

POLICY TITLE: <i>Electives Policy</i>	APPROVAL DATE: <i>July 3, 2019</i> <i>Revised June 4, 2020</i> <i>Revised June 3, 2021</i> <i>Revised March 3, 2022</i> <i>Revised September 1, 2022</i> <i>Revised May 4, 2023</i> <i>Revised September 7, 2023</i> <i>Revised March 7, 2024</i> <i>Revised December 5, 2024</i>
RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT: <i>Office of Curriculum Management and Integration</i>	APPLIES TO: <i>All Students</i>

POLICY STATEMENT

PURPOSE

The University of Cincinnati College of Medicine (UCCOM) offers electives to medical students to broaden and balance the overall educational development of each student while enhancing learning in preparation for residency as well as an opportunity for career exploration and appreciation for medical specialties. This policy outlines the types of electives that are available at each academic level and the associated enrollment requirements.

Elective Guidelines

Electives are offered for two weeks OR four weeks total credit. The time to complete the total number of hours can be offered as full time which is 40 hours per week or part time which would be less than 40 hours per week.

1. Two weeks = 80 hours
2. Four weeks = 160 hours

A student may enroll in an elective only once. In other words, the same course number may only be taken once. Exceptions to this rule are away electives and specific research courses.

Elective Add/Drop

- To drop a course, students should submit a request at least 30 days prior to the start date in order to automatically withdraw to avoid a formal approval process. If the drop request is submitted less than 30 days, the drop request must go through a formal approval process with the department.
- To add a course, students should submit a request 30 days prior to the start date for consideration for approval. If the add request is submitted less than 30 days prior to the start date, the add request must go through a formal approval process with the department. Requests submitted less than 30 days may not necessarily be approved due to the short-time frame and onboarding process.

Longitudinal Electives

Medical students have the opportunity to take an elective offered for two or four weeks credit that spans several months and, in many instances, more than a single academic year starting during Phase 1. Credit for completion

of these electives is applied to Phase 3. While students may apply for consideration to more than one longitudinal elective, students are restricted to enrolling in only ONE longitudinal elective. Students applying for a longitudinal elective should be in good academic standing. However, if a student experiences academic difficulty at any time while enrolled in the elective, consideration of withdrawal will be discussed with the elective director, student, and possibly advisor in the office of student affairs.

Longitudinal electives may include activities in Phase 2 and 3, and therefore, can be taken concurrently with a Phase 3 course. Priority will be attending the AI, ICE, and general elective over longitudinal elective activities as students may not miss any components of a required course in order to complete requirements of a longitudinal elective.

MD-MPH Longitudinal Elective Credit

Students in the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine MD-MPH Dual Degree Program will not be eligible to earn additional credit towards the M4 year/Phase 3 for another pre-clinical longitudinal elective should they enroll in a longitudinal elective separate from their dual degree program.

If a student enrolled in a longitudinal elective prior to joining in the MD-MPH Dual Degree Program, the student will be capped at 4 weeks longitudinal elective credit applied to Phase 3. Students who were accepted to the MD-MPH Dual Degree Program prior to 07/01/23, who also completed another longitudinal elective, will receive full credit for both.

Phase 2/M3 Electives

Phase 2 Electives /Third Year Specialty Electives*

During Phase 2/M3, students will have two, two-week blocks where they can choose a specialty elective. The emphasis for these electives is for career exploration. A lottery system permits students to rank their order of preference for these electives. Students may opt to use one of the two-week blocks as flex time or a general elective offered in Phase 3. If flex time is used, those weeks will be deducted from the 20 total weeks of flex time offered in Phase 3 and will need to take compensatory general electives in place of the specialty elective. Exceptions to the flex option must be approved by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs or designee. Students may only take a general elective if the pre-requisites are met.

Phase 2 Electives/ Specialty Electives Offered:

- Anesthesiology
- Cardiovascular Intensive Care Unit
- Clinical Oncology
- Clinical Genetics
- Dermatology
- Emergency Medicine
- Geriatric Medicine
- Medical Intensive Care Unit
- Ophthalmology
- Otolaryngology
- Pathology
- Pediatric Neurodevelopmental Disabilities
- Pediatric Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
- Radiology
- Urology

Phase 3/M4 Electives*

Phase 3/M4 is designed to provide medical students with more independence and responsibility in terms of patient care to ensure they have met the overarching program objectives of UCCOM.

1. Students must complete required course pre-requisites to enroll in a Phase 3 elective.
2. Students must complete a total of 32 weeks of credit for Phase 3. Specifically, all students must take a defined number of weeks within each elective grouping of which the definition of each experience is outlined later in this policy:
 - a. A total of 4 weeks of required Internal Medicine Acting Internship
 - b. A total of 4 weeks of a Specialty Acting Internship
 - c. A total of 12 weeks of Intensive Clinical Experience
 - d. A total of 12 weeks of General Electives
 - e. During the spring semester of the M4 year, students must complete a minimum of 4 weeks in a course that provides the student with the responsibility of actively providing direct patient care (AI or ICE) for a minimum of 20 hours/week.
 - f. An additional 20 weeks is considered flex time, which is time to be used for Step 2 study, interviews, vacations, or other personal use.

Elective Type	Duration	Total Credit
Specialty Acting Internship (AI)	Four Week block	4 weeks
Intensive Clinical Experience (ICE)	Two or Four Week block	12 weeks
General Electives	Two or Four week block	12 weeks
	Total	28 weeks
Required Internal Medicine Acting Internship	Four Week block	4 weeks
	TOTAL	32 weeks
*20 weeks flex time		

Internal Medicine Acting Internship and Specialty Acting Internship – 4 weeks each for a total of 8 weeks
Acting Internships (other schools called sub-interns or sub-Is) is a four-week experience for the student to practice being an intern under the careful supervision of an attending physician and senior level resident physician. Acting Interns (AI) are the primary caregiver for these patients, performing the history and physical, creating a differential, then writing the orders, and managing the patient's care. The AI also participates in potential call, potential cross coverage, and patient care transitions just like any other first year resident. Students may choose from a specialty/discipline of their choice: surgery, pediatrics, family medicine, anesthesiology, obstetrics, gynecology, neurology, psychiatry, emergency medicine or internal medicine. AIs must be completed in Cincinnati.

Intensive Clinical Experience (ICE) – total 12 weeks

Defined as intensive, substantial, direct patient care experience providing more than 20 hours/wk of direct clinical/patient care experience and responsibility; cannot be primarily shadowing or in a didactic setting. Designed to teach medical students the importance of actively participating in the care of a patient and the health care team. Students spend 50% of the rotation in face-to-face patient interactions while serving as a member of the medical team. Four of the 12 weeks of ICE must be taken in Cincinnati.

General Electives –total 12 weeks

Provides medical students with an opportunity to broaden and balance their educational experience in preparation for intern year.

Part-time Electives

Provides fourth year medical students the opportunity to take an elective offered for two- or four-weeks credit with fulfillment of required time to obtain credit spanning from one month to several months of the entire M4

academic year. Part-time electives provide medical students with an opportunity for flexible working hours, nonconsecutive working days, and the ability to overlap with a qualifying elective. These electives allow students to be productive during interview season months.

- Students may overlap a part-time elective with an elective that allows overlap as noted on the M4 Course Availability schedule page in MedOneStop.
- Students may not miss any components of one elective in order to complete requirements of overlapping elective.
- Part-time electives cannot be overlapped with an AI or ICE credit electives.
- Students may take a maximum of 2 electives per M4 rotation i.e full-time plus part-time or two part-time provided the electives permit overlap as noted on the M4 Course Availability schedule page in MedOneStop.

Extended Electives

Provides fourth year medical students the opportunity to take an elective offered for two- or four-weeks credit with fulfillment of required time to obtain credit spanning across the entire M4 academic year only. Extended electives are considered a subset of part-time electives which also offer medical students an opportunity for flexible working hours and nonconsecutive working days with the unique ability to overlap to overlap with any elective including Acting Internship (AI) and Intensive Clinical Experiences (ICE).

- Students may not miss any components of one elective in order to complete the requirements of the extended elective.
- Exception: Students may take a maximum of 3 electives per M4 rotation if the third elective is an extended elective i.e. full-time plus part-time plus extended or two part-time plus extended provided the electives permit overlap as noted on the M4 Course Availability schedule page in MedOneStop.

Away/Extramural Electives

Students may choose to do away electives for a variety of reasons: encouraged by some specialties (e.g. emergency medicine, orthopedics) or personal desire to investigate institutions. No more than 16 weeks of electives can be completed as away electives. Acting internships are not accepted as an away elective. Additionally, four weeks of ICE credit must be completed at UC. Students are not permitted to concurrently take an online elective with an away elective.

Before applying for an away rotation, students must meet with their advisor in the Office of Student Affairs to obtain approval from the College of Medicine to confirm the student is in good academic standing and the elective opportunity meets the needs of the individual student's education.

The elective must ultimately be approved by the UCCOM commensurate department insuring it provides an adequate learning experience.

- Apply via AAMC Visiting Student Learning Opportunities (VSLO) or if offered outside VSLO must be with an LCME accredited medical school
- Away elective dates will often not match UC elective dates
 - Recommendation: Use flex time until you are back on UCCOM rotation schedule
- Forward acceptance to commensurate UCCOM department as soon as accepted
 - Request ICE credit, if applicable, by sharing syllabus or elective description with commensurate UCCOM approving department.
 - Students may not receive retroactive credit. All arrangements for an elective experience must be submitted for approval before the elective begins. Once approved by the UCCOM commensurate department they will add the elective to the student's schedule.

Grading Policy for Away Rotations

- The student will email the UCCOM commensurate department elective coordinator with name and email address of the away elective director and coordinator responsible for completing the grade ideally when initially accepted for the away elective.

- The UCCOM commensurate department elective coordinator will be responsible for uploading the away elective director and coordinator into MedOneStop so the grade request will be sent in the same fashion as other UCCOM elective grades are collected.
 - If the grade is not submitted by day 20, the coordinator should resend the MOS reminder email requesting grade submission. The coordinator should consider sending an email directly to elective director and coordinator sharing the expectation that the grade be submitted as per LCME guidelines.
 - If the grade is not submitted by day 30, the coordinator should resend the MOS reminder email requesting grade submission. The coordinator should send an email directly to the elective director and coordinator sharing the expectation that the grade be submitted as per LCME guidelines.
 - If the grade is not submitted by day 30, the coordinator should also reach out to the student informing them of the missing grade and encourage student to reach out to away elective director and coordinator requesting grade completion.
 - If the grade is not submitted by day 35, the elective coordinator may offer assistance to UCCOM commensurate department with grade submission. The UCCOM elective coordinator and/or director should consider calling the away elective to encourage grade completion.
 - If the grade is not submitted by day 38, Phase 3 Curriculum Director, can be requested for further assistance.

International electives offered through UC may be approved for ICE credit if ICE criteria are met.

International electives not offered through UC may be used for general elective credit but cannot satisfy the ICE requirement.

Virtual Away Electives

Purpose: The University of Cincinnati College of Medicine (UCCOM) offers the ability for students to participate in virtual away electives. As a result of COVID 19, institutions created virtual away electives to combat the inaccessibility of away rotations and create a shared, altered approach to help future residency applicants meet the goals of away rotations. In the future, virtual away electives may be another means for students to experience other institutions.

Prerequisite: UCCOM students must have completed all core clerkships.

Before applying for a virtual away rotation, students should meet with their advisor in the Office of Student Affairs to confirm good academic standing and ensure the elective opportunity meets the needs of the individual student's education.

The elective must ultimately be approved by the UCCOM commensurate department/elective director ensuring it provides an adequate learning experience. Students must forward acceptance and course syllabus to ensure content meets UCCOM criteria.

- Apply via AAMC Visiting Student Learning Opportunities (VSLO) or if offered outside VSLO must be with a LCME accredited medical school
- Away elective dates will often not match UC elective dates
- Recommendation: Use flex time until you are back on UCCOM rotation schedule
- Only general elective credit will be offered
- Students may not receive retroactive credit. All arrangements for an elective experience must be submitted for approval before the elective begins. Once approved by the UCCOM commensurate department they will add the elective to the student's schedule.
- Download evaluation form from MedOneStop and give it to your preceptor. Return the completed form to the UCCOM approving department.

- Follow grading policy as outlined in Away/Extramural electives

Virtual Away electives may not be taken with another full time UCCOM elective but can be taken with a part time or longitudinal elective provided work hours do not conflict.

Course length: Maximum 8 weeks of virtual away rotations permitted with a 2-week minimum.

Course Content: Students are expected to participate for a range of 20-40 hours per week.

Students must spend at least 50% of the rotation involved with a clinical component to include concepts such as observation/participation of rounds, office visits via telehealth, surgical procedures via video observation or patient simulations. The course should be designed to teach medical students the importance of actively participating in the care of a patient and the health care team. For the remaining 50% of the rotation, acceptable activities could include case discussions, case presentations, topic specific didactics, journal club, conference attendance, literature review, and case-based problems all which should have oversight by faculty and/or residents.

Grading: pass/fail

Updates or Changes to Elective Director/Coordinator Process

In addition to the yearly elective updates requested by the Office of Curriculum Management and Integration (OCMI) electives may undergo other changes such as a new elective director or coordinator.

Communicate any requests for changes to contact information for the elective director or coordinator to OCMI M3/4 Administrator and OCMI Program Manager.

In the event that a current elective director needs to step down from his/her responsibilities, the following steps must be taken:

- Current elective director writes a formal email of resignation which will include the name of the successor to the Phase 3 Curriculum Director, Elective Coordinator, Department Head, OCMI Phase 2/3 Administrator, and OCMI Program Manager.
- Successor writes a formal email accepting the new position to Phase 3 Curriculum Director, Elective Coordinator, Department Head, OCMI Phase 2/3 Administrator, and OCMI Program Manager.
- Department Head writes a formal email stating support of the new elective director and confirming department support including allocated time to perform new educational duties sent to Phase 3 Curriculum Director, Elective Coordinator, Department Head, OCMI Phase 2/3 Administrator, and OCMI Program Manager.
- After approval by EPC, the elective coordinator will update MedOneStop with approved changes.

Creating a New Elective Process

1. To create a new elective, the elective director can directly access the new elective proposal document to download from MedOneStop under the course information tab under course offerings heading. Or contact OCMI Program Manager or Director of Electives directly for the form.
2. Email completed new elective proposal form for preliminary review to the Phase 3 Curriculum Director, OCMI Program Manager, and Office of the Registrar Expectation for review is within 14 business days. Additional information or clarification may be requested of the elective director at that time. This is done by email request.
3. If revisions are necessary, the elective director will revise and resubmit to Phase 3 Curriculum Director.
4. After approval by the Phase 3 Curriculum Director, the elective must be presented to Phase 1/M1/2 curriculum committee if the elective is offered over Phase 1 and/or the Phase 2/3 curriculum committee if the elective is offered or given credit during Phase 2 or 3. The new elective will be added to the agenda for the next committee meeting.
 - a. The presence of the elective director will be strongly recommended to present the elective and answer any questions at the curriculum committee meetings in order to expedite the approval process. If the elective director cannot be present, then the Phase 3 Curriculum Director will present the elective to the committee. If questions arise that would need the elective director response, voting will be delayed until those answers can be obtained. Then the elective will be voted upon by the curriculum committees.
5. Once the Phase 1 or Phase 2/3 Curriculum subcommittee approves the elective, the new elective must be approved by Education Program Committee (EPC). An approval email will be sent to the Phase 3 Curriculum Director.
6. After all committees have approved the elective, the elective director or elective coordinator must enter all the elective information from the new elective proposal document into the new elective form on MOS which uploads directly into MedOneStop.
7. Timeline for New Elective Proposals

- a. Please allow 12 weeks from the time of submission to final approval in timing the offering of the elective.
- b. For a new elective to be considered for a subsequent academic year, recommend final deadline for approval by October 1st prior to the AY for implementation.
- c. Proposals may be submitted at any time during the academic year but are not guaranteed to be approved for the current or subsequent academic year for which it is submitted.

RELATED LCME STANDARD

6.5 Elective Opportunities