

# Medical student liaison

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The Royal College of Surgeons has always been committed to helping future surgeons and ensuring the highest standards of training. The College has a thriving Medical Students' Liaison Committee (MSLC), comprising the presidents of each of the 34 UK medical schools' student surgical societies with College staff and Council members.

The MSLC and ABUSS (the Association of British University Surgical Societies, a purely student-led and run society) share ideas and resources to encourage good surgical teaching for all students and good support for those considering a career in surgery.

Times have changed. The *Broadening the Foundation Programme* initiative has removed many surgical posts from the foundation years.<sup>1</sup> Many reports cite a problem with surgical teaching at undergraduate level<sup>2,3</sup> and others cite old-fashioned ideas about what is needed to become a surgeon.<sup>4</sup> Services have changed so that there is less exposure to surgery. It is now more important than ever that medical students feel supported and educated in surgery.

Successes of the MSLC (and every constituent student surgical society) include:

- Editing and collating a new National Undergraduate Curriculum in Surgery (<http://bit.ly/1UUB9r6>). This is aimed at the minimum standard that should be expected for every doctor at the point of graduation. It provides clarity on the knowledge and skills expected. It encompasses prevention, consent and the entire patient journey. It contains a syllabus with 35 essential conditions to be understood and the key skills to be mastered. There is also a *Learning in Operating Theatres*

document.<sup>5</sup> The new curriculum should help all medical students to focus their learning and all those who teach students to maximise the learning opportunities. It is for every future doctor, with additional links for those keen on surgery, and should improve the care of future patients.

- Running 'how to be a surgeon' evenings through our Surgery in Schools programme.
- Running 'surgical revision for finals' courses for other medical students.
- Providing information on surgical careers.
- Running surgical careers courses.
- Links with the Women in Surgery group (free to join).

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## The Broadening the Foundation Programme initiative has removed many surgical posts from the foundation years

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- An affiliate scheme (£15 per year for medical students, foundation doctors and others before membership exam).
- ABUSS produces a regular newsletter.
- Ensuring the Museum and Library are set up to benefit medical students.

We now need the help of 'ordinary' surgeons, each one of whom is an inspiration.

- The medical students in the regions need help with identifying speakers. For all the online and web-based learning, students need to get into the operating theatre, to be welcomed and involved in the operating theatre and have role models.
- Do you have medical students attached to your firm or hospital?
- Could you talk at one of their events?
- The medical school societies vary in their enthusiasm and size and some need more support.
- Would you be able to contact the person in your local student surgical society to see what help they need? Visit the RCS Surgical Careers website or email [cwynn-mackenzie@rcseng.ac.uk](mailto:cwynn-mackenzie@rcseng.ac.uk).

### References:

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2. Davis CR, Toll EC, Bates AS *et al*. Surgical and procedural skills training at medical school – a national review. *Int J Surg* 2014; 12: 877-882.
3. Illing JC, Morrow G, Rothwell C *et al*. Perceptions of UK medical graduates' preparedness for practice: A multi-centre qualitative study reflecting the importance of learning on the job. *BMC Med Edu* 2013; 13: 34.
4. Sutton PA, Mason J, McNally S *et al*. Attitudes, motivators, and barriers to a career in surgery: A national study of UK undergraduate medical students. *J Surg Edu* 2014; 71: 662-667.
5. Royal College of Surgeons of England. *Learning in the Operating Theatres*. London: RCS; 2015. <http://surgicalcareers.rcseng.ac.uk/documents/Learning%20in%20the%20operating%20theatre.pdf>