

## **Personal Excellence Path: Year 1 M.B.Ch.B**

### **Preliminary Module: student information & guidelines 2013-14**

#### **PLEASE READ THIS DOCUMENT IN FULL**

#### **What is a Personal Excellence Path?**

The Personal Excellence Path (PEP) is an integrated series of student selected educational modules which forms part of the Manchester Medical School Undergraduate Programme. The PEP is designed to educate medical undergraduates focusing mainly on the GMC Tomorrows Doctors version 3, 2009 theme 'Doctor as a Scientist and Scholar'. Every PEP module in Years 1-4 will be identified using two different themes: vocation and context. PEP will be flexible enough to provide an opportunity for students to study a range of topics within and beyond the field of medicine or, if the student prefers, pursue a single theme or subject throughout their period of study.

#### **Preliminary PEP**

In Year 1, the Preliminary PEP involves learning essential academic skills that underpin all future study themes. The Preliminary PEP requires students to research and produce a comprehensive literature review on a specific topic. The topic chosen will relate to one of the three strands of the curriculum: Body & Disease, People Health and Illness or Doctors in Society.

#### **Aims**

The Preliminary PEP aims to provide you with:

1. Literature searching skills
2. Scientific writing skills to enable production of a comprehensive literature review
3. Interpretation and analysis of scientific literature
4. The means to explore in depth a scientific topic of interest to you

#### **Intended Learning Outcomes**

The Preliminary PEP will enable you to:

- Select topics of interest from a pre-defined list
- Devise a search strategy using library and the internet
- Access and search relevant databases and search engines used in clinical and scientific research
- Select articles relevant to a topic area
- Appraise data (understand strengths and limitations) from the literature at a basic level
- Understand different forms of scientific literature (e.g. primary studies, review articles)
- Interpret information written in scientific language
- Produce a scientific written report of specified length that collates information gathered from the different sources
- Summarise the report clearly and concisely in lay terms
- Utilise appropriate software (including word processing, figures/tables and referencing) to produce a scientific written report

- Understand what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it

## Viewing & Selection of Topics

**FROM 2<sup>nd</sup> DECEMBER – 13<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2013**

Topics can be viewed through the PEP link on Medlea from 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2013. Instructions of how to proceed with selecting your topic choices will be provided on this link.

You must make a selection of a minimum of eight different topics and list them in order of preference. Make sure you are happy with your choices as you may be given any one of them to research. Students who chose less than 8 different topics will be allocated a topic randomly. Those students failing to make any selection by the deadline of 5pm, 13<sup>th</sup> December, 2013 will have a title allocated randomly to them.

**Topics are NOT allocated on a 'first come, first served' basis. Those making their selection on 13<sup>th</sup> December have the same chance of being allocation one of their top 8 titles, as those students making their selection on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December.**

## Allocation of Topics

**On 27<sup>th</sup> January 2014**

A topic will be allocated to you by 27<sup>th</sup> January 2014. Every attempt will be made to allocate you a topic of your choice. Occasionally this may not be possible as it depends on the distribution of choices made by students. You will be informed of your allocation on Medlea.

## Supervision

**27<sup>th</sup> January 2014 - 4<sup>th</sup> April 2014**

Once you know your allocation, you must make contact with your supervisor (through e-mail or telephone) to arrange an appointment to see them to discuss your topic. You must have read these guidelines in full prior to the first meeting to enable you to make the most of this first appointment. Most students will meet with their supervisor 3 times (either in person or electronically):

**Meeting 1** to discuss the topic you have to research, literature you should be consulting and to plan future meeting times

**Meeting 2** to discuss a detailed plan produced by you

**Meeting 3** to obtain feedback from your first complete draft of the report. You should send the complete draft to your supervisor on an agreed timetable with them. Do NOT leave things till the last minute as supervisors have a number of demands on their time and will not be able to provide feedback at short notice. Your supervisor is only allowed to read and provide feedback for one complete draft.

Remember this module is a chance for you to develop your skills. Supervisors have a number of demands on their time so please use contact time with them efficiently and plan ahead – write down questions you have for them prior to the meetings. Make the best use you can from your supervisor; they are here to help and guide you through the literature review and writing process. Some students will have to travel to their supervisor’s work place, which may be a hospital, in order to meet with them – it is expected students will make their own travel arrangements.

## **The written report**

**HAND IN DEADLINE: 12noon, FRIDAY 4th APRIL 2014**

Prior to the deadline date of 12noon, Friday 4th April 2014, you will need to produce a report on your topic which must be uploaded onto Medlea as a PDF. The report must contain two abstracts, illustrations (figures and tables where appropriate) and a substantial literature review. All reports will be assessed using the PEP marking guidelines on Medlea. The following will be assessed:

1. Two abstracts (1) lay audience (2) scientific community (total 10%)
2. Content (30%)
3. Use of literature (20%)
4. Organisation of the report (20%)
5. Presentation of the report (20%)

### **- ABSTRACTS**

The purpose of an abstract is to summarise the content of the report and be intelligible without reference to the content of the report (i.e. it should be stand alone). You are required to include **two** abstracts in your report: one abstract written for the lay audience and the other for the scientific community. Think about the language you use in each as these are very different audiences you are addressing. Each abstract should be a maximum of 200 words. Each abstract should contain:

- An introduction to the topic ( about two sentences)
- The aim of the report (about two sentences)
- The major findings of your report (the bulk of your abstract)
- Conclusion ( about two sentences)

It is not standard practise to insert references in the abstracts and abbreviations should be avoided.

The abstracts will be examined for their clarity (including use of appropriate language), accuracy and comprehensiveness.

### **WRITING THE LAY ABSTRACT**

Good communication skills, written and oral, are the key to the safe and effective practise of medicine. Knowledge alone will not make you a good doctor if then you are unable to relay this and communicate effectively with colleagues and patients.

During your studies so far you have learnt many specialist words which is important to enable you to keep abreast of current developments in the field of medical sciences. However, it is important to be able to communicate effectively with your patients who will not have this specialist knowledge so as not to distance them. We want you to be aware that this happens and to take steps to overcome it by getting in the habit of asking yourself 'How would I explain these facts simply and accurately to someone else?'

Some key points to consider when writing the lay abstract:

- *Consider your target audience:* different words and phrases will need to be used in the lay abstract compared to the scientific abstract. Easy to read text consists of short words (3 to 4 syllables long) and short sentences. If you have no option to use a specialist term, you must give a short explanation. When writing the lay abstract, imagine how you would speak to a non-University friend to keep the descriptions simple.
- *Accuracy:* you must NOT distort the message of the scientific abstract. In tailoring it for a different relationship you must not change the facts, but remember you are writing this as a health professional and like a good news reporter you are informing your readers about what the scientists have found and how it matters.
- *Getting the message across:* The lay reader does not need detailed figures as a scientist does. Facts should be presented as simply as possible to get the message home. For example, it is simpler to say 'over half could not read' instead of the more complex statement that 'over 50% could not understand written information given out to them'.

You can become more used to lay language by looking at lots of leaflets (e.g. in shops, GP surgeries, advice centres), reading tabloid newspapers and popular magazines (not just your textbooks) and talking to many different people (not just University students).

## **-CONTENT**

A literature review is more than a long essay. It is an exercise in the reporting, construction and presentation of a piece of scholarly work on a topic, carried out over a long period (i.e. a review article). Have the readers in mind as you write. Your supervisor may be an expert on your topic but the moderator may well not be. Provide a clear structure, explaining any technical terms and making clear what each section will cover.

**INTRODUCTION:** Beginning with a good brief introduction is key to a good report. The introduction should provide the background to the general topic. You should begin by "setting the scene": explain why this topic is important and how it fits into the general scheme of things. You should end the introduction with a clear statement of what you aim to address in detail in the main body of the report.

**BODY:** This is where you describe in detail the different aspects of your topic. Make good use of headings and subheadings to divide the report into sections. Depending on your topic a section may be devoted to a specific example related to your topic or a section may describe one aspect of the whole topic. Do not be tempted to write many short sections with little detail. A report with a few detailed sections is much better.

**CONCLUSIONS:** A good report has a critical drawing-together of the foregoing strands and requires a summary of what you have just described in the Introduction and main body of the report. In this section you should also describe any remaining questions associated with your topic and any future work that needs to be done. This is also a good place to give support for your own opinions (which you should have developed, as you should now be quite knowledgeable on the topic). This will show that you have understood the topic and have not just reproduced information you have found on the topic.

We expect you to demonstrate through your report a detailed knowledge of your study topic and a soundness of understanding. The content of your report will be examined for its scope (have you considered all areas of relevance to the topic?), the relevance of information to the topic (have you been selective in the information that you have included?) and the accuracy of the information included.

### **-USE OF LITERATURE**

We expect you to demonstrate your capability in accessing and making good use of library resources by the range and types of literature you cite and the way you make use of the literature. We expect you to have made use of information databases to find relevant information. The library offers assistance in literature searches – look out for the notices stating when drop-in sessions are available. However, it should be emphasised that it is often more appropriate for you to consult textbooks and then specialised books before using databases. We expect you to show that you understand the differences in levels of authority between different forms of literature such as textbooks, reviews and scientific papers, by the way in which you use information from them in your report. Your literature review should be up to date, i.e. refer to current literature, where appropriate. **You MUST cite your references, list your references in a consistent manner and follow the guidelines given below.**

### **Referencing**

Throughout your report you will need to refer to the work of others (a citation). There are two main methods of citation and we recommend you use the Vancouver System as this is the format required by the British Medical Journal. The important point to note is that you reference accurately (e.g. are the references you cite in the text present in the reference list and vice versa?) and the reference list is consistent (is all the information present and in the same format?).

### **Citing References in the Text**

Text books and journal articles should be cited in the text using consecutive numbers in superscript, for example e.g. “Research suggests<sup>1-3</sup>.....”; “Jones *et al*<sup>6</sup> demonstrated ...”. References are then arranged in numerical order in the final list (**Reference list**) at the end of the report. Every significant statement came from a source (whether textbook, review article or primary research paper) so every statement or concept must be referenced.

### **Generating a Reference List**

The following information should be given in the reference list – it is important that you include all the information on a reference. Give the names and initials of all authors, unless there are more than six, when only the first six should be given followed by *et al*.

**For a journal article:** Author(s) surname(s) and initials, full title of the article, the journal title, year of publication, volume number and the first and last page number. For example:

- 1 Sanger F. Determination of nucleotide sequences in DNA. *Science* 1981; 214: 1205-1210
- 2 Yuan B, Vaske D, Weber JL, Beck J & Sheffield VC. Improved set of short-tandem-repeat polymorphisms for screening the human genome. *Am. J. Hum. Genet.* 1997; 60: 459-460

**For a book:** Author(s) surname(s) and initials, title, number of edition (if not first edition), page numbers referred to, place of publication, publisher and year of publication. For example:

- 3 Osler AG. *Complement: mechanisms and functions*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed, pp 24-28. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1976.

**For a chapter in a book:** Author(s) surname(s) and initials, title of chapter, title of book, name of editor(s), number of edition (if not first edition), page numbers referred to, place of publication, publisher and year of publication. For example:

- 4 Farr LA, Gaspar TM & Munn DF. Desynchronization with surgery. In *Chronobiology*. Eds. E Hans & HF Kabat. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, pp 12-21. New York: Karzer, 1984.

**For an internet site:** Author of website, title of website, web address, date site was accessed. For example:

- 5 Bournemouth University Library. Guide to Citing Internet Resources. Available from: [http://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/using\\_the\\_library/html/guide\\_to\\_citing\\_internet\\_sourc.html](http://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/using_the_library/html/guide_to_citing_internet_sourc.html) [Accessed 25 May 2008]

**N.B.** At this level, you should **not use more than 5 reliable internet sites** for your report.

## **-ORGANISATION**

The report will be assessed on subdivision and balance, use of text, tables and figures. You are encouraged to use diagrams and tables where these are clearer than long explanations in words or where they will enhance the text. For example, if you are having trouble explaining a concept in words, a diagram may be more appropriate. However, unless diagrams and tables are self-explanatory – which usually they are not – you must provide your readers with an explanation of what they are looking at, and reference to the material must appear in the text. All figures and tables should be inserted into the text, rather than at the end of the manuscript. Tables should have a heading, and diagrams or pictures should have a legend to explain their relationship with, and relevance to, the text. Any tables must be retyped by you and not simply scanned or ‘lifted’ from the original article. Provide keys for tables and figures if abbreviations or special symbols are used. Make sure you explain the meaning of arrows, brackets, etc. where this is not obvious (and do not assume that much is obvious to the reader!). If you use tables or figures from other sources, or put these together using information published elsewhere, remember to acknowledge your sources and include them in the bibliography. Acknowledgement should be included in the legend to the Table or Figure using a phrase such as “taken from [5]” or “adapted from [5]”.

## **-PRESENTATION**

**Your report MUST be word processed.** We expect you to use the skills you have developed in using relevant computer software packages (e.g. word processing and graphics packages and other

relevant software). Your report will be examined for the consistency and quality of presentation style and use of English. You should select Arial (12pt) as the font, use 1.5 line spacing with margins of at least 2.5cm all around the text.

## Final preparation of your report

### Length

The report must be between ten and fifteen A4 pages, excluding the title page and the list of references. You should only have text on one side of the paper and all pages should be numbered. Text must be in Arial, 12point, one and a half line spacing, with margins of at least 2.5cm all around the text. ALL supporting materials such as figures, tables, text boxes etc must be included in the page limit and you are advised to ensure that any such items are sufficiently large enough to be read and understood with ease. Penalties will be imposed for exceeding the page limit and for not adhering to font size and page layout.

**If the length of the report is below ten pages, the total mark will be divided by 2. Consequently reports below 10 pages are likely to fail. Reports above 15 pages will have 5% deducted for every page (or part thereof) over this limit.**

### Cover page

Your name should be in the top right hand corner of the cover page. The year, the title of your project, your supervisors name and the page count should also be on the cover page. A **page count** carried out by the word processor should be included on the cover page of your report.

### Submission of report

**DEADLINE DATE: 12noon, 4th April 2014**

Your report **must be uploaded onto Medlea** by 4th April 2014, 12noon. If this is not done, the submission will be deemed incomplete and you will fail. Only reports submitted onto the Medlea site will be accepted for marking. Any other electronic submission (such as e-mailing the report to your supervisor) will not be accepted and you will receive a mark of zero.

**Use your full name as the file name for the report, e.g. John Smith PEP 2014.** Instructions on how to upload your report will be given to you nearer the time.

There is NO requirement to produce a hard copy of your report.

*Reports uploaded after 12noon on 4th April 2014 **will not be accepted and you will receive a mark of zero.***

### Marking of report

This report is marked by the supervisor and under certain circumstances (i.e. the first mark for the report is <52% [pass/fail borderline] or the Honours borderline [68-72%]) the mark is moderated by another member of staff. The marking guidelines staff will follow are accessible on the Year 1 PEP pages of MedLea. The Preliminary PEP is a stand-alone assessment. You will be provided with feedback from the mark sheets on Medlea which will aid you with future assignments.

## Available Resources for Students

There are a number of supporting materials for you whilst you undertake this Preliminary PEP:

- Lecture on Plagiarism
- Lecture on literature searching, use of library catalogue and OVID Medline
- Library drop in sessions
- Comprehensive online guidance (E4Med) on literature searching and critically appraising documents
- These detailed PEP student guidelines which includes guidance on referencing

## Plagiarism

This is a **very serious offence**. The report should be **written in your own words**. You must not simply copy sections, including diagrams or tables, from other works whether they be books, journals, theses or other dissertations unless you fully acknowledge the source. All figure legends must be **written in your own words** and not simply copied and pasted from the original source. When you quote the work of others this must be made clear by appropriate citations, acknowledgement of the source of information and not exceed 5% of the text.

Copying the work of others without reference to the original work is plagiarism and is treated very seriously (See the MBChB handbook for further information) as well as the University's policy on plagiarism:

<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=2870>

The report you submit will be checked for plagiarism in the following ways:

- Staff are asked to be on the lookout for suspected plagiarism when marking your report
- Phrases or sentences in your assessed work may be checked against material accessible on the internet, using commonly available search tools
- The University subscribes to an online plagiarism detection service specifically designed for academic purposes. **Your report will be examined using this software.**

**If you are found guilty of plagiarism you will, in most cases, be required to produce a new report with a new title over the resit period.**

In semester two, students will be allowed to submit a draft copy of their literature review to the plagiarism software and view the plagiarism report on their work. This will help you determine what plagiarism is, how it is detected and what measures you should take to avoid it. More details on this will be given nearer the time.

## Applications for Extensions

Applications for an extension to submit after the deadline of 12noon on 4th April 2014 must be received and approved before that deadline. No retrospective extensions will be granted. Extensions will only be granted for medical reasons if verified by a medical certificate or in exceptional personal circumstances that have been brought to the immediate attention of the PEP co-ordinator. Formal applications for extensions must be made in writing to the PEP co-ordinator (contact details below) such that an extension can be granted prior to the deadline of 12noon, 4<sup>th</sup>



April 2014. Please note that computer failure, lost memory sticks, slow internet connection etc **do not** constitute “exceptional personal circumstances” and will **not** be considered.

## **Consequences of failure to submit a report**

Students who do not submit a report by the specified deadlines and so score a mark of zero will be assigned a new topic with a provisional deadline of 12noon on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2014 for submission of their report. If you are found guilty of plagiarism you will, in most cases, be required to produce a new report over the resit period.

At the resit attempt you can only be awarded a maximum mark of 50%.

## **Expectations of Supervision**

Supervisors have all been asked to read available ‘Supervisors Guidelines’ found on Medlea. Members of staff have different strengths and you will find that each takes a slightly different approach to supervision. This is something to be welcomed and allows staff to play to their strengths. You should not feel disadvantaged if the interactions you have with your supervisor differs from that of your peers. If you have concerns or worries about any aspect of supervision and feedback provided, a mature approach to take would be to discuss these issues openly with your supervisor in the first instance. All staff are working towards the same goal; that of providing you with the necessary scientific skills to complete a good literature review. All staff are professionals who take student concerns seriously and do not harbour any ill will. However, the approach taken by individuals will differ (this is human nature!).

If you have any concerns at any point during the module, you should inform the Preliminary PEP coordinator as soon as possible to allow sufficient time for suitable interventions.

## **I would like to submit my work for publication at a conference or as a journal article**

If you feel that your body of work is of publishable quality, whether that be for a conference or as a journal article, then you must discuss this with your supervisor, and gain their approval before submitting your work. Your supervisor will have contributed to the work in terms of their intellectual input, and it is standard academic practice, and basic courtesy, to consult all contributors prior to submission to a journal or for a conference.

## **Further Help and Advice**

Please contact the Preliminary PEP coordinator if you have any questions/queries or require any assistance:

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