicative grade of what would have been awarded if they had continued.
40. If a candidate is on IOS, all elements of a candidate's BD portfolio may be carried over to the subsequent grading committee for the academic year they return to study – this will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
41. The formal BD grading will be determined by the BD grading committee for the academic year they return to study from IOS.
42. Ratification of BD results will only occur at the BoE when candidates have returned from IOS and taken all other required assessments.

### **Progression from Year 1 to Year 2 at first attempt**

43. At the end of Year 1, candidates will be awarded a grade for each element of the Professional Knowledge (PK) domain (BCS and PPS). These will be categorised as detailed in paragraph 31.
44. A candidate, whose grade in both elements of the Professional Knowledge (PK) domain (BCS, PPS) is **Acceptable** shall have passed the year and may proceed to Year 2 of the MBBS programme.
45. A candidate whose grade in any assessment domain (including **either or both** themes of the Professional Knowledge domain) is **Unacceptable**, will be given the option to enter the resit examination(s)/assessment(s). Alternatively, a student may opt to repeat Year 1.
46. Candidates who opt to repeat the year will be required to sit all domains of assessment, including all elements of Becoming a Doctor, regardless of whether they have passed the domain or domain element in a previous academic year.

### **Re-sit Examinations/Assessments**

**For candidates entering the resit period at 2<sup>nd</sup> attempt in the same academic year as the 1<sup>st</sup> attempt**

47. The resit period for the Professional Knowledge (PK) domain will normally take place between the July and August Board of Examiners.
48. For the Professional Knowledge (PK) domain, candidates who elect to resit will be required to resit only the domain theme(s) they failed (BCS and/or PPS).
49. The written resit examinations shall be set for each domain element (BCS and PPS) and shall cover the content of Year 1 using similar methods of assessment as those used in the first sit examinations.
50. A candidate, whose grade at each resit examination(s)/assessment(s) entered is Acceptable shall have passed the year and may proceed to Year 2 of the MBBS programme.
51. A candidate, whose grade at any resit examination(s)/assessment(s) is **Unacceptable** will be deemed to have failed the examination and therefore the programme. Such students may be eligible for a 3<sup>rd</sup> discretionary attempt, in accordance with *the procedure for consideration for a final discretionary attempt at an assessment*.

### **Progression from Year 1 to Year 2 following a repeat of the year at 2<sup>nd</sup> attempt**

52. A candidate who is repeating the year at second attempt will be entered into all domains of assessment, including all elements of Becoming a Doctor, regardless of whether they have passed the domain or domain element in a previous academic year.
53. A candidate whose grade in both elements of the Professional Knowledge domain (BCS or PPS) is **Acceptable** shall have passed the year and may proceed to Year 2 of the MBBS programme.
54. A candidate whose grade in any element of Professional Knowledge (BCS and/or PPS) is **Unacceptable** at second attempt will be required to apply to the Discretionary Panel for a third and final attempt. If the discretionary attempt is granted the candidate will be eligible to enter the resit examination for the relevant domain(s) in the Year 1 resit testing period or may choose to repeat Year 1 in full at third attempt and sit all domains of assessment, regardless of whether they had passed them at second attempt.
55. A candidate whose grade in any element of Professional Knowledge (BCS and/or PPS) is **Unacceptable** at third and final attempt is deemed to have failed the domain and therefore the programme.
56. All grades may be made available to the discretionary panel, including formative grades, and those from the Becoming a Doctor domain.

### **Progression from Year 1 to Year 2 following a repeat of the year at 3<sup>rd</sup> Discretionary Attempt**

57. Candidates offered a third and final attempt will be required to repeat the year and sit all domains of assessment, including all elements of Becoming a Doctor, regardless of whether they have passed the domain or domain theme in a previous academic year.
58. A candidate, whose grade in both elements of Professional Knowledge (BCS, PPS) is **Acceptable**, shall have passed the year and may proceed to Year 2 of the MBBS programme.
59. A candidate, whose grade in any one assessment domain (including either or both themes of Professional Knowledge) is **Unacceptable**, on the third attempt, shall be deemed to have failed the programme and will have their registration terminated.

### **Students re-enrolling/re-joining a year of a programme following an approved period of absence OR students who are required/have elected to repeat a year**

60. Candidates re-enrolling/re-joining Year 1 following an approved absence (e.g. interruption of studies) will be examined in accordance with the scheme of assessment in place in the academic year in which the re-enrolment/re-joining takes place.
61. Any candidate required to repeat a year or any candidate who elected to repeat a year, will be examined in accordance with the scheme of assessment in place in the academic year in which the repeat year takes place.
62. Any candidate returning from an approved absence (e.g. interruption of studies) part way through an academic year will have their assessment requirements (i.e. the assessments in which they will be formatively and summatively examined) determined on a case-by-case basis.

## **Board of Examiners and Management Arrangements**

### **Board of Examiners**

63. There shall be an MBBS Board of Examiners constituted in accordance with the General Regulations for Students and Programmes of Study.
64. The Board of Examiners has ultimate responsibility for the standard of the examinations and their fair and proper conduct.
65. The Board of Examiners will determine progression from Year 1 to Year 2.

### **External Examiners:**

66. There is a detailed job description for External Examiners, available separately.
67. External Examiners will be invited to attend the meeting of the Board of Examiners.

### **Chief Examiners:**

68. There will be a Chief Examiner for the year. It is the responsibility of the Chief Examiner(s) to oversee a master blueprint for the examinations across the year.
69. The Chief Examiner, alongside module and year leads will be responsible for standard-setting and quality assurance meetings.

### **Annual Report:**

70. The Chief Examiner shall co-ordinate production of an annual report on the conduct and standard of the examinations to the Chair of the Board of Examiners and the Course Committees.