

<p>POLICY TITLE: <i>Electives Policy</i></p>	<p>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>  <i>Revised February 5, 2026</i></p>
<p>RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT: <i>Office of Curriculum Management and Integration</i></p>	<p>APPLIES TO: <i>All Students</i></p>

## 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

1. 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.
2. **Longitudinal electives** may be taken concurrently with Phase 1, 2 and 3 courses and will not count toward the course maximum per rotation. Credit will be applied to Phase 3 as general elective credit.
3. **Extended electives** – students are permitted ONE extended elective.
4. Students may take a maximum of 2 electives per M4/Phase 3 rotation i.e full-time plus part-time or two part-time provided the electives permit overlap as noted on the M4/Phase 3 Course Availability schedule page in MedOneStop.
  - a. Exception: Student 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.

### Elective Add/Drop

- To drop a course, students should submit a request at least 30 days prior to the start date to

automatically withdraw to avoid a formal approval process. If the drop request is submitted in less than 30 days, the drop request must go through a formal approval process with the department. Formal approval process is defined as the student contacting the elective director and/or elective coordinator for permission.

- To add a course, students should submit a request 30 days prior to the start date for enrollment. If the add request is submitted less than 30 days prior to the start date, the add request will require a formal approval process with the department as the request may not necessarily be approved due to the short time frame and onboarding process. Formal approval process is defined as the student contacting the elective director and/or elective coordinator for permission.

### **Longitudinal Electives**

Medical students can take an elective offered for two- or four-weeks credit that spans more than a single academic year starting during Phase 1. General elective 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. 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. Early years in longitudinal elective experiences will be recorded as no-credit/non-graded to reflect participation. A grade is awarded upon successful completion of the final year of the sequence. Credit is applied towards Phase 3 requirements.

Longitudinal electives may include activities in Phase 2 and 3 and therefore can be taken concurrently with a Phase 2 or 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. Longitudinal electives may be taken concurrently with Phase 3 courses and will not count toward the course maximum per rotation.

### **Dual Degree Students**

Students enrolled in the MD/MPH or MD/PhD dual degree programs may apply to MD longitudinal electives in addition to participating in any required longitudinal course work for their dual degree program. Dual degree students will only receive credit for ONE longitudinal elective. If a student completes both an MD longitudinal elective and a longitudinal elective required by their dual degree program, the total number of credits earned will not exceed four weeks.

### **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 but may also be used to complete research or for flex time. If flex time is used, those weeks will be deducted from the total weeks of flex time offered in Phase 3 and the student will need to take compensatory general electives in place of the specialty elective.

#### **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
- \*Research (2 or 4 weeks permitted if projects approved)
- \*Flex (2 or 4 weeks permitted)

### **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 take a defined number of weeks within each elective grouping:
3. Class of 2027
  - 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. Spring direct patient care requirement: During the spring semester of the M4 year, students must complete a minimum of 4 weeks credit of direct patient care course(s). Students who have a graduation date that is off-cycle are exempt from this requirement.
  - f. An additional 24 weeks is considered flex time, which is time to be used for Step 2 study, interviews, vacations, or other personal use.
4. Class of 2028+ \*\*\*subject to change
  - a. A total of 4 weeks of Internal Medicine Acting Internship
  - b. A total of 4 weeks of Acute Care Experience
  - c. A total of 4 weeks of Transition to Residency
  - d. A total of 12 weeks of Intensive Clinical Experiences
  - e. A total of 12 weeks of General Electives
  - f. Spring direct patient care requirement: During the spring semester of the M4 year, students must complete a minimum of 4 weeks credit of direct patient care course(s). Students who have a graduation date that is off-cycle are exempt from this requirement.
  - g. Additional 20 weeks considered flex time, which is time to be used for Step 2 study, interviews, vacations, or other personal use.

**Internal Medicine Acting Internship and Specialty Acting Internship** – Four weeks each for a total of eight weeks for Class of 2026 and 2027 and only four weeks of IM AI for Class of 2028+. Acting Internship (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 call, cross coverage, and patient care transitions just like any other first year resident. Students may choose from a specialty of their choice to satisfy

an ICE requirement once two AIs are not required: anesthesiology, emergency medicine, family medicine, gynecology, internal medicine, neurology, labor and delivery, maternal and fetal medicine, neurology, pediatrics, psychiatry, surgery. AIs must be completed in Cincinnati.

### **Intensive Clinical Experience (ICE)** – total 12 weeks

Defined as intensive, substantial, direct 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 the majority of the rotation performing face-to-face patient interactions while serving as a member of the medical team. If a course has an ICE designation, students must complete the full duration of the course to receive ICE credit. For example, if an ICE course is offered as both a four-week and a two-week rotation, a student will only earn ICE credit by completing the full four-week rotation. If taken for two weeks, the student will earn general credit. 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 with the opportunity to take an elective offered for two- or four-weeks credit with fulfillment of required time to obtain credit spanning from four weeks to less than or equal to 16 weeks. Part-time electives provide medical students with an opportunity for flexible working hours and days, in addition to 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.
- If the part-time elective only meets in the evening, it can overlap with ICE only if ICE elective director offers permission.

### **Extended Electives**

Provides fourth year medical students with 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 or greater than 16 weeks. Students may only take one extended elective. Extended electives offer medical students an opportunity for flexible working hours and nonconsecutive working days.

- Extended electives may 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.

### **Acute Care Experience (Class of 2028+)**

Students will choose either a medical/surgical critical care experience or an emergency medicine experience to fulfill this four-week requirement. The goals of this experience are to learn to recognize a patient requiring urgent or emergent care because of high acuity complex disease(s), to initiate evaluation and management of acutely ill patient, and to demonstrate empathy, compassion, and a commitment to acknowledge and address suffering.

### **Transition to Residency (Class of 2028+)**

All students will simultaneously take this four-week course toward the end of Phase 3 to prepare them for a successful transition to residency in terms of autonomy and responsibility by way of generalized and specialty-specific activities in the following categories: clinical skills, communication skills, procedural skills, professionalism.

### **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. Away Acting Internships do not fulfill the UCCOM acting internship requirement but will count as ICE credit. 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 are encouraged to meet with their advisor in the Office of Student Affairs 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**

- Students must be graded by the away rotation with the UCCOM evaluation form.
- 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.
- When a host institution completes the UCCOM evaluation form, grades are assigned according to the UCCOM grading rubric, regardless of the host institution's internal grading outcome.
- When a host institution requires use of its own evaluation form for an away elective, the completed evaluation is submitted to UCCOM for review. The Phase 3 Director is responsible for interpreting the host institution's assessment and determining the equivalent UCCOM grade in accordance with UCCOM's grading rubric and policies.

### **Virtual Away Electives**

Purpose: The University of Cincinnati College of Medicine (UCCOM) offers the ability for students to participate in virtual away electives. Virtual away electives may provide the student with unique experiences.

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 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 and/or Assistant Dean of Phase 3 Curriculum to ensure the elective 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.
- 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 4 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

## RELATED LCME STANDARD

### 6.5 Elective Opportunities