🌟BSMS GOLDEN ADVICE FOR GRADUATE & MATURE STUDENTS🌟

Welcome to the GOLDEN ADVICE document for graduate and mature students! This is a collection of tips and tricks we've gathered up to answer some FAQs about navigating your BSMS journey in a non-traditional way. If you feel that there's anything we've missed or want to bolster it with tips and tricks of your own please get in touch with G&M rep or email graduatemature@bsmsmedsoc.co.uk

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📚Studying 📚

- 📖 As with any study advice, you need to find what works best for you whether it's Anki, mindmaps, flowcharts, whiteboards, study sessions, etc. It's great to try out techniques and eventually stick with the one that resonates with you the most. It might be a mixture, or might just be one thing
- 📖 Blocking out study periods well ahead of deadlines can help manage time, especially with long commutes and family commitments
- 📖 Don't be afraid to ask for help early - medicine is demanding for everyone. Your tutors, peers, and online resources are all here to help you
- 📖 Work with your strengths - if you understand one topic really well and your friend doesn't, swap explanations and work together!
- 📖 Remember that your extra life experiences bring maturity and unique perspectives to your time as a student, there are some things that just can't be taught in a lecture
- 📖 If you ever find yourself experiencing symptoms of Medical Student Syndrome, remember that almost everyone is learning the same content as you for the first time, and they probably also have concepts they're struggling with and lectures they haven't covered. As easy as it is to compare your progress to others, try to focus on your own journey :) If you are reading this document, you deserve to be here!

👥 Socialising 👥

- 💬 It can be daunting thinking about socialising with younger peers as you might have different life experiences, but over time these differences matter less and you realise that you're all on the same course with the same goal - becoming a doctor!
- 💬 Try to join societies so that you can meet people with similar interests, not just similar ages
- 💬 Go at your own social pace - if you don't feel like going clubbing because you're dreading the lack of sleep, loud space, and potential hangover in the morning, don't go! FOMO is real, but you're never kinder to yourself than when you've

prioritised your own time. Grab some friends and head to the pub, coffee shop, or stick a movie on with your fave socks and a cup of tea :) or if you have the energy to go out with MedSoc and Freshers events during the week and still make it on time to your 9ams, be a role model to us all!

🏋️‍♀️ Working alongside full time study 🏋️‍♀️

- 💼 Medicine is full-on, so be realistic about how much you can work (e.g. weekend/evening shifts) before overcommitting and pre-burdening your workload
- 💼 Casual/flexible jobs (tutoring, bank shifts, remote work) fit better around placements if possible. Check the newsletter for short term work opportunities such as helping out with interviews or open days. Sussex student union jobs (bar, co-op, SU shop) are very flexible and are advertised on the SU website under the jobs section and often recruit at the start of term and around Easter
- 💼 Prioritise wellbeing if you can! It's so tempting to book in as many shifts as you can in every crevice of spare time the timetables allow, but if you're exhausted from extra work and can't focus properly on studying, you might overwhelm yourself. You know yourself best, so trust your gut!

🚗 Commuting & parking on campus🚗

- 🚕 Parking at Sussex - there are lots of car parks at Sussex, but LOTS of students and staff. Getting a permit is tricky unless you're eligible (see below), and if you have a permit you can park in any car park on Sussex campus
- 🚕 Parking at Brighton - you'll be here one day per week in Phase 1, on Tuesdays in Year 1 and Thursdays in Year 2. If you park here it's a 15 minute walk to the MTB on Sussex campus. See below for eligibility
- 🚕 There is free parking on the road outside BACA, and is a 15 minute walk to UoB campus / 20 min walk to UoS campus in case you don't qualify for the permits or can't afford to pay for a permit. But beware, spaces fill up earlier in the morning!

Sussex side parking eligibility	🚕 Disabled badge - you can park for free on Sussex campus, in any car park 🚕 Responsible for primary aged children and/or guardians to other dependents 🚕 Living on campus with families 🚕 Living more than 1h15m from campus on public transport 🚕 If none of these apply, you have to pay for standard visitor parking during working hours (£7 for full day)
Brighton side Parking eligibility	🚕 Disabled badge - you can park for free on Sussex campus, in any car park 🚕 If you have a LSP you might be eligible for a permit, but the criteria online aren't clear. If you think this might be helpful to you, contact Student Advice for more info! 🚕 Living 30+ miles from campus 🚕 Living more than 45m from campus on public transport 🚕 Have childcare responsibilities, that you can only meet with access to a vehicle and parking on campus 🚕 "Other circumstances where home life responsibilities could not be met, without access to on-site parking."

Apply for University of Sussex parking permit
Apply for University of Brighton parking permit with your uni email address

✍️ Deadlines, learning support plans (LSPs), & Student Advice ✍️

- 💻 If you are worried about not meeting deadlines, contact Student Advice and they can help you organise a LSP. You don't need a diagnosed condition to obtain a LSP, and Student Advice know all there is to know about the right places to get help

- 💻 The 80% attendance* is required to pass a module, but childcare or other commitments can get in the way. If you are worried about dipping below 80% for each module, go to Student Advice! They really are there to help, and WANT you to pass this course.

**This can get confusing, so let's clear some things up. DISCLAIMER: THIS IS BASED ON PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES, BUT EACH STUDENT SITUATION IS UNIQUE SO PLEASE CONTACT THE STUDENT ADVICE FOR PROPER GUIDANCE.*
Each Module (eg. 101, 102, 103, 104, 110) requires 80% attendance to pass. If you dip below 80% and the module finishes, you will fail the module on attendance. HOWEVER!!! If you have been in contact with Student Advice throughout the term/year and have kept them in the loop about things you are struggling with, you'll be able to submit either Planned Absence forms (if you have 7+ days notice of a day you'll be out) or an Unforeseen Circumstances form (submitted within 7 days of the last day affected. For example, you had the flu from Monday-Wednesday and missed monitored sessions that made you dip below 80%, you have 7 days to submit from Wednesday). These forms will (hopefully!) be approved by the absences team, and will be taken into account when reviewing your attendance failure. You might have to write an essay or do a presentation on why attendance is important, but the school will try to work with you to 'mitigate' the attendance failure in the best way, and almost all the time people can progress to the next year. ***The most important thing is keeping the uni in the loop with what's going on, as it's happening.***

💸 Finance 💸

Mature student no previous degree	• Tuition and Maintenance loan - if this is your first degree you are eligible for a full tuition loan and minimum maintenance loan • You may be eligible for further maintenance loans depending on your household income (see below)
Graduate & Mature student	• Tuition - if this is your second (or even third!) degree you won't be eligible for a tuition loan. To set up paying your fees, you have to log into the StudentView website with your UoB login (looks like bsmsXXXX) and password and enter card details on the "Tuition fee payment options" tab. You'll get a payment schedule afterwards, payments are usually paid in 6 instalments • If this is not your first degree you may be eligible for maintenance loans depending on your household income (see below)
Independent students and Household Income	• Applying and "Household Income" - 25+ or 21+ with a child / have supported yourself financially for 3 years before your course starts / you're a care leaver or you're estranged from your parents / you have been married or in a civil partnership at any time before the start of your course
Extra Support: Carer / Children / Dependents	• Childcare Grant - full time higher education student + children under 15 or 17+special educational needs • Parents' Learning Allowance - full time student with children (means tested) • Adult Dependent's Grant - full-time student in higher education and an adult depends on you financially
Grants *Note: all of these grants (except for the NHS bursary, see below) often require a supporting statement, which Student Advice can help you write, as well as finding other charities who*	• BMA charities trust fund offer grants to medical students who are taking medicine as a second degree - this is usually not in 1st or final year - medical students who are in immediate and serious financial need and money advice to people who are struggling

may be able to help *More information on the [BMA website for grants available]*	• [Sidney Perry foundation] can give grants of up to £1000 for people doing a second degree where their first degree was at least a 2:1 and they were younger than 35 at the start of their course (currently not accepting more applications, but keep checking their website!) • [Sir Richard Stapley Educational Trust] offers grants of up to £1000 for students over the age of 24 (have closed applications for 2025/2026, but keep checking their website in future years!)

An extra bit about 5th year funding

If you are a grad or mature student who will not be 25 until part way through 4th year, applying for the higher amount of the NHS bursary grant in 5th year can be complicated. Once you get to 5th year for your maintenance loans you get some money as a loan from SFE (a flat amount that everyone gets no matter your circumstances) and then you can apply for a grant from NHS bursaries. For this you can apply for a higher amount as a means tested application and one of the ways to get the extra money is to show you are independent. This can either be that you are estranged from your parents or that SFE have previously deemed you as independent (which they do once you are over 25), however if you are only turning 25 during your 4th year SFE will not have deemed you as independent previously. You can still apply for the higher amount if you are going to be 25 by the time 5th year starts, even if you don't have proof of being independent from SFE, instead you tick that SFE have deemed you as independent and say that it is because you are over 25 but where it says to upload the student loan letter you just upload your passport or drivers license. You have to have previously received money from SFE and also have to be in receipt of their loan in 5th year.