

St George's, University of London
Scheme of Assessment
MBBS Penultimate Year (P Year) 2023-24

Overview

1. The fourth year of the MBBS 5-year stream and third year of the MBBS 4-year stream shall be known as the Penultimate Year (P Year). During this year the students on both streams will undertake identical assessments. This Scheme of Assessment specifically relates to the Penultimate Year.
2. In accordance with the GMC assessment guidance, assessment in the MBBS programme will be across three domains, namely:
 - Professional Knowledge (PK)
 - Professional Skills (PS)
 - Becoming a Doctor (BD)
3. A student may only have **ONE** discretionary 3rd 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)

Definitions

4. An **Assessment** may comprise a written exam, practical assessment or portfolio of assessed work. This section refers only to assessments in the Professional Skills (clinical competency assessments, CCA [previously called objective structured clinical examination, OSCE]) and Professional Knowledge (written exams such as year-specific knowledge tests, YSKT) domains.
5. 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 assessments, and by extension defines the sittings within the course.
6. An **Attempt** is defined by any of:
 - 6.1. 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.
 - 6.2. Partial unsuccessful completion of any of the assessments within a sitting, regardless of how much of each assessment is completed.
 - 6.3. 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.
 - 6.4. 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

7. 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 Clinical Science years, a student who fails PPS but passes BCS within the same sitting, has failed their first attempt at that domain.
 - In T, P or F years, candidates cannot be on second attempt at the YSKT but only first attempt at the CCA within the same sitting. It is the number of prior attempts at the *sitting* of the set of linked assessments (as defined above) that is used to determine the attempt number.
8. 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 YSKT in P year at first attempt in the first sitting but has an acute illness precluding them doing the CCA in the same sitting. The candidate passes the YSKT and, following approval of a mitigating circumstance application, the candidate is allowed to take the CCA at the next sitting. As they have passed the YSKT element in the first sitting, and mitigating circumstances were approved in respect of their non-attendance at the CCA, their completion of the CCA in the next sitting would be regarded as a single (split) attempt at this set of assessments.
- ii. A candidate sits the YSKT in P year at first attempt in the first sitting but has an acute illness precluding them doing the clinical assessment in the same sitting. The candidate fails the YSKT and is therefore required to repeat the YSKT at the next sitting, together with the CCA that they have not yet undertaken. As their partial unsuccessful attempt in the first sitting constituted an attempt as defined by criterion 2.2, above, they will be entering the next sitting at second attempt for both assessments.

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 (section 6).
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 3rd 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 7 days of taking the exam, before results are released. The attempt will count, but if approved, the circumstances will be taken into consideration should they fail and need a 3rd discretionary attempt.

Summative Assessment

12. The Professional Knowledge (PK) domain is tested using a written examination and will assess knowledge and application of knowledge. The content of the written examination will include teaching and clinical attachments.

The Professional Skills (PS) domain is tested using a clinical competency assessment (CCA) and will assess clinical communication and clinical skills. The content examined will be synoptic and will include teaching from earlier years and skills acquired during attachments.

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. In P Year, feedback will be provided across four main elements: attendance, other professional behaviour, SSC and projects and the clinical workplace portfolio.

The Professional Knowledge domain (written examination)

13. The written examination will normally consist of SBAs and will comprise of no less than 120 items. Other question types (e.g. SAQs) may be used if deemed appropriate.
14. The length and format of the written examination will be announced in advance of the assessment by the Year/Domain Lead. In addition, the Year/Domain Lead will provide information about computer-marked versus free-text question styles.

Written Examination Marking Arrangements and Standard Setting

15. The pass standard for the written examination shall be determined using standard setting (using recognised methods) and the percentage value shall be rounded to one decimal place. This will normally be determined by the Angoff method. (see paragraph 16)
16. In regard to the standard setting method 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.
17. Marks for candidates shall be rounded to one decimal place when being compared with the pass mark (e.g. 51.15 will be rounded up to 51.2 and 51.14 will be rounded down to 51.1).

Written Examination Progression Requirements

18. Candidates **at the end of the written examination** will be graded one of the following categories:
 - **A (Acceptable):** competent – attained the numerical passmark or above
 - **U (Unacceptable):** not yet competent – below the numerical passmark

19. A candidate, whose grade in the written examination is **Acceptable** shall have passed the Penultimate Year and may proceed to the Final Year of the MBBS programme, provided that they also meet the requirements of paragraphs 32-34 and 44-50.
20. A candidate, whose grade in the written examination is **Unacceptable at first attempt** may choose to repeat the Penultimate Year, completing all domains of assessment, or may opt to enter the re-sit written examination.

Written Re-sit Examination

21. The written re-sit examination will normally take place within one month of publication of results.
22. A candidate, whose grade in the written re-sit examination is **Acceptable** shall have passed the Penultimate Year and may proceed to the Final Year of the MBBS programme, provided that they also meet the requirements of paragraphs 36 and 54.
23. A candidate whose grade at the written re-sit examination is **Unacceptable** is deemed to have failed the domain and therefore the programme. Such students may be eligible for a 3rd discretionary attempt, in accordance with the *procedure for consideration for a final discretionary attempt at an assessment* (see paragraph 3).
24. Candidates granted a final 3rd attempt will be required to repeat the Penultimate Year and sit all domains of assessment, regardless of whether they have passed the domain in a previous academic year.

The Professional Skills domain (CCA)

25. The CCA will normally comprise no less than 10 stations. Each station will be between 5 and 15 minutes in duration but in total will normally summate to no less than 120 minutes testing time.
26. The length and number of stations will be announced in advance of the assessment by the Year/Domain Lead.

CCA marking arrangements and standard setting

27. The pass mark for the CCA shall be determined using standard setting (using recognised methods). The pass standard will normally be determined by the borderline regression method.
28. In regard to the standard setting method 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.
29. The resulting pass mark for each station (out of 100) will be rounded to one decimal place. These marks will be added together and converted to a percentage to give the overall numerical passmark for the CCA, which is then calculated to one decimal place.
30. Candidates will be given a mark out of 100 for each station, calculated to one decimal place. These marks will be added together and converted to a percentage to give the overall numerical mark for the CCA, which is then calculated to one decimal place.

31. In order to attain the pass standard, candidates are required to achieve the numerical passmark for the examination and pass at least 65% of stations (rounded to the nearest whole number). For example, for a 12 station CCA, students must pass at least 8 stations. Numbers needed to pass will be rounded down to the nearest integer e.g. 8 from a range 8.0-8.49 and up to the nearest integer e.g. 9 from 8.50-8.99.

CCA Progression Requirements

32. Candidates **at the end of the CCA** will be graded one of the following categories:

- **A (Acceptable):** competent – achieved the numerical passmark or above **and** pass at least 65% of stations
- **U (Unacceptable):** not yet competent – below the numerical passmark **or** fail more than 35% of stations

33. A candidate, whose grade in the CCA is **Acceptable** shall have passed the Penultimate Year and may proceed to the Final Year of the MBBS programme, provided that they also meet the requirements of paragraphs 18-20 and 44-50.

34. A candidate, whose grade in the CCA is **Unacceptable at first attempt** may choose to repeat the Penultimate Year, completing all domains of assessment, or may opt to enter the CCA re-sit examination.

CCA Re-sit Examination

35. The re-sit examination for the CCA will normally take place within one month of publication of results.

36. A candidate, whose grade in the CCA re-sit is **Acceptable** shall have passed the Penultimate Year and may proceed to the Final Year of the MBBS programme, provided that they also meet the requirements of paragraphs 22 and 54.

37. A candidate, whose grade at the CCA re-sit is **Unacceptable** is deemed to have failed the domain and therefore the programme. Such students may be eligible for a 3rd discretionary attempt, in accordance with the *procedure for consideration for a final discretionary attempt at an assessment* (see paragraph 3).

38. Candidates granted a final 3rd attempt will be required to repeat the Penultimate Year and complete all domains of assessment, regardless of whether they have passed the domain in a previous academic year.

Becoming a Doctor (BD)

39. Candidates will be considered across four main elements: SSC and projects in the form of SSC-T, attendance, other professional behaviour and the clinical workplace portfolio. Attendance, including mandatory personal tutor meetings, other professional behaviour and the clinical workplace portfolio are assessed during the attachments in P Year.

40. Individual requirements for each element will be published in advance by the Year/Domain Lead.

Becoming a Doctor (BD) Marking Arrangements and Standard Setting

41. The assessments within this domain will be assessed by the relevant Educational Supervisor.

42. Students will have 3 submissions at 1st attempt for the SSC-T. Students who fail the SSC-T at 1st attempt will undertake the 2nd attempt during P-Year, before the P-Year re-sit board of examiners. Non-submissions are awarded a mark of zero and constitute a submission attempt.
43. The Becoming a Doctor Grading Committee will meet twice yearly to discuss 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 report to the Board of Examiners any unsatisfactory performance within the domain via the allocation of a grade for 'other professional behaviour', and subsequently an overall grade for the domain, for all students. The Becoming a Doctor Grading Committee will automatically consider all students progressing to P year with an overall grade of Borderline from T year. The Becoming a Doctor Grading Committee may consider any evidence assimilated from the point of entry to the MBBS programme.

Becoming a Doctor (BD) Progression Requirements

44. Candidates *at the end of the Becoming a Doctor (BD)* domain will be graded as one of the following:
- **A (Acceptable)**
 - **B (Borderline)**
 - **C (Cause for concern)**
 - **U (Unacceptable)**

Attendance Element	Other Professional Behaviours Element	Clinical Workplace Portfolio Element	SSC and Projects Element	Overall P Year BD Grade
A C U	A C U	A C U	E A U	← <i>Available grades</i>
A	A	A	E	A
A	A	A	A	A
A	C	A	A	B/A *
C	A	A	A	C
A	A	C	A	C
A	C	C	A	C
C	C	A	A	C
C	A	C	A	C
A	A	A	U	C
A	C	C	U	C
C	C	A	U	C
C	A	C	U	C
A	C	A	U	C
C	A	A	U	C
A	A	C	U	C
C	C	C	A	C
Any U in attendance, other professional behaviours or clinical workplace portfolio will result in an overall grade of U				
U	A	A	A	U
A	U	A	A	U
A	A	U	A	U

*Final grade to be determined by the Professionalism grading committee.

45. A candidate, whose grade in the Becoming a Doctor domain is **Acceptable** at the end of the year (see final column in table above) shall have passed the Penultimate Year and may proceed to the Final Year of the MBBS programme, provided that they also meet the requirements of paragraphs 18-20 and 32-34.
46. Candidates may only receive one **Borderline** grade during the MBBS programme. A candidate whose grade in the Becoming a Doctor Domain is Borderline and who has not previously received a grade of Borderline shall have passed the penultimate year. A candidate whose grade in Becoming a Doctor for Penultimate year is Borderline, but who has received a Borderline grade in any previous year, shall be deemed to have failed the Domain and be awarded an Unacceptable grade for the domain overall.
47. A candidate whose grade in the Becoming a Doctor Domain during a repeat of Penultimate year is Borderline will be deemed to have failed the domain and be awarded an Unacceptable grade for the Domain overall.
48. A candidate, whose grade in the Becoming a Doctor domain is **Borderline** at the end of the year (see final column in table above) will be automatically considered at the Grading Committee at the end of F year.
49. A candidate, whose grade in the Becoming a Doctor domain is **Cause for Concern** at the end of the year (see final column in table above) may choose to repeat the Penultimate Year or may opt to enter the re-sit period.
50. A candidate, whose grade in the Becoming a Doctor domain is **Unacceptable or Borderline**, having previously been awarded a Borderline in T year or M4 Year 1 or M5 Year 2 will be required to repeat the Penultimate Year; completing all domains of assessment, regardless of whether they have passed the domain in a previous academic year.

The Becoming a Doctor Re-sit Period

51. The re-sit period for the Becoming a Doctor domain will normally take place within one month of publication of results.
52. The requirements for the re-sit period (e.g. clinical attachment, attendance) will be determined on a case by case basis, by the Academic Year Lead and the Becoming a Doctor Domain Lead or their nominee(s).
53. Candidates who are required to re-sit the domain may have their grade capped at **Borderline**.
54. A candidate, whose grade in the Becoming a Doctor re-sit period is **Acceptable** or **Borderline** shall have passed the Penultimate Year and may proceed to the Final Year of the MBBS programme, provided that they also meet the requirements of paragraphs 22 and 36 and have not previously received a grade of Borderline.
55. Candidates may only receive one Borderline grade during the MBBS programme. A second Borderline grade, at any attempt in any academic year, will result in an Unacceptable grade for the Becoming a Doctor domain. (see Paragraph 46)
56. A candidate, whose grade in the Becoming a Doctor re-sit period is **Cause for Concern or Unacceptable** is deemed to have failed the domain and therefore the programme. Such students may be eligible for a 3rd discretionary attempt, in accordance with the *procedure for consideration for a final discretionary attempt at an assessment* (see paragraph 3).

57. Candidates granted a final 3rd attempt by the Discretionary Panel will be required to repeat the Penultimate Year and sit all domains of assessment, regardless of whether they have passed the domain in a previous academic year.

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

58. If a candidate is on IOS or takes an IOS between the end of year BD grading committee 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.

59. If a candidate is on IOS at the time of a grading committee for their end of year assessment, their BD components will be discussed at the grading committee, and formative feedback given to the candidate with an indicative grade of what would have been awarded if they had continued.

60. 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.

61. The formal BD grading will be determined by the BD grading committee for the academic year they return to study from IOS.

62. Ratification of BD results will only occur at the BoE when candidates have returned from IOS and taken all other required assessments.

Transition from a previous Scheme of Assessment

63. Students who first registered for the MBBS before October 2007 (for 5-year stream) and September 2008 (for the 4-year stream) but who took an Interruption of Study will be required to resume their studies by joining the new MBBS Programme, including its assessment and progression regulations.

Merits and Distinctions

64. Candidates who pass the Final Year and are awarded the MBBS degree will be eligible to be considered for the award of a St George's Mark of Merit or a University Distinction, in the following four disciplines:

- Medical Sciences (on the basis of performance in the Clinical Science year/s)
- Clinical Science (on the basis of performance in the Transition Year)
- Clinical Specialties (on the basis of performance in the Penultimate Year)
- Clinical Practice (on the basis of performance in the Final Year)

A candidate awarded a Distinction in a discipline cannot also be awarded a Merit in that discipline. Merits and Distinctions are only awarded to those completing the degree.

65. For the sole purpose of calculating Merits and Distinctions, a final mark for the Penultimate Year shall be determined, using the weightings specified in the table below:

	P Year (Clinical Specialties)
Written examination percentage mark	50
CCA percentage mark	50
TOTAL	100

66. A Distinction in Clinical Specialties will be awarded to candidates in the top 10%, i.e. the 1st decile, of the cohort in the Penultimate Year. This will be based on the final weighted percentage mark, rounded to one decimal place. Candidates must pass at 1st attempt in order to be eligible for a distinction. Candidates must also achieve a grade of Acceptable in the Becoming a Doctor (BD) domain at first attempt.
67. A Merit in Clinical Specialties will be awarded to candidates in the 2nd decile of the cohort in the Penultimate Year. This will be based on the final weighted percentage mark rounded to one decimal place. Candidates must pass at 1st attempt in order to be eligible for a merit. Candidates must also achieve a grade of Acceptable in the Becoming a Doctor domain at first attempt.
68. Candidates who defer entry to an examination and sit their first attempt with the re-sit cohort will be ranked alongside first attempt candidates from the main cohort and then awarded a Merit or Distinction according to where they rank with the main cohort (i.e. 1st or 2nd decile). A candidate who defers entry to an examination more than once, will be ranked alongside the most recent main cohort.

Deferred Entry Candidates

69. Candidates who defer entry to one or more examinations due to approved mitigating circumstances will have their future examination arrangements considered on a case-by-case basis.

Progression from the Penultimate Year to the Final Year following a repeat of the Penultimate Year

70. A candidate repeating the year will be required to complete all assessment domains, regardless of whether they have passed the domain in a previous academic year.
71. Candidates repeating the Penultimate Year will be required to achieve a grade of **Acceptable** for the Becoming a Doctor domain in order to progress to the Final Year.

Repeat of the Penultimate Year as a second attempt

72. Candidates repeating the Penultimate Year after no more than one prior unsuccessful attempt at all Penultimate Year assessment domain(s) will be required to complete the Penultimate Year in full and achieve a grade of **Acceptable** in all assessment domains. This will be considered a second attempt at all assessment domains, regardless of whether they have passed these in a previous academic year.
73. A candidate whose grade in either the CCA or YSKT (not both) assessment domain is **Unacceptable** at second attempt will be eligible for a fast-track Discretionary Panel for a third and final attempt. If the discretionary attempt is granted at fast track the candidate will be eligible to enter the resit examination for the relevant domain(s) in the P Year resit testing period or may choose to repeat P Year in full at third attempt and sit all domains of assessment, regardless of whether they had passed them at second attempt.
74. A candidate whose grade in Becoming A Doctor at second attempt is **Borderline** or **Cause for concern** is deemed to have failed the domain and shall receive the grade of **Unacceptable** overall for the domain (see paragraph 50)
75. A candidate whose grade in any assessment domain is **Unacceptable** at third and final attempt is deemed to have failed the domain and therefore the programme.

Repeating the Penultimate Year as a 3rd Discretionary Attempt

76. A candidate, whose performance in all domains is **Acceptable** (refer to domain specific progression requirements) shall have passed the Penultimate Year and may proceed to the Final Year of the MBBS programme.
77. Candidates repeating the Penultimate Year in full will be required to achieve a grade of **Acceptable** in all assessment domains. This will be considered a third and final attempt at all assessment domains, regardless of whether they have passed these in a previous academic year.
78. A candidate whose grade in any assessment domain is **Unacceptable** at third and final attempt or **Borderline or Cause for Concern** in Becoming a Doctor domain, is deemed to have failed the domain and therefore the programme.

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

79. Any candidate re-enrolling/re-joining a year of a programme 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.
80. 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.
81. Procedural workplace based assessments (DOPs) will have a valid life-span of 2 academic years from the Board of Examiners at which they were ratified (regardless of reason for interruption of studies) to protect against skill fade and changes to clinical practice – students who return from an approved period of absence where their most recent procedural assessments are more than 2 academic years from when they re-join will be required to repeat all mandatory DOPs for the year of study in which they return.
82. 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 by the academic decision of the Interruption of Studies panel – see section 80 regarding DOPs.

Board of Examiners

83. There shall be an MBBS Board of Examiners constituted in accordance with the General Regulations for Students and Programmes of Study and the MBBS Programme Regulations.
84. The Board of Examiners has ultimate responsibility for the standard of the examinations and their fair and proper conduct.
85. A Sub-Board of Examiners will determine progression from the Penultimate to Final Year.

External Examiners

86. There is a detailed job description for External Examiners, available separately.
87. External Examiners will be invited to attend the meeting of the Board of Examiners and if required, the CCA and the Becoming a Doctor Grading Committee.

Annual Report

88. 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.