

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>
RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT: <i>Office of Medical Education &amp; Office of Student Affairs</i>	APPLIES TO: <i>M3 and M4 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. All electives must be approved by the Education Program Committee.

### Pre-Clerkship

#### Longitudinal Electives

Provides medical students the opportunity to take an elective offered for two or four weeks credit that spans across several months and in many instances more than a single academic year starting during the pre-clerkship phase in the M1 or M2 year. Credit for completion of these electives is applied during the fourth year. 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 the third and/or fourth year and, therefore, can be taken concurrently with any type of elective including acting internship (AI), intensive clinical experiences (ICE), general elective or part-time elective. Priority will be attending the AI, ICE, and general elective over longitudinal elective activities as students may not miss any components of one elective in order to complete requirements of overlapping elective.

Beginning 07/01/23 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. This is because the MPH includes 4 weeks of elective credit applied to the M4 year for the History and Ethics of Public Health course taken during Phase 1. For example, if a student chooses to take a longitudinal elective (e.g., Medical Spanish and Latino Health) in addition to the History and Ethics of Public Health course required for the MD-MPH Dual Degree Program, they may not apply the credit for the Medical

Spanish longitudinal elective toward M4/Phase 3 elective credit requirements.

If a student enrolled in a pre-clinical 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 the M4 year. 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.

There is a maximum of four weeks that may be applied to M4/Phase 3 elective requirements. This holds no matter when the students take the History and Ethics of Public Health course and no matter the other longitudinal electives they have taken.

### **M3 Electives**

#### **Third Year Specialty Electives\***

During the third year of medical school, students are required to choose two specialty electives each lasting two weeks. The emphasis for these electives is for career exploration. These electives are interspersed during the third year and are selected by way of a lottery system permitting students to rank order of preference. See Appendix A

Deferment of this requirement will be rare and granted only under exceptional circumstances such as the following: (1) to allow military (Health Professions Scholarship Program) students to do their required active duty or (2) extenuating personal/academic circumstances. The office of Student Affairs will review all requests. The student will replace the deferred weeks of M3 specialty electives with an equivalent number of additional weeks of M4 electives that must be completed to meet graduation requirements.

#### **Specialty Electives Offered:**

- Anesthesiology
- Cardiovascular Intensive Care Unit
- Clinical Oncology
- Dermatology
- Emergency Medicine
- Geriatric Medicine
- Medical Intensive Care Unit
- Ophthalmology
- Otolaryngology
- Pathology
- Radiology
- Urology

### **M4 Electives\***

The fourth year is designed to provide medical students with more independence and responsibility in terms of patient care to ensure that they have met the overarching program objectives of UCCOM.

1. Students must complete all required third year clerkships prior to starting any fourth year electives.
  - a. Exception: Students with unique circumstances may be permitted to take an M4 elective prior to completing third year clerkships. Students must select from a pre-approved list of electives and obtain permission from their advisor in the Office of Student Affairs.
2. Students must complete a total of 28 weeks of elective credit. Specifically, all students must take a defined number of weeks within each elective grouping:

- a. A total of 4 weeks of a Specialty Acting Internship
- b. A total of 12 weeks of Intensive Clinical Experience
- c. A total of 12 weeks of General Electives
- d. During the spring semester of the M4 year, students must complete a minimum of 4 of the required 32 weeks in (2) 2-week electives or (1) 4-week elective or (1) 4-week Acting Internship that provides the student with the responsibility of actively providing direct patient care for a minimum of 20 hours/week.
- e. An additional 20 weeks is considered unscheduled or flex time, which is time to be used for interviews, vacations, or other personal use.

<b>Elective Type</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Total Weeks</b>
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
	<b>Total</b>	<b>28 weeks</b>
Required Internal Medicine Acting Internship	<b>Four Week block</b>	<b>4 weeks</b>
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>32 weeks</b>
*20 weeks unscheduled/flex time		

3. 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.
  - a. Two weeks = 80 hours
  - b. Four weeks = 160 hours
4. Refer to the absence policy for blackout dates and attendance issues.
5. To drop a course, students should submit a request at least four weeks 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.
6. To add a course, students should submit a request four weeks 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.
7. The same elective cannot be taken twice unless it is an away or research elective.

\*Detailed descriptions and syllabi for each elective are available in the M3/4 Course Offerings on MedOneStop

### **Specialty Acting Internship** – total 4 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 will 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 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 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 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
- 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

- 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 or by the first week of the rotation but no later than the last day of the rotation.
- The UCCOM commensurate department elective coordinator will be responsible for uploading the away elective director and coordinator into MedOneStop so that 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 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 encourages student to reach out to away elective director and coordinator requesting grade completion.
  - If the grade is not submitted by day 35, Elective Coordinator may offer assistance to UCCOM commensurate department with grade submission.
  - If the grade is not submitted by day 38, Director of Electives, will 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 insure 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 insuring it provides an adequate learning experience. Student must forward acceptance and course syllabus to insure 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.

Student 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 Medical Education, 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 OME M3/4 Administrator and OME 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 Director of Electives, Elective Coordinator, Department Head, OME M3/4 Administrator, and OME Program Manager.
- Successor writes a formal email accepting the new position to Director of Electives, Elective Coordinator, Department Head, OME M3/4 Administrator, and OME 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 Director of Electives, Elective Coordinator, Department Head, OME M3/4 Administrator, and OME 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 OME Program Manager or Director of Electives directly for the form.
2. Preliminary review of the completed new elective proposal by the Director of Electives, Office of Medical Education Program Manager, and Office of the Registrar will occur 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 Director of Electives.
4. After approval by the Director of Electives, the elective must be presented to M1/2 curriculum committee if the elective is offered over the M1 and/or M2 academic year and/or the M3/4 curriculum committee if the elective is offered or given credit during the M3 and/or M4 academic year. The new elective will be added to the agenda for the next M1/2 and/or M3/4 Curriculum 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 Director of Electives 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 M1/2 and/or M3/4 Curriculum Committee approves the elective, the new elective must be approved by Education Program Committee (EPC). An approval email will be sent to the Elective 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 December 1<sup>st</sup>.
  - 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**