Self-Proposed SSC (SPSSC) Guidelines – 10 Steps with Exemplar

Students are encouraged to propose their own SSCs in Years 3 and 4; unlike Year 2, which is menu only due to the limited clinical experience that you have at this stage. These can be undertaken in Glasgow, anywhere in the UK or worldwide. Please carefully follow the steps listed below.

Sequence of events

1. Start early – it is strongly advisable for students to start planning very early on. The potential supervisor may take a long time to reply to you and also other hospitals/universities/institutes may have requirements for students to meet certain criteria, such as providing references or other paperwork. All SPSSCs are required usually to be finalised at least 6 weeks before the module starts, preferably earlier.
2. Students’ responsibility - please note that SPSSCs are your responsibility to set up and this includes funding, organisation and communication with your supervisor, etc although guidance about the process can be obtained from the SSC Office. It is also worth noting that it is up to you to sort out adequate travel insurance or indemnification arrangements, if travelling out with the UK. Students should also check whether a visa is required for the period of your stay.
3. Download and look over the SP form - which essentially is the Learning Contract between you and the supervisors and is available from the SSC Homepage (exemplar form is found below).
4. Identify the subject area of interest. Please be as specific as possible and carefully consider possible titles for any written work (e.g., report/essay/dissertation/audits) which is subsequently to be assessed.
5. Identify a location within or out with Glasgow.
6. Identify a supervisor(s) and obtain confirmation
7. For most students, the supervisors will be someone in and around the Glasgow area. It is likely that the supervisor is affiliated with the University and therefore able to assess the work. If not, they can suggest someone who can mark the report, who must be associated with the University.
8. If students organise an SPSSC out with the Glasgow area they will ALSO be required to identify a Glasgow Academic supervisor (“Glasgow Marker”) who is normally affiliated with the University and who is prepared to liaise with them about the content and assessment of the module. **This is important because the Glasgow supervisor is the one that will actually assess most of your work (at least 80% and usually is in the form of a 4,000-word referenced report on some aspect of the area of interest).** This person could be an academic member of staff in the University or member of NHS staff with Honorary University status (or higher). NHS staff involved in teaching medical students usually have such status or equivalent. Assistance to help you identify a suitable individual can be obtained from the SSC Office, if required. The remaining **20%** (or less) is usually assigned by the “**distant” supervisor** and tends to be a subjective supervisor’s assessment based on **your overall performance** during the SSC module. Please ensure that you have identified and consulted with your Glasgow Supervisor/Marker well in advance of submission of your application, as there is no flexibility in the SP proposal deadline. During the consultation phase, please do not forget to discuss the content and the method of assessment which must be appropriate for assessing the learning outcomes of the SPSSC.
9. Supervisor(s) should send a confirmatory e-mail to the SSC Office in lieu of their signature on the SP form to indicate their willingness to act in this capacity and their agreement with the proposal. **For modules out with Glasgow this will involve confirmation from both the “distant” AND Glasgow Supervisor/Marker.**
10. Prepare the SSC self-proposal form which, as mentioned above, can be downloaded from the SSC website (exemplar form is below).
11. This should be prepared in conjunction with the SSC supervisor (and Glasgow supervisor where relevant) and submitted to the SSC Secretary ([med-sch-ssc@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:med-sch-ssc@glasgow.ac.uk)). Please note that the completion of the form IN FULL is essential, so provide as much information as possible when explaining the content of your SPSSC. This is important as it is the only documentation on your educational activity during the module and is the only means by which the module can be judged by the SSC Office, SSC academics and the External Examiners. Particular care should be taken with the sections on aims, educational objectives, module description, timetable and assessment. An SSC SP exemplar form and how to write aims and objectives are found in the appendix below.
12. Before submitting the self-proposal application to the SSC Office, you could use the SP form, to help you prepare your DRAFT proposal, prior to submission.
13. If travelling abroad for your SSC, you will also need to complete a risk assessment form: a blank and exemplar form can be found in these links and is also available from the SSC website

<https://www.gla.ac.uk/media/Media_888078_smxx.doc>

<https://www.gla.ac.uk/media/Media_888077_smxx.docx>

1. Please be sensible and make sure the country that you are going to is safe and that there are no issues relating to your return for your next block. One way to do this is to check with the Foreign Office website ([http://www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk/)). Useful information is available on your Elective site.
2. Agree the SPSSC (which is the Learning Contract) with the supervisor and obtain signature/confirmation.
3. Once the agreement has been reached, submit the form ([med-sch-ssc@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:med-sch-ssc@glasgow.ac.uk)) making sure that it contains all the relevant information. If applicable, also submit the risk assessment form.
4. Once submitted this will be examined by the SSC team and feedback given, where necessary.
5. Your supervisor(s) will be required to accept and provide written confirmation of their acceptance of the proposal.
6. If for any reason the SPSSC falls through, you will have to choose one of the organised SSCs from the menu. If this occurs after the deadline for selection, then the SSC Office will allocate you an SSC.
7. Advantages of SPs - SPSSCs allow you to not only pursue something that is of interest to you, and which may not be available on the menu but also guarantees your first choice. Finally, SPSSC students tend to get more out of their module because they have much more “ownership” of their learning.

Students also have the opportunity to combine their Junior Elective with your SPSSC to yield a 9-week block provided students manage to do their SSC in the first block in Year 4. The Year 4 Secretary should be contacted in order to request your SSC block preference for the beginning of term. This extended period can be spent in a laboratory, hospital, or other appropriate location, either in the UK or overseas. The SSC Director/Deputy may ask to meet with you in order to ensure that you maximise this 9-week learning experience. Under these circumstances, the written work should be more extensive (~6500 words) and can also be used as an Elective report.

Good luck and enjoy!!

SSC Team

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| LEARNING CONTRACT (Year 3 or 4)  Self-Proposed SSC Submission Form Template  Please email completed forms to the SSC Secretary ([med-sch-ssc@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:med-sch-ssc@glasgow.ac.uk)) or return  the Wolfson Medical School Building, University of Glasgow, G12 8QQ | | | | | | | | | | | FOR MEDICAL SCHOOL USE ONLY Date Received: | | | | | | |
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| Please note that the red text below denotes instructions while blue text illustrates an exemplar  **Supervisor** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| Supervisor’s name: | | Dr Mary Meechan | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| Address: | | Please be sure to include name of hospital/clinic/organisation, and department  Department of Surgery, Queen Elizabeth University Hospital  1345 Govan Road, Glasgow, G51 4TF | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | |  | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Telephone: | | 07592724844 | Email: | | | | | Mary.Meechan@glasgow.ac.uk | | | | | | | | | |
|  | |  | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Supervisor's signature: | | Mary Meechan | | | | | | | | | **OR** Consenting Email: | | | | | | 🞎 |
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| **Student** | |  | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| Student's name: | | Margaret Brownlie | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| Matriculation No: | | 2162134B | | | | | Year of Course: | | | 4 | | | | | | | |
|  | |  | | | | |  | | |  | | | | | | | |
| Email: | | [2162134b@student.gla.ac.uk](mailto:2162134b@student.gla.ac.uk) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| Student's signature: | | Margaret Brownlie | | | | | | | | | Date: | | | | 14.08.2021 | | |
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| **Glasgow Marker** (Note 1) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| Marker’s name: | | If the supervisor is not a member or affiliated with the University of Glasgow, then a Glasgow marker is required. This is usually the case for SSCs than take place outwith Glasgow. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| Address: | |  | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| Marker's signature: | |  | | | | | | | | | **OR** Consenting Email: | | | | | | 🞎 |

**NOTE:** If a Glasgow marker is required then the main written assessment component (e.g., report, audit, cases with reflection) must be at least 80%.

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| **Learning Contract** | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| SSC title: | No more than 10 words.  Molecular, cellular and clinical aspects of breast cancer | | | | | | | | | | |
|  |  | | | | | | | | | | |
| SSC date: | From: | | 5th Sept 2022 | | | To: | 7th Oct 2022 | |  | | |
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| Overall aims: | One or two bullet point - The overall aims of the module should encapsulate the intentions of the SSC supervisor (i.e., overall purpose).   * The student will gain a broad experience of breast cancer. This will include all aspects of care from diagnosis and staging through to both the surgical and oncological treatment of the disease. * The student will further their knowledge of the pre-clinical aspects of the disease through reading of current research and spending time in affiliated laboratories in the Institute of Cancer Sciences. | | | | | | | | | | |
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| Educational objectives: |  | Educational objectives should inform the students of what they ought to be able to *do* as a result of the SSC learning experience/activities. Verbs should be in the active case (e.g., explain, identify, describe, analyse, communicate, demonstrate). Avoid the passive case (e.g., understand, be aware of, appreciate, recognise) and should *avoid* being statements of belief or philosophy.  Also please note objectives should be assessable/examinable and further examples are in the Appendix at the end.  Four or more objectives please. | | | | | | | | | |
|  | 1. | To identify the salient scientific and clinical issues from a review of the literature on breast cancer | | | | | | | | | |
|  | 2. | To describe the clinical presentation of breast cancer and describe how it is investigated and staged | | | | | | | | | |
|  | 3. | To explain the surgical and oncological treatments offered and decision-making employed in choosing breast cancer treatment | | | | | | | | | |
|  | 4. | To describe the impact of a diagnosis of breast cancer on the patient | | | | | | | | | |
|  | 5 | To analyse a specific area of current research from the breast cancer database | | | | | | | | | |
|  | 6. | To demonstrate a professional attitude throughout the SSC module | | | | | | | | | |
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| Learning strategies: | If this is covered elsewhere in the SP form, then there is no need to complete this section. Examples include department tutorials, lecturers, attendance at clinical sessions, group tutorials, self-directed learning, assigned guidelines, textbooks and journal papers. | | | | | | | | | | |
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| Resources: | Some examples are:   * Introductory tutorial on breast cancer * Scheduled teaching and departmental educational meetings * Pathology Sessions * Hospital Clinics * Ward Rounds * Theatre Sessions * Doctors, nurses, and other healthcare staff * Case Notes * Databases * Landmark online journal articles on breast surgery and cancer * Textbooks and Guidelines | | | | | | | | | | |
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| Assessment: | The most common assessment weighting:  Nature | | | | | | | | |  | % Weighting | |
|  | 1. | Supervisor Assessment/Judgement | | | | | | | |  | 20% |
|  | 2. | Oral Presentation (15mins incl. answering questions) | | | | | | | |  | 20% |
|  | 3. | Individual Written Report (3000 words) | | | | | | | |  | 60% |
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|  | **Essentially the weighting suggestion is 1000 words for every 20% of written work.**  Please note, that it is good practice for all SSCs to use at least two assessment techniques and the methods used be appropriate for assessing the learning outcomes of the SSC. Supervisor’s assessment of 20% should be considered for clinical placements to ensure that an element of professionalism is assessed in the modules although we appreciate that; this may not be possible in modules that take large numbers of students. At least 60% of the assessment must be in a form accessible to the External Examiners (e.g., written report, case reports with reflections, lab books, etc.). Ideally, the main assessment tool should be a properly referenced report/dissertation/essay/audit (3000-4000 words depending on the other assessment weighting). If case reports are used, then each must be accompanied by a reflective commentary of about 500 words bringing the word count up to a total of 1000 words for each). Please ensure that ALL the work (including oral presentation) is submitted on the Friday of the last week in the block. This is important because it is “date stamped” and penalties will be incurred for late submission.  Some other common examples of assessment breakdowns:   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | Supervisor Assessment/Judgement |  | 20% | | Individual Written Report (4000 words) |  | 80% |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | Supervisor Assessment/Judgement |  | 20% | | Two Cases with Refection (2000 words) |  | 40% | | Individual Written Report (2000) |  | 40% | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | Of course, other types of assessment instruments can be used such as lab book, literature review, reflective portfolio, blog, website, learning resource etc. For these, like the above regular used methods the **weighting suggestion is 1000 words for every 20% of written****.** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Module description: | 1 or 2 paragraphs providing an overview  This module will allow the students to gain a comprehensive grounding in the current surgical treatment of patients with breast cancer as well as obtaining some insight into potential future developments. The students will also learn first-hand how breast cancer patients are managed by the multi-disciplinary team and explore other aspects of current breast cancer management. In parallel, using data from the Department of Surgery's breast cancer database, the students will undertake a small audit in investigating the challenge in predicting outcome in breast cancer.  Assessment will be in the form of a written report (on a topic which will be mutually decided), a departmental oral presentation, and supervisor assessment which will be based on interest, motivation, reliability, attendance, etc. | | | | | | | | | | |
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| Timetable of events: | Weekly attendance at the following:   * 1 clinic, 1 lumpectomy/mastectomy theatre list, 1, 1 departmental and MDT meeting, with ward rounds interspersed * Throughout the five-week block, sessions with breast care nurse specialists, radiologists, oncologists and pathologists will be arranged * A short audit will be undertaken during week 3 of the block * Time not attending clinical sessions will be spent either in Institute of Cancer Sciences or self-learning * Time in the final week will be dedicated to a departmental oral presentation and submission of the final report   OR   * Week 1 & 2: Attend outpatient clinics, ward rounds, theatre sessions and start literature review * Week 3 & 4: Continue to attend clinical sessions, have one-to-one sessions with allied specialists (e.g., nurses, oncologists, pathologists) and examine clinical data using appropriate statistical analysis * Week 5: Oral presentation and write up report for submission before 5pm on Friday | | | | | | | | | | |

**Appendix**

**How to write aims and objectives**

**What are ‘Aims’?**

The ‘aim’ of a PBL. laboratory, tutorial exercise, or lecture states the *intentions* of the ‘teacher’ or designer of the exercise. For any one element it should be possible to convey the aim in a sentence.

**What are ‘Objectives’?**

Objectives should inform the students of what they ought to be able to *do* as a result of the learning experience/activities.

(i.e. verbs should be in the active case. Avoid the passive case e.g. understand, be aware of, know (a fact), appreciate, recognise).

Objectives should *not* be statements of belief/philosophy/fact.

Objectives should be assessable (examinable) and that which is assessed should be clearly stated as an objective.

Examples of ‘good’ constructions for objectives:

*analyse* data/information --

*argue* the pros and cons of –

*calculate* the caloric intake –

*communicate* with the block leader through the internet

*demonstrate* how to resuscitate a patient

*describe* the purpose of

*design* an improved case record sheet

*dissect* out the nerve from Tom’s thumb

*draw* a diagram/paint a picture

*dress* a wound

*examine* a slide to determine whether tissue is normal

*explain* the safety implications

*identify* a specimen/tissue

*interview* a patient to establish ---

*list* the complications of diabetes

*measure* blood pressure

*observe* and report upon the behaviour/reaction

*outline* the main features of ----

*prepare* an agenda/spreadsheet

*research* the library catalogues for information

*sterilise* the environment

*summarize* the findings in a paper/report

26 Sept 2023