School of Medicine 'Fit to Sit' Policy
for MBChB, BSc, ScotGEM and Postgraduate Taught Programmes

1. Purpose of the 'Fit to Sit' document. A 'fit to sit' policy ensures fairness and consistency for students sitting the variety of assessments, across all programmes within the School of Medicine. This policy applies to all in-person, scheduled summative assessments proctored as part of any taught programme of study. Example assessments include but not limited to:

- Mid and end of semester exams (BSc/MBChB Phase 1/ScotGEM)
- Skills tests e.g. OSCEs (all programmes)
- Portfolio reviews (all programmes)
- Presentations (all programmes)
- Progress tests (MBChB Phase 2)
- Medical Licensing Assessments (MLA): Applied Knowledge Test (AKT) and Clinical & Professional Skills Assessment (CPSA), (MBChB Phase 2)
- Prescribing Safety Assessment (PSA), (MBChB Phase 2)

It places responsibility on students to assess their own health and wellbeing before entering an examination.

The regulatory body, the General Medical Council (GMC), along with the Medical Schools Council (MSC) stipulate competency standards expected of medical school graduates. These include a student's professional responsibility to have insight into their own health and how it might impact their ability to perform at work. Consequently, the MSC endorses a 'fit to sit' process for medical schools and the message reinforced in paragraph 83 of 'Achieving Good Medical Practice':

> *"You should think about the impact your health might have on your ability to study or sit an assessment. Just as doctors in practice need to be able to determine whether they are well enough to care for their patients, so* ***as a medical student you would be expected to determine if you are well enough to fully engage with the course including assessments,*** *raise this with your medical school and seek independent medical advice if appropriate. Your medical school will support you to develop this awareness"*

2. Student Responsibility: A 'fit to sit' policy means it is the sole responsibility of each student to decide whether they should attempt the relevant assessment, including the consequences of that decision. In line with MSC guidance, an 'attempt' occurs when a student enters the exam environment and begins taking the assessment.

By sitting the assessment, students are confirming that there is no reason why their performance would be adversely affected or why they may subsequently bring forward a request for mitigating circumstances. In declaring themselves 'fit to sit', the examination result will stand and the attempt will count as a valid sit.

3. Not 'Fit to Sit. Where a student believes they are NOT 'fit to sit' prior to sitting an assessment, they should advise the University as soon as possible and seek guidance regarding requesting a deferral of the assessment, as outlined in the School's Absence from Exams/Deferred Exams policy.

Where it is not possible to request a deferral in advance (e.g. due to missing an assessment on the day it is scheduled), students should follow the process in the School's Absence from Exams/Deferred Exams policy.

Declaring yourself not 'fit to sit' would ordinarily be expected before entering the exam, however there may be instances where a student becomes unexpectedly unwell during the assessment. Under such circumstances, the student should inform an invigilator immediately, to record the incident before leaving the exam room.

Upon leaving the exam, students should contact the Director of Teaching (medicaldot@st-andrews.ac.uk) at the earliest opportunity and no later than three working days after the exam, to inform of the incident. Students should also follow the process for requesting a deferral as outlined in the School's Absence from Exams/Deferred Exams policy.

Leaving the exam venue without notification of any issue would ordinarily invalidate a request for mitigating circumstances. Deferral applications should be submitted no later than five working days after the exam, as per the policy for Absence from Exams/Deferred Exams (unless there are exceptional circumstances that mean requesting earlier was not possible).

4. Extraordinary circumstances. An exam attempt could be considered invalid in the event of extraordinary circumstances whereby a student has been impacted by extenuating personal circumstances, materially affecting academic performance AND was demonstrably not possible to notify the University of before the exam. **Circumstances of which the School was already aware, or could reasonably have been made aware of, will not be granted**. Submission of supporting evidence will be required and students should follow the University's Student Academic Appeals process. University Policy on Extenuating Circumstances provides guidance on events and evidence which may be considered.

5. Medical Licensing Assessment (MLA). The Medical Schools Council (MSC) provides guidance for ensuring consistency between medical schools in the national delivery of the MLA, for both the AKT and CPSA. The conditions outlined above encapsulate those principles.

A maximum of four valid attempts to sit either the AKT or CPSA are allowed, over two years of study, with no more than two attempts per year permitted. By attempting the AKT/CPSA, the default assumption is that the student declares they are fit to do so and the attempt will count as a valid sit.

6. Rules around what constitutes a valid attempt for the AKT or CPSA. By entering the exam environment and beginning the assessment, a student is declaring themselves 'fit to sit'. All attempts are valid and count towards the maximum number of four permitted attempts, unless an attempt is nullified by the School as a result of:

- A student declaring themselves not 'fit to sit', in advance of the assessment and requests a deferral
- Successful AKT or CPSA appeal on grounds of extraordinary circumstances

Specifically for the MLA, when an assessment is delivered over two different days, e.g. the two papers of the AKT, where a student sits the first paper but not the second, the student would be deemed to have failed that attempt of the AKT. Voiding of such an attempt would require approval following processes outlined in sections 3 and 4.

Unauthorised non-attendance of an MLA component would be classed as a valid attempt and be counted towards the maximum number permitted. Students must notify when they are not 'fit to sit' to ensure their absence is not listed as unauthorised non-attendance (see policy for absence from exams and deferred exams).

If a student is found to have committed academic misconduct during an exam, the result of that sitting will be nullified, however the attempt would still count towards the maximum number of attempts permitted.