

## GKT School of Medical Education Student Professionalism Policy and Supporting Procedures

This Policy is in addition to and should be read in conjunction with the College Policy 'G29 Academic Regulation (Appendix): Fitness for registration and fitness to practise', details of which can be found on the College website [here](#).

The GKT School of Medical Education Student Professionalism Policy and Supporting Procedures documents the following:

- How concerns and/or potential commendations can be notified to the School
- How concerns are considered and managed
- What happens when a professionalism meeting with a Senior Academic is required
- Student records and the 'Student Professionalism Monitoring List'
- Convictions and lesser sanctions
- College professionalism processes
- General Medical Council declarations
- Professional behaviour that supports commendation
- Flowchart of typical course of behavioural concerns once reported

### Introduction

The GKT School of Medical Education is responsible for giving students opportunities to learn, understand and practise the professional standards expected of doctors. The standards of professional behaviour expected of medical students are outlined in the GMC guidance '[Achieving good medical practice; guidance for medical students](#)'.

Sometime students may display behaviours which raise questions about whether they are meeting these standards. It is the responsibility of the GKT School of Medical Education to have a transparent and fair process to identify, manage and support students whose behaviour calls their professionalism into question.

At the same time, there is also professional behaviour that supports commendation and the School is very keen to hold positive information about its students.

The purpose of this document is to provide information about the School of Medical Education procedures for managing the professional behaviour of medical students, with a view to ensuring that all students meet the expectations set out in the GMC's guidance.

## How concerns and/or potential commendations can be notified to the School

Any member of staff (clinical, academic or administrative) at any organisation at which the student spends time, any patient, fellow student or member of the public may report any concern they have about a student.

Anyone who wishes to report a concern, pass on such a report or send a commendation should notify the School's Education Support Services as quickly as possible, by emailing [PSRBstudentsupport@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:PSRBstudentsupport@kcl.ac.uk) or through [Raising Concerns](#).

The Medical School will keep a record of all reported instances of low-level concerns to enable identification of persistent low-level concerns and any unprofessional behaviour. This is to enable the School to address these as early as possible and provide support before they lead to potentially more significant issues.

## How concerns are considered and managed

In line with GMC guidance, the School will consider each concern on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration the student's previous behaviour and any patterns or persistent concerns. On this basis the School will decide whether to monitor the situation or whether a referral to a senior member of staff is required.

In general, instances of reported behaviour that are purely factual, e.g. missed appointments will be recorded on the student record. Instances which are potentially subject to interpretation, e.g. rudeness will first be discussed with a senior member of staff who has not been involved in the communication previously. This will ensure that any decision as to whether to record the inappropriate behaviour is not subject solely to the reaction of the individual who received the report about the behaviour in question.

The types of behaviour that would constitute lower level concerns could include, but are not limited to:

- Missed teaching sessions for which students are required to register, e.g. IPE, BLS etc.
- Untruthfully documenting attendance at teaching sessions that have not been attended
- Failure to meet deadlines for submission of non-assessment related items
- Debts to the College (unless these are caused by external factors beyond a student's control)
- Inappropriate behaviour towards patients or staff
- Missed appointments with Occupational Health, personal tutors, clinical advisers or other support provision
- Demonstration of an uncaring attitude or lack of insight

Taken individually, the above may only require monitoring but multiple instances of low-level concerns can often signal either that a student needs additional support or they may constitute a professionalism issue that needs to be addressed by the School.

The types of behaviours that would constitute serious concern could include, but are not limited to:

- Plagiarism or cheating in an examination
- Forging of a healthcare workers signature
- Failure to declare DBS issues at the point of admission or during the medical programme
- Serious threats or abusive behaviour
- Being untruthful

Any one of the behaviours above will generally need to be addressed by an appropriate senior member of the School's academic staff.

In some circumstances, concerns may fall into more than one category and the School will ensure it takes account of the cumulative effect of all factors in the case in order to decide on a course of action.

### What happens when a meeting with a senior academic is required

When a referral to a senior member of the School's academic staff is deemed necessary, a student will be expected to attend a meeting with an appropriate senior academic. This meeting will be arranged by Education Support Services and the student will receive an email from [PSRBstudentsupport@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:PSRBstudentsupport@kcl.ac.uk) providing the date, time and location of the meeting.

The purpose of the meeting is to explore the concern(s) raised and provide the student with the opportunity to present their perspective and understanding of the situation. A member of Education Support Services will generally also attend the meeting to take notes. The student will be provided with notes of the meeting and given the opportunity to comment as necessary.

The meeting may identify underlying issues for which the student can be sign posted to support/reasonable adjustments if necessary. Examples of follow up and support that may be provided could include:

- Referral to College support services (including Wellbeing, Counselling, and Disability)
- Regular meetings with Clinical Advisor/Personal Tutor
- Referral to Occupational Health
- Referral to Faculty Health & Wellbeing Lead
- Reasonable Adjustments

In some circumstances, the meeting may identify that a student's behaviour, or pattern of behaviour, has significantly departed from the expected standards of professionalism. In this case the student will be added to the Schools 'Student Professional Monitoring List'. Students will receive an email from [psrbstudentsupport@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:psrbstudentsupport@kcl.ac.uk) confirming their addition to the list and the reason for this decision.

Depending on what the issue is, and to who the concern is first reported, concerns are followed up in a number of ways. Those parties involved in follow-up are Education Support Services, the student's Clinical Adviser or Personal Tutor, Senior Clinical Adviser or Senior Personal Tutor, Director of Undergraduate Medical Education or Head of Stage/Phase, Where necessary, more complex decisions about follow-up will be shared and decided by the Dean/Deputy Dean of Student Affairs.

If further concerns arise or support/reasonable adjustments are not effective then this may require referral to the Dean of Medical Education or Dean of Student Affairs to determine whether the matter can be resolved informally or whether investigation of fitness to practise is required. The School's Fitness to Practise policy can be found in the MBBS handbook on KEATS [here](#).

## Student records and the 'Student Professionalism Monitoring List'

The 'Student Professionalism Monitoring List' is internal to the School. A student being added to this is not generally considered to be a matter for declaration to the GMC at the point of application for provisional registration. At the end of a student's final year, the record will be reviewed by the School. If it is determined that there are no significant issues that need to be retained for future reference, the concerns will be expunged and the record updated to note this.

The general criteria in determining whether information is 'significant' and therefore to be retained, will be that unless matters were sufficiently important to merit inclusion in the 'Transfer of Information' process to Foundation Schools or if formal fitness to practise proceedings were necessary, the concerns will generally be deleted from the student's record. If the decision is taken to retain details about a concern the student would be informed by the School.

## Convictions and lesser sanctions

In the case of the issuing of a Penalty Notice for Disorder, Reprimand, Warning, Caution or Conviction, the School requires students to self-declare this immediately to the School by emailing [psrbstudentsupport@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:psrbstudentsupport@kcl.ac.uk). When students accept the College's regulations at the point of initial registration and each subsequent year during re-enrolment, they are agreeing to the statement that requires these matters to be declared. Although this is often a cause of anxiety, the School remains supportive of its students and is in a better position to help and advise when it is fully informed. A delay in any such declaration is often of more concern than the declaration itself.

NOTE: Medical students have often been misinformed by well-intentioned police officers who claim there is no need to tell the School about a transgression and that it will not show up on a DBS check. The School **does** need to be informed and these matters **will** show on an enhanced check which all FY1s must complete.

## College Professionalism Processes

Conduct or behaviour which is sufficiently serious on its own merits will be referred by the School to the College. The College has procedures which cover the serious issues that may arise in relation to student behaviour. These are:

- Misconduct
- Fitness for Registration and Practise

These procedures each deal with serious and specific concerns about student behaviour and details can be found on the King's 'Student Conduct & Appeals' webpages [here](#).

## General Medical Council Declarations

At the point of applying for provisional GMC registration, all applicants are asked to declare any issues under a number of different categories. If the School deems any student to have exhibited behaviour which it believes should be declared to the GMC under fitness to practise or professionalism, the student will be notified of this.

Other matters that must be declared include academic misconduct (or investigations) and criminal convictions (or lesser sanctions). In any instance when a student declares something to the GMC, the School is contacted for further information, in addition to the student being asked for a statement and any documents held. Students are informed at the time of what is being submitted to the GMC and it should therefore not come as a surprise. If any of these types of issue have been

declared to the School in a timely fashion, and if a student has been permitted to continue on the grounds that there are no fitness to practise concerns, this is made clear to the GMC by the School

### Professional behaviour that supports commendation

The School is very keen to hold positive information about its students. To this end, the School proactively records evidence of good professional behaviour that would not generally be noted as part of the assessment processes.

For example:

- Voluntary activity for the School, hospitals, community groups etc.
- Particular kindnesses and support of students, staff, College
- Ethical behaviours such as reporting concerns

Students will receive an email notifying them of any commendation added to their record. Patterns or instances of commended behaviour will be considered at a senior level by the student's Dean/Deputy Dean of Student Affairs and, where deemed appropriate, a letter of formal commendation will be issued to the student at the end of the academic year and placed on file.

### Flowchart of typical course of behavioural concerns once reported

Please see following page.

## Flowchart of typical course of behavioural concerns once reported

