

General Regulations for the MBChB Programme

AU-RSC-20-3964-A

Applicable to students in all Stages/Years of the MBChB
programme

2021-22

CONTENTS

Policy Summary	2
Version Control	2
1 DEFINITIONS	3
2 ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS	5
3 ATTENDANCE	5
4 ASSESSMENT OF CLINICAL PLACEMENTS	5
5 DECISIONS OF THE BOARD OF EXAMINERS AND PASS MARKS	6
6 OPTIONS IN CASE OF FAILURE	8
6.1 Principles	8
6.2 Initial failure within a Stage of assessment	8
6.3 Failure of referred assessments	8
6.4 Failure of repeat assessments	9
6.5 Final Stage of Assessment and Fitness to Practise	9
6.6 Exit qualifications other than the MBChB	9
7 FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE/EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES	10
8 AWARD OF DEGREE	11
9 CLASSIFICATION OF AWARDS	11
10 PUBLICATION OF RESULTS	12
11 WAIVERS OF REGULATIONS	12

Regulation Summary

These General Regulations, approved by the University Senate, set out the requirements for the MBChB programme. Programme Regulations are published as part of the Programme Specification.

These regulations cover entry and attendance requirements of the MBChB programme, the assessment of clinical placements, decisions of the Board of Examiners, and the classification of awards.

Version Control

Ref No	Version	Responsible Officer	Approved by	Approval Date	Effective Date
REG/16/573	1	Adam Hewitt	ULTC	Sep 2016	Sep 2018
REG/16/573	2	MBChB Assessment Group	ULTC	Jul 2018	Sep 2018
REG/16/573	3	Adam Hewitt	ULTC	Jul 2020	Sep 2020
AU-RSC-20-3964	A	Adam Hewitt	ULTC	Jun 2021	Sep 2021

1 DEFINITIONS

- 1.1 **Approved Programme** means the set of teaching materials organised into a series of Blocks and Stages leading to the formal MBChB qualification offered by the University, as prescribed by the Programme Specification approved by the Senate on the recommendation of the University Learning and Teaching Committee and the College of Health and Life Sciences Learning and Teaching Committee. The MBChB is subject to approval of the General Medical Council (GMC).
- 1.2 An **Assessment** is the measurement of a student's performance. Each assessment may comprise a number of components.
- 1.3 The MBChB programme is a fully integrated degree programme. The five year programme is divided into five Stages, with each Stage being a single, core module. Each Stage is broken down into **Blocks** of study covering particular subject areas.
- 1.4 **Board of Examiners** means the Board of Examiners of the University for the MBChB programme, as approved by the Senate on the recommendation of the College Learning and Teaching Committee. Boards of Examiners have responsibility for considering progression and conferment of awards, in accordance with the requirements of the programme, and in the light of all the separate results and any exceptional circumstances.
- 1.5 **Clinical Placement** means professional or occupational training or experience, approved by the MBChB Programme Committee and undertaken by students enrolled on the MBChB programme.
- 1.6 A **Component** is an element of summative assessment. For progression to the next Stage of the programme, or completion of the programme, all components must be passed, as described in the Code of Practice for Assessment. If a student is unsuccessful in any component in a Stage then, subject to approval by the Board of Examiners, they must be referred in **ONLY** the components they have failed within that Stage. If they are required to repeat the failed component then, subject to approval by the Board of Examiners they must repeat all the components within that stage.
- 1.7 The **Dean of Medical Education** means the person designated to co-ordinate the MBChB undergraduate programme in the Medical School, and to monitor the quality and standard of this programme.
- 1.8 **Exceptional Circumstances** are circumstances which cause the student to:
- a perform less well in coursework than might have been expected on the basis of other work, or
 - b fail to meet submission deadlines.
 - c fail to attend a timed assessment or examination.
 - d be adversely affected by an incident or issue occurring during an examination.

In general, exceptional circumstances will be of a medical or personal nature significantly affecting the student at or during a relevant period of time and/or during the examination period and which can normally be corroborated by independent evidence.

- 1.9 **Patterns and length of Study.** The MBChB programme is only taught full-time and comprises 120 credits per Stage.
- 1.10 A **practical procedure** is one of the twenty-three practical procedures specified by the General Medical Council in 'Practical Skills and Procedures' (2019), in which students must demonstrate competence to at least the specified level, by the end of the programme, in order to graduate.
- 1.11 **Progression** is the formal recognition of a successfully completed Stage of study and the ability to move to the subsequent Stage of study as approved by the Board of Examiners.
- 1.12 **Qualifications.** The requirements for all Aston University Qualifications, including credits, and Levels of awards, are detailed in Aston University Credit and Qualifications Framework.
- 1.13 **Referred Assessments** are new assessments in that Stage, of such form and timing as the Board of Examiners may determine, undertaken upon initial failure in that Stage. Feedback and support will be provided but no additional tuition. However further attendance and engagement at clinical placements may be required. Referred assessments will take place prior to the start of the next academic Stage (see also Regulation 6 below).
- 1.14 **Repeat Assessments** are new assessments within that Stage following repeated attendance of all the Blocks within the repeated Stage, and of such form and timing as the Board of Examiners may determine. Repeat assessments normally take place in the academic year following the previous attempt (see also Regulation 6 below).
- 1.15 The College **Learning and Teaching Committee** is responsible for the maintenance and enhancement of the academic standards and quality of the taught programmes of the College. The College Learning and Teaching Committee may formally delegate all or some of the responsibilities assigned in these General Regulations to appropriate bodies or individuals. Any such delegation of authority shall be recorded in the minutes of the Committee.
- 1.16 **Stage.** The Stage referred to within the regulations is a period of time culminating in a decision by the Board of Examiners on progression or completion. For the MBChB programme it comprises one 120 credit module of teaching and assessment.
- 1.17 **Transcript.** Students, except those in debt to the University, will, at the end of each Stage, be supplied by the College with an official transcript recording the Blocks which the candidate has studied, the Level, the credits awarded and the percentage marks awarded. The transcript should indicate any Stage passed in a referred or repeat assessment.

2 ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS

- 2.1 In order to qualify for admission to the MBChB programme, a student must produce evidence of having fulfilled the entry requirements as prescribed for that particular programme;
- and
- have provided evidence of proficiency in the English language and mathematics as demonstrated by GCSE Grades or an equivalent qualification recognised by the Senate as described in the Admissions Code of Practice.
- 2.2 There will be no Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for any part of the MBChB programme.
- 2.3 An Aston University MBChB undergraduate degree may only be awarded to students who successfully complete all academic Stages of study with Aston University.

3 ATTENDANCE

- 3.1 All MBChB students are required to attend each Stage of the programme in accordance with the MBChB Attendance Policy. Attendance will be monitored. If any student fails to attend significant parts of the programme with or without authorisation, such failure could lead to the student being withdrawn from the programme by the Board of Examiners or Executive Dean of the College (or nominee). It is the responsibility of each student to advise the Medical School in writing of any factors which may have affected their attendance.
- 3.2 Non-attendance without prior authorisation must only take place in exceptional circumstances, with the Medical School being notified as soon as is practicably possible.
- 3.3 The College Learning and Teaching Committee may approve a maximum of 24 months leave of absence (subject to the constraints within Regulation 5.3).

4 ASSESSMENT OF CLINICAL PLACEMENTS

- 4.1 The assessment of clinical placements is documented in the MBChB Code of Practice for Assessment. At the end of each clinical placement a report will be prepared by the placement tutor (or Block team) for each student, evaluating performance in each of the categories described below. The reports will be considered formally by the Board of Examiners or a sub group of the Board. Satisfactory completion of clinical placements is a requirement for progression from one Stage of the programme to the next. Students must have an up to date completed portfolio in order to progress to the next stage.
- 4.2 Clinical placements are considered to be an apprenticeship. All students have an obligation to complete sufficient time on the clinical placement in order to satisfy the apprenticeship obligations. Students who are absent will not be able to fulfil the

apprenticeship obligations and will be reported to the Board of Examiners, or a specific sub-group of the Board, as not having met the specific requirements of this element of the programme.

- 4.3 All clinical placements or Blocks have workbooks and or a portfolio containing a variety of specified tasks for students to complete. The Block team will make a judgement of each student's performance in those tasks and tests by scrutiny of workbooks, by the inspection of case reports or log books, or by other means published to the students.
- 4.4 The reports from Block Teams will be considered formally by the Board of Examiners or a sub group of the Board who will make a judgement about overall satisfactory completion of the tasks and quality of the performance. Students who are judged not to have completed appropriate tasks to a satisfactory standard in a Block or Blocks will be considered as having failed to meet the specific requirements of this component of the assessment.
- 4.5 The Board of Examiners may specify elements of work which must be completed satisfactorily before a student may progress to the next Stage of the programme. Students who do not complete this additional work to a satisfactory standard will be recommended for withdrawal from the programme, irrespective of performance in summative examinations, and their cases considered by the Board of Examiners.
- 4.6 It is expected that students will be observed consulting with patients during each Block, and that the results of such observations will be recorded. Students who are making poor progress will be considered and offered appropriate support through the Support and Concerns Process.
- 4.7 The Board of Examiners may require students to complete certain elements of clinical skills training and demonstrate the required competence level for the Stage, in order to progress on the programme. Any student who has not completed all parts of the clinical skills training by the end of the final Stage must do so satisfactorily before the end of the programme in order to graduate. Any student who does not demonstrate competence in all specified skills by the end of the programme will be recommended for withdrawal from the programme, irrespective of performance in summative examinations, and their case considered by the Board of Examiners.
- 4.8 Professional behaviour is expected from all students on the MBChB programme as outlined in the Code of Practice on Assessment, the Regulations on Fitness to Practise and the MBChB Student Code of Professional Conduct.

5 DECISIONS OF THE BOARD OF EXAMINERS AND PASS MARKS

- 5.1 Students must have met the attendance requirement as outlined in Regulation 3.1 to be able to progress to a subsequent Stage of the programme.
- 5.2 To progress from one Stage to the next of the MBChB programme, students are expected to achieve 120 credits for the appropriate Stage and to have satisfied all prerequisites for the next Stage specified in the Programme Specification.

- 5.3 Students must complete all their MBChB studies within a seven year period.
- 5.4 Wherever the Board of Examiners considers that more than one failure decision is applicable, it may allow the student to choose between those options available.
- 5.5 Subject to the Credit and Qualifications Frameworks, AU-RSC-20-3958-A and subsequent versions, and Regulations 5.1- 5.3 above, the Board of Examiners shall have the discretion to decide whether the student:
- a following award of the specified number of credits in the final Stage, shall be recommended for an award, or
 - b following award of the specified number of credits at Stages other than the final Stage, shall proceed to the next academic Stage of the programme, or
 - c shall be required to take referred assessments with no further tuition, but with a required additional clinical placement as necessary, or
 - d shall be required to take repeat assessments with attendance and in receipt of such tuition as is specified by the Board, or
 - e shall be required to withdraw from the programme, with or without one of the exit awards described in the Programme Specification or
 - f shall be offered the opportunity to transfer to a relevant Honours Degree with additional study and tuition fees as specified by that programme. Transfer to a programme within a different College at Aston University would be at the discretion of the relevant Associate Dean in that College.

Where exceptional circumstances are to be taken into account, further options become available to the Board of Examiners, as set out in Section 7 below.

- 5.6 The pass score for the MBChB programme will be determined as described in the Code of Practice for Assessment. Students must gain the pass score or above in each component of their written and practical examinations, as specified in the Code of Practice of Assessment, in order to progress from one Stage to the next.
- 5.7 The period for which credit is valid for progression from one Stage of a programme to another, or for the award of a degree or other qualification applicable to that Stage, shall be two years for a student on a full-time degree. As outlined in Regulation 5.3, students must complete all their MBChB studies within a seven year period.
- 5.8 There is no condonement for any component of assessment within the MBChB programme.
- 5.9 Before implementing a decision that a student should withdraw from a programme, the Board of Examiners shall give the student concerned, aided by another member of the University (as defined in paragraph 1 of the Charter and Section II of the Statutes) if so desired, an opportunity to make representations, in writing or in person or both, of any circumstances which might have affected his/her performance, that were unknown to the Board when the first decision was made.
- 5.10 A student wishing to request a formal review of the decision of a Board of Examiners may appeal on the grounds set out in the University's Academic Appeals Procedure. The Academic Appeals Committee may consider allegations of procedural irregularity

in the conduct or marking of assessments; the decisions of the Board of Examiners in all matters relating to academic judgement shall be final.

6 OPTIONS IN CASE OF FAILURE

6.1 Principles

- 6.1.1 Students may not be reassessed in any Stage for which they have already obtained credit.
- 6.1.2 A student who fails any assessments within a Stage of the MBChB programme may, subject to the decision of the Board of Examiners, be required to undertake referred or repeat assessments, or to withdraw from the programme.
- 6.1.3 Any referred or repeat assessments must be passed before the commencement of the next academic Stage. Failure to pass referred assessments may, subject to the decision of the Board of Examiners, result in the student repeating the Stage with full attendance or being withdrawn from the programme. Failure to pass repeat assessments may, subject to the decision of the Board of Examiners, result in the student taking referred assessments or being withdrawn from the programme.
- 6.1.4 If a student fails referred or repeat assessments, where these constitute a third attempt, the Board of Examiners will require the student to withdraw from the programme of study.
- 6.1.5 The Board of Examiners shall record the pass mark for referred assessments passed. For repeat assessments, The Board of Examiners shall record the mark obtained.
- 6.1.6 The Board of Examiners' decisions in case of failure are governed by the options set out in Regulation 5.5 above.

6.2 Initial failure within a Stage of assessment

- 6.2.1 The Board of Examiners may require a student who fails initial assessment within a Stage of the MBChB programme:
 - to undertake referred assessments at the next available opportunity, with or without attendance as specified by the Board, or
 - to undertake repeat assessments not later than 12 months after the first attempt, with attendance and in receipt of tuition as specified by the Board, or
 - to withdraw from the programme. A student required to withdraw may be eligible for an exit award as detailed in Regulation 6.6.1.

6.3 Failure of referred assessments

- 6.3.1 Students may only be referred on one occasion for each Stage of the MBChB programme. If a student fails the referred assessment, and subject to Regulation 6.1.4, the Board of Examiners may require the student:

to undertake repeat assessments not later than 12 months after the first attempt, with attendance and in receipt of tuition as specified by the Board, or

to withdraw from the programme. A student required to withdraw may be eligible for an exit award as detailed in Regulation 6.6.1.

6.4 Failure of repeat assessments

6.4.1 If a student fails repeat assessments, and subject to Regulation 6.1.4, the Board of Examiners may require the student:

to undertake referred assessments at the next available opportunity, with or without attendance as specified by the Board, or

to withdraw from the programme. A student required to withdraw may be eligible for an exit award as detailed in Regulation 6.6.1.

6.5 Final Stage of Assessment and Fitness to Practise

6.5.1 In addition to passing the Final Stage Assessment, a student must satisfy the Board of Examiners that they are fit to practise medicine. A student will only be allowed to graduate with an MBChB award if they are not subject to an investigation by the Concerns Group or Fitness to Practise Committee.

All medical students must also satisfy the separate General Medical Council (GMC) requirements regarding fitness to practise medicine in order to be granted provisional registration with the GMC and be awarded a licence to practise.

6.6 Exit qualifications other than the MBChB

6.6.1 A student who has gained the requisite number of credits but who is unable, for whatever reason, to complete their MBChB degree programme shall be awarded one of the following awards on satisfactory completion of the relevant stage: Certificate of Higher Education at end of Stage 1, Diploma of Higher Education at end of Stage 2, Bachelor of Medical Studies (Hons) (BSc Hons) at end of Stage 3, a Bachelor of Advanced Medical Studies (Hons) at end of Stage 4, or may be offered the option to transfer to a relevant Honours degree, subject to approval of the relevant Associate Dean.

6.6.2 The award of a Certificate of Higher Education indicates that the student:

- a has knowledge of the underlying concepts and principles associated with their area(s) of study, and an ability to evaluate and interpret these within the context of that area of study;
- b has an ability to present, evaluate and interpret qualitative and quantitative data, in order to develop lines of argument and make sound judgements in accordance with basic theories and concepts of their subject(s) of study;
- c can evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems related to their area(s) of study and/or work;

- d is able to communicate the results of their study/work accurately and reliably, and with structured and coherent arguments;
- e has the ability to undertake further training and develop new skills within a structured and managed environment;
- f has the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of some personal responsibility.

6.6.3 The award of a Diploma of Higher Education indicates that the student:

- a has knowledge and a critical understanding of the well-established principles of their area(s) of study, and of the way in which those principles have developed;
- b an ability to apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied, including, where appropriate, the application of those principles in an employment context;
- c has knowledge of the main methods of enquiry in the subject(s) relevant to the named award, and ability to evaluate critically the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems in the field of study;
- d an understanding of the limits of their knowledge, and how this influences analyses and interpretations based on that knowledge;
- e can use a range of established techniques to initiate and undertake critical analysis of information, and to propose solutions to problems arising from that analysis;
- f is able to effectively communicate information, arguments and analysis in a variety of forms to specialist and non-specialist audiences, and deploy key techniques of the discipline effectively;
- g has the ability to undertake further training, develop existing skills and acquire new competences that will enable them to assume significant responsibility within organisations;
- h has the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making.

7 FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE/EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

- 7.1 The Board of Examiners will consider any claims of exceptional circumstances. All decisions relating to adequate performance and the allocation of marks are at the discretion of the Board, and such circumstances will inform, but not determine, its decisions.
- 7.2 It is the student's responsibility to inform the Chair of the Exceptional Circumstances and Absence Panel (ECAP) in writing, normally prior to the meeting of the Panel, of any factors that occurred either during or prior to any of their assessments which they feel may have affected their performance. Students should supply any relevant evidence and must comply with any procedures published by the Dean of Medical Education.
- 7.3 By being present beyond the start time of an examination or other fixed-time assessment, students will be regarded as having deemed themselves fit to be able to undertake the assessment in question, and accept the outcome of the assessment as

valid, subject to consideration of factors affecting performance which may arise subsequent to beginning an assessment which are notified to the Board of Examiners by the student. Any factors affecting performance that result in a student leaving an examination or other fixed-timed assessment must be raised with the Chief Invigilator and must be recorded in the Chief Invigilator's Report. Where a student has deemed themselves fit to sit, the Examination Board will normally consider the student to have made a valid attempt at the assessment.

- 7.4 A student who is prevented from taking all or part of an assessment, or whose performance has been significantly affected, by illness or other sufficient cause may, where none of the options available in Section 7 is deemed sufficient or appropriate, be allowed to sit the assessment at the next normal occasion as if for the first time. Sufficient cause should be taken as to circumstances genuinely beyond the student's control.
- 7.5 Exceptional Circumstances claims which are judged to meet University Regulations will be addressed by taking appropriate action specific to the Stage assessments concerned whenever possible (e.g. by allowing a further attempt with no penalty), or by putting in place provisions to address a special need (such as allowing a longer length of time for an examination). These Exceptional Circumstances will be deemed to be 'spent' (already dealt with).

8 AWARD OF DEGREE

- 8.1 A student who has gained the appropriate number of credits at the appropriate Levels, as well as being deemed Fit to Practise as detailed in Regulation 6.5 shall be recommended to the Senate for the award of an MBChB.
- 8.2 In order for an award to be conferred a student must have discharged all obligations to the University, normally within 12 months of the date upon which the Board of Examiners recommended the award.

9 CLASSIFICATION OF AWARDS

- 9.1 The MBChB degree does not have classifications.
- 9.2 The Board of Examiners will recommend that the degree of MBChB be awarded with Honours according to the guidance laid out in the Assessment Code of Practice.
- 9.3 The degrees of MBChB may be awarded with Honours to approximately 10% of the graduating cohort at the discretion of the Programme Board of Examiners on the basis of the average weighted marks for the MBChB Programme for each of the Years 1-5.
- 9.4 The components of assessment will be combined within a year according to the weightings described in the Schedule of Assessments.

The Year Marks will be combined according to the scheme below:

Assessment Year	Weighting
Stage 1	10%
Stage 2	15%
Stage 3	20%
Stage 4	25%
Stage 5	30%

10 PUBLICATION OF RESULTS

- 10.1 The results achieved in all assessed work, and at all Stages of study, shall be released to individual students in the form of a transcript detailing their own assessment results in the form of a percentage mark for each component each term and as an overall percentage mark for the Stage.
- 10.2 Marks awarded for each component will be provisional until confirmed by the relevant Board of Examiners; subject to this provision students shall be given informal guidance with regard to their academic performance at such times as the Dean of Medical Education may determine.
- 10.3 Any final award is regarded as public information and may be published by the University in any form and released to enquirers and the General Medical Council on request.

11 WAIVERS OF REGULATIONS

Where, in the opinion of the College Learning and Teaching Committee, there have been exceptional circumstances affecting a student after admission to the programme which could not reasonably have been foreseen at the time of admission and which operate to the detriment of the student, the College may:

- a waive any relevant part of the programme specification on such conditions as it may deem fit to the benefit of the student, or
- b recommend that the University Learning and Teaching Committee waive any relevant part of the General Regulations on such conditions as it may deem fit to the benefit of the student.