

## MB ChB Programme - Guidance for Students acting as Chaperones

### Introduction

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the [MB ChB Programme – Guidance for Students on Intimate Examinations](#), but also apply to any clinical examination of a patient. In performing an intimate examination, you will require an appropriate chaperone. You must also consider the need for a chaperone for any examination, including the patient's wishes.

These guidelines **must** be read in conjunction with the General Medical Council (UK)'s advice on intimate examinations and chaperones:

[http://www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/ethical\\_guidance/21168.asp](http://www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/ethical_guidance/21168.asp)

And also with the GMC's guidance on maintaining professional boundaries:

[http://www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/ethical\\_guidance/21170.asp](http://www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/ethical_guidance/21170.asp)

Similarly, the GMC has published guidance on consent:

[http://www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/ethical\\_guidance/consent\\_guidance\\_index.asp](http://www.gmc-uk.org/guidance/ethical_guidance/consent_guidance_index.asp)

In addition each Trust, including your main Sector Trust, has its own guidelines on chaperones. You must also regard yourself as being bound by these and you should consult them where necessary. Similarly when you are on placement with a general practitioner you must adhere to any GP Practice guidelines.

### Remember:

- The presence of a chaperone protects you and the patient.
- The requirement for a chaperone includes examinations of patients who are the same gender as you.
- Any examination, intimate or not, must have the patient's informed consent including discussion of the need for a chaperone.
- The discussion must ensure that the patient really understands the purpose of the intimate examination.
- Discussion can be supported by the use of accessible information e.g. 'easy read leaflets' for patients with communication difficulties
- An examination of any part of the body that the patient considers intimate requires a chaperone who, for you as a medical student, **must be clinically qualified**.
- The patient may request the presence of another person (for example a relative or an interpreter for someone hearing impaired) for support.

- In the case of an intimate examination, the names of the person who performed it and the chaperone must be recorded in the patient's records.
- You may act as a chaperone for your clinical supervisor, but if you feel uncomfortable in this role, you must flag up your concerns and may decline.

You **cannot**

Act as chaperone to your clinical partner for **intimate** examinations.

- Act as a chaperone where the patient lacks capacity to consent.

### **Maintaining a Professional Boundary:**

In general, and particularly acting as a chaperone at a clinical (intimate) examination, you must ensure that you have an appropriate professional boundary between you and the patient. This is based on trust that you will behave professionally to any patient. This means that:

- You should not enter into a personal relationship
- This also applies to anyone close to a patient
- If a patient seeks such a relationship, you should remain polite and re-establish a professional relationship.
- You must be particularly vigilant when dealing with vulnerable patients
- You should also be vigilant in any use of social media as it is very easy to blur boundaries

If you become concerned about a relationship with any patient or someone close to them, you must talk to someone from the Programme.

### **What is the role of the chaperone?**

In its guidance (see above), the GMC states that a chaperone for conduct of an intimate examination should:

- be sensitive and respectful of the patient's dignity and confidentiality
- be prepared to reassure the patient if they show signs of distress or discomfort
- be familiar with the procedures involved in a routine intimate examination
- be prepared to raise concerns about the person conducting an intimate examination if misconduct occurs.

A chaperone protects the patient from students and doctors who behave inappropriately during intimate examinations. In addition, a chaperone protects you from misinterpretation of your actions by the patient. A chaperone is required even if you are the same gender as the patient.

You should note that the GMC states that a chaperone 'should usually be a health professional'. The MB ChB Programme recognises that in busy clinical practice in hospital or

in general practice, your clinical supervisor or another health professional may ask you to act as a chaperone. In agreeing to this, you **have to fulfil** the role described above. This means that you may, on occasions, need to raise concerns or the question of inappropriate conduct. If you feel that this might be very difficult for you, then you should politely decline.

If you encounter a serious problem relating to acting as a chaperone and what you should or should not do, then **discuss it urgently** with the Hospital Dean or local tutor/Academic Lead. You should also be familiar with MB ChB Programme guidance on raising serious concerns: [MB ChB Programme Handbook Contacts: See 'Educational Alert' section](#).

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