

MB ChB Year 3 Student Choice

Information for Supervisors

Academic Year 2025-2026

INTRODUCTION

Year 3 is the final year of the Student Choice (SC) programme in MB ChB. The medical students have already completed Student Choice in Years 1 and 2. Although there are common aspects among SC in these three years, there are skills, knowledge and opportunities that are specific to each year. Year 3 SC represents significant novelty in relation to Year 1 and Year 2 SC, particularly with regard to the time allocated for the placement, the theme and the skills developed.

1. The Student Choice component of Year 3 enables students to select a 6-week placement/project from a wide selection of exciting possibilities.
2. The overarching theme for Year 3 SC is:

“Evidence Based Medicine in the broad sense”

Medicine is mainly based on evidence. This evidence (in the broad sense) comes from many sources, including:

- Observational studies
- Interventional studies
- Case studies
- Laboratory research
- Qualitative methods
- Evidence synthesis
- Quality improvement

It is crucial for a medical student to be familiar with the ways by which different sources of evidence inform Medicine. Possible topics include, and are not limited to:

- Public health
- Personalised medicine
- Clinical work (primary and secondary care)
- Clinical epidemiology
- Pharmacology and therapeutics

- Laboratory based research (University and hospital based)
3. In Y3 SC, students will be exposed to a more advanced analytical experience than in Y2 SC. This will enable them to better know and understand the clinical and basic elements of medicine. As a consequence, students will be exposed to, and will benefit from, new transferable skills from a range including:
- using scientific method and principles to design their chosen study
 - searching for evidence in the literature and critically appraising it using advanced literature searches
 - generating evidence relevant to their chosen study
 - understanding of relevant methodologies, including technical and ethical principles used in the study
 - assessing the quality of the evidence with appropriate tools and integrating, reflecting and critically appraising different sources of evidence
 - data analysis and presentation of data
 - reflecting on the application of evidence in clinical settings

Students are also expected to be more independent, so contributing to their leadership skills.

Placements/projects are available within a number of Schools within the University and across all the Clinical Academies within Bristol Medical School. For example, students could opt for placements in a hospital academy, a local GP practice or a university department. Some placements/projects also offer the chance to work with organisations outside the University and NHS, for example with charities, residential homes and schools.

The role of supervisors is key and central. Supervisors will ensure that students develop the knowledge and skills required to make the most of their placements. For this reason, the commitment and close involvement of Year 3 SC supervisors is both necessary and very valuable in order to ensure the best experience for the students.

We very much thank you for your contribution to the Student Choice programme this year!

Dr Rachel Sunley, Student Choice Academic Lead for Year 3

WHO CAN SUPERVISE A PLACEMENT/PROJECT?

We are keen to recruit supervisors from any faculty within the University and the Academies. Supervisors are normally academic members of staff at the University of Bristol or NHS staff who hold honorary contracts with the University.

The main supervisor should be a permanent staff member of the University of Bristol or the NHS who is of sufficient seniority to assume responsibility for all aspects of the placement, although it is perfectly acceptable for them to delegate aspects of delivery to other members of the team or a third sector organisation.

Some projects are run by external organisations who will supervise their own projects.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE STUDENT CHOICE PLACEMENT/PROJECT SUPERVISOR?

- Propose an exciting placement/project that can realistically be attempted in six weeks
- Complete a risk assessment form for the placement **when you submit your placement proposal** (a proforma and examples of risk assessments for different types of placement are attached).
- Complete the supervisor agreement included in the proposal form.
- Discuss the risk assessment with students as soon as they start the placement.
- Ensure that ethical approval is in place prior to the start of the placement if it is required. It is important to note that, if required, obtaining ethical approval is the responsibility of the supervisor, rather than the student.
- Undertake supervision of the students during the placement period. The following meetings are compulsory, and if the project is held online these meetings should occur virtually
 - ✓ First meeting: Meet with individual students to discuss details required to start the placement.
 - ✓ Weekly meetings. Meet with individual students at least once per week through the placement. Weekly meetings are compulsory and need to cover discussions with individual students including their progress and possible issues in relation to the placement. Guidance to resolve any possible difficulties faced by each student will be provided.
 - ✓ Last meeting: Meet with individual students on or around the last day of the placement to give immediate verbal feedback on achievements during the placement period.
- Mark the Choice placement/project report in accordance with the supplied marking criteria by the deadline stated (refer to timeline at the end of the document). If you are unavailable to mark, you should arrange for your deputy to undertake this for you.

Importantly, supervisors will be required to provide information on student attendance at weekly meetings. This is key for Year 3 Student Choice, since student progression depends upon this.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF BECOMING A YEAR 3 STUDENT CHOICE SUPERVISOR?

- **Teaching:** Choice placements/projects are a great opportunity to teach undergraduate medical students and to contribute to their overall development as effective doctors.
- **Students:** The fact that students choose their placement/projects means that they are usually very engaged and interested in the subject matter of their placements.
- **Outcomes:** It is likely that students produce results of interest to the supervisor. Scientific outcomes include pilot data to inform further projects or grant applications, publications in journals, posters to conferences, etc. Clinical outcomes include audits, case studies, etc.
- **Funding:** there is a generous provision of funding for each student undertaking a placement (see below for further details)

WHEN WILL THE YEAR 3 STUDENT CHOICE PLACEMENTS TAKE PLACE?

The Year 3 Choice placements in 2025-26 will run in a 6-week block at the end of the academic year from 15th June – 24th July 2026. NB: This is effectively a week later than in previous years.

For a summary of key dates in Year 3 Choice placements, please see below the Timeline for Year 3 Student Choice (2025-2026).

WHAT TYPE OF PLACEMENTS CAN BE PROPOSED IN YEAR 3 STUDENT CHOICE (2025-2026)

As the Choice supervisor you can propose any combination of placement that provides the student with a great experience. Such as:

- Example one: ward experience of cardiology including ward rounds, catheter laboratory experience, outpatient clinic experience combining all this with a review of the literature.
- Example two: online based project with virtual meetings/discussions with students, self-directed learning from literature, virtual clinics.
- Example three: experiential learning of how cookery impacts health and mental wellbeing, yoga, meeting patients with chronic health issues and learning to communicate a healthy diet plan, literature review to support learning.
- Example four: Laboratory based project using PCR and pulsed gel electrophoresis to ascertain MRSA variants, literature review.

These are not exhaustive examples, but hopefully give an idea of the range and varied types of placements that can be offered, both in person and virtual. It is key that EVERY project contains a literature search and review as this is a key skill in Year 3.

HOW DO I PROPOSE A YEAR 3 STUDENT CHOICE PLACEMENT?

In order to be eligible, potential supervisors will need to apply by filling in a standard form where they include information about placement details, maximum and minimum numbers of students that can be taken, details about the supervisor(s) and any other relevant information about the placement, including ethical approval and other aspects. New proposals representing follow-up studies of Year 2 SC placements, INSPIRE projects or others are welcome.

All applications will be considered by the Year 3 Student Choice working group at the beginning of each academic year and if successful added to a catalogue that will be made available to Year 3 SC students.

Please complete the [Year 3 Student Choice Placement Proposal form \(link\)](#) and a risk assessment (supplied separately) for the placement by **5pm on 7 November 2025**. Email the risk assessment document to medadmin-3choice@bristol.ac.uk.

HOW DO STUDENTS CHOOSE THEIR PLACEMENTS?

Students choose their placements/projects from the online catalogue which contains all placements/projects offered. The choice is entirely their own, so as to fit with their own preferences and interests.

Students will select 7 choices in February 2026. They are allocated projects dependent on their choices. This means that we **cannot guarantee** that any individual project will go ahead.

Please note that the first selected title will be considered as the preferred placement/project by the student. The remaining 6 choices will not be in order of preference, so that all these 6 titles will be considered equally acceptable.

HOW ARE PLACEMENTS/PROJECTS ALLOCATED TO STUDENTS?

The allocation of placements/projects is a two-stage process:

Stage 1:

We look at students' first-choice placements and consider how many places are available.

- If the number of places available for a placement is equal or greater than the number of students selecting it as their first choice, these students will be allocated to that project.
- If the number of places available for a placement is lower than the number of students selecting it as their first choice, placement supervisors may be asked if they have any preference, or allocations may be decided by the Year 3 Student Choice team alone.
- There may be exceptions – see additional notes below.

Stage 2:

We aim for the best outcome between students' selections and supervisors' offerings.

- We want to have as many proposals running as possible.
- We will use a rigorous random-allocation process if no other deciding factor is available.
- In the unlikely event that it is not possible to allocate a student to one of their 7 preferred choices, we will contact the student directly to offer a choice from the remaining available placements.

Additional notes:

Some placements require a minimum number of students in order to run, for educational or financial reasons. If not enough students have selected a placement, the supervisor may choose to withdraw it from consideration. Any student who has selected this placement will be reallocated as detailed above.

HOW MANY PROJECTS WERE THERE IN 2024/25?

In 2024/25, there were 244 projects listed in the Student Choice Project Catalogue, with some additional bespoke choices, totalling 735 possible individual placement places. The cohort was unusually small, with 245 students compared to our usual ~275. Projects ranged from solo projects to multi-student projects offering various title options.

41% of the projects had students allocated to them. The maximum number of students on a single project title was 7; the mode was 2 students. 85% of allocated project titles had 1 or 2 students only.

75% of students were allocated to their first-choice project and all students were allocated to one of their given 7 choices.

EACH ALLOCATED PLACEMENT IS A CONTRACT BETWEEN A SUPERVISOR AND A STUDENT

Once the student has been allocated to a placement offered by a supervisor, both need to agree in writing to carry out all tasks required in the placement. We ask both students and supervisors to sign an agreement/contract for this.

By signing this agreement/contract, the supervisor will ensure that the placement takes place at a required standard to enable completion by the student and that the student is also aware of their responsibilities. This is a two-way contract with obligations on the student as well as the supervisor. Failure of a supervisor to comply with this agreement/contract may result in withdrawal of their placement from the catalogue in the current academic year and/or in future years.

Please note that there may be unexpected and unavoidable reasons by which a student allocated to your placement may not be able to undertake it or may not be able to undertake it in full. This is very unusual, and causes may include health reasons, changes in personal circumstances, suspension of studies, or other reasons.

Due to the nature of the allocation process, we will not normally be able to replace any student(s) unable to undertake your placement.

EXAM RESULTS AND STUDENT CHOICE PLACEMENTS

The Student Choice placements take part at the end of the Academic Year, immediately after the end-of-year exams. This may affect your placement in two ways:

- Any student who needs to undertake additional coursework (e.g. GP placements) will be asked to do this **in the first week of Student Choice**. This may mean that they need to miss sessions planned in Week 1.
- Any student who fails their end-of-year exams will be required to **terminate their placement early** to enable them to prepare for resit exams. This is usually after week 4 of the placement. They will still be required to submit a project report.

We therefore ask that supervisors account for this when planning activities especially in Weeks 5 and 6 of the placement, and that you avoid planning any trips during this period.

Normally only very few students are affected by these scenarios.

CHANGING A SUPERVISOR

In the case of the supervisor being unable to undertake their supervision and/or assess the student(s), they will need to identify appropriate cover. This cover must ensure the required standard for all the tasks involved in the placement, which remains the responsibility of the principal supervisor of the placement (usually the person submitting the placement to the catalogue). The original supervisor needs to write to the Year 3 Admin Lead at medadmin-3choice@bristol.ac.uk with details of their placement and the named cover explaining why it is no longer possible for them to

undertake the supervision and/or assessment and certifying that the placement will be delivered to the agreed standard.

If you have problems, please discuss this with the Year 3 Student Choice Academic Lead Dr Rachel Sunley (dh19881@bristol.ac.uk).

WHAT ARE THE FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS TO SUPPORT A YEAR 3 STUDENT CHOICE PLACEMENT?

Most students are supervised by staff working in University of Bristol Schools and Clinical Academies (including the virtual academies of Psychiatry and Primary Care). These "provider organisations" receive "Medical Undergraduate Tariff" (MUT) in exact proportion to the length of the SCP (in this case six weeks) and the number of students signed up. The MUT rates are subject to annual review and details are available on request.

Provider organisations have varying arrangements with individual supervisors with respect to compensation (contact your individual School/Academy for more information). It may be for instance that supervisors who are doing their supervision in NHS or University time are not paid additionally. Provider organisations can also subcontract SCP supervision to external organisations and individuals. For example, GP practices are remunerated by Primary Care for setting students up to run audits and quality improvement projects. Providers can negotiate rates of remuneration based on the extent of the supervision offered.

Exceptionally payment can be made directly to organisations outside the University/Academy structure such as charities. Money cannot be paid directly to individual supervisors and must flow through provider organisations. MUT funding to provider organisations is stored centrally and reimbursement made to the parties concerned once the Student Choice placement has been completed and student numbers confirmed.

Please note – funding cannot be paid to supervisors outside of the UK.

ACCOMMODATION AND TRAVEL COSTS

The School / Trust / Primary Care / organisation where each supervisor is based should provide accommodation locally to students undertaking placements outside Bristol or, alternatively, should be able to reimburse students for travel costs if they are expected to travel daily from Bristol to the location where the placement will take place.

ADDITIONAL TEACHING SESSIONS

Additional teaching sessions specific to Year 3 SC will be available in order to support students, including advanced literature search sessions.

SUBMISSION OF THE PLACEMENT REPORT BY THE STUDENT

The deadline for students to upload their Year 3 placement report to Blackboard will be Wednesday 2 September 2026, before 12 noon.

The student will need to submit a plagiarism statement cover sheet with their report; this will be available on Blackboard. Students will also be required to complete the Academic Integrity online learning module and quiz at the point of submission of their report.

Submissions are automatically processed through Turnitin for plagiarism and AI checking, as part of the submission process.

Penalties will apply for late submission of the report in accordance with University regulations.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The end-product of a student's placement/project is a written report, together with any appendices. Assessment of Year 3 SC will be similar in relation to Year 2 SC, but there are 3 elements novel to Y3 SC:

1. Students' placements/projects will be assessed on the basis of an individually-written report (3000 words, excluding references and appendices – longer than in Year 2 SC. Please refer to the word count details below) showing more comprehensive and advanced understanding of Evidence Based Medicine. References and in-text citations must be in Harvard style, not Vancouver.
2. The report will include two summaries of the placement (not required in Y2 SC).
 - a. A scientific abstract (300 words) (to be written in a specified format similar to Medical or Scientific Conferences)
 - b. A lay summary (300 words) (free of all jargon and able to be understood by a lay person)

Written reports will be marked by the supervisor, but this should not be an onerous task. Some moderation will be done centrally to maximise consistency between markers.

Supervisors are required to assess reports according to standard marking criteria, also available to students. More details on the assessment process (and associated deadlines) for the report will be made available nearer the time.

- Students who find they have failed the OSCE and or the Progress Test will withdraw from Year 3 Student Choice to enable them to prepare for resits (which will probably be in the final week of the Student Choice, or the week following).
- Students can fail their Year 3 Student Choice either in terms of engagement or by having their written report marked as unsatisfactory. Engagement will be recorded by the supervisor at the weekly meetings with students throughout the placement.

Please note that although some elements of a placement may involve groups of students (e.g. teaching sessions, activities, sharing data, etc.), the final report has to be written up individually, not as a group.

Presenting work to a wider audience is not part of the assessment process in Year 3 Student Choice, but we encourage supervisors to offer this opportunity to their students.

WORD COUNT – WHAT’S INCLUDED

The word count for the Student Choice report is 3,000 words, **which includes** the scientific abstract (300 words) and lay summary (300 words).

Please note that the inclusion of the abstract and summary is an exception to the standard University policy (see section 4 of the word count policy).

The 3,000-word count currently (2025-26) includes:

- The 300-word scientific abstract and 300-word lay summary
- Main text including in-text titles and headings
- Figure and table legends
- In-text citations

The word count does not include:

- Cover sheet
- Title page
- Acknowledgements
- Contents page(s)
- Abbreviations page
- List of references
- Text in tables
- Text in figures
- Index
- Appendices

Reports that exceed the word count will be subject to penalties. The penalties can be viewed within the [word count policy via the MBChB Sharepoint](#).

Exact details may change year-to-year, so students should review the latest [wordcount policy on Sharepoint](#).

KEY CONTACTS/STUDENT SUPPORT

ACADEMIC STAFF CONTACTS

The Academic Lead for Student Choice in Year 3 is Dr Rachel Sunley (dh19881@bristol.ac.uk).

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF CONTACTS

The Year 3 Student Choice Administrative Team can be contacted via the Year 3 Student Choice Mailbox (medadmin-3choice@bristol.ac.uk). The main contact is Year 3 Admin Lead, Sarah Quin.

Timeline for Year 3 Student Choice 2025-2026

Placement proposal submission:

Stage	Deadline
Call for Supervisors to submit applications / Call for bespoke placements	Monday 6 October 2025
Deadline for Proposal submission and sign supervisor agreement	Friday 7 November 2025
Placements reviewed and revisions requested (note Turing deadline 31 Dec)	Friday 28 November 2025
Deadline for revisions	Monday 15 December 2025
Final revisions reviewed	Friday 9 January 2026
Supervisors Informed of decision	Friday 16 January 2026
Choice Catalogue created and checked	Friday 30 January 2026

Placement applications:

Stage	Date
Catalogue of placements released to students	Monday 2 February 2026
Application form available to students	Monday 2 February 2026
Students complete application form	Monday 16 February 2026

Student Allocations:

Stage	Date
Allocate students	Friday 27 February 2026
Supervisors and academies informed of numbers for placement (sent student names and emails)	Friday 6 March 2026
Students informed of placement allocations	Friday 20 March 2026
Students to complete agreement form	Friday 17 April 2026

Student Choice Q&A - Wednesday 6 May – 1-2pm Teams

Marking:

Stage	Date
Student Choice placements take place	15 June – 24 July 2026
Submission deadline for Swindon projects	Monday 27 July 2026 (11:59am)
Students submit reports	Wednesday 2 September 2026 (11:59am)
Reports made available to markers by	Monday 7 September 2026
Students with extensions submit reports	Wednesday 9 September 2026 (11:59am)
Deadline for completion of marking	Wednesday 16 September 2026 (11:59am)
Moderation meeting	Thursday 17 September 2026
Internal Exam Board/Faculty Exam Board	Tuesday 22 / Thursday 24 September 2026
Marks released to students	Monday 28 September 2026