

Year 5 Cluster Based Teaching 2026-27

Tutor Guide



University of
BRISTOL

Centre for Academic
Primary Care

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Welcome

Thank you for agreeing to teach our Year 5 medical students.

Cluster Based Teaching (CBT) provides students with an opportunity to meet weekly with peers from other practices during their 9-week final year GP placement (GP5). Students will have the opportunity to discuss clinical experiences, explore challenges they encounter during placement develop consultation skills, and prepare for their transition to Foundation Year 1 practice.

Students consistently describe CBT as one of the most valuable aspects of their GP attachment because it provides:

- Peer support and reflection
- Discussion of real clinical cases
- Advanced consultation skills practice
- Preparation for working as an F1 doctor
- Dedicated pastoral support and guidance

This guide is intended to be a practical reference for tutors throughout the attachment.



Key Principle:

GP5 is designed as an apprenticeship-style placement that prepares students for Foundation Year practice through independent consulting and clinical decision making.

Quick Reference

Key Facts

Item	Information
Student group size	4-10 students
Session length	2.5 hours
Frequency	Weekly
Attachment length	9 weeks
Teaching style	Facilitated discussion and reflection
Assessment	Attendance and engagement
EPA contribution	Approximately 4-5 EPAs per student
Attendance requirement	80% minimum
Main contact	phc-teaching@bristol.ac.uk

Background to GP5

The Year 5 Primary Care Placement forms part of the 27 week 'Preparing for Professional Practice (PPP)' programme which also includes Ward Based Care and Acute and Critical Care rotations. PPP takes place following an 8-week elective. Students have already completed their final examinations and are now working in an apprenticeship-style placement designed to prepare them for practice as Foundation Year 1 doctors.

The placement focuses on:

- Independent consulting
- Clinical decision-making
- Managing uncertainty
- Team working
- Professional development
- Understanding the role of Primary Care

Students attend their practice placement in pairs and spend one session each week attending Cluster Based Teaching.

Weekly Structure

- ✓ **6 scheduled teaching sessions** in practice divided over 3 or 4 days based on tutor/room availability
 - **5 student-led surgeries:** students consult independently with review from GP tutor after each patient. The students can do clinics individually or in pairs but by the end of the attachment students should have done at least 2 clinics individually.
 - **1 joint surgery:** students consult independently whilst being directly observed by GP tutor.
- ✓ 2 hours of protected project time per week
- ✓ Wednesdays free for Cluster Based Teaching

Example 3-day timetable:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday Out of Practice	Thursday	Friday
AM	Student-led Surgery 09:00-12:30	Private study	Cluster Based Teaching (CBT)	Student-led Surgery 09:00-12:30	Student-led Surgery 09:00-12:30
Lunch	Break 12:30-13:00	Private study		Break 12:30-13:00	Break 12:30-13:00
	Lunch Activity 13:00-13:30			Lunch Activity 13:00-13:30	
	Project Work 13:30-14:00			Project Work 13:30-14:30	Project Work 13:00-14:00
PM	Student-led Surgery 14:00-17:30	Private study	CBT Preparation Outside the Box Project	Joint Surgery 14:30-17:00	Student-led Surgery 14:00-17:30

Example 4-day timetable

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday Out of Practice	Thursday	Friday
AM	Student-led Surgery 09:00-12:30	Student-led Surgery 09:00-12:30	Cluster Based Teaching (CBT)	Student-led Surgery 09:00-12:30	Student-led Surgery 09:00-12:30
Lunch	Break 12:30-13:00	Lunch Activity 12:30-13:00		Break 12:30-13:00	Project Work 12:30-13:00
	Lunch Activity 13:00-13:30			Lunch Activity 13:00-13:30	
	Project Work 13:30-14:00			Project Work 13:30-14:30	
PM	Student-led Surgery 14:00-17:30	Private study	CBT Preparation Outside the Box Project	Joint Surgery 14:30-17:00	Private study

Aims of CBT

- ✓ Meet with colleagues to share experiences and learning from GP placement
- ✓ Reflect on patient cases and how this relates to current guidelines
- ✓ Develop advanced consultation skills
- ✓ Understand how General Practices can differ in terms of population demographics, available resources and how care is delivered
- ✓ Reflect on General Practice as a specialty and potential career option
- ✓ Further expand on non-clinical areas to develop as a well-rounded practitioner.

Structure of Weekly Sessions

You will be sent a detailed session plan at least 1 week prior to the date of each session. This is only a guideline, and the activities can be used as required to guide and generate discussion. Students have feedback that they really value the tutor being flexible with the sessions and tailoring to the students' interests. Please note that you are not expected to prepare an alternative session for the students, the students will need to lead on this.

The students will have access to a weekly session plan by midday on the Wednesday a week before the session. **They will be expected to complete some pre-learning each week.** This information is on Blackboard which is a platform they are familiar with.

Example Session Format

Welcome and Check-In 15 minutes	Discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How placement is progressing• Any challenges encountered• Key learning point• Student wellbeing• Progress with projects
Case Discussion 55 minutes	Students should bring: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interesting patient encounters• Challenging consultations• Clinical dilemmas• Relevant guidelines
Break 10 minutes	
Skills Development Activity 60 minutes	Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consultation skills scenarios• Topic-based discussion

Reflection and Planning

10 minutes

- Key learning points
- Feedback
- Planning for next week

⚠ Common Issue:

Students occasionally arrive without prepared cases or pre-learning. Encourage ownership of the session and use this as a learning opportunity.

Suggested Weekly Themes

Week	Theme
1	Introduction, Common GP Conditions
2	Emergency Care
3	End of Life Conversations
4	Being a Doctor
5	Using an Interpreter
6	Investigations and results
7	Managing Uncertainty and Complaints
8	Medical Complexity and Discharge Summaries
9	Outside the Box Presentations



Further Guidance:

These themes provide a framework only and may be adapted to meet students' needs.

Outside the Box Project

Students complete an "Outside the Box" project throughout the attachment. The aim is to encourage learning beyond clinical medicine, but which support their future clinical practice.

We challenge students to pick something new from one of three themes:

1. **Creative Practitioner** (Art, writing, film, photography etc)
2. **Lifestyle prescription** (couch to 5 km, mindfulness, yoga, breath work)
3. **Medical reviewer** (e.g. book, film, TV review)

They have two hours per week in their self-study to dedicate to their exploration. Week 9 is dedicated to the students presenting their project during the final CBT session. This session is usually lots of fun and highly rated by the students.

COGConnect Consultation Model

Consultation skills, at Bristol Medical School, are taught via the Effective Consulting course which spans all 5 years of the curriculum. This course is based on the COGConnect consultation model developed by Bristol Medical School.

A visual overview, observation guide and more information on COGConnect can be found on our [website](#).

If you would like to learn more about using COGConnect in your teaching, please see this e-learning module which contains lots of teaching tips. [COGConnect a visual resource for teaching Effective Consulting](#)

Assessment

By the end of Year 5 the students need to complete:

- ✓ **16 Entrustable Professional Activities (EPAs)**
- ✓ 23 Core Practical Skills and Procedures (PSPs)

During their GP attachment, students must complete:

- ✓ At least 2 satisfactory Mini-CEX (1 in block C)
- ✓ At least 2 satisfactory Case- Based Discussion (CBD) (1 in block C)
- ✓ **1 Team Assessment of Behaviour (TAB) – Nov-April blocks ONLY**
- ✓ A student assistantship log on OneNote – brief learning log of daily activities
- ✓ Have at least 80% attendance
- ✓ Have satisfactory engagement and performance in both their placement and cluster-based teaching

CBT Assessment

Students must demonstrate:

- Satisfactory attendance
- Active participation
- Engagement with Outside the Box
- Appropriate professional behaviour

Students may also ask you to complete some EPAs and a TAB.

✓ Action Required:

After each session you will receive a short attendance and engagement form to complete. This should take no more than five minutes.

Entrustable Professional Activities (EPAs)

EPAs are 16 core activities that students need to become trusted to perform at the level of an F1 doctor. The students need to collect a minimum of five signatures from supervisors for each EPA stating that they have performed a task at the level expected of an F1 doctor.

Each session of cluster-based teaching has a list of EPAs that could be completed during that session but not all students will complete one each week. We anticipate that students will each be able to get up to 4-5 EPAs completed over the 9 weeks of CBT.

- Only 1 EPA can be signed off for a single activity
 - e.g. If a student presents a patient case to their group, they could use this to sign off EPA 7. If they then conduct a role play scenario satisfactorily in the same session, they could also be signed off for EPA 1.
- EPA 11 can only be signed off once during CBT.
- Up to 5 EPAs can be signed off on the same form

The student should fill in the scenario information on the EPA form, and you would then need to provide your name, position and GMC number. This should only take a couple of minutes.

EPA	Description
1	Gather a history and perform a mental state and physical examination
2	Communicate clearly, sensitively and effectively with patients and relatives verbally and by other means
3	Prioritise a differential diagnosis following a clinical encounter and initiate appropriate management and self-management in partnership with the patient
4	Recommend and interpret common diagnostic and screening tests
5	Prescribe appropriately and safely
6	Document a clinical encounter in the patient record
7	Provide an oral presentation of a clinical encounter
8	Form clinical questions and retrieve evidence to advance patient care and/or population health
9	Give or receive a patient handover to transition care responsibly
10	Communicate clearly and effectively with colleagues verbally and by other means
11	Collaborate as a member of an inter-professional team, both clinically and educationally
12	Recognise a patient requiring urgent or emergency care and initiate evaluation and management
13	Obtain informed consent for tests and/or procedures
14	Contribute to a culture of safety and improvement and recognize and respond to system failures
15	Undertake appropriate practical procedures
16	Adhere to the GMC's guidance on good medical practice and function as an ethical, self-caring, resilient and responsible doctor.

Team Assessment of Behaviour (TAB)

During the first two attachments, Students need to complete a TAB. They will need to send a ticket request (email) asking for feedback for their TAB to a range of different staff they have worked with during GP5.

Your Role as CBT Tutor

Your Key Responsibilities

Before the Session

- ✓ Review session plan
- ✓ Familiarise yourself with preparatory materials
- ✓ Contact students if role-play preparation is required

During the Session

- ✓ Create a safe learning environment
- ✓ Encourage participation from all students
- ✓ Keep discussions focused and on time
- ✓ Support constructive feedback
- ✓ Help students reflect on their experiences
- ✓ Share relevant clinical experience when appropriate
- ✓ Highlight links to Foundation Year practice
- ✓ Ensure sessions remain enjoyable and engaging

After the Session

- ✓ Complete attendance and engagement form
- ✓ Raise any student concerns promptly
- ✓ Complete any required EPA signoffs

You Are Not Expected To

- Deliver extensive formal teaching
- Prepare additional teaching materials
- Cover every element of the suggested session plan



Key Principle:

Students value flexibility and discussion more than formal teaching.

Student Support Plan (SSP)

An SSP is a confidential University document outlining reasonable adjustments to support a student's learning and participation during placement. Adjustments may include practical measures such as rest breaks or advance access to teaching materials. If your student has an SSP, we will inform you via email before the start of the placement. Most students with SSPs require little or no additional support during placement. However, SSPs help tutors understand and plan for any adjustments that may be needed

Contact the Primary Care Team if you have concerns about implementing adjustments or supporting the student during the placement.

✓ **Action Required:**

Review any Student Support Plan information provided and discuss adjustments with students where appropriate.

⚠ **Common Issue:**

Not all students who may benefit from adjustments will have an SSP. A brief conversation with all students at the start of the placement can help identify any additional support needs.

Professional Behaviour & Mobile Phones

[Mobile devices](#) can be useful learning tools but may also create the impression of disengagement.

We recommend discussing expectations during the first session. Students should only use mobile devices:

- For educational purposes
- When appropriate to the activity
- With your consent

Student Concerns

Due to the regular contact with your students, you may identify concerns about a student.

Student concerns usually fall into the following areas:

1. Professional behaviour/attitude
2. Pastoral
3. Safety – to patients/themselves/colleagues
4. Clinical knowledge/skills including communication

If you have a concern about a student's performance or behaviour, then keep detailed notes and please address the issues with the student directly initially. If you are not easily able to resolve your concerns with the student, please contact us at phc-teaching@bristol.ac.uk.

There is a single [MBChB Programme support request form](#) to complete to raise any concerns that you have about a student. These may be professionalism or wellbeing concerns, study support or financial issues. The student should be aware that you are submitting the form and the reasons that you are completing it.

These forms are reviewed at least once a week by the senior tutors who will triage and offer support where appropriate. Any immediate risks of harm should be directed to 999/111. The forms ensure that only those people that need-to-know concerns about students are involved.



Further Guidance:

There is detailed information about the central support available for students at:
<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/services/>

⚠ Common Issue:

Please also let the GP5 leads know about any concerns by emailing phc-teaching@bristol.ac.uk.

If You Are Unable to Teach

Email phc-teaching@bristol.ac.uk (if within 24 hours mark as **URGENT – FAO Sam**)



Action Required:

If you are unable to teach a session, contact phc-teaching@bristol.ac.uk with as much notice as possible to allow the team to find suitable cover.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I have to follow the session plan exactly?

No. Students value flexibility. Use the session plan as a guide and respond to the interests and needs of the group.

How many EPAs should students get through CBT?

Typically, 4-5 signoffs across the placement.

Can students miss any sessions?

100% attendance is expected at CBT. The student will need any leave, other than illness, approved by the primary care teaching team. This will only be granted for exceptional reasons and we will inform you of any decisions. If the student is absent from the final session we would expect them to send you their Outside the Box presentation.

Thank You

Thank you for supporting Year 5 students during this important stage of their training. Your contribution plays a vital role in helping students develop the confidence, skills and professionalism required for Foundation Year practice.