

A Guide to Mentoring Medical Students
Medical Education Unit, UCMS and GTB Hospital
University of Delhi

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Faculty mentors and students, batch of 2010, who participated in the mentoring survey, 2010.
Quotes from the survey are found in the manual.

Special mention

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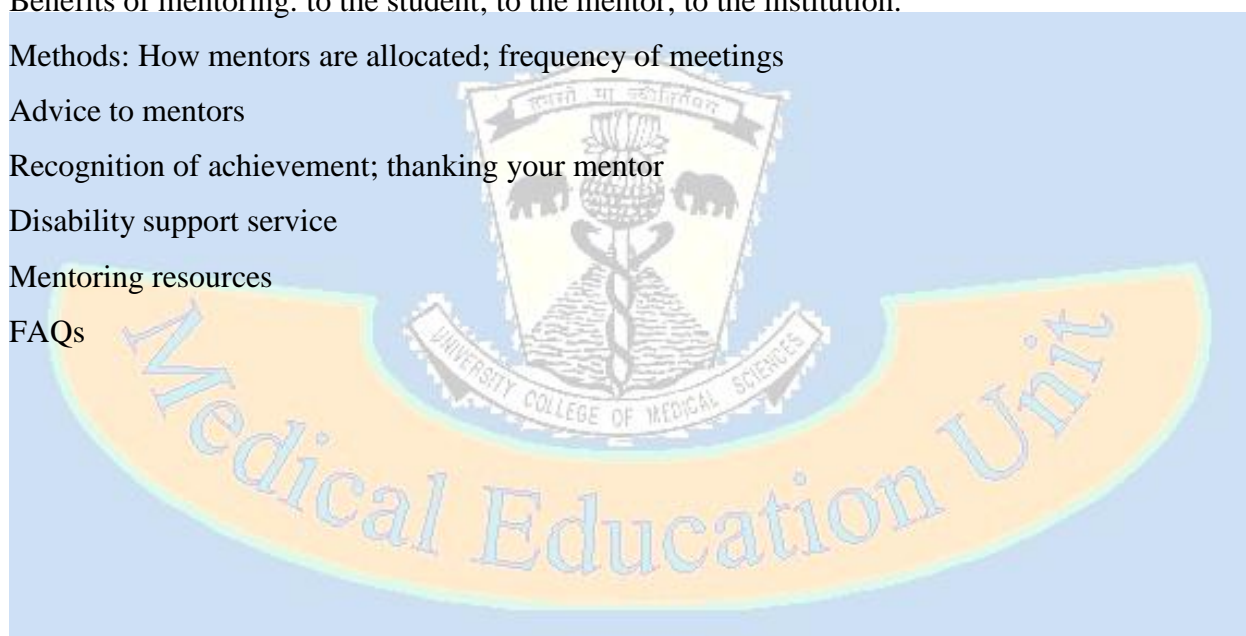
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1. Introduction

What is mentoring?

Mentoring is a relationship between a more experienced person (mentor) and a less experienced one (mentee). As a new entrant to the professional course at the University College of Medical Sciences you have a unique opportunity to be mentored by both a faculty member *and* a senior medical student. The mentor-mentee relationship is based on mutual trust, respect, and a willingness to learn and share. The central point is encouragement, constructive comments, and openness. The mentor encourages the mentee to reach her/his full potential by sharing knowledge and experience, and provides emotional support and encouragement.

Do you need a mentor?

You may have managed school very well with only parental support. However, the medical curriculum is unlike anything you have experienced before. As first year medical students, you are suddenly thrown into a new, challenging environment. This change makes you vulnerable to stress. Moreover, some of you are from out of Delhi and may not have as much family support as before. Mentoring provides a supportive infrastructure that tries to make you feel at home. It is an opportunity for you to get to know a number of excellent faculty members and senior students. You can maximize your experience as a medical student and a soon-to-be professional by interacting with them and learning from their experiences. They can help you make important personal and professional decisions, like how to balance studies with personal needs, how to talk to patients, how to overcome learning difficulties, how to be more professional, what field of medicine to specialize in, and so on. Your mentor can help you generate research opportunities and give feedback on project write-ups or patient case reports.

If you feel that you don't need a mentor right now, remember that you may need one later in your medical career. Starting a mentoring relationship now will ensure that you have someone who knows you well and can guide you years later. In a sense, having a mentor is like having an insurance policy: the benefits are maximal when you pay regular premiums. Therefore, establish a relationship with a mentor *before* you get into a stressful situation, rather than *after*.

2. Goals

The Student Mentoring Program at UCMS was designed by a group of dedicated faculty and students to facilitate informal out-of-classroom conversations between faculty, senior students and new entrants. The broad aim is to enhance the University experience for all.

The program has **short term** and **long term** goals.

The **short term goal** is to introduce an immediate support network for incoming students. Thus, new entrants will get familiar with life at college, academically and culturally, so that they can better achieve their full academic potential.

The **long term goal** is to cultivate a mentoring culture at UCMS and GTBH that will engage all strata of students and every faculty member.

It is envisaged that every mentoring relationship will be unique in its nature and scope and will develop over time. The variable perspectives and different experiences of every mentor and mentee will add to the success of the program.

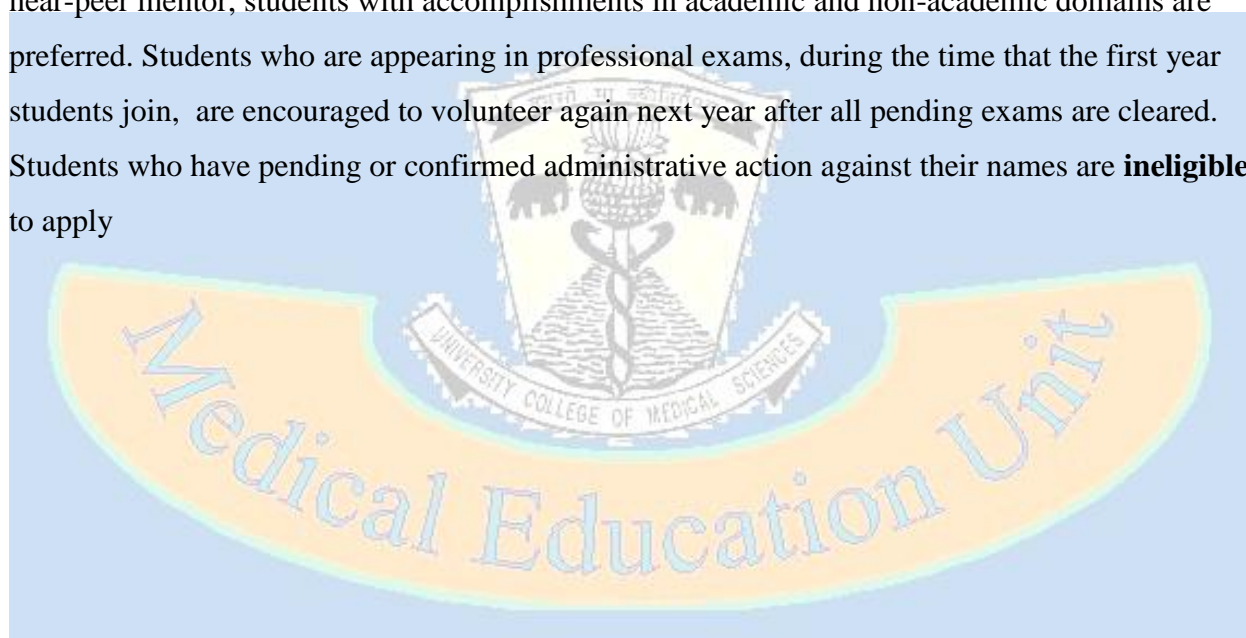
The aim of this booklet is to explain the roles of mentors and mentees and to act as a useful reference manual.

3. Near-Peer Mentoring at UCMS

Near-Peer mentors are undergraduate students, in their 3rd to 9th semesters, who have volunteered and undergone an orientation. They are our most valuable resource and eminently suited to be mentors because they still recall the difficulties they faced as new students. Their assistance can make college life easier and more enjoyable for new entrants.

Eligibility criteria

While every student from 3rd semester through to the 9th semester is eligible to apply to be a near-peer mentor, students with accomplishments in academic and non-academic domains are preferred. Students who are appearing in professional exams, during the time that the first year students join, are encouraged to volunteer again next year after all pending exams are cleared. Students who have pending or confirmed administrative action against their names are **ineligible** to apply



4. Roles

What is the faculty mentor's role?

The Mentor is role-model, motivator and counselor who helps the student in the following ways

- understanding the institution's culture and the medical course
- becoming familiar with campus life and its support services
- communicating and socializing with staff and peers
- becoming informed about administrative procedures
- transitioning to new methods of learning and working
- setting goals: short term goals for learning and long-term goals for career purposes
- transferring knowledge in skills relating to communication, critical thinking, responsibility, flexibility, and teamwork, that cannot be learned from books
- pointing out strengths and areas for development
- answering any questions, even those pertaining to personal matters
- supporting the student even after studies are completed.

What is the Near-Peer mentor's role?

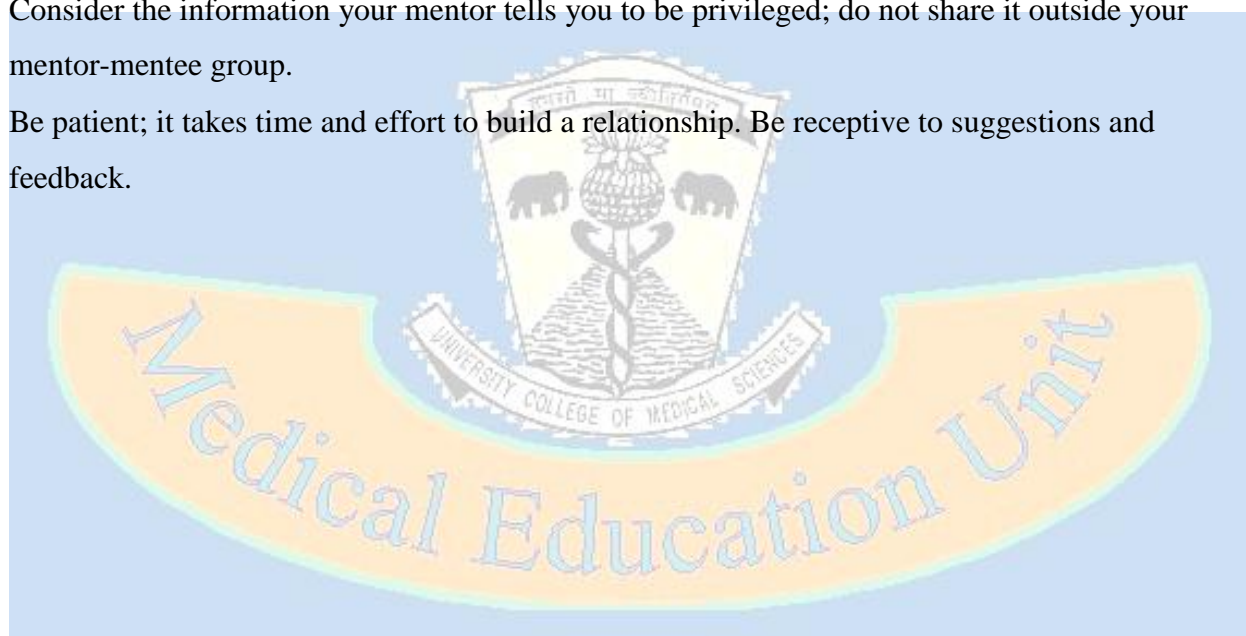
In addition to most of the roles described above for the faculty mentor, the student mentor is expected to

- be a source of information and assistance to help new students settle in
- help first year students feel a sense of belonging to the Institution
- contribute to developing an excellent supportive environment
- be a positive role model
- encourage fellow Student Mentors to hone their leadership and inter-personal skills
- assist in positive interaction between new students, Student Mentors and Faculty Mentors
- Recognize and respond to feelings of anxiety or isolation among new students

What is the mentee's role?

- Your role is to be enthusiastic, curious, and ambitious when discussing your interests with your mentor.

- Try to attend all meetings and arrive on time. If you are delayed or cannot attend, let your mentor know in advance.
- Respect your mentor's time and space. Your mentor understands that setting up meetings may be hard to do, especially with your hectic class schedule, and they are busy too; try to be flexible about what time you can meet.
- Find out how your mentor would prefer you contact him or her: e-mail, phone number or personally. Keep your mentor informed of your progress; it is important to stay connected even in-between meetings. You can easily e-mail your mentor to let him or her know what is going on in your life.
- Consider the information your mentor tells you to be privileged; do not share it outside your mentor-mentee group.
- Be patient; it takes time and effort to build a relationship. Be receptive to suggestions and feedback.



5. What makes a good mentor? Do I have the skills to be a successful mentor?

Effective mentoring is multidimensional. There is no single formula; every mentor uses a combination of professional expertise and personal style to mentor students.

Generally speaking, a good mentor has the following skills:

- enjoys helping others
- is available and willing to spend time with the student
- is open-minded and flexible
- has good communications skills; asks appropriate questions, listens actively and with empathy, gives feedback with clarity and sensitivity
- provides encouragement and support which enables the mentee to express feelings and consider options.

If you think you have the skills listed above, you will be a successful mentor.

“My mentor thinks from the student's point of view”

“My mentor was casual; that made it easy for me to approach her”

“My mentor solved all my problems”

6. Benefits of Mentoring

How does mentoring benefit the student?

Mentoring, more than teaching, helps students be successful. The mentor can enhance the mentee's sense of confidence and increase his or her self-esteem by showing genuine interest in the mentee's development. The student understands her/his role in the organization, gets advice, help and encouragement, and finds opportunities for networking.

"I enjoyed that I could talk to somebody who knew the medical profession (I don't have a medical background)."

"As a result of mentoring, I became aware of college rules, and felt supported when tense about studies."

How does mentoring benefit the mentor?

The mentor develops leadership and communication skills, shares experience and knowledge, and discovers the students' point of view. Mentors experience greater productivity, career satisfaction, and personal gratification. In addition, medical teachers that mentor, develop valuable skills that help shape the professionalism of future doctors.

"As a mentor, I acquired some new skills; counseling, humility, patience, and respect for students"

"I discovered empathy, compassion, and sensitivity to student problems"

How does mentoring benefit the department or Institution?

Having mentoring relationships in place stimulates the workplace, making it more effective. There is better communication, networking and sharing of values. The process generates positive

supporters who can promote mentoring to other employees/students. All in all, mentoring is an opportunity for faculty and senior students to 'pay back' to the Institution by making the workplace vibrant and contributory. In some instances, mentoring identifies qualified potential candidates who may fulfill future recruitment needs of the Institution.



7. Methods to the mentoring

How are mentors allocated?

Faculty and senior students volunteer for the program by July of each year. As soon as new student admission lists are available, random allocation is performed. Depending on the number of volunteers, each faculty member may expect to mentor 3-5 first year students, assisted by 2-3 student mentors.

Can I choose my mentor?

Since you are new to the program we expect that you will be mostly unfamiliar with the faculty and senior students. Thus, for your first year at UCMS, your mentors will be assigned to you. Later, however, from your second year and onwards, as you become exposed to more and more faculty and senior students, you may choose your mentors. Your needs are going to change; therefore, not only can you change your mentor, you can have multiple mentors.

Is it mandatory for me to meet my faculty mentor?

Not at all! The program is meant to support you during your initial phase of college life. Thus, you are encouraged to meet your mentors, but there is no compulsion to do so.

How do I find my assigned mentor?

The first contact between mentees and mentors will be arranged by the Mentorship Program Organizers. This is a valuable opportunity to get to know each other before the hectic schedule of your academic lives begins. You must make sure you do not miss it.

What are we expected to do at the first meeting?

It is essential that you exchange contact details and write them down in a safe place for future reference.

Consider some of these points at your first meeting; these will help you coordinate your mentoring relationship better.

1. Since the mentees are new to everything in the Institution, this is the time for the faculty and near-peer mentors to let them know **how** they wish to be contacted; by email, phone, or personally.
2. The mentors should decide how **often** they expect to hear from, or meet, the mentees; in other words, if limits must be set, now is the best time. Some mentors may encourage students to call as often as they choose.
3. It is important, at this stage, for you, the mentor, to let the students know if they can approach you on campus to say hello, share coffee, etc.
4. Fix the date of your next meeting; decide on a meeting time and duration (e.g. 30 minutes, from 1:15 to 1:45pm), and meeting location.
5. Discuss the purpose of mentoring and what each of you expects from the mentoring relationship.

We have had our first meeting, now what?

After this first meeting, the rest is up to you!

The Mentoring Program will facilitate 2-3 small-group meetings in the academic year, but it is important for the mentor and mentees to maintain some level of contact beyond these organized meetings. This can be done by organizing a pizza-lunch, or just meeting informally in the canteen or office. The frequency of meetings will be dictated by the needs of the mentee, and are likely to be very frequent only in case of some ongoing problem.

8. Advice to Mentors

Do arrange to meet your mentees in a group following your initial introduction. Continue to talk/meet on a regular basis through the year. It would be best to always meet on college premises or in a public area. Ask about their experience of living and studying at UCMS; try to identify students who may be having difficulties and encourage them to seek help from an appropriate support service. In case of any difficulty, other mentors, and the Mentorship Program organizers will be only too willing to help.

Common issues which may arise

Issues may be academic or social/personal. Try to use your own judgment to anticipate what kind of issues you can expect to deal with. The section on Frequently Asked Questions attempts to identify some issues that commonly arise.

Where do I go for advice as a Mentor?

Every Mentor will of course encounter some issues which fall outside the scope of his/her ability to manage. If you need advice on how to approach a particular situation please contact other mentors, or one of the Mentorship Program organizers.

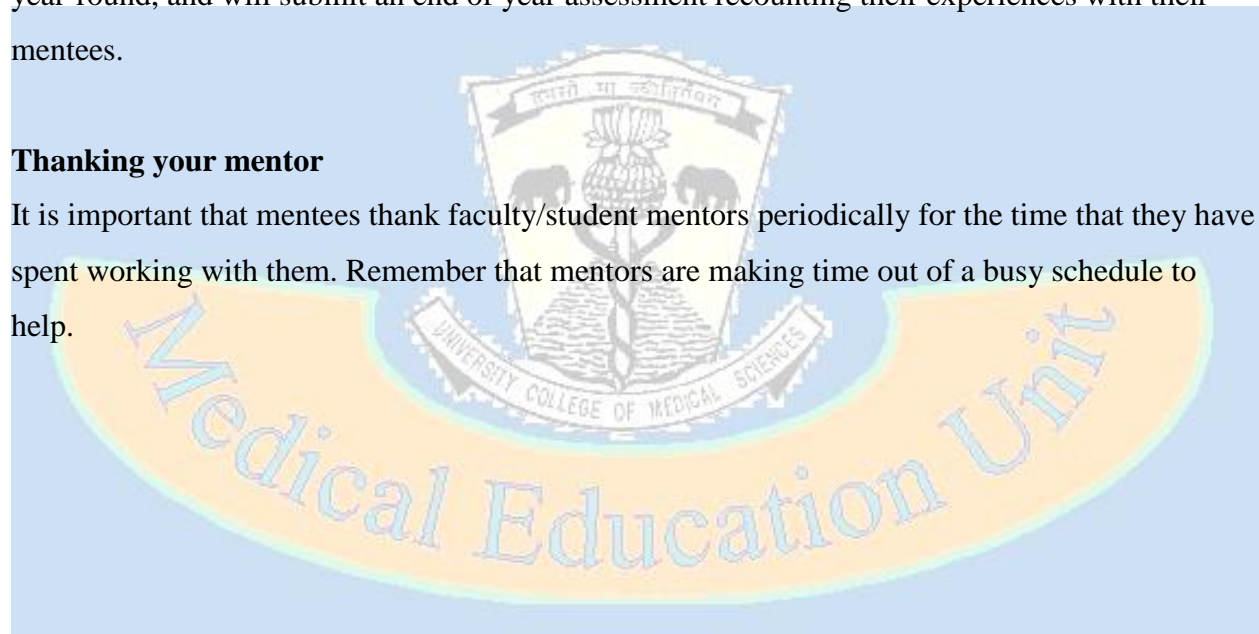
9. Recognition of Achievement

The Medical Education Unit of the UCMS will provide student mentors with a letter of recognition for participating in the Near-Peer Mentor Program. The letter represents your commitment to contribute something beyond your studies. Both UCMS and future employers recognize that learning can come from outside the classroom, so you can list your stint as a Near-Peer mentor as an achievement on your bio-data.

To receive a letter, it is expected that Student Mentors will contribute visibly to the program, year-round, and will submit an end of year assessment recounting their experiences with their mentees.

Thanking your mentor

It is important that mentees thank faculty/student mentors periodically for the time that they have spent working with them. Remember that mentors are making time out of a busy schedule to help.



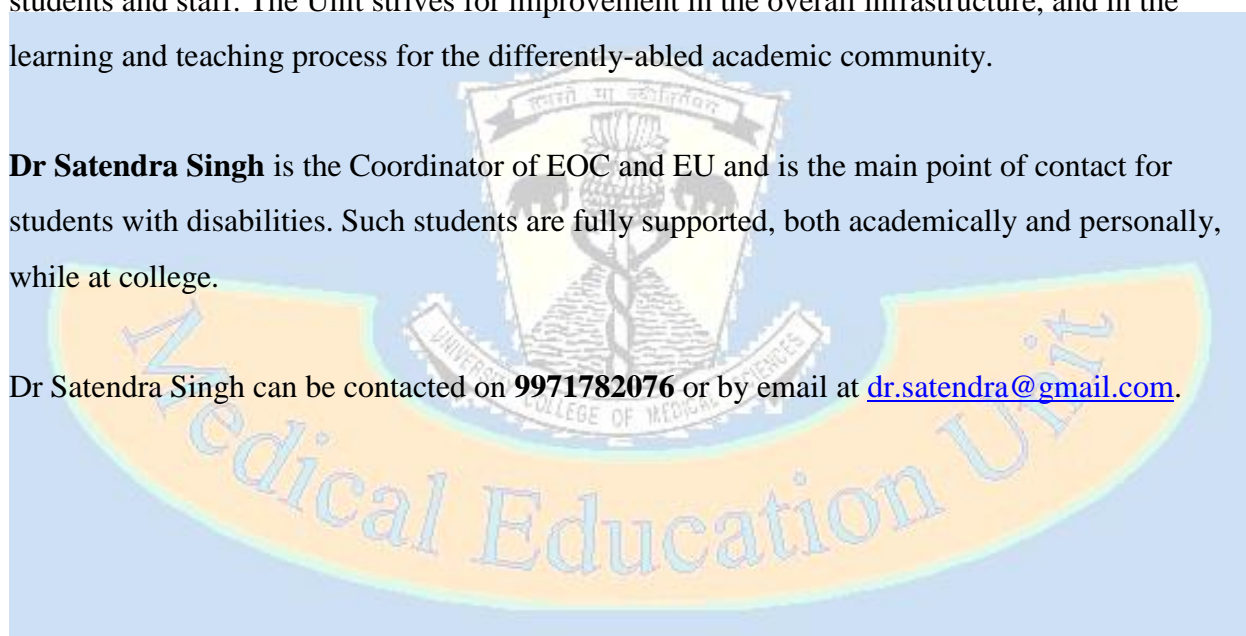
10. Disability Support Service

UCMS is committed to providing equal access to education and equal opportunities for students with disabilities. Students are encouraged to be open about their disability and to discuss their individual needs with the Equal Opportunities Cell. Students should disclose a disability early in the academic year to ensure that essential support can be provided on time.

The **Equal Opportunity Cell** of UCMS ensures affirmative action concerning persons with disability. The **Enabling Unit** adheres to University of Delhi's policy regarding differently-abled students and staff. The Unit strives for improvement in the overall infrastructure, and in the learning and teaching process for the differently-abled academic community.

Dr Satendra Singh is the Coordinator of EOC and EU and is the main point of contact for students with disabilities. Such students are fully supported, both academically and personally, while at college.

Dr Satendra Singh can be contacted on **9971782076** or by email at dr.satendra@gmail.com.



11. Useful resources

The following resources helped in the formulation of this manual

1. Swanson KE. Mentorship Manual for Medical Students. 2001. Accessible at <http://www.medschool.vcu.edu/wims/documents/MentorshipManual.pdf>
2. <http://www.mcgill.ca/mentoring/>
3. Van Dyke is teacher, mentor, 'ultra-bean'. Med Ed Update. University of Iowa, medical education community. May 28, 2008. Accessible at <http://medcom.uiowa.edu/meded/>
4. Rose GL, Rukstalis MR, Schuckit MA. Informal Mentoring Between Faculty and Medical Students. Acad Med 2005;80:344–8.
5. Walker WO, Kelly PC, Hume RF. Mentoring for the new millennium. Med Educ Online [serial online] 2002;7:15. Accessible at <http://www.med-ed-online.org>
6. Peer Mentoring at National College of Ireland. Accessible at [http://www.ncirl.ie/dynamic/File/Student Support Publications/Peer Mentor Manual.pdf](http://www.ncirl.ie/dynamic/File/Student%20Support%20Publications/Peer%20Mentor%20Manual.pdf).



12. FAQs

Academic FAQs

1. Now that I have joined UCMS, can you tell me something more about its standing in the medical fraternity?

University College of Medical Sciences is among the 5 highest ranking Medical Colleges in the country. It is known for its quality research; its national ranking is 7th based on the number of publications in PubMed indexed journals. Meritorious/Eminent Faculty are on expert groups of UNICEF, WHO, UNAIDS, World Bank, ICMR, ICMR, NACO, DST and CSIR. The college shows excellent results; students excel in curricular/extracurricular activities.

2. What is the MBBS course like?

MBBS is a 4 ½ year course, which is divided into 3 parts, called professionals. The first year features pre clinical subjects- Anatomy Physiology and Biochemistry; the second professional, over 1-1/2 years, deals with para-clinical subjects- Pathology, Pharmacology, Microbiology and Forensic Medicine. The final year and a half is divided into Part 1- Ophthalmology, ENT and Community Medicine, and Part 2- Medicine, Surgery, Pediatrics and Obstetrics and Gynecology. For greater detail visit http://ucms.ac.in/c_mbbs.htm

3. What books are to be purchased and read during the first year?

The complete list will be provided by the respective departments; however in case of any confusion your mentor will be glad to help you.

4. Where do we get the books?

Books are available at the Bookshop in the Junior Resident Doctors' Hostel.

5. How many hours of study are expected from a student on a daily basis?

It is a common belief that MBBS means studying 24x7. That is not true. The crux of MBBS is not based on the number of study hours, but on the quality of study. It helps if you are regular and attentive in class, and if your goal is to be a knowledgeable doctor. Studying everyday for

about 2 to 3 hours, even when you don't have exams, are good enough for most students; however, you must tailor your study to your own particular needs. If you require more hours of study to keep you going, make sure you put in those many hours every day.

6. Does my continuous assessment count toward my end of year result?

Absolutely! The test results and your year-round attendance record contribute to your being permitted to sit for the final assessment. Please try to maintain at least 80% attendance and 35% internal assessment.

7. Is there anywhere I can go to get extra academic support?

You can always contact the concerned Faculty, or Senior Residents, Postgraduate students, Senior Undergraduates or your mentors for help.

8. Will the mentoring program help me secure better marks in the exam?

Student mentors have already passed the phase you are in right now. They know how to tackle your situation in the best possible manner. Hence their advice would definitely help. But your mentors can't guarantee good marks. That depends solely on you.

9. I don't like my course and want to leave the college, should I just leave or talk to somebody first?

It is very common for students to get an academic and cultural shock once they enter a medical college. This is because of the tiring routine and the innumerable tests they appear for. This is a temporary phenomenon and most students get over it. Give it some time and even then, if you are not comfortable with the course, you can always talk to your mentors, a faculty member, senior students, or a career counselor for further advice.

10. My faculty mentor teaches clinical subjects. How will that help a 1st year student like me?

Faculty mentors are not solely for the purpose of helping you in your current academic course. They are motivators and advisers as well. A good relationship with your faculty mentor gives you an opportunity to seek professional and career advice in later years when you may need it.

Social/Personal FAQs

1. I am having difficulty settling down in UCMS & don't seem to be making friends, what should I do?

This is not unusual; it is experienced by many students when they join a medical college. It does take some time to settle down. Try and look for people who share common interests, join extracurricular teams, and stay in contact with your mentors.

2. How can we reach the college?

The college is served by the Delhi Metro; Jhilmil is the nearest metro station and is a ten minute walk away. Refer to the map provided on the Delhi Metro website for a Metro route convenient to you. If you are arriving from Ghaziabad, the Delhi-UP border is 2km from the college, only a short rickshaw ride away.

3. Are there any cultural activities at UCMS?

UCMS is well known for its cultural teams. There are two societies: Phocus (photography club) and Apokalypto (literary society). In addition, there are four teams: Dramatics (Manchayan), Choreography (Celeste), Western Dance (Waves) and Fashion (Larzish). If you wish to join, stay alert for the announcements; the coordinators are always looking for new talent. You can contribute to SPIC-MACAY which conducted three cultural events at UCMS last year, including a lecture demonstration of Kathak by Padamshree Shovana Narayan.

4. Does the UCMS have a designated college festival?

Certainly! The students' union organizes two splendid events, one in February-March, called "Ripple", and a mid-year festival called 'Avalanche'.

5. Where can students go in their free time?

There are two common rooms, one each for girls and boys, where students can spend time if free. The campus has a canteen complex near the teaching block where students can congregate.

6. Is there any ragging at UCMS?

The UCMS is strongly committed to providing a peaceful environment for students; we have a very active anti-ragging cell. Our senior students are helpful and cooperative. Nevertheless, if you feel insecure for any reason, do please confide in your mentors, or any teacher, or security staff.

7. How can we interact with our seniors outside of ragging?

Till your freshers' party you will have limited interaction with your seniors. The best way to have a positive interaction with seniors is through the mentoring cell and by joining the various extracurricular activities.

8. I want to join up for cultural activities. Will it hamper my studies?

Many students, who excel in cultural events, manage to do well in studies as well. These activities help you come out of your cocoon and contribute to personality development and time management skills. These skills will be useful to you as a Doctor. As a matter of fact, many of our student mentors are part of some team or society. Nevertheless, it is your decision; if you feel you cannot cope with too many things at one time, give preference to your studies. Academics are unquestionably the primary reason for your being in college.

9. Is there any time to relax and unwind during this course?

Definitely! Everyone needs a break and being in a rigorous course like MBBS increases that need. There are festivals, vacations and holidays to help you unwind and recharge for this never ending marathon of studies.

10. Is there any dress code, or decorum?

As a medical student, you are supposed to be a role model. Hence, you are expected to dress and behave in a manner befitting a future doctor. You will soon be interacting with patients, and must try to earn their respect.

11. **When and how will we get a room in the boys' hostel?**

You must apply, on the prescribed form, to Dr Satendra Sharma, Professor of Pathology. He is the warden for boys' hostel. Rooms are allocated first to students from outside Delhi; it may take a few months for rooms to fall vacant for students who have residential addresses in Delhi. After a few months, nearly all students find accommodation in the hostel.

Mentoring FAQs

1. **Can I stay in contact with more than one student mentor at the same time?**

Yes, you can. There is no limit to the number of senior students that you can seek advice from.

2. **We never felt the need for a mentoring program at school. How would it be useful here?**

At school, your teachers were almost always available for you when you needed help. Without realizing it you were in a mentoring relationship. Here in a professional college, your teachers are doctors and researchers as well and may not have time to devote to you beyond the lecture or lab. Your mentor on the other hand, is a faculty member who has committed to being available for you and your problems, and will ensure that you always get help when you need it.

3. **Why do we need a mentor from the faculty? Wouldn't student mentors be sufficient to address our needs pertaining to college and studies?**

A faculty mentor represents the other side of the game. While student mentors will help you study for exams and take part in cultural events, faculty mentors will help you grow and mature as individuals and doctors.

4. **What should I do if my mentor is unavailable or cannot help me?**

Usually, mentors are committed to be available at all times; however, in case of unavailability, you may contact another mentor, or the mentoring program organizers. Contact details are available at the end of this manual.

5. Does being a mentee this year mean that I will automatically become a student mentor in the years to follow?

No, that is not the case. Student mentors are chosen from amongst volunteers based on what they can contribute as role models. Being a part of this program requires active participation all through the year; in addition, student mentors must have communication skills and the attitude of "Happy to Help".



Contact us in case of any difficulty pertaining to the mentoring program

Name	Designation	Telephone number
Dr Navjeevan Singh	Coordinator, Medical Education Unit	8800537575
Dr Upreet Dhaliwal	Professor of Ophthalmology	9868399780
Dr Satendra Singh	Lecturer of Physiology	9971782076
Rajat Thawani	9 th Semester student	9899576611
Sonal Pruthi	7 th Semester student	9310221101
Mohit Chhabra	7 th Semester student	9871530473
Skand Shekhar	7 th Semester student	9810014439

