

## **SCOTGEM YEAR 2 STUDENT PLACEMENT ALLOCATION POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

### **(Version 2.1)**

1. **BACKGROUND.** Year 2 of the ScotGEM programme gives all students the opportunity to spend time living and studying in three of our partner health boards: NHS Dumfries and Galloway, NHS Fife, and NHS Highland. This policy describes how allocations to Year 2 placements are made, including guidance on exceptional circumstances.

2. **YEAR 2 STRUCTURE.** Year 2 comprises four blocks. The first two blocks are Case-Based Learning (CBL) blocks. The third block is a mix of CBL and Agents of Change (AoC). The final block is Patient Journey Urgent Care (PJUC).

There are four rotation options for completing these blocks, as shown below (A, B, C, D). The dates for each block can be found in the academic calendar.

	<b>Rotation A</b>	<b>Rotation B</b>	<b>Rotation C</b>	<b>Rotation D</b>
<b>CBL1</b>	NHS Fife	NHS Fife	NHS Highland	NHS Dumfries & Galloway
<b>CBL2</b>	NHS Fife	NHS Fife	NHS Dumfries & Galloway	NHS Highland
<b>CBL3 &amp; AoC</b>	NHS Highland	NHS Dumfries & Galloway	NHS Fife	NHS Fife
<b>PJUC</b>	NHS Dumfries & Galloway	NHS Highland	NHS Fife	NHS Fife

The total number of student places available within the partner boards for each rotation is fixed and the Year 2 allocation process will operate within the confines imposed by these arrangements. Of the places available for students in Year 2, approximately 50% are within NHS Fife, 25% within NHS Dumfries and Galloway, and 25% within NHS Highland.

It is not possible for students to undertake academic activities (e.g. teaching, placements or assessments) outwith their allocated health board area.

3. **ALLOCATION PROCESS.** All students are invited to submit their preference for one of the four possible rotation options (A, B, C or D, see table above) during Semester 2 of Year 1 using a preference questionnaire (in accordance with submission dates published on Solas). Students will be informed of the submission deadlines for their academic year via email and on Solas. If a student expresses no preference, they will be allocated randomly.

The allocation process takes place shortly after the closure of the questionnaire submission deadline. Students will be allocated to the available places across the boards; if there are more preferences for rotations than there are places, students will be allocated randomly to another rotation. All students will be notified by email of their rotation allocation.

4. **GENERALIST CLINICAL MENTOR (GCM) GROUPS.** All students will be allocated to a GCM group for their placements in NHS Fife, NHS Dumfries & Galloway, and NHS Highland.

Their locations can be viewed in Appendix 3 of the '[ScotGEM Student Placement Accommodation and Travel Expenses Policy](#)', in MedHandbook.

Students are allocated to GCM groups by the ScotGEM programme team. Students are not permitted to request allocation to a specific GCM group and are not able to transfer between groups once they have been allocated. Students will remain in the same GCM group for the duration of each block.

5. **TRAVEL EXPENSES.** Students are entitled to claim travel expenses for travel to and from placements, in accordance with the '[ScotGEM Student Placement Accommodation and Travel Expenses Policy](#)' in MedHandbook.

6. **EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES (Allocations).** We recognise that for some students, moving around the ScotGEM partner health boards may not be possible. We anticipate that a very small number of students may need to spend all of Year 2 in one location due to exceptional circumstances.

6.1 **The Exceptional Circumstances (Allocations) Group** – (“The Group”) will consider anonymised students’ exceptional circumstances (allocations) applications. The Group will comprise the following roles:

- ScotGEM Programme Director or Deputy Programme Director (Y1/2)
- Year 1 Lead (or Deputy Year 1 Lead)
- Year 2 Lead (or Deputy Year 2 lead)
- University of St Andrews Pro-Dean (or a delegate)
- University of Dundee student support lead (or a delegate)

6.1.1 The Group will meet to consider exceptional circumstances applications during Semester 2 before student rotation allocations for Year 2 are confirmed.

6.2 **Applying for Exceptional Circumstances** Exceptional circumstances applications should be presented to The Group by completion of the [Application Form](#) while the student is undertaking Year 1 of the programme, in accordance with submission dates published on Solas, such that their application can be considered and an outcome given prior to the commencement of Year 2. Students should discuss their circumstances with MedSupport ([medsupport@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:medsupport@st-andrews.ac.uk)) before submission of an exceptional circumstances application.

6.3 **In-Year Applications** If significant extenuating personal circumstances that could not reasonably have been disclosed by the student emerge after the meeting of **The Group** (6.1.1), then the student can make an in-year application to The Group asking for their circumstances to be considered to remain in one location for the remainder of the year, by completion of the [Application Form](#). In addition to the criteria in 6.4, these in-year applications must also

- be submitted a minimum of 5 calendar weeks prior to the last working day in the preceding block, and
- provide a reason for non-disclosure of the circumstances for consideration during the normal meeting of The Group, with supporting evidence.

The Group will reconvene to consider in-year applications if applications are made.

UG teaching\_ScotGEM\_Y2\_placement allocation

**6.4 Criteria** There are two criteria that must be met to accept an exceptional circumstances application: i) the student must present valid grounds for their application, with supporting evidence (as defined in 6.4.1), **and** ii) there must be sufficient capacity in the programme to accommodate the student in their desired board area (see 6.4.2).

#### 6.4.1 Valid Grounds

- *Student is a parent or legal guardian of a child or children under the age of 18 who resides primarily with them and for whom they have significant caring responsibilities. Evidence required:*
  - o Copy of full birth certificate(s)
  - o Evidence of residence
  
- *Student is an official, recognised primary carer for someone who is disabled or seriously ill. Evidence required:*
  - o An official Care Assessment Plan with the local authority, or similar official documentation.
  
- *Student has a chronic illness or disability for which local follow up is an absolute requirement. Evidence required:*
  - o In the case of disabilities: confirmation by a treating specialist that this is a required adjustment.
  - o In the case of chronic illness: evidence from a treating medical specialist that explains why the care must be delivered in a specific location rather than by other treatment centres.

#### 6.4.2 Sufficient Capacity

- If there is insufficient logistical or educational capacity (as determined by the DME team) in a board area to accommodate a special considerations application, then that application will be declined.

**6.5 Outcome** The Group will decide whether an exceptional circumstances application is accepted. Students will receive email notification of the outcome.

**6.5.1 Accommodation** Out-block accommodation will not be provided for students who have their exceptional circumstances accepted and remain in one location for the duration/remainder of Year 2. If students are awarded special considerations to remain in one health board area then it is their responsibility to find and pay for accommodation.

**6.5.2 Repeat Years** Students who repeat Year 2 (e.g. deferrals, returning after leave of absence, academic resit years etc.) after being awarded exceptional circumstances should contact [scotgem-placements@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:scotgem-placements@st-andrews.ac.uk) to discuss their recommencing of studies with exceptional circumstances again in their repeat of Year 2.

**6.5.3 Appeals** Students who wish to appeal a decision taken by The Group can do so by making an appeal to the Head of School within 5 working days of receiving the outcome of their application.

Appeals will only be considered in cases where The Group has arrived at their decision based on a substantial error in fact. The following are not considered valid grounds for appeal: i) Disagreement with the judgment of The Group, ii) Lack of awareness of the relevant procedures or regulations.

Students seeking impartial and independent advice on an appeal submission should contact the Student Advocate (Education) at the Students' Association ([unionadvocacy@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:unionadvocacy@st-andrews.ac.uk)).

To have an appeal considered, an email should be sent to [medical.dean@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:medical.dean@st-andrews.ac.uk) outlining the grounds for appeal with required supporting evidence.

**Please direct any queries relating to this policy, to:**

ScotGEM Placement Coordinator  
email: [scotgem-placements@standrews.ac.uk](mailto:scotgem-placements@standrews.ac.uk)

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<b>Date</b>	<b>Revision Description</b>	<b>Major Changes</b>
01/08/2019	Published version	
11/12/2019	Revised version	Changing of wording to specify 'exceptional' circumstances Amending procedure for preference selection to include
06/10/2020	Revised version (2020/21 Version 1.2)	Updating terminology: PJEC to PJUC Updating terminology: Module Controller Earlier deadline date for submission of preferences Swap window for PJUC block - procedure Added Appendix B
05/08/2021	Revised version (2021/22 Version 1.3)	Terminology changed from 'Year 1 and Year 2 Leads' to 'Deputy Programme Director' Update to numbers of GCM practices in D&G
02/11/2021	2021/22 Version 1.4	Re-order of CBL blocks (Birth & Early Years no longer first) Update to number of GCM practices in Fife Update to ScotGEM Placement Coordinator phone number
11/01/2023	Revised version (2022/23, v1.5)	Update to preference submission dates
06/03/2023	Revised version (2022/23, v1.6)	Addition of CBL/AoC rotation swap window
18/04/23	Revised version (2023/24, v1.7)	Removal of Remote & Rural Commitment Statement requirement Removal of Notification of Swap Request form Removal of repeating students keeping previous allocations Addition of choosing 2 preferences of rotation instead of 1
06/02/24	Revised version (2024/25, v1.8)	Revision of policy due to change in structure of year 2 (i.e update to structure/rotations, removal of separate PJUC allocation), update to composition of exceptional circumstances (allocation) group, changed exceptional circs to enable spending all of year 2 in one location other than Fife in certain circumstances. Wording updated re contacting medsupport before submitting exceptional circs application.
15/01/25	Revised version (2024/25, v1.9)	Addition of section 4: Appeals & Further Submissions
July 2025	Revised version (2025/26, v2.0)	Removal of rotation swap window
December 2025	Revised version (2026/27, v2.1)	Update to section 6: Exceptional circumstances Addition of in-year timeline, board capacity limitations and application form.