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## Intercalation Policy

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## Introduction

### 1. What is Intercalation?

- 1.1. Intercalation is an approved leave of absence (usually for 1 year), to study a degree programme outside of the primary medical degree. Intercalation usually takes place after Stage 3 or 4 of the Bachelor of Medicine Bachelor of Surgery (BMBS) programme.
- 1.2. A student who is granted approval to intercalate, will suspend all activity associated with the BMBS programme on which they are registered, for the duration of the intercalation.
- 1.3. Students are normally expected to return after the one year of absence permitted for intercalation in time for the start of the next academic year of their BMBS programme.
- 1.4. If the absence permitted for intercalation unexpectedly extends beyond a single academic year or breaches the KMMS expected return date (the start of the academic year that the student is returning to) this can have significant implications for the student's plans for financing both their intercalated degree as well as their undergraduate BMBS programme. To lessen these impacts, the student will be required to apply to formally intermit from the medical programme for any extension of absence for intercalation, rather than intercalate to fulfil their intercalation wishes. Such applications must follow the Interruption of Studies Procedure and be approved by the Dean of KMMS, informed by a recommendation from the Intercalation Panel.
- 1.5. It is the student's responsibility to consider the financial implications of intercalation and have appropriate financial arrangements in place before submitting a request to intercalate. Students can seek advice from the Student Life and Wellbeing Team, the Universities, or the Student Unions regarding financial support available. As an example, an overview of some of these financial considerations as of September 2022 is provided in Appendix 3. These considerations are subject to change and are beyond the control of the School. It is the responsibility of the student to decide if the financial implications will affect their ability to undertake the intercalation degree.

### 2. Common reasons for wanting to intercalate

- 2.1 Students may wish to intercalate for the following reasons:

- Opportunity to become engaged in research, and to gain an insight into research practices.
  - Opportunity to broaden academic and intellectual horizons. In some instances, this may lead to career-defining changes, such as the choice of a career in academic medicine (or not).
  - Opportunity to get in-depth scientific training in an area already of interest to the student. It could be an opportunity to study something they really enjoy.
  - To gain an additional qualification which may be of relevance to future careers.
  - To gain new skills, e.g., laboratory work.
  - Opportunity to study with students from outside a clinical medicine background.
  - Improve writing and reporting skills by doing a subject where these are developed more than in undergraduate clinical medicine.
  - Potential for scholarly publications associated with intercalate degree topics.
- 2.2 Students may need to take a period of leave from KMMS for other reasons, and circumstances such as these, as well as policy and procedures, are outlined in the [KMMS Interruption of Studies Procedures](#).

## Policy

### 3. Eligibility to Intercalate

3.1 To be eligible to intercalate students must meet all the following criteria:

- Students must have passed all stages at the first attempt since enrolling on the programme.
- The academic performance, attendance, and engagement of the student up to the point of the request will also be considered.
- In certain extraordinary circumstances, students with concerns about their engagement with the programme, their attendance or their academic performance on the programme may be given permission to intercalate as part of a prospective and supportive plan to leave the BMBS programme.

### 4. Intercalation for more than one year

4.1 If a student knows in advance that they will require more than one year away from the BMBS programme to pursue a PhD or Professional Doctorate, the student should follow the normal intercalation process to make their request and rationale clear and the application will be considered. Students should

carefully consider why they wish to complete a doctoral level programme before completing their undergraduate medical degree.

- 4.2 Intercalation to pursue a multi-year, doctoral level programme will only be permitted after Year 4 and students, and KMMS, will need to consider whether the total duration of absence represents too great a break in terms of maintaining the essential currency of study and their proficiency in any required professional skills and experience upon their return to the final year of the BMBS programme. This might be addressed by studying a topic aligned to clinical medicine, but this must be counterbalanced by the fact that the student will not yet be clinically registered and so **MUST NOT** engage in activities which require a GMC license to practise. The detail of this is a mandatory section of the application form (where applicable).
- 4.3 Processes of due diligence e.g., to ensure that a return to the programme in a timely manner with a reasonable expectation that the student will be able to resume their studies and complete their final BMBS assessments shall be the responsibility of the student and the detail of this is a mandatory section of the application form (where applicable).

## **5. Requests to intercalate abroad**

- 5.1 If a student knows that they wish to pursue a programme of study abroad, the student should follow the normal intercalation process making their request and rationale clear and the application will be considered.

## **6. Status and assessment record implications**

- 6.1 KMMS will update the student record to show the period of intercalation starting from the end of the KMMS academic year prior to intercalation. This date will be used to work out the tuition fee liability and student funding.
- 6.2 All summative assessment marks achieved for completed stages prior to the period of intercalation will be carried forward.

## **7. Access to resources**

- 7.1 During the period of intercalation students will not have access to resources except for the following:

- Usage of the Library will continue as normal unless students fully withdraw from the programme
- Access to student computer accounts
- Access to student support services

## **8. Accommodation**

- 8.1. If a student is occupying University accommodation as part of their enrolment on the BMBS programme, they may be required to vacate their room by the date the period of intercalation begins.
- 8.2. If a student is intercalating on a programme at either the University of Kent or Canterbury Christ Church University, they may be able to extend their accommodation contract for the period of their intercalation but must organise this with the accommodation office themselves.
- 8.3. For further information about accommodation at other universities, it is the student's responsibility to contact the accommodation office of the university where they will be undertaking their intercalation programme.

## **9. Resumption of studies**

- 9.1 Processes of due diligence e.g., to ensure that a return to the programme in a timely manner with a reasonable expectation that the student will be able to resume their studies and complete their final BMBS assessments shall be the responsibility of the student and the detail of this is a mandatory section of the application form (where applicable).
- 9.2 Students who intercalate are expected to return to study at a specified date agreed at the time of intercalation approval being given. Students must engage in a specific, additional plan for resumption of studies, including a plan for their Individual Research Project (IRP) if they are returning to year 4.
- 9.3 A return from intercalation form will need to be completed by the student and sent to the medical school a minimum of three months before the expected resumption of studies date.
- 9.4 It is the student's responsibility to be clear what the consequences will be for the award they gain from their intercalated programme if they do not subsequently complete the undergraduate BM BS programme. This is

especially important for post-graduate programmes such as Masters or Doctorate level programmes.

9.5 The return from intercalation form will require students to:

- Engage with an agreed plan for resumption of studies which may include assessment by occupational health, completing a DBS check (possibly at the student's own cost) or satisfactorily meeting any conditions established by a previous fitness to study or fitness to practise panel before the planned date of resumption.
- Arrange a meeting with their Clinical Academic Tutor (CAT) to discuss their return to the programme, including a discussion about preparing for their clinical placements and their IRP plans if returning to Stage 4 of the programme.
- Student Route visa students must contact KMMS at least three months prior to their resumption date to advise and update on their arrangements to apply to secure a Student Route visa for their next period of study.
- Provide evidence of successful completion of the intercalation degree (either transcript, or letter from supervisor).

9.6 Once all requirements have been met the student will receive written permission to resume their studies from the Dean or BMBS Programme Director and will be able to re-register for the BMBS programme.

9.7 In the unlikely event of the BMBS programme closing before a student resumes study, the student will be contacted by the Programme Director to discuss alternative arrangements.

9.8 If a student does not re-enrol at the agreed resumption date and reasonable attempts by KMMS to contact the student have failed, the student shall be deemed to have withdrawn – the date of withdrawal being identified as the original intercalation date.

## **10. Extension of Intercalation period**

10.1 Requests to extend a period of intercalation for more than what was initially approved can have serious consequences for the student's eligibility for funding and will only be considered in the most exceptional circumstances.

Such requests must be approved by the Dean of KMMS or their delegate.

- 10.2 Where a student on an approved period of intercalation indicates that they wish to extend their period of absence for only a short time beyond the agreed return date e.g. a few days or weeks, an extension to the intercalation period may be considered by the Programme Director providing that the total period of absence including the extension does not prevent the student from returning to the BMBS programme for the start of the next academic year.
- 10.3 Except in the case of multi-year Doctoral-level programmes of research if the total period of absence needs to be extended for unforeseeable reasons and will prevent the student from returning to the BMBS programme for the start of the next academic year, the student will be required to formally intermit from the medical programme, rather than 'intercalate' to fulfil their intercalation wishes. In this instance students will need to complete a formal application to intermit.
- 10.4 In deciding whether to permit this extension of time away from the BMBS programme, the Dean of KMMS will take account of:
- A recommendation from the Director or School hosting the intercalation programme provided by the student
  - The nature of the reason for the request – whether it is serious and likely to be a long-term issue
  - Any documentary evidence provided in relation to the reason
  - The overall duration of both the intercalation programme and the BMBS programme
  - Planned major or substantive changes to the format of the BMBS programme or the cost of the BMBS programme which may significantly impact on the student at the end of the extended period when they seek to resume study
  - Whether the total duration of the absence represents too great a break in terms of maintaining the essential currency of study and their proficiency in any required professional skills and experience.

## **11. Intercalation Procedures (See Appendix A: intercalation process flowchart)**

- 11.1 Students wishing to intercalate should check their eligibility to do so (see Section 3 of the Policy: Eligibility to Intercalate)

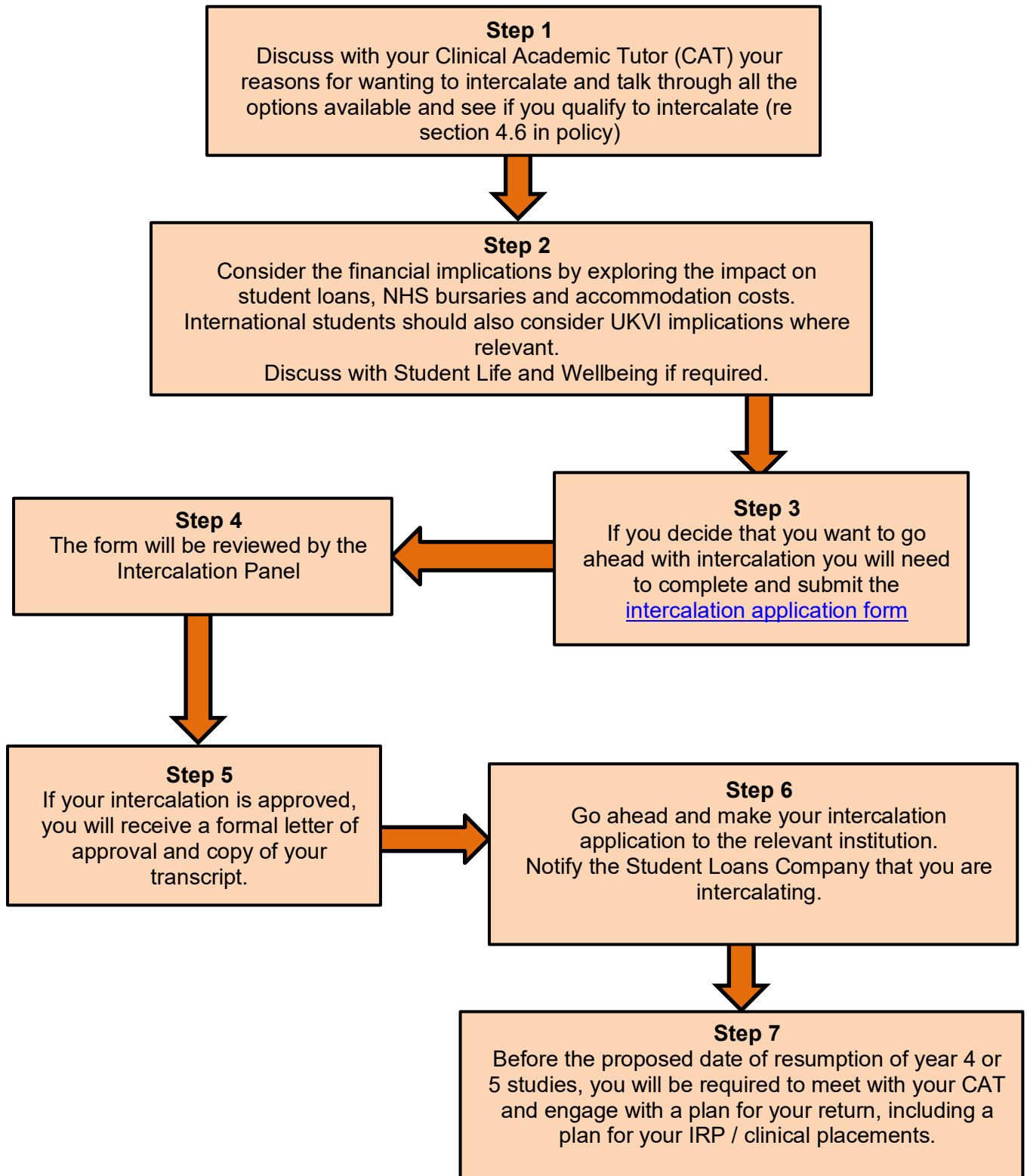


- 11.2 Students who meet the criteria should discuss their desire to intercalate with their CAT in the first instance.
- 11.3 All discussions that the student has with a member of KMMS staff should be recorded on the student record system.
- 11.4 As shown in the flowchart in Appendix 1, there are multiple points where the student will be supported in considering how their BMBS studies are likely to be impacted such as information provided in the Intercalation Handbook and information on the Student Portal.
- 11.5 Student Route visa students who wish to intercalate, must seek information from the Student Immigration Compliance Team or advice from Kent Union Advice Service as an intercalation will have visa implications.
- 11.6 Students may also be directed to the KMMS Student Life and Wellbeing Team to understand financial and other logistical implications.
- 11.7 After these initial discussions students need to complete the [Intercalation Application Form](#).
- 11.8 The Intercalation Application Form will be reviewed by the Intercalation Panel [Intercalation Lead, Heads of Year, and the Programme Director].
- 11.9 Students must request to intercalate by a strict deadline each academic year. Requests beyond the deadline, will not be considered under any circumstances. See Appendix 2 for timelines.
- 11.10 If approved the student will receive written notification of conditional approval to intercalate and the relevant departments of KMMS, University of Kent and Canterbury Christ Church University will be notified of the student's planned absence from the BMBS programme. This conditional approval letter will state the start and end dates of the intercalation period which will be used for the purposes of calculating tuition fees and other financial obligations.
- 11.11 Students must continue to meet the medical school's requirements to apply to intercalate, they must also meet the entrance requirements of the university and programme they wish to move to for their intercalation programme. Students may be given conditional permission to intercalate by KMMS, however they will also need to follow the application process and meet the requirements of the programme they wish to undertake for their intercalation in addition to the criteria above. These requirements and

processes are external to the school, and it is the responsibility of the student to meet these. If the student receives conditional approval to intercalate, KMMS will take all reasonable steps to provide any documentation required by the intercalation programme to allow the student to reserve a place on the programme.

- 11.12 Students who need to repeat the Stage for any reason, will no longer meet the criteria for intercalation and will no longer have approval to intercalate. Students so affected must take immediate steps to cancel their intercalation.
- 11.13 Students will be required to undertake several steps prior to resuming their studies, failure to complete these steps could result in a delay to resuming their studies and/or have serious financial implications for the student. Students must engage in this specific plan for resuming their studies after their intercalation. If students are returning to Stage 4 this must include a plan for their Individual Research Project (IRP).
- 11.14 A minimum of 3 months before their intended return to the BMBS programme, students must submit a Return From Intercalation form. This will ensure that they have met all the preconditions for re-registering with the BMBS programme after a period of absence.

**Appendix 1 – Intercalation process flowchart for Students**



**Appendix 2– Intercalation Timelines**

Academic Year September – June (specific dates will be decided each year)				
September	Mid-December	Mid-January	Mid-January to March	June
Intercalation Townhall and signpost to information on student portal and intercalation handbook	Students make their intercalation applications to KMMS	Students informed about the outcome of their application. Rejections should be managed sensitively by face-to-face meetings.	Students make their intercalation-course application to their university of choice	Students must notify KMMS of their offer and confirm that they are intercalating.

### Appendix 3 – Financial Implications

The information in this appendix is indicative only, the medical school has made every effort to ensure that it is up to date (Sept 2022), but external funding bodies may make changes at short notice to their terms and conditions. Students must always check with their awarding body in the first instance regarding award amounts and personal eligibility. The information below does not apply to students studying medicine as a second degree.

Students are ultimately responsible for seeking advice on how the intercalation year will affect their personal finances and how it will also affect any other loans, scholarships, or bursaries they are receiving.

How an intercalating year is funded depends on:

- When they started their undergraduate medicine course
- The point in their BMBS programme a student has reached
- Whether is it an undergraduate or postgraduate intercalation
- Whether the student is in a year of study that is eligible for funding
- Whether the student is eligible to receive funding from Student Finance or NHS Bursaries

It is up to a student to check that they are eligible to receive funding from the correct awarding body but there are some points of eligibility to be aware of:

- Whether they have been ordinarily resident in the UK for a period preceding the course, not for purposes of education
- Each UK country is responsible for its own medical and dental students wherever they study in the UK, e.g. a Welsh student studying at KMMS has their funding provided by Student Finance Wales and NHS Wales.

There are certain years when students are not eligible to receive funding from their awarding body. These can be:

- Second repeat years. The SLC only funds one repeat year of study, students with mitigating circumstances may be an exception to this rule. Similarly, the NHS will fund one repeat year if the year being repeated was originally funded by an NHS bursary.
- The first year of funding with NHS Bursaries cannot be a repeat year.

Students must take responsibility for notifying the Student Loan Company that they will be undertaking an intercalation year, and they date that they will resume their BMBS programme.

The following tables show possible progression routes that indicate where intercalating years can fall and which awarding body would normally fund each year.

To avoid confusion, it is important to know that when a student intercalates, the year of study is not the same as a student's academic Stage (year) on the BMBS programme. If a student intercalates after Stage 3 then, once they complete the intercalation, they will be in the 4<sup>th</sup> Stage (year) of the BMBS programme but in their 5<sup>th</sup> year of study. When calculating years of study, a first repeated year is not included, but a second repeated year is.

### Intercalation on Bachelors programme after Stage (year) 3 of the BMBS programme

Study Year	1	2	3	4	5	6
Academic Stage (year)	1st	2nd	3rd	Intercalation BSc/BA	4th	5th
Usual awarding body	SLC	SLC	SLC	SLC	NHS and reduced rate SLC Loan*	NHS and reduced rate SLC Loan

\*Reduced rate maintenance loan worth £2324

### Intercalation on Bachelors programme after Stage (year) 4 of the BMBS programme

Study Year	1	2	3	4	5	6
Academic Stage (year)	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Intercalation BSc/BA	5th
Usual awarding body	SLC	SLC	SLC	SLC	NHS and reduced rate SLC Loan	NHS and reduced rate SLC Loan

### Intercalation at PG level

If a student intercalates at postgraduate level, they can only do so in an academic year which, had they continued the BMBS programme, would have been a year in which they would have either been NHS funded, or would have been the final year in which they would have received full (not reduced rate) from their SLC award body. This is because students will be receiving a qualification higher than the one which their main course awards. If a student chooses to intercalate at PG level in their 3<sup>rd</sup> year of study, they will not be eligible for the tuition fee loan portion of funding from SLC in their 4<sup>th</sup> year of study and would have to cover that cost themselves. In the past, Office for Students would waive this requirement, so long as the postgraduate award certificate was not conferred until after the student had completed their undergraduate BMBS degree. We understand that this waiver is no longer possible. If possible, students should now try to ensure that the outcome of their intercalation programme is ratified, prior to returning to the BMBS programme in year 4 or 5. Failure to do so may affect their eligibility for various student funding options, especially the Student Loan or NHS Bursary.

If a student intercalates at postgraduate Masters level in their 4<sup>th</sup> year of study, then they may apply for a Masters Loan. Home students cannot apply for a Masters Loan to intercalate at PG level in their 5<sup>th</sup> year of study when they are eligible for an NHS bursary instead. Not all PG programmes are funded by Masters Loans and students must check with the relevant university to see if their choice of course is funded. Students should consider carefully whether they will have enough funding to complete a postgraduate intercalated year.

The Masters Loan product works differently to the undergraduate provision. It is designed to be a **contribution** to study only and will not cover all a student's costs. Students are required to set up a payment plan to cover their tuition fee. The Masters Loan is paid directly to students and is not paid to the University on their behalf by the awarding body. Students are expected to have made financial provision to cover all their tuition fees living costs for the intercalated year. The Masters Loan is treated differently to any undergraduate loan a student may have. This means that the repayment terms and conditions that a student agrees to for the postgraduate loan (e.g., repayment threshold, when they enter the repayment period etc) apply from the point of graduating from the intercalated PG programme.

The NHS will provide a fees grant of **up to** £9250 if a student intercalates at PG Level during their NHS funded years. Again, home students cannot apply for a Masters Loan to intercalate at PG level in their 5<sup>th</sup> year of study. If their fee for the PG intercalation course is greater than £9250 then the student needs to plan to cover the cost of the top up themselves. They will also not be eligible for the reduced

rate SLC loan during their PG intercalation year. They currently remain eligible to apply for the reduced rate SLC loan in the subsequent NHS funded years, although this may be being reviewed.

If a student intercalates after their fourth year of study and normally lives in England, Scotland, or Northern Ireland, they will also be eligible to receive a non-means tested grant of £1,000. Some students may also be eligible for a means-tested bursary (of up to £4491 for a 52-week course) from the NHS. If a student intercalates after their fourth year of study and normally lives in Scotland, they currently receive living cost and tuition fee funding from the Student Awards Agency for Scotland in the usual way for the duration of their course, including the intercalation year.

If a student intercalates at Doctoral level in their 4<sup>th</sup> year of study, then they must be aware that the Masters postgraduate loan scheme is not available for programmes at this level and there is not currently any national funding scheme available for fees or living expenses to support this. Students who wish to undertake a course of doctoral level study should start to explore alternative funding arrangements with specific funding bodies or institutions as early as possible.

#### **Intercalation at PG level (Masters) after Stage (year) 3 of the BMBS programme**

Study Year	1	2	3	4	5	6
Academic Stage (year)	1st	2nd	3rd	Intercalation MSc/MA	4th	5th
Usual awarding body	SLC	SLC	SLC	Masters Loan	NHS and reduced rate SLC Loan	NHS and reduced rate SLC Loan

#### **Intercalation at PG level (Masters) after Stage (year) 4 of the BMBS programme**

Study Year	1	2	3	4	5	6
Academic Stage (year)	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Intercalation MSc/MA	5th
Usual awarding body	SLC	SLC	SLC	SLC	NHS*	NHS and reduced rate SLC Loan

\*Maximum NHS Bursary fee grant is £9250, and the student is not eligible to receive the reduced rate SLC loan or to apply for a Masters Loan.

#### **Intercalation at PG level (Doctoral) after Stage (year) 4 of the BMBS programme**



Study Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Academic Stage (year)	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Intercalation Doctoral level	Intercalation Doctoral level	Intercalation Doctoral level	5th
Usual awarding body	SLC	SLC	SLC	SLC	None	None	None	NHS and reduced rate SLC Loan

In addition to University advice about fees and student finance students are strongly advised to make direct contact with their respective funding bodies and to confirm the current terms and conditions for their funding with respect to intercalating from an undergraduate medical programme.

Student Finance England: <https://www.gov.uk/contact-student-finance-england>

Student Finance Wales: <https://www.studentfinancewales.co.uk/contact.aspx>

Student Finance Northern Ireland:

<https://www.studentfinancenir.co.uk/contact/general-enquiries/>

Student Awards Agency for Scotland: <https://www.saas.gov.uk/contact-us>

NHS Bursaries: <https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-bursary-students/contact-us>