Overview
Electives are an important and mandatory component of the MD Program. They provide opportunities for medical students to explore medical domains in a more in-depth fashion than may be permitted in the core clerkship. Medical electives allow students to develop their own specific interests and expertise, as well as sample disciplines for possible career choices and postgraduate training programs.

Purpose
This policy exists to define where electives may be completed, length of electives, application procedure, placement and elective change/cancellation requests, assessment requirements, quality of electives, immunization requirements, and malpractice and personal health insurance.

POLICY
1. RESPONSIBILITY
   a. Students organize their own placements.
   b. Clinical electives may be done at:
      i. any Committee on the Accreditation of Canadian Medical Schools (CACMS) accredited medical school and/or Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) accredited North American medical school;
      ii. international sites that are part of a formal exchange program;
      iii. approved global health sites;
      iv. other sites as approved by the Director, Electives.
   d. Students must identify their status by wearing their UAhlberta student ID badge at all times.
   e. Students must complete an evaluation of the elective within 21 days of the completion of the elective.
2. GENERAL GUIDELINES
   a. Each medical student must complete a total of 14 weeks of electives before the end of clinical terms of Year 4.
   b. A total of 10 weeks of electives must be completed at a CACMS and/or LCME accredited medical school.
   c. Each elective must, normally, be a minimum of two weeks duration, or 20 half-day contacts. A half-day contact is 4 to 6 hours duration.
   d. No clinical elective can be more than four weeks duration.
e. Electives begin on Monday (Tuesday in case of holiday) and generally end on Fridays.

f. Students may carry forward four weeks credit from MED 528 (the optional Summer Electives between years 2 and 3) to MED 547 Electives (Year 3) or MED 557 Electives (Year 4).

g. MED 547 Clinical Electives is a four-week requirement.

h. MED 557 Clinical Electives is a ten-week requirement.

i. Students may carry clinical electives time forward from Year 3 to Year 4.

j. Students will not be granted credit for an elective that is supervised by a member of their immediate family, extended family or in-laws, or by anyone with whom they are involved in a close personal relationship. They will not be granted credit for an elective with their own personal physician or at a clinic at which they have been a patient within the previous 2 years as this would be considered to be a conflict of interest.

k. Students are strongly encouraged to use electives to pursue a broad range of interests in addition to their chosen specialty. As a result, beginning with the class of 2021, the University of Alberta MD Program will support the national initiative to limit the maximum number of clerkship electives in one CARMS entry discipline to 8 weeks.

3. ELECTIVE PRIORITY

a. Visiting elective students will only be allowed if they will not interfere with the learning experience of UAlberta medical students on rotations or electives. If visiting students are on an elective with UAlberta students, they should be anticipated to demonstrate qualifications comparable to UAlberta students.

b. Electives by visiting pre-clerkship students are not permitted.

4. ELECTIVE PROCEDURE FOR UALBERTA STUDENTS

The procedure for University of Alberta students to request and complete electives is outlined in the Booking & Confirming Electives Procedure.

a. The student must submit the elective application form to UME by 8:00 AM on the day that the elective starts.

b. The student must submit the name of the preceptor with whom they worked the most by 8:00 AM on the Thursday of the last week of the elective. Refer to Booking and Confirming Procedure for complete outline of process.

c. An elective may be cancelled a minimum of 6 weeks prior to the start date. Cancellation with less than eight weeks notice will result in a PAF being placed in the student’s file unless the student has a reason for cancellation that is acceptable to the electives coordinator. If the MD Program at the University of Alberta requires a student to withdraw from an elective, the program will provide the student and the elective with documentation.

d. No credit will be granted if these steps are not followed.

5. ELECTIVES CANCELLATION POLICY

a. Elective must be cancelled a minimum of 6 weeks prior to the start date. Students must cancel through MedSIS or the AFMC portal. The Undergraduate Medical Education (UME) office must be notified when cancelling any external electives.

For external electives, students who cancel must notify:
- the contact person through whom they booked the elective
- the preceptor, if they have been provided with their contact information
- University of Alberta MD Program office (within two working days of cancelling)

b. UME will notify the electives coordinator of cancellations that occur less than a minimum of 6 weeks prior to the starting date. This will result in a PAF being placed in the student’s file, unless the electives coordinator agrees that the cancellation was justifiable because of medical or personal problems. Changing career plans will not be considered a justifiable excuse.
6. ASSESSMENT
   a. Medical students are required to submit an evaluation of all electives done for credit to UME within 21 days of elective completion.

7. QUALITY OF ELECTIVES
   a. Electives in northern Alberta
      i. Electives that are in the electives catalogue are considered to be high quality with no extraordinary safety issues. All electives that are not in the electives catalogue must be specifically approved by the Director, Electives. The student must submit all available details about the content of the elective and accommodation arrangements to the Director, Electives at least 6 weeks prior to the start of the elective. Refer to Quality Review of Electives Procedure.
   b. Electives at LCME accredited schools
      i. It is assumed that the quality of such electives is high and that student safety is not an issue.
   c. Global health electives (in resource poor countries)
      All electives must be approved by the director of global health. The director is responsible for verifying that the following have been considered and are acceptable:
      - potential risks to the health and safety of patients, students and the community
      - the availability of emergency care
      - the possibility of natural disasters, political instability and exposure to disease
      - the objectives of the elective
      - the number and type of patients seen
      - the level and quality of supervisions and methods of teaching
      - the working conditions
      - any potential challenges to the code of medical ethics adopted by the home institution

      Pre-departure training is mandatory before a student participates in a global health elective. Pre-departure training is provided by the Office of Global Health. Training sessions typically take place twice per year. Pre-departure training addresses information about passports, visas, what to pack, etc; health and safety information about required immunizations, malaria prophylaxis, travel health and safety; information about personal and client safety, skill limitations; language and culture; and a discussion and case-based session where students explore different medico-ethical scenarios.
   d. International elective exchanges
      i. Such electives are acceptable as UAlberta representatives have verified the quality and safety of the elective placement.
   e. Other electives – includes IFMS exchanges and all other electives (includes electives that are not in an electives catalogue from UAlberta or another medical school)
      i. Such electives must be approved by the Director, Electives. The student must submit all available details about the content of the elective and accommodation arrangements at least 6 weeks prior to the start of the elective (refer to Quality Review of Electives Procedure).

8. INSURANCE
   a. Students doing electives outside of Canada must apply for malpractice insurance through UAlberta Risk Management. While on clinical placement in Canada or abroad, coverage is set at $5 million (CAD), inclusive for bodily injury, personal injury and property damage.
   b. Students are personally responsible for their health insurance, and any extended health insurance for electives that will be taken outside of Alberta.
9. IMMUNIZATION
   a. Students are expected to be up-to-date with the MD Program immunization requirements, as noted in Section 113.2.3(13) of the University Calendar.

10. N95 MASK FITTING
    a. All students are required to have current and valid N95 mask fitting.

11. POLICE INFORMATION CHECK
    a. All students must have a clear police information check that includes a vulnerable sector search on file in the UME office.

12. OVERSIGHT OF ELECTIVES
    a. The Director, Electives makes day-to-day decisions on granting or withholding elective credit when the rules are breached and on issuing professionalism lapses regarding unprofessional conduct when electives are cancelled.
    b. Decisions as to which new electives should be added to the electives catalogue are made by the Director, Electives, in conjunction with the Assistant Dean, Academic Affairs of the MD Program.
    c. The electives coordinator presents an update to the curriculum committee twice per year for their information and for advice on how to optimize the electives program.

DEFINITIONS

Any definitions listed in the following table apply to this document only with no implied or intended institution-wide use. [▲Top]

| Committee on Accreditation of Canadian Medical Schools (CACMS) | The Committee on Accreditation of Canadian Medical Schools (CACMS), working with the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) in the United States, ensures that Canadian medical faculties’ MD programs meet the quality expected when producing tomorrow’s doctors. Medical schools demonstrating compliance are afforded accreditation, a necessary condition for a program’s graduates to be licensed as physicians. |
| Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) | The Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) is the nationally recognized accrediting authority for medical education programs leading to the MD degree in U.S. and Canadian medical schools. The LCME is sponsored by the Association of American Medical Colleges and the American Medical Association. |

FORMS

Elective Application Form (Years 1 & 2)

RELATED LINKS

Booking and Confirming Electives Procedure
Code of Student Behaviour
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<td>Approved</td>
<td>25 July 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kent Stobart, associate dean, MD Program</td>
<td>Revisions made: added links to accompanying procedures; changed Electives Outside of Canada heading to Global Health Electives (in resource poor countries); under Elective Procedure for UAlberta Students, added information about cancelling electives; added Other Electives heading</td>
<td>11 February 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>MD Curriculum and Program Committee</td>
<td>Revision made to address elective diversification: Added “k. Students are strongly encouraged to use electives to pursue a broad range of interests in addition to their chosen specialty.”</td>
<td>7 December 2017</td>
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<td>MD Curriculum &amp; Program Committee</td>
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<td>18 July 2018</td>
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Revision to include the new national electives diversification standard. Additional wording and procedural changes made to bring the policy in line with current practice.