

4/2020

Primary Health Care
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Teaching Newsletter

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Dear GP Teachers,

This is the newsletter when we would normally wish you a Happy Easter but in the middle of a pandemic that doesn't sound right. Instead we would like to express our hope that you will all stay safe and find a moment of relaxation over Easter, ideally to enjoy some sunshine, spring blossom and some Easter eggs.

A big thank you to all of you for teaching our Bristol students this academic year. Please join us in being proud of our fifth year students who are graduating early to join NHS staff in the fight against Covid-19. You have made a significant contribution to their training.



Read the **Bristol Medical School bulletin about fifth years on page 2**
Best wishes from all of us in Primary Care

Corona virus and GP placement teaching

The University has responded swiftly to the Coronavirus pandemic and we are now getting used to different ways of working. This has meant that GP placements for our undergraduate medical students had to be curtailed from mid-March, as did our on-site teaching such as Consultation Skills. The central admin team and academics are adjusting to working from home but we are still available on our usual phone numbers and email – please bear with us if it takes us a little longer to respond, and please feel free to leave a voicemail on the main PHC telephone number if you can't get through straightaway. As the university buildings are now closed, please avoid sending us physical post. Please note that the **university will be shut from Friday 10 April and re-open on Monday 20 April** after the Easter break, so we will not be available during that period.

We are hoping to return to normal as soon as possible. Because of ongoing uncertainty, we have not yet sent out our usual recruitment emails for the coming year 2020-21 but are hoping to do this in due course once the situation becomes clearer. Thank you for your ongoing support for teaching.

Want an inside view how China is controlling the Covid-19 outbreak and what this means for Chinese people? Look no further than this brief video account from Prof. Thompson's son

From Trevor Thompson

While the Coronavirus was heading West my son was, against all advice, heading *East* by train across the frozen reaches of Siberia. His destination the [Wudang Mountains](#) in, I jest not, Hubei Province of central China. This is the location of a Tai Chi school he considers it his destiny to attend. That was early February. At the end of March he is sitting pretty in Shanghai worrying about us in Europe. His video on China-style centralised epidemic control is worth a look <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0W0B2Qg3r2k&t=13s>

But he is also a reminder to us that this time of crisis will inevitably pass. And when it does, I wonder if there will be any lasting changes to how we look at ourselves and our practice? Here in UoB we are organising to deliver the entire curriculum online for the Summer Term and getting rapidly adept at video-conferencing software such as Zoom, Skype, Slack and BlueJeans. Last week I held my first video-consultation with a patient; this week I ran a clinic from a spare bedroom. I am sure how we practice and how we teach will never be quite the same again.

Bristol—one of the first medical schools to graduate their students early

More than 220 final year medical students from the University of Bristol will qualify early this week to enable them to work as doctors in the NHS during the COVID-19 crisis.

A virtual qualification ceremony for the students will be held on Friday 3 April attended by the University's Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Hugh Brady. Once provisionally registered by the General Medical Council (GMC) they will be invited to apply for jobs by the Foundation Programme, which will oversee the national implementation.

The Medical School anticipates that the majority of its new doctors will be working in local hospitals in Bristol, Bath, Swindon, Taunton, Gloucester, Yeovil, Cheltenham and Weston-super-Mare.

Depending on GMC registration, it is likely that they will be working in hospitals before the end of April. They will predominantly be working on the wards in the hospitals clerking new patients, checking on admitted patients, assisting more senior doctors, ordering tests and checking results, prescribing drugs and undertaking procedures such as siting drips.

Bristol Medical School are providing practical and topical advice and information about starting as a doctor to the newly qualified cohort. They will also support individuals personally, both through maintaining contacts with the year five academic team, and also with the Academy where the doctors trained. In addition, they will encourage community spirit by setting up social media groups based on where doctors begin practice.

Like all new doctors, they will be supervised and mentored by more experienced colleagues and Bristol Medical School will also continue to provide close support. Ben Turner is one of the final year medical students who will qualify early this week. He said: "After a minimum of five years of study, final year medical students possess fundamental skills to support our NHS colleagues at this time of national crisis. "The cohort feels an overwhelming desire to help and graduating us early is vital to support hospitals already feeling the strain, allow the reallocation of more senior doctors to the front line and create capacity in the system as medical staff increasingly need to self-isolate.

"It is important to remember that, whilst COVID-19 cases are rising amongst the inpatient population, other unwell patients continue to present to the health service. Ensuring the highest standard of care for *all* patients remains the number one priority of everyone within the NHS family; early graduation of final year nurses and medical students will reinforce the national fight against this virus."

John Gilbert, another final year medical student, added: "Myself and my fellow final year students want to help the NHS as much as we can. We have all spent five, or six years studying medicine to enter a career of serving the health of the UK. "Many of us have already demonstrated to the Medical School and the General Medical Council all of the necessary requirements to graduate as doctors. During this time of international crisis, a health crisis, we want to start work a few months early so that we can help our colleagues, help our NHS, and help our country to overcome Covid-19.

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Megan Kelsey, who will also qualify this week, said: "Going straight into an NHS hospital at the moment might seem quite daunting however this is a job we've been training for five to six years and we're all really eager to help out in this time of national crisis.

"Whilst this strain on the NHS is unprecedented, there's equally never been a more rewarding time to start our careers as doctors. At this time, it's very touching to see how the country is coming together to support the NHS and do their bit wherever they can and it only feels right that our skills and knowledge are put to good use where they're most needed."

Professor Ashley Blom, Head of Bristol Medical School, said: "We have worked with our NHS partners throughout the region to ensure that our newest cohort of young doctors will be both effective and safe in their roles in the NHS during these challenging times.

"The University of Bristol will continue to provide support and care for our new doctors. We are confident that they are ready for the challenges ahead and will make a strong contribution."

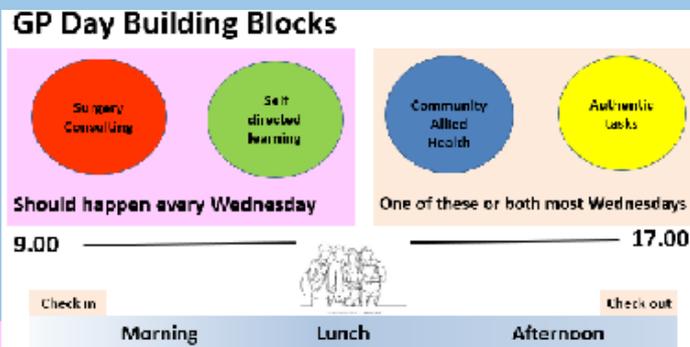
Dr Andrew Blythe, Bristol Medical School Programme Director, added: "We are immensely proud of our final year class who have been magnificent. They are well trained, capable and their positive response to the crisis has been overwhelming. The staff and students have worked extremely hard to ensure that the students have completed all aspects of their training and are ready to work as junior doctors."

Professor Jane Norman, Dean of Health Sciences, said: "Medical Schools across the nation are working hard to ensure that their final year students are fully trained and ready for qualification.

"We will be one of, if not the first Medical School to qualify our students, but over the next few months many Medical Schools will do the same. With this additional workforce and all the dedicated retired staff who have recently returned to service, the NHS will be in a much stronger position to look after the nation."

Professor Hugh Brady, Vice-Chancellor and President, added: "I am incredibly proud of our final year medical students and look forward to taking part in Friday's virtual qualification ceremony.

"They will be an invaluable and welcome addition to our hardworking NHS medical teams during this very testing time. On behalf of the University of Bristol, I thank them for their service and wish them all the very best for the future."



MB21 GP4

As some of you already know we had to cancel our Year 4 workshop due to take place on 28th April. It was going to play a key role in bringing you up to speed with the changes for Year 4 in the next academic year. We continue to get the course ready as planned and are keeping our fingers crossed that clinical placements may be possible by September. We will keep you posted.