



# PENINSULA

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# MEDICAL SOCIETY



## WELCOME TO MEDSOC!

*YOUR SOCIAL, ACADEMIC AND PASTORAL NETWORK THROUGHOUT  
MEDICAL SCHOOL*



[peninsulamedsoc.com](http://peninsulamedsoc.com)

## Congratulations and Welcome!

Firstly – well done! You’ve made it, in a year of massive uncertainty, and in the absence of the standard admissions process, you’re in and you’re on your way to Plymouth and the Peninsula school of Medicine and Dentistry – an enormous achievement.

The purpose of this booklet is to give you all an introduction to studying in Plymouth, the medical school and, most importantly, to our medical society. MedSoc is a society to which the majority of our medical students belong, it is run by medical students, for medical students. The overarching aim of the society is to provide a network of academic, social and pastoral support throughout your time at medical school. From the MedSoc sports teams, to our wide variety of specialist teaching, our families system, and our highly renowned socials we are able to supplement all areas of uni life and provide our members with a very well-rounded medical school experience.

Before going any further – could I please urge you to join the below Facebook group for your year group – we know there is already a group that some of you are members of but this group is the official one that comes under the Peninsula MedSoc Facebook page and thus we will communicate with you through this page and not any that already exist: <https://bit.ly/2XWTrTV>

Secondly, as will become clear below, we have found our families system to be of huge value to freshers, providing a basis for academic support and any questions you may have regarding the course and uni life, and for creating really good social links between first and second years. In order to make this system as good as possible, it would be in your interest to fill in the below questionnaire so that we can give you “parents” and “siblings” with whom you have the most in common.

The questionnaire can be found on the MedSoc Website: [www.peninsulamedsoc.com](http://www.peninsulamedsoc.com) (N.b. whether you fill in this questionnaire or not, all freshers are allocated a family. Therefore, if you do not fill in this form we will simply allocate randomly).

The aim of the remainder of this booklet is to introduce you to all elements of MedSoc and give you some useful guidance for your first weeks of uni, hopefully it should answer a lot of your questions. If you have any other questions please feel free to email [committee.pms@gmail.com](mailto:committee.pms@gmail.com) or to message any of the committee on Facebook.

We look forward to meeting you in September!

***Simon Jowett***

*MedSoc Vice-President*

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## Your MedSoc Committee 2020-21

### President – *Vicky Vincent*

I'm Vicky and I am the MedSoc President. My job is to lead the society and organise the committee, as well as liaise with the Med School and Student Union to hopefully provide the best experience for you. I ensure everything runs smoothly on a day to day basis by organising sponsorship deals and chasing up members of the committee to make sure things are getting done.

I very much value student welfare, so know that I am always around to help or listen to any problems you may be having. Whether that's personal problems such as homesickness, issues with adapting to the course or anything in between. Remember, even what seems like the smallest of problems are important!

So, when I'm not drowning in SU paperwork or in the library, you'd often find me doing some pretty random things. From doing some home workouts, to playing MedSoc Football and even trying to learn the violin (which definitely needs some practice!).

It's important to know that the life of a medic is pretty hectic, but I'm always here to give you some advice on how to balance your time – having been an elite athlete I've managed to acquire some tricks along the way. I'm always around so drop me a message if you need someone to talk to, someone to listen or someone to give you advice. I will always be on your side!

My eMail – [president.pms@gmail.com](mailto:president.pms@gmail.com)



### Vice President – *Simon Jowett*

Hi all – I'm Simon and I am your Vice president for the next year. My job is essentially to ensure that the day-to-day cogs of MedSoc keep running. As a result, I spend a lot of time liaising with the whole committee and ensuring that everyone is playing their part in running of the society as efficiently as possible. I also spend a lot of time supporting Vicky in her role – in whichever areas of MedSoc that our time and attention is most necessary. I will also have an impact in your freshers experience in that I organise and run the MedSoc families system – meaning that I am responsible for pairing you with your parents and am your point of contact if you have any questions about or issues with the system.

I like to think that I am a (reasonably) rounded medical student. Alongside spending probably less time in the library than I should, I love the outdoors and being active. I am a keen rower and can be found down at Totnes on the river many Wednesdays and weekends. You will also meet me on nights out in freshers (or whenever clubs open...) I'm a big fan of MedSoc socials and am gradually learning to get through the Derriford bus ride on a Thursday morning in a somewhat fragile state!

Otherwise – I'm really passionate about the power of MedSoc to provide a friendly, strong network of friends and peers early on, and then throughout your time at Uni. So, if you have any questions at all about the society, the medical school or wider Uni life then don't hesitate to drop me a message or email – I'm more than happy to help!

My eMail – [vicepres.pms@gmail.com](mailto:vicepres.pms@gmail.com)



**Treasurer – Gaby Lau**

Hello! I'm Gaby and as the treasurer, I will be making sure we have a sufficient amount of money for different kinds of events throughout the year! I don't usually go out but when I am, I usually get lost so if you happen to see me please come and say hi! I am very excited to introduce others to places where there is good food!



My email – [treasurer.pms@gmail.com](mailto:treasurer.pms@gmail.com)

**Social Secs – John Cavlin & Laura Jacobs**

*Laura*



Meet Laura, Peninsula's very own TikTok superstar. Born and raised in Cornwall, Laura has grown up accustomed to Plymouth's culture of living and breathing pasties, however she still struggles with keeping her balance in elevators (the 13 Jager bombs didn't help either). Rumour has it that Walkabout offered her a sponsorship to wear their stamp to every clinical skills each week.

Laura is a reliable wing-woman and will be making it a job for herself to keep the freshers safe from 2nd year sharks. She is happy to answer any questions anybody has about settling down in Plymouth,

working a part-time job while at uni and where to go for a forgettable night out. She is

best contacted after 2pm, giving her time to recover from the night previous' liquid courage.

Special interests: Dancing, Popworld (...), Flat 59 + Francisco, RPAs – Laura enjoyed the first so much that she did the second.

*John*

This is John, he is your typical Northern Irishman so if you don't understand what he is saying, don't worry, neither do we. In John's spare time he likes to promote the psych soc and mental health awareness so he would always be there for you if you needed a helping hand. However, it doesn't stop there, on a typical night out John does not finish at the club, he loves "afters", some of which often stay on till about 6am with him drinking water and vodka (not because he enjoys the taste but because he's run out of mixer). John is just John and you'll see why very shortly.



**Ball Sec. – Febronia Hanna**



My name is Febronia, but people know me as Rona. I am from Brighton, but originally from Egypt. My thesis in life is party hard but work hard. I like a fancy party with good food and plenty of drinks. So, I am taking care of some of the fun you will have this year. I am going to be organising your winter and summer balls this year (TRYING). I aim to make those two nights the most memorable in medical school experience (or not remember much of it). I can't wait to see you all at the ball slaying.

My eMail – [ball.pms@gmail.com](mailto:ball.pms@gmail.com)

**Foundation Sec. – Kimberley Ssewanyana**

Hey there, I am Kimberley, and I will be the Foundation sec for MedSoc. I consider myself a chatty, bubbly, and sociable person, with an interest in music and art (Unfortunately, I am no Picasso.). As a previous member of the foundation cohort, my experiences have influenced the way I will carry out this role. I will provide support for the next cohort in various ways: from ensuring teaches are held for them, to arranging activities that integrate the foundation year more within the Medical school and MedSoc. I honestly can wait to work with MedSoc and you all, feel free to contact me if you have any questions, ideas, concerns, or anything.



My eMail - [foundationsec.pms@gmail.com](mailto:foundationsec.pms@gmail.com)

### Publicity Sec. – *Kara Hole*

Hi I'm Kara! I'm the Publicity Sec so I'm involved with running social media and advertising for MedSoc.

I'm from the South East coast near Brighton and although I love the living by the sea I am almost definitely the least outdoorsy person you will ever meet! I can often be heard complaining about the cold or the rain (turns out when they say it rains a lot, they really mean it!)

I'll try and use just about anything as an excuse to go out for cocktails, and like most people I love a night out, even if they sometimes lead to a few, lets say interesting situations. As for academics, I'm one of those people who spends more time stressing about an exam than they do studying for it.

I'm happy to help out with anything and will always be up for a chat! I'd like to think I'm good at giving advice - unless it's about cooking or how to save money, in which case you're probably better off asking anyone but me!

*My eMail – [publicity.pms@gmail.com](mailto:publicity.pms@gmail.com)*



### Pre-Clinical Academic Sec. – *Krishan Venu-Gopal*

Hey, I'm Krishan, the pre-clinical academic secretary, who sorts out the medsoc teaches for the first and second years and here to offer a hand wherever I can. I'm a postgrad who's been around the medical field for slightly too long, outside of university I volunteer as an ambulance technician with St John Ambulance and coordinate student volunteering for the west of England. I enjoy walks round Plymouth, watch far too much telly and am a fan of a good pub trip. Happy to lend a hand with PBL, AMK and other scary three letter acronyms that you'll come to know. Look forward to welcoming you and I am sure you'll love your time at Plymouth.

*My eMail – [academics.pms@gmail.com](mailto:academics.pms@gmail.com)*

### Charity Sec – *Ella Walton*



Hey, I'm Ella and I'm your charity sec for this year! My main roles are to organise the awesome volunteering opportunities we have for you all and to strip you of all your cash during fundraising events for our amazing charities.

Even though I have some grandma-like tendencies, I love a good night spent dancing to the bangers in the Vinyl room of Pryzm and that maternal instinct means I'm great at giving advice (even if I'm not so great at taking it... oops!). My main aim in life is to travel as much as possible so you can often find me in the library looking at flights I can't afford, instead of working. If you have any questions about the charity work we do or anything else for that matter, don't hesitate to get in touch!

*My eMail – [charity.pms@gmail.com](mailto:charity.pms@gmail.com)*

**Plymouth Secs. – Sam Ghaznavi & Ahmed Muntadhar**

The Plymouth secs' job is to provide academic support to the clinical years based in Plymouth. They are the go-to point for all queries regarding academic teaches, events and conferences based in Plymouth for Yr.3 and above. Both Ahmed and Sam have previous experience working on the committee in academic roles and therefore bring a wealth of experience to this new role.

*Sam*

MedSoc's resident brainbox, a man who's AMK score is only surpassed by his ruthless humour! He uses his abundance of knowledge to help teach his fellow student whenever needed. He enjoys long walks on the beach and visiting local coffee shops to test out the latest strain of coffee beans, Live, Laugh, Love is his moto and he tries to live everyday by it.



*Ahmed*



Hey, I'm Ahmed, I'm the Third Year Clinical Sec, I will be involved in mainly third year related things, especially our half-way ball (celebrating halfway through the degree). I'm not too important freshers wise but I am more than happy to help anyone who just wants some help on settling in, understanding bits and bobs and life in Plymouth!

*Our eMail – [plymouth.pms@gmail.com](mailto:plymouth.pms@gmail.com)*

**Torbay Sec. – Rachel Millington**

Hey Fresh! I'm Rachel, a 3rd year here at Plymouth. As Torbay sec, I will be the Medsoc rep for the 3rd and 5th year students based at Torbay Hospital. We will not have too much interaction over the year, but I am hoping to keep those of us out at 'Torbay-dos' involved with the goings on in Plymouth. I



will be organising teaches for students, for additional learning and teaching opportunities, and making sure our social lives don't perish. If you have any queries or concerns about Torbay placements, then don't be afraid to ask! Good luck in your first year!

*My eMail – [torbay.pms@gmail.com](mailto:torbay.pms@gmail.com)*

**Taunton Sec. – Harry Simpson**

Hi all, my job is to provide the continuous support of MedSoc to members who move to Taunton in their



clinical years. This looks like clinical teaches, nights out and wellbeing support to name but a few. Although my role isn't immediately relevant to you, a large proportion of you will end up in Taunton over your five years, and some of you will also like to look ahead in your med student career, so if you have any questions or concerns, give me a shout! Aside from attempting a medical degree, you can often find me climbing at the life centre or wearing just the weirdest outfits on nights out. And if you like hockey or want to give it a go, I'd love to see you at our med hockey club on Fridays!

*My eMail – [taunton.pms@gmail.com](mailto:taunton.pms@gmail.com)*

**Competitive Sports Sec. – Ben Wisden**

I'm Ben, and I'll be your external sports sec this year.

There's a range of sports here at peninsula, including rugby, football, netball and hockey, and I'll be liaising with the captains to make sure that they're supported throughout the year.

Sport is a great way to keep fit, blow off some steam and meet new people (including the valuable opportunity to scab notes off people in the older years).

There will be stuff to look forward to throughout the year, such as varsities and charity matches, including the infamous Marines game (where the rugby team go head to head with 15 lethally trained Royal Marines), so be sure to keep an eye on the medsoc page!

Whether you're looking to play competitively, casually, or just to be Peninsula's next superfan, there's something for everyone! If you have any suggestions, questions about sport (or about anything else) I'd love to hear them, so send me a message.

My eMail – [sportssec.pms@gmail.com](mailto:sportssec.pms@gmail.com)



**Social Sports Sec. – Zoe Lambert**

Hi I'm Zoe, this year's Social Sport sec – I will be running the Medics social sports such as Yoga as well as the Choir (which apparently comes under the banner of social sports???)

I spent most of my first year climbing at the Life Centre I keep telling myself that second year will be more productive but I'm sure you will still be far more likely to find me out on my bike than in the library. Although I do a lot of sport, I also enjoy having a laugh trying out new activities, even if I'm not always very good at them to begin with – I came second last at my first parkrun (although a rather messy night out might not have helped).

I'm happy to answer any questions you might have from getting involved with social sport to which SSU not to pick- (I learnt the hard way) just give me a message.

My eMail – [sportssec.pms@mail.com](mailto:sportssec.pms@mail.com)



**Halfway Secs. – Mo Sadeed Bhat & Anjeli Taheem**



Hey, we are currently in third year and the halfway secs. We will mostly be involved in planning the halfway ball for the third years, making sure it's a night they remember. We will also be there to help out with Medsoc events and support anyone needing our help. If you have any questions regarding anything medicine related or settling in Plymouth, we will be more than happy to help. We are looking forward to meeting you all!

Our eMail - [Yr3sec.pms@gmail.com](mailto:Yr3sec.pms@gmail.com)



## Prepping for Life as a Med Student

### What to Bring:

The university produce a list of all the standard things that are sensible to bring when you start uni which can be accessed [here](#). This list is not exhaustive but gives a good idea of the basics. As medical students, we also recommend a few extras to enhance your uni experience; we recommend:

- **Every last bit of fancy dress you own!!** – Many of our Med Soc socials involve fancy dress, as do many other society socials. Invariably, bolder is better!!
- **Smart Casual Clothes** – for placements and Clinical Skills (and any other clinical environment in which you want to make a good impression)
- **Formal Wear (Black tie)** – for the summer and winter balls
- **Some sportswear** – Whether or not you plan to join a sports club we recommend bring sports kit as we will have some active socials in freshers (trampolining etc.) and sportswear is required for some Clinical Skills sessions.
- **A Laptop / Tablet** – Obvious essential kit. A tablet with a pen such as an apple pencil can be a great investment for your studies (BUT bear in mind we receive an iPad for free in 3<sup>rd</sup> year and they are by no means essential before then)
- **An Ethernet Cable** – Halls all have Ethernet plugs and the WIFI can be unreliable.
- **A Whiteboard and Whiteboard pens** – a great revision/learning tool – highly recommended
- **A sturdy bag** – for books/laptop/water etc.
- **A stethoscope** – Most of us have the Littman Classic III. There are deals available at the freshers fair and they're not essential early on so it's a good Christmas present idea. MAKE SURE you get your name engraved on it.
- **A flask** – If you're not already a caffeine addict you will be by Christmas! An essential for your 9AM EBL coffee.

### Halls Top Tips

Starting in halls is largely common sense, your flat will become a huge part of your freshers experience and ensuring you are happy and settled in it is a key part of nailing your first year.

Therefore, we have put together a few pointers for those first weeks in halls (Nb. RAs are Resident Assistants - older students who live in halls and are there to monitor/be your first port of call in case of issues in halls):

- Check your room and the communal areas thoroughly for any damage when you arrive and before you unpack. Take photos of any damages and clearly write this on the inventory sheet as they may try and fine you for existing damage.
- Save your duty RA's number in your phone before you go out in case you lose your keys.
- Be friendly with your RAs and don't get a reputation as the flat that is always causing trouble – they might be flexible with the curfew on special occasions.
- Don't feel bad for phoning the RA. If someone is being annoying or keeping you awake, let them know.
- RAs will appear from anywhere in the communal areas (at least in the newer halls). If your mattress is particularly bad, ask for it to be replaced. If anything is broken, bug the halls reception to get it fixed.

- If you've got an ensuite, clean the tiles frequently and let it air as much as possible to stop mould building up.
- Get to know your flatmates and do the Fresher's events the SU has organised on the weekend they arrive.
- Agree on some ground rules with your flatmates about the cleaning (especially in communal areas – you do not want it so dirty that it annoys the cleaner!)
- Consider sharing things with short use-by dates and washing up liquid/kitchen roll with your flatmates.
- The freezer is your friend but don't have too much in it in case someone leaves it open/accidentally turns it off when you go away for the weekend. Watch out for things you're defrosting e.g. meat.
- Try not to set the fire alarm off burning food – you might get fined and the rest of the block will hate you.
- Damage to the communal areas will be split between everyone with access to it if they can't find the culprit. If you can prove you weren't there when it happened, they can't fine you.
- If you're caught breaking the law or get so paralytically drunk that the RAs have to call an ambulance, be aware that the medical school will be informed. Enjoy yourselves but be mindful of the higher standard of conduct you're being held to.

## Families

All MedSoc members will be a member of a MedSoc family. The family system is a strong part of MedSoc tradition, establishing a really effective support structure between year groups.

Essentially, each fresher is given two (or more) “parents” in second year alongside “siblings” in their own year and second years are coupled up (or in some cases even thruppled/qudruppled) to be parents. Therefore, each fresher has at least two parents in the year above and several siblings in their own year, giving a strong support system and an easy contact (or several) for any questions at all about your Medical School experience.



This system is of particular value in the first few weeks of medical school and we feel that, this year, in the absence of a “standard” freshers, it will of particular importance to have this support. Furthermore, many of our freshers activities will be done in family groups this year, meaning that you are likely to get to know your family groups well and hopefully they will become a strong support and group of friends to you during your time at Peninsula.

As such, we are trying to ensure that you have as much in common with your parents and siblings, therefore, we have created a totally confidential survey to try to gain an idea of your interests and background so that we can create really strong cohesive families. The questionnaire is optional and your answers will only be seen by the members of the committee responsible for forming the families and only for this purpose; therefore whilst it is optional, it is ***highly in your own interest to complete it!***

*The questionnaire can be found on the MedSoc Website: [www.peninsulamedsoc.com](http://www.peninsulamedsoc.com)*

*For any further information, questions or issues surrounding the families system and the questionnaire, please contact Simon on: [vicepres.pms@gmail.com](mailto:vicepres.pms@gmail.com)*

## Social Media

MedSoc has a plethora of different social media groups/group chats/pages which we use to communicate with all of our members (we still find it confusing so don't worry too much about all the different groups.) The main things that we recommend you do at this point are to:

- Join your year group Facebook page: <https://bit.ly/2XWTrTV>
- Join the main MedSoc Facebook page: <https://bit.ly/2PA4BZZ>
- Like and Follow the official MedSoc Facebook page: <https://bit.ly/3idNJ7I>
- Follow Peninsula MedSoc on Instagram: <https://bit.ly/30FcsMa>

## MedSoc Stash

Uni students love walking around in their course/society/sports team stash – and medics are no different. We have a wide range of MedSoc branded stash, much of which is personalised. Our PubSec, Kara will be in touch in the first term to take orders from you all so that you can proudly wear your MedSoc kit round uni.

## Charities

I'm sorry to break it to you all, but getting into medical school isn't the final destination, it's the first step on a very long road and there's still loads you can do to make your CV pop. Charity work always looks great (and, y'know, makes you feel great by doing something for a worthy cause, but we know that won't pay the bills after the student finance stops). MedSoc has lots of opportunities for you to get involved in, with volunteering opportunities at amazing local charities you can head down to with a friend and fun fundraising events throughout the year that are as much about having a good time than they are about raising money.

Now is the time to do all the volunteering you so humbly bragged about on your personal statement and with different charities and activities to choose from, in addition to us rotating the volunteers for each session, it should be easy to find something that works for you. We do a lot of work with two great local charities called START and Shekinah who do work with refugees and people in recovery, respectively. At START, you would be helping out with one of the social events they run called the Cultural Kitchen and at Shekinah, you can help out with the soup kitchen. Both are perfect opportunities to develop your communication skills which is vital both short term on placements and in clinical competencies, as well as long term in your future careers. We also have some other very exciting opportunities in the pipeline so there's lots to look forward to!

If you are interested in getting involved in any capacity or would like some more information, then don't hesitate to contact our charity sec on [charitysec.pms@gmail.com](mailto:charitysec.pms@gmail.com). She's looking forward to hearing from you all!

## Eating Out

Places to reward yourself after spending 8 hours in the Library distracting yourself from doing any actual work)

Aside from McDonald's, here is a selection of our favourite places to eat. We're sorting out discounts for MedSoc members for some of these, you'll find out more during Freshers!

### City Centre

A place where you can find all the things you will need as a student. As well as a selection of casual food spots, there are many on this list that make up some the nicest food spots you can have on the regular!

**Turtle bay** - a Caribbean food franchise you've all heard of! With a diverse menu and crazy number of cocktails, you are bound to find yourself here at some point during freshers!

**Yo! Sushi** — don't go when it's not blue Mondays. No one is rich enough.

**The Bank** — a solid dinner with a nice pub atmosphere, the perfect place for a Sunday lunch to debrief Saturday night's antics.

**Nando's** — the perfect place to end a tiring day of designing with playdough and playing hide and seek in your flat like the child you are... grow up

**Royal William Yard** – probably the most upmarket area in Plymouth with classic architecture and waterfront views. With some of the best restaurants, this is where you go for dinner when your parents are down and willing to pay for your food, as it is not sustainable place for a student's bank account.

### The Barbican

Having more waterfront views, The Barbican is MedSoc's favourite place in the city. Located very close to Astor House and close to the town centre it provides a mixture of cocktail bars, pubs and some nice restaurants. We are particular fond of **The Harbour Seafood Restaurant**, another great place to take your parents and perfect for a post exam treat. Be aware – whilst it isn't just as expensive as Royal William Yard, do not expect to be eating out here too often!

While you will inevitably spend a lot of time in McDonalds and Subway, there are definitely other cheap bits to eat around Plymouth that you can become a regular at – or you'll give up all resemblance of a human and have it Deliveroo-ed to the door while still in pyjamas at 6pm.

**The Camel** - A Halal eatery. Camel is reasonably priced with good food. If you're particularly adventurous, you can order a whole sheep and rice (with about 15 friends). The Camel is also Plymouth student's favourite shisha bar if that is what you're into!

**PSQ Cafe** – PROCEED WITH CAUTION – we recommend not having a pizza after any of your EBL sessions here – the prices are too cheap and the food is too good, it can become quite problematic to develop the habit of eating here after every session you have in PSQ.

**Caffeine Club** - The eatery that never sleeps apart from its resident cat. It's open 24 hours to comfort and sash, your needs including fry-ups at 4am after a night out. James recommends trying Pizza Fries and the 2-pint milkshakes. Think of this place like Jake's – but with a smidge more class.

**Jakes's** -The perfect first date for you to take that new partner you met 2 hours ago in the queue for a drink at walkabout at 3am. Jake's is open to 5am every night of the week and will become a ritual to end your night out with a cheesy chip with curry/gravy. The place we have missed most in Plymouth

**Wildwood** - Wildwood provides delicious meals for all occasions as well as 50% student discount (for up to 8 people) Sundays to Thursdays!

### Places to Visit

**The Hoe** A huge grass area with Smeaton's Tower in the centre (iconic Plymouth). The Hoe is the number one spot in Plymouth for day trips out of the flat to clear your head. Make sure you don't miss the spectacular fireworks display on bonfire's night and enjoy the funfair!

**Dartmoor National Park** A gorgeous landscape that is beautiful but may bring back bad memories of Duke of Edinburgh. When you aren't climbing mountains and thinking of how bad it was of a decision to come here, Dartmoor offers stunning waterfalls, deep gorges and miniature ponies to see when you're there. Dartmoor is a vast national park that's reasonably accessible from Plymouth on the bus. If you like cycling, head to the Burrator reservoir!

**Cremyll Point and Mount Edgecombe** A cheap ferry from Stonehouse will take you over the river to Cornwall. You can find a lovely pub with a great Sunday carvery here, as well as a lovely country house. This is a favourite running spot for the weekly circuits run by MedSoc.

**Tinside Pool** Apart from the sea, this is the best place to swim in during summer. It overlooks the sea and it is found near the Hoe. It is open between the months of May and September and is a great laugh in the sun!

**Water sports @ Mount batten** Plymouth is Britain's ocean city and Mount Batten is Plymouth's main centre for water sport activities. They offer a wide range of both events and qualifications such as RYA Instructor courses, RYA and BCU personal proficiency awards or just perfect for a day out.

## Staying Safe

Plymouth really is a safe city, but it's still a city. Here is our general advice on staying safe whilst you're getting to know the area. You'll probably spend most of your time in the city centre, North Hill and Mutley Plain. These are fairly safe "student" areas which are packed with shops, bars and restaurants. But just to be safe:

- Try and avoid walking alone after dark until you know where you're going.
- Make sure you have your RA's or flat mates number at hand.
- Avoid areas like the sundial or Devil's point after dark unless you're in a group — just ask any Janners.

### Important tips on nights out:

- Try and walk to and from pres in a group and stick together on nights out.
- If you lose something, ring the bars you've been to or ring security (who handle lost property) and fill out a police form online.
- If you're on a night out: Stick with a group and DON'T leave anyone behind.
- Make sure you have everyone's number on your phone!
- Don't share taxis with people you don't know.
- Be careful with accepting drinks from people you don't know.
- Don't get too drunk!
- Pace yourselves with alcohol and ask for tap water every now and again. All bars, by law, have to give it to you – but only if you ask!
- If someone is bugging you, let the bouncers know.
- Stick to clubs/bars within the city centre and Pryzm and avoid bars in areas like the Barbican and Union Street until you know your way around.
- Put your keys, cards and ID in a safe place and never leave your bags lying around. (We know this happens a lot!)
- If someone in your group drinks too much. make sure they get home safely before you leave them!

Key Areas of Plymouth as below:



## Nightlife

Plymouth has an exciting nightlife with a diverse range of places in which to spend your evening ranging from outside bars to large clubs.

### Around university and North hill

**Air** – Brilliant when the sun is out and about for a cheeky afternoon pint and pizza in the sun with decent discount with your medic card.

**Bac Bar** – Kryptonites (a very potent drink) of all the colours of the rainbow, and a new drink deal every night. A pole for all the photos you'll regret in the morning a ping pong table for beer pong.

**Classrooms** – Changed recently from the infamous Fresher and professor a place we spend a large amount of our time and far too much of our money. This is a staple with their ridiculously strong cocktail. This is a place you won't remember until the 3<sup>rd</sup> time you go.

**Switch** – Medics love Switch. £1 pint deals for one hour every day, and the official hosts of medic pre's on our social nights. Two floors and many many memories to be made (and then promptly forgotten).

**SU Bar** – Drinks available from midday and decent food it is the perfect place to come after lectures or between if you like to live life dangerously, as well as transforming into a night club which on certain nights will be packed to the brim for university students only. Make sure you take your student ID to the SU for entry.

### Union Street

**Revs** – A slightly classier standard of bar and more expensive prices. They do a banging cocktail, especially on 2 for 1 days

**Union Rooms** – The central Spoons (Plymouth has 3). Perfect place to go for a pitcher before hitting the clubs nearby. Many a medic has brilliant memories of a messy night there!

**Walkabout** – With renovation over, MedSoc is waiting with bated breath to see the changes. A must on a Wednesday night, as university society night out is held here. Walkabout has a fond place in many a fresher's heart.

**Popworld** – It is slightly sleazy, it is very cheesy and is opposite Union Rooms. It plays all the old school bangers that you love to disco to; from blue sky to blue VK's this place has it all

**Pryzm** – Plymouth's biggest clubs with different rooms for R&B, 80s music, hip-hop etc. Perfect for when you are in the mood for belting out classics or having a good time.

## MedSoc Balls

MedSoc holds several balls per year. The two of most relevance to the freshers (and second years) are the winter and summer balls:

### Winter Ball

The Winter Ball is the perfect way to round off your first term with a bang. At the end of a long term, it is the perfect opportunity for those with fresher's blues to have a top-class event with their peers in the medical school. It is one of the biggest events of the year with consistently high turnouts, this is one opportunity you do not want to miss! Time to party the night away all dressed up for the first of many classy nights here at Peninsula. The night starts with a 3-course meal and drinks to get the conversations flowing and occasionally ends with a few alcohol-related mistakes...

### Summer Ball

The Summer Ball is the biggest and most stunning MedSoc event of the year. To make it grander, we will be teaming up with another society so we can book the biggest and most stunning location possible within Devon or Cornwall.

The Summer Ball entails the journey to the Ball, a drinks reception, a 3-course banquet, followed by evening entertainment such as a disco, photobooth and more. We end the evening by travelling back to the city, with the option to go out or go home. Ask any older medic and they'll be guaranteed to share fond memories of their summer ball with lovely photos to prove it.

For obvious reasons, last year's ball had to be cancelled, meaning that there will be no doubt that the ball of summer 2021 will have to fill the place of not one, but two summer balls, as such it promises to be nothing short of spectacular.



*A Selection of photos from the summer ball of 2019 - with 2020 out, 2021 will be bigger and better than ever!*



## MedSoc Sports

### Hockey

The PUPSMD Hockey Club is a mixed team for medics, dentists and biomed students who play for fun but also take part in some tournaments throughout the year. We compete against local teams within Plymouth, against Exeter Medical School (in the Interpeninsula Cup) as well as in the TITS (Tournament in the South) in November and NAMS (National Association of Medical Schools) in March. PUPSMD hockey trains weekly at Plymouth College on Friday evenings. Everyone is welcome regardless of experience.

For more information,

email: [pupsmdhockey@outlook.com](mailto:pupsmdhockey@outlook.com)

[Like and follow PUPSMD HC on Facebook](#)



### Rugby

Established in 2003, PEMRFC (aka "The Squirrels") is a friendly club with a good social atmosphere.

They are represented by medical students (but we also welcome all students from all courses) from both universities. PEMRFC compete in a number of tournaments across Devon and Cornwall.

We also compete in NAMS (National Association of Medical Schools) Rugby, play an annual charity fixture against the Royal Marines at Plymouth Albion in front of a few thousand spectators. This is the perfect opportunity for those that want to play rugby but can't or don't want to commit to the time-consuming training sessions expected by the university. Training normally takes place on Wednesdays and matches are on



Interested? For more information, email:

Club captain: Tom Davies [thomas.r.davies-1@students.plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:thomas.r.davies-1@students.plymouth.ac.uk)

Vice President: Alex Westwater [aw705@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:aw705@exeter.ac.uk)

Plymouth Rep: Harry Lockley

[harry.lockley@students.plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:harry.lockley@students.plymouth.ac.uk)

Like and follow [PEMRFC Squirrels](#)

### Netball

UPMD Netball Club was formed in 2016 for medics, dentists, nurses and all other healthcare students. All abilities are welcome and we'd love for you to come along and have a go as it is a fantastic way of meeting students across the university from different years. They have their training sessions on Wednesdays 7-8pm to give you plenty of time to get ready for the renowned sports socials on Wednesday nights! Also, there are lots of opportunities to play matches in the University Intramural League against other



departments and we also run charity games throughout the year. However, if you fancy playing more competitively, we will be holding trials in October to be part of NAMS (National Association of Medical Schools) team, as well as playing matches against other southern medical schools to qualify for the National finals in Birmingham. We have qualified for the 2 years we've been running! For more information, email: [pupsmdnetball@outlook.com](mailto:pupsmdnetball@outlook.com)

### Football

The prestigious Peninsula medical school's football team has been running for 18 years and is eager to recruit enthusiastic new players of all abilities. We plan on starting a team next year who will compete in a Wednesday League where we came second last season! We also enjoy playing casual 5 a side football regularly. Highlights of our football calendar include bi-annual varsity matches against our historic rival Exeter, the Peninsula dental school as well as NAMS (National Association of Medical Schools) tournament at the end of the season. There will be weekly training sessions on Sundays (more details will be provided at the start of the year) and amazing team socials regularly so you can get a chance to get to know other students from different year groups! We aim to get enough committed people to NAMS with our own men's and women's team.



Get involved and have a go!

For more information, contact:

Jake Craddock – [jacob.craddock@students.plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:jacob.craddock@students.plymouth.ac.uk) (MENS)

Sneha John – [sneha.john@students.plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:sneha.john@students.plymouth.ac.uk) (WOMENS)

### MedSoc Yoga



This isn't just yoga; this is MedSoc Yoga. Develop your flexibility while revising your anatomy. It can also be the perfect way to destress and escape your studies for an hour. MedSoc Yoga is open to all abilities, whether you have tried yoga before or not! This is the cheapest yoga class you will ever go to in your life at only £3 a session (most groups charge at least £5). MedSoc yoga relaxes the mind, clearing it for work or sleep following the session, whilst also helping to

develop your body's strength and flexibility. Our qualified yoga instructor is very friendly will guide you through a fun yet meaningful one-hour session on Tuesday nights. Feel free to bring flatmates and non-medics as well (they will have to pay an additional MedSoc Sports fee for the first time). If you have a yoga mat at home, then bring it along! Otherwise, we have some that you can borrow. Looking forward to seeing you on the mats!

For more information email our MedSoc Sports Sec Zoe Lambert at [sportsec.pms@gmail.com](mailto:sportsec.pms@gmail.com)

[Join MedSoc Yoga on Facebook](#)

## Societies

MedSoc is regulated by The University of Plymouth Students Union and works in partnership with a variety of other Medically orientated societies to which many of our students belong. These societies are generally made up of medical students but are often open to non-medics as well and include both academic and extra-curricular opportunities and support. N.b. – ALL of the societies below and more will be available to speak to and find out more from at our Medics' freshers fair – the idea of the summaries below is just to give a flavour of the breadth of societies available.

MedSoc works with the following societies:

### Plymouth Anatomy Society



Plymouth Anatomy is a society that was created to support medical students with their anatomy studies.

We offer extra-curricular lectures, workshops and revision sessions that aim to give pre-clinical students the chance to further their anatomical

knowledge under the guidance of senior students and clinicians.

### Students for Global Health

Students for Global Health (Formerly Medsin) welcomes the Freshers!

We are a student network and registered charity tackling global and local health inequalities through education, advocacy and community action. Plymouth is one of 30 university branches across the UK. We run many events throughout the year including charity fundraising, short courses and weekend events such as socials.

We are deeply involved in helping to tackle issues such as climate change, women's rights, infectious diseases and access to medicine...and many more! This year we are planning to host a weekend conference in October around the topic of Displacement where you will be able to meet members from all branches across the UK – which will be a great opportunity to further enhance your portfolio. We are also planning to hold "Tales from Global Elective" early on this year – a very successful annual event which we hope will inspire you.

STUDENTS  
FOR  
GLOBAL  
HEALTH

PLYMOUTH

Joining Students for Global Health will allow you to meet people across all years with similar interests and get involved with the community while making a difference and having fun. We can't wait to welcome you in the new academic year!!

### Friends of MSF

Plymouth Friends of MSF is a University society for fundraising and volunteering. Our main aims are to raise funds and awareness for the international organisation MSF (medecins sans frontiers/doctors without borders)



### Plymouth General Practice Society



We welcome all students on healthcare related courses to join our general practice and primary care society!

We hold regular events, both academic and social - we would love to see you at the next!

### Marrow

Marrow is the student branch of Anthony Nolan which is a UK blood cancer charity and bone marrow register. Anthony Nolan works to find stem cell matches for people with blood cancer in order to save their life. Last year Marrow raised nearly £10,000 and signed up over 1000 people to register.



Every 14 minutes someone in the UK is diagnosed with blood cancer. Plymouth Marrow proudly support Anthony Nolan by recruiting potential donors, spreading awareness and raising funds. We put on monthly swab clinics to try increase those on the stem cell register and we also raise money to help provide these life saving transplants.

***Like and follow Plymouth Marrow on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and SC to keep up to date on the latest events.***

### University of Plymouth First aid Society



University of Plymouth First aid Society aims to provide students with the opportunity to learn First Aid skills in a friendly, supportive environment, for free! We run weekly interactive training sessions as well as frequent talks from guest speakers, the chance to fundraise for local charities as well as the fantastic opportunity to put those learnt skills into action as a volunteer for St John Ambulance, in our affiliated student volunteering unit. As well as learning first aid skills, we also aim to provide you with the confidence to use them – with exercises to develop your communication and teamwork ability, and lots of opportunities

to make friends! You don't need to have any experience to come along, but conversely, if you've got skills to share and you'd like to support our sessions as a student HCP, get in touch. We hold a number of socials throughout the year and would love to welcome you into our student community.

### Plymouth Undergraduate Surgeons



Plymouth Undergraduate Surgeons are an academic society aiming to provide more teaching opportunities in surgery for medical students. We run a range of sessions throughout the year for students of all years to get involved in, including:

- Teaches from students as well as consultants and registrars
- surgical skills workshops
- a weekend national surgical conference with opportunities to present poster and oral presentations of research
- student led mentoring for AMK and ISCEs
- Additional surgical placement opportunities

## MegaReach



MegaReach is a global volunteering network driven by the vision of "making a real difference to real people". We aim to create partnerships between people and organisations for the mutual benefit of all parties. Please join us.

## Plymouth Obstetrics and Gynaecology Society



Throughout the year both students and clinicians will be providing teaches with the aim of enhancing your existing knowledge and to prepare you for clinical placements in years 3 and 4.

Topics on our curriculum which we will deliver teaches on include; female reproductive anatomy and physiology e.g. menstruation and contraception, pregnancy, common gynaecological conditions, STIs, Obs and Gynae emergencies, Obs and Gynae surgeries, plus many more!

We are also aiming to hold a careers event, a couple of teaches in collaboration with other societies, and fundraising events throughout the 20/21 academic year.

Search "Plymouth Obstetrics & Gynaecology Society" on Facebook, or "ogsplymouth" on Instagram.

## Nutritank

Nutritank@plymouth is a society set up for students that want to gain a better understanding of nutrition and lifestyle medicine that is so often missing from medical school curriculums.

Our main two aims are to:

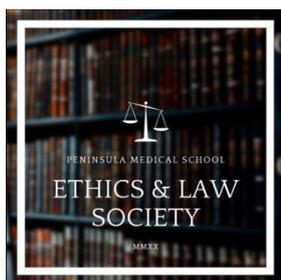
1. Raise medical students' awareness of the importance of nutrition and lifestyle medicine for all stages of healthcare.
2. Promote the need for greater nutrition education within medical school education so future doctors are equipped with sufficient knowledge to advise their patients.

By joining Nutritank@plymouth you'd be part of a community of students who want to develop their knowledge of how nutrition and lifestyle changes can affect our health. You would receive invitations to talks from national speakers and lifestyle medicine doctors; a chance to engage in social nutrition workshops and become involved with the wider Plymouth community with workshops in local primary schools.

Nutritank is a hub for your interest in food, nutrition and lifestyle medicine.



### Ethics/Law Society



Welcome to this brand new society! Formed just before the COVID-19 pandemic, we aim to bring the relevance of medical ethics and law to both our daily personal and professional lives.

Medical ethics and law are often brushed under the carpet by students in the quest to study 'real medicine'. This is something we want to change. All our future professional decisions will be guided by ethics and law and so a good understanding is essential.

We aim to provide events, debates, teaching and regular information on all aspects of medical ethics and law. Hoping to bring real cases from doctors and lawyers to our medical school. Aiming to explore above and beyond the taught curriculum.

To join our society and get involved in upcoming events, please visit our Facebook page 'Plymouth Medical Ethics & Law Society'. We look forward to seeing you there!

### Plymouth Undergraduates Neuro Society

PUNS is dedicated to inspiring interest in neurology and neuroscience. We offer neuro-based academic teaches for our members, every two weeks. For pre-clinical years, there is the opportunity to be allocated a neurosurgical placement at Derriford.



For Year 2 and Year 4, the society runs ISCE workshops, to prepare for the challenging neuro stations. Students have given great reviews about the whole day teaches that PUNS offers a weekend or two before each AMK. We also organise termly charity events to raise money for Brain Tumour Research.

### Acute Care and Anaesthetics Society (ACAS)

The Acute Care and Anaesthetics Society provides educational opportunities for those interested in the specialties of Acute Medicine, Emergency Medicine, Anaesthesia and Intensive Care Medicine.

### PsychSoc

Plymouth Psychiatry Society (PsychSoc) is an academic society set up for medical students with a keen interest in learning more about the world of Psychiatry.



Whether you are passionate about pursuing a career in Psychiatry, interested in the role of mental health in a clinical setting, or simply enjoy the discussion surrounding the psychiatric field, PsychSoc aims to give you the best possible opportunities to do so.

### Paediatric Society

Plymouth's Paediatric society, filling a vital gap in the curriculum, for those interested in children's health, unsure of their future career or just for exams. We will host a number of talks by students and clinicians throughout the year and the return of the Annual South West Paediatric Conference after an extremely successful first year in 2015! Members get many discounts and goodies throughout the year!



### Widening Access to Medical School (WAMS)

WAMS stands for Widening Access to Medical School and is a society which aims to encourage children of all ages to consider and experience a career in healthcare. With the help of our students, it organises mock interviews, provides a wealth of information, support and guidance to any future medics. Becoming a member of WAMS allows you to help share your passion for medicine with those who think they may also want to follow a career in medicine, and, on top of this, in participating in WAMS workshops/mock interviews etc. there are opportunities for paid work so it's healthy on the bank account as well!

### Plymouth University Wilderness and Expedition Medicine Society (PUWEMS)

We are the Wilderness & Expedition Medicine, or PUWEMS for short. We are a student-led society with dedicated students who love exploring the wilderness of the UK and have a passion for pre-hospital medicine.

Throughout the year we run a wide range of workshops which are led by a variety of people from paramedics, doctors, search and rescue teams and our own experienced medical students. These workshops are always aimed to be as interactive and fun as possible and will give you a great start at learning practical medicine that can be used in everyday life when responding to medical and trauma emergencies.

We also organise trips to different places all over the UK such as Dartmoor, the Cornish Coastal Path and Snowdonia. Our society gives you the opportunity to see some of the fantastic wilderness this country has to offer!



On these trips we run scenarios to allow for practical teaching and learning. Additionally, we attend national events like conferences and Wild Trials (a national competition).

Getting involved in PUWEMS is a great way to develop your emergency medicine knowledge and your teamworking skills. It is also a great opportunity to meet medical students in older years who can help you throughout your time in Plymouth. Most importantly, our society offers the opportunity to share some great adventures with a fun and friendly group of people.

### Friends of Future Health Africa

Friends of Future Health Africa is a society dedicated to raising money and awareness of the charity Future Health Africa.



Future Health Africa (FHA) strives for sustainable improvement in the health and wellbeing of people in low-middle-income countries (LMICs). Through sharing skills, they hope to transform lives, relieve suffering and reduce poverty. Their work started in Kenya back in 2009 by Dr Lucy Obolensky, who had been helping to improve access to primary healthcare for Maasai communities in Central Kenya as far back

as 1997. Along with surgeon Dr Ndanya, of Nanyuki District Hospital, they organised an orthopaedic trauma project, assembling a multidisciplinary Trauma Team from Torbay Hospital in Devon. The success of this

project has led to many further projects in Nanyuki, Mombasa, Kitale, Nyahururu and Marsabit, all in government facilities.

Since then, they've launched many different projects such as the Trauma Team which tackles disability and poverty caused by injuries, GRASPIT which teaches healthcare staff how to recognise and deal with acutely ill or deteriorating 'sick patients' to prevent avoidable death and disability, Team Talk encourages rural children to stay at school, challenges gender stereotypes and highlights the importance of sexual health and many, many more.

Through various events, fundraisers and talks we hope to raise money and awareness of Future Health Africa and help them continue their incredible work. Also, though we will not be organising our own trips to Kenya, Future Health Africa have volunteering opportunities and we can help our members get in contact with FHA so that they can apply to volunteer with them.

## What to expect from your first few weeks at Uni

The first two weeks at Plymouth provide you with an overview of the curriculum at Plymouth and introduce you to key areas like clinical skills, anatomy, problem-based learning and much more. You will hear lots of jargon and abbreviations, some of the key ones are listed below with a few hints and tips to help you get the most out of the different sessions.

Obviously, COVID will play a part in your first few weeks, the faculty will be in touch with plans and induction timetables alongside details of social distancing etc. As MedSoc, we will also be in touch nearer the time with details of fresher's fortnight within social distancing parameters as, COVID will clearly have a significant impact on freshers. However we will ensure that at some point in your first couple of days, the Medoc committee will be around to introduce ourselves and give you a proper welcome to the MedSoc.

Even though some sessions in the induction may say it's optional, we would recommend you go to them. Don't miss out on the Medic's Information (Fresher's) Fair (virtual or not!). You will have the opportunity to sign up to MedSoc and get details about the stash!

You will also get this opportunity to sign up to other societies and importantly sign up for medical insurance, so you don't end up with stern emails from the Faculty Office later in the term. Littman is often there and sometimes giving discounts on stethoscopes – So no need to buy one yet!

Finally (and most importantly) ENJOY THIS FORTNIGHT AND YOUR TIME BEING A FRESHER! The uni deliberately doesn't give you much work to do outside of the timetabled activities for this reason, and you'll be a lot busier once the case units start (don't worry, you'll still be able to find time to enjoy yourself). Feel free to go out and have fun every night, go to all the Fresher's Fairs (don't join too many societies though and blow your loan – you won't have time for all of them!) and get 30 £1 Domino's pizza boxes.

Also make sure you attended the timetabled sessions in body if not in spirit.

Once these first two weeks of induction are over your actual timetable will kick in, you will be shown how to access this as part of your induction. Be proactive check your timetable and use the digital learning environment to find the preparatory reading that you may need to do for sessions. It's a good habit to develop as sessions like clinical skills require you to prepare to get the most out of the sessions! Good luck!

## Our Top Tips to you for starting medical school

### Get involved!

- Don't let university just happen to you, make the most of it and get involved in different societies including MedSoc, as it will give you a chance to meet people outside of halls and medicine, who have similar interests to you.
- In the first few weeks you will get a chance to try things that you've never had a chance to do before and that after university may not get a chance to do again.
- Check out the UPSU information about societies and go to Society and Sports Fair during Freshers Week to see what's available. <https://www.upsu.com/ents/>
- In these first few weeks spend time making friends with both medics and non-medics. Having non-medic friends allows you to get away from talking about medicine!

### Medicine is a tough, long journey.

- You've gone from being some of the best at school, to being exclusively among people like yourself, so don't be fixated on being the best at everything you do as you won't be able to.
- Just remember you have been selected to come to Plymouth out of all the applicants and therefore belong here and are good enough to pass.
- Medicine is such a large field that it will seem daunting the amount you need to learn with some people being able to pick it up very quickly and some people taking their time to find their feet.
- Don't worry – everyone finds some aspect of the course tougher than others, so use the additional support that is available including tutors, fellow medics, MedSoc lectures, revision sessions to name just a few!
- Do not get distracted by comparing yourself to others, focus on the feedback from tutors and peers on how you can improve.

### Don't buy lots of resources

- Many of you will be tempted to buy yourself a library of books and a selection a medical apparatus - while the enthusiasm is admirable, medical textbooks are expensive.
- Wait until you have submersed yourself in the course and know more about what you need.
- There is also a large library and resource centres which contain everything you need - if you find a textbook you like or use a lot you may want to buy a copy.
- Speak to older students and ask for recommendations.

### Start a revision group.

- The assessment process involves regular progress tests throughout the year and as medicine is such a broad subject it is not easy to learn by last minute revision – you need to practice and continually build on your knowledge.
- Working in a group is often more effective than working on you own (providing that you're actually working). It allows you to cover each other's weak points as well as being able to share resources within your group to reduce time researching topics. Also, it means you are more active in your learning rather than just sitting staring at a textbook!
- Practice questions so you know what to expect.
- Get a group of fellow medics together to practice your clinical examination techniques – you need to practice to become competent.

**You** will also need to keep on top of deadlines for other assignments like reports/essays that you will need to complete during the year – being organised and not leaving everything to the last minute will reduce stress.

Above all use the multitude of resources that are available to support your learning and take charge of your learning.

### Be humble

- While it's normal to be proud that you've managed to secure a place in medicine remember there is a long journey ahead before you become a doctor.
- From very early on you will attend placements and meet a wide range of healthcare providers in a community setting as well as a clinical one. You can learn a great deal about health and patients in placements where you might least expect it - so keep an open mind and take every opportunity to learn from everyone you meet.

Finally always remember that you represent the Medical School and your behaviour must be guided by the GMC's Professional Behaviour

and Fitness to Practice Guidelines <https://www.gmc-uk.org/education/standards-guidance-and-curricula/guidance/professional-behaviour-and-fitness-to-practise>

## Methods of Learning at Peninsula Medical School University of Plymouth

### EBL – Evidence-based learning

This will form the core method of studying case studies linked to the life cycle from conception to old age during your first two years of medical school. It will provide a basis for everything else you will study during your two-week case unit, including clinical skills and LSRC. You will cover ten cases during the first year initially heavily guided by your facilitator but increasingly being self-run. You work in small groups which are allocated at the start of the term and each student takes a turn at chairing the sessions. The aim is to research a clinical scenario/case study by identifying the key themes and concepts and identifying questions to research for the next session. As a group make sure you agree good focused questions to research or you'll pay for it later when you spend hours researching bizarre open-ended questions that are less relevant to your case study. This is an effective way of learning because you are actively learning rather than just having information told to you.

### Placement

During Year 1, you will be paired up with another student in your year to visit a range of health and social care settings on placement. The placements are either community or GP based and very varied ranging from obstetrics to funeral directors, the aim being to provide experience of the extended medical universe, i.e. not just "typical clinical settings." You will be surprised how you can often learn the most about patients and factors that affect health in placements that are not hospital or GP based. Always check you know where your placement is as you may need to get a bus, check the dress code and act in a professional manner as you are representing the Medical School.

### Jigsaw

This, like EBL is a small group session where you will have the opportunity to share and discuss the experiences that you had during your placement in order to get you into the habit of being able to share and discuss your emotions in relations to events or experiences that may have affected you.

You will identify key issues, in both your placement and your theme of the week which is usually set on the Jigsaw Discussion Forum – so keep an eye out for any preparatory work that you may need to do before Jigsaw. There is a document called a JRT (Jigsaw Reflective Template) which you must complete after each placement and during or after the Jigsaw session

**\*Top tip:** Get your JRT's completed as they need to be shared on the Jigsaw Discussion forum and you must include them in your Portfolio.

### CSRC- Clinical skills resource centre

This is where they will attempt to teach you the practical skills that will stop you appearing incompetent in your second-year placements! Clinical skills tutors teach you everything from hand hygiene, communication skills, history taking to clinical examinations and first aid. To get the most out of the sessions, do the preparatory work and get a group of students together to practice these techniques as you will be assessed on them during the year.

**\* Top tip:** Wear smart clothes for CSRC as it's a requirement as part of professionalism. Guys need shirts, trousers and smart shoes. Girls need smart trousers or knee length skirts/dresses, covered shoes and clothing that covers the midriff and back. Make sure you're bare below the elbows!

**\*Top tip:** You'll be able to get a FREE bus to Derriford, so don't worry about not being close to the hospital. Take any of the Number 42s or 1 and these buses will pick you up from uni/top of North Hill/Mutley Plain. These buses do take a while to get to Derriford Always leave for CSRC at LEAST an hour before your session as traffic can be a nightmare and completely unpredictable and if you arrive late you won't be allowed in. The best way to plan what bus to get is just via google/apple maps on your phone and using the public transport option for travel.

### LSRC- Life Sciences Resource Centre

This is a session with about a third of the year group where you will mainly learn anatomy using the Anatomage table you will be show during your induction, diagrams, models and real people who you will draw on. These sessions are all interactive and you will be expected to do preparatory work beforehand to contribute to the conversation to get the most out of it.

Top tip: do your prep so you don't look like an idiot

### Plenaries

These are your lectures take your notes and you'll get along fine.

### SSU - Student Selected Unit

There are three SSUs in the first year one of which is a formative/practice one. The remaining two SSUs will be chosen from the SSU catalogue and students choose from topics in biomedical science, medical humanities and healthcare environments. The SSU is completed over two weeks and may involve lectures, a placement or even an art class! During that two- week period you prepare an essay/report based on your topic and usually complete a presentation to your group about your findings. This is the medic equivalent of coursework and you will be guided by an expert in the field you have chosen, and the aim is to improve skills such as information retrieval, critical appraisal, time management, uncertainty management and communication skills.

**\*Top tip:** while it may be tempting to leave it to the last minute, submitting seconds before the deadline is not good for your grades or your heart especially considering the tenuous university Wi-Fi connections.

### Tutor and Portfolio Analysis

In the first year you will be allocated an academic tutor who you will meet with on a regular basis to discuss progress and to review your Portfolio. Each student must

While producing a portfolio can be time-consuming it is something that you will have to do in your actual career so it is important to practice now!

\*Top Tip: update your portfolio regularly as you get feedback and complete JRT's etc – that way you are not searching for reports when it comes to completing the Portfolio Analysis which happens twice a year. Portfolio Analysis involves reflecting honestly on three areas specified as well as reflecting on your academic progress.

### Assessments

If you're anything like we were, you'll already be stressing out about exams. But, we'll give you a brief overview and explain why you shouldn't.

Assessments here are not graded in firsts, 2:1s etc. They are graded as satisfactory (pass), excellent (better pass), borderline and unsatisfactory. Whether a borderline is a pass or not depends on the type of assessment. Your first attempt at everything (aside from competencies and PJs, 2 of your PAs, 2 of your SSUs) are considered formative – meaning they won't count towards your score or affect our progression to second year. Your entire score in first year counts for just 5% of your overall final ranking. You'll have a whole lecture from the Head of Assessment on this during Freshers so don't worry if this doesn't make much sense.

### AMK/Progress Tests

This progress test is taken 4 times per year and is the same test given to all five years. There is no pass mark, but you are graded against your cohort using the unsatisfactory – excellent scale mentioned above. This test consists of 125 questions over 3 hours which are negatively marked (you lose 0.25 mark for every incorrect answer). Thankfully, there is a Don't Know option which saves you from losing anything but forfeit the chance at gaining a mark. Don't worry if you only get a one-digit percentage from the first few progress tests (this is completely normal). Your first AMK is formative. AMKs are sat in October, January, March and May on a computer system.

### End of Year

100 questions for nearly 3 hours testing everything you have learnt throughout year 1. It is marked like the AMK, but this exam has a pass mark of around 45% but this depends on your cohort. This is the final thing you will need to do for Year 1 and your gateway to summer!

### Professionalism Judgments (PJs)

These are subjective assessments on how you participate in your sessions. PJs are given throughout the year for EBL, Jigsaw, SSUs and Clinical Skills. Make sure you engage in your sessions, be on time, dress appropriately and don't skip sessions – and you'll be fine!

Please note that you can also be given "On the Spot PJs" for good or BAD conduct.

## Clinical Competencies

These tests the skills you have been taught in your clinical skills sessions. In Year 1 you will be tested on Vital Signs, Basic Life Support, Cardiovascular/Respiratory/Gastrointestinal examinations. You have three attempts at each if needed.

## Academics Support

### What if I fail at something?

Don't even think about failing! The assessment team's motto is frequent assessment and rapid remediation. This means they test you frequently to work out if there are any issues, then they'll give you intensive support to help you improve. Once you're here, as long as you work hard, they'll fight with you to help you stay here!

## MedSoc Academic Support

MedSoc aims to give you as much extra support you may need on your journey throughout medical school. MedSoc may know how to party, but we view academics as most important!

Self-Directed Learning (SDL) is quite daunting especially as it might be something you've never really done before if you're coming straight from 6th form and have only had to revise from things you've been taught. It was for all of us at the beginning so don't worry! One of the most difficult challenges you will face in first year is working out how much you need to know, identifying what you don't know and also how you learn best in terms of revision. A lot of the learning is SDL – unfortunately, there are no revision guides for medicine. While medical school is tough MedSoc aims to give you all the tools to succeed.

As part of MedSoc you will have the opportunity to attend extracurricular lectures delivered by a student in higher years 3 times per case unit as well as larger review lectures before exams, as well as running SSU support sessions.

For more information, email: [academics.pms@gmail.com](mailto:academics.pms@gmail.com)

## Medical School Support

The medical school truly values their students and they offer a range of support for their students. If you ever have any questions about literally anything, your first point of contact would be the PSQ Faculty Office. They can be emailed at: [psqfacultyoffice@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:psqfacultyoffice@plymouth.ac.uk). You can also ask questions about your course and make recommendations through your student reps who will be elected to represent your year in the student staff

liaison committee and various other events. If you also have any concerns about anything throughout your course e.g. with academics or personal issues, please don't hesitate to get in contact with your academic tutor, pastoral tutors and lecturers (you'll find out more information about them during your induction here at Peninsula).

## Recommended Reading

FoMD will send you a recommended reading book list before you arrive in September. If it's like anything we got as Freshers, you DO NOT want to get everything on that list! You'll have access to the titles in the library and in LSRC. The most important titles on that list are available as free e-books (YES, THEY'RE FREE!) Our main piece of advice is to try a few titles out when you get here. Make sure you skim read through before buying! Please note that the medical school will also give you a link to an external webpage regarding recommended reading.

### Here are our top recommendations:

Human Physiology: From Cells to Systems – L. Sherwood

Good descriptions and helpful diagrams to really help you get your head around all those different systems. Great for just getting an overview of what everything does.

Gray's Anatomy for Students – R. Drake et al.

The best place to start learning about anatomy before you get bogged down with nth branch of whatever nerve etc. This book provides simple diagrams, easy to follow descriptions and helps you grasp the important stuff before you put the whole human body together!

The Anatomy Colouring Textbook

Makes a very dry topic a hell of a lot easier to remember! Also helpful for educational procrastination.

Dr Najeeb Lectures and Armando Hasundungan

These are a series of really popular medical lectures for medical students who prefer watching videos instead of reading (some of us are guilty). They cover a lot of the core knowledge you need to know for Year 1 and in good stead during your pre-clinical years. However, don't be overly reliant on YouTube videos, make sure you do some reading too and go over your lecture notes frequently!

*These are just some of the ones we like – you'll find out what works best for you through experimenting.*

## Useful Abbreviations

- ADB** – Assessment Database (where results for everything apart from the AMK/EOY are released).
- Panopto** – where you can access recorded plenaries to help you write your notes. Unfortunately, all plenaries are compulsory so you can't just rely on Panopto.
- BMA/MDU** – British Medical Association/ Medical Defence Union (the two indemnity providers you'll meet).
- Consolidation/CLUE Weeks** – usually a week where you don't have any lectures. These give you time to go over your notes and revise.
- DLE** – Digital Learning Environment (everything that you need will be on here including: plenary slides, link to Panopto, timetable etc).
- EBP** – Evidence Based Practice (here you will learn how to critically appraise research papers and learn statistics – these are really funnn).
- FoMD** – Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry
- ILSA** – Integrated Life Sciences Assessment (this is a formative and anonymous test on all previous case units held during consolidation week to help you find gaps in your knowledge).
- Interactive Sessions** – Plenaries longer than an hour with an interactive element to stop you from falling asleep/messing around – often involves food.
- JBB** – John Bull Building at Derriford Hospital where CSRC is and where you're based in Year 3.
- Logbook** – the website where your AMK and EOY scores are released.
- PCMD** – Peninsula Colleges of Medicine and Dentistry (a medical and dental school run together by Exeter and Plymouth which split in 2013 creating PUPSMD and in 2013 FoMD).
- PMS** – Peninsula Medical School
- PSQ** – Portland Square Building on campus where you will spend most of Year 1 and 2
- SDL** – Self-Directed Learning
- UPSU** – University of Plymouth Student's Union (our SU and the body MedSoc are registered with).

## Look After Yourself!! (We don't want to sound like your Mother...but seriously)

We're sure you've been lectured about all this many times before. You know the drill. Eat healthily, sleep, exercise, don't drink too much alcohol etc. We won't lecture you, but just make sure you **DO** look after yourself because your mental and physical health is most important, above everything else. Make sure you learn to prioritise and are organised, so you don't get stressed out too often and end up taking on too much work for yourself.

Medical school is an incredibly fun and rewarding part of life. Being in a small cohort is no doubt one of the best things about this medical school. It allows you to get to know everyone in the course really well and feel like you are part of a tight-knit community. If you feel like you haven't settled in or made friends at the start of the year, don't worry! We all felt like that at some point and we promise that without realising it, you've made some amazing friends for life. Your friends don't have to be just other medics, get involved with other societies and get to know students outside of the course too!

University is always hyped up to be one of the best years of your life, but this may not always be the case. It's important to us that everybody is happy at university and whilst we try our best to achieve this, it may not always be possible. Life as a medical student can be incredibly stressful especially for those who are not used to high workloads or not being the best academically. Sometimes the pressure does get to you and we understand that completely. It is a sad truth that medical students have one of the highest rates of mental health issues out of the whole student population.

It is important to us that you feel that you can talk to any of us in the committee, but there are also professional people we would recommend that you talk to if you're ever worried or stressed about anything. There is no shame in talking about any issues you may have, and talking to someone, especially a professional, will have no impact on your future career.

Through the University, there are several ways to access help for you and your wellbeing through e-counselling, peer support, help lines as well as help with anything else you may be struggling with such as accommodation.

Information on this can be found here:

<https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/about-us/teaching-and-learning/guidance-and-resources/student-support-services>

Ultimately, if you are experiencing any issues, do know that MedSoc is here to support you and can direct you to the correct support if necessary. No problem is too small!

***Thank You for reading! (if you've made it this far) – enjoy the rest of your summer and we look forward to meeting you in freshers – information regarding freshers' fortnight (yes – you get a week longer than everyone else) will be shared via Facebook nearer the time (So get on that yearbook group!!)***