

Policy on the Extension of Clerkship Initiative Following an Unsuccessful CaRMS Match

1. Background and Principles:

During the third and final year of training in the MD Program, most students will elect to enter the process for securing a residency position in a Canadian residency program. Students enter the residency matching process through the Canadian Residency Matching System (CaRMS). Occasionally, students will participate in the CaRMS process, in good faith, and remain unmatched to a residency program. Students will have successfully completed the requirements of their MD Degree and therefore are not eligible to continue training in the university. This limits their opportunities to engage in additional electives that may improve their chances at matching in subsequent CaRMS application cycles.

The goal of this policy is to provide additional training opportunities for students who were unsuccessful during the CaRMS matching process. This program should be seen as a less desirable “back up” to the normal CaRMS process to discourage students from potentially taking multiple attempts to match to highly competitive specialties while supporting students who have made reasonable attempts to engage in the matching process in good faith. The principles applied in the development of this policy reflect our goal to achieve the balance between support and adherence to the spirit of the CaRMS process in Canada.

2. Extension to Clerkship Initiative:

2.1. Eligibility

Students must meet the following criteria to be eligible to apply for this initiative:

- Be in good standing in the MD Program at time of application;
- Satisfactorily completed the electives diversification requirements at time of application with all appropriate paperwork submitted;
- Participated in both the first and second iteration of the CaRMS match in good faith;
- Are engaging in reflective dialogue with the career counselling services offered by the MD Program to re-evaluate their options for subsequent CaRMS applications
- Have not previously participated in an Extension to Clerkship Initiative

2.2. Application

Students will apply to the initiative by submitting a brief proposal.

Application must be made to the Assistant Dean, UGME within fourteen days following the second iteration CaRMS match date.

The proposal will include the following information:

- A brief statement of the student's overall approach to career decision-making based on their prior match results and discussions related to career counselling. This description should also include an explanation of how the *Extension to Clerkship Initiative* is integral to their current career decision-making approach.
- A schedule outlining how the time will be spent during the *Extension to Clerkship Initiative* adhering to the rules outlined below. At the time of application, it is recognized that specific details (e.g. names and locations of elective supervisors, etc.) will not be available. The proposal should include an outline of the disciplines, locations, and duration of electives that will be completed as well as a brief rationale for each elective. Students should consult with any of their Student Advisor, Student Affairs Director, MD Program Career Counsellors, or mentors in developing this proposal.
- A signed contract indicating agreement to the terms of the *Extension to Clerkship Initiative*.

2.3. Selection

Applications to the *Extension to Clerkship Initiative* will be reviewed by a committee consisting of the:

- Assistant Dean, UGME;
- Clerkship & Electives Chair;
- Chair, Student Affairs; and,
- Program Manager, UGME.

The committee will provide a decision to each applicant by email no later than April 30th. A follow-up letter will be provided with a copy of the student's application.

2.4. Rules of the Extension to Clerkship Initiative

- a) Students must satisfactorily complete all of the elements of the MD Program, including, the Concept Integration and Review period; electives, including all associated administrative obligations; Clerkship rotations; etc.
- b) Students must be registered at McMaster University to ensure appropriate malpractice coverage. All of the rules, regulations, policies, and practices of

the University, the Faculty of Health Sciences, and the MD Program will continue to apply during the period of registration.

- c) The *Extension to Clerkship Initiative* may run any time between the Monday following the completion of the Concept Integration & Review period until the Friday of the last full week in October, inclusive.
- d) Students are covered under Level 3 fees until August 31st. They will pay tuition and supplementary fees if registered in the program in the new academic year, beginning September 1st. Tuition will be pro-rated on a monthly basis at the rate equivalent to third year tuition applied in the year following the year of entry into the *Extension to Clerkship Initiative*.
- e) Students may write the MCCQE Part 1 in either the Spring or the Fall of the year in which they enter the *Extension to Clerkship Initiative*
- f) Students will defer graduation from the MD Program until November of the year they enter the *Extension to Clerkship Initiative*.
- g) The *Extension to Clerkship Initiative* may consist of up to sixteen (16) weeks of additional *clinical or research elective activity*. *Electives should be used to learn more about the desired discipline(s) selected for residency or to enhance competencies in a clinical field which was not sufficiently explored during the 3 year program.*
 - i) Electives must be a minimum of 2 weeks in duration (no one week electives);
 - ii) Up to 50% of the elective time can be spent in one discipline;
 - iii) The remaining 50% or greater of the elective time must be spent in alternative disciplines (according to the domains of the *Electives Diversification Policy*);
 - iv) Failure to achieve the diversification limits will result in an "Unsatisfactory" assessment on the *Extension to Clerkship Initiative*;
 - v) Electives will be registered in the MD Program database in the same manner as they are in the remainder of the MD Program;
 - vi) Electives will be evaluated in the same manner as they are in the remainder of the MD Program; and
 - vii) The same policies pertaining to electives will apply in the *Extension to Clerkship Initiative* as they do in the remainder of the MD Program.
- h) Students will continue to engage in a reflective process with respect to career decision-making with members of the MD Program's career counselling services throughout the *Extension to Clerkship Initiative*.
- i) Student Affairs will provide students in the *Extension to Clerkship Initiative* with a new Student Advisor for the duration of the Program.

2.5. Student Assessment

Students will be assessed on their performance during the elective using the same assessment forms and practices as is used in the remainder of the MD Program. Elective supervisors may assess student performance as “Satisfactory”, “Provisional Satisfactory”, “Unsatisfactory”, or “Incomplete” according to the definitions of student performance in the *Faculty Policy and Procedure for the Evaluation of Undergraduate Medical Students* (hereafter referred to as the “*Evaluation Policy*”).

Students who receive a “Provisional Satisfactory”, “Unsatisfactory”, or “Incomplete” performance assessment will be subject to the procedures outlined in the *Evaluation Policy* as summarized below:

- The Clerkship & Electives Chair will review the elective performance assessment with the elective supervisor and make a final determination of the appropriate performance assessment.
- “Incomplete” performance assessments will require the development of a plan that will have the elective satisfactorily completed before October 15th. Electives that remain “Incomplete” at that time will be converted to “Unsatisfactory”.
- Performance assessments that remain “Provisional Satisfactory” or “Unsatisfactory” will require that the elective be successfully remediated in its entirety. To facilitate remediation timeliness with respect to the Academic Progress Committee (APC) process, students may choose one of the following three options:
 - i) Propose a remediation program to the Electives Chair. The program must be in the same discipline as the provisional satisfactory or unsatisfactory elective and for the same duration. The Electives Chair may approve the proposed remediation elective or may refer the matter to the APC. The Electives Chair will have the opportunity to review the learner’s MD Program Student Evaluation File and to consult with the Program Manager/ Administrator and/or the Evaluation Chair in deciding the most appropriate course of action. The Electives Chair will consider the nature of the reasons for the unsuccessful assessment and the existence and nature of prior difficulties or remediation in making her/his decision. The proposed remediation program will form the basis for a Learning Assistance Contract as described in the *Evaluation Policy*, Section IV. The new elective supervisor will be the learning assistance tutor; or,
 - ii) Request to proceed immediately to APC. Based on the file review process outlined in (i) above, the Electives Chair will determine whether the student may continue in other electives while waiting for an APC meeting; or,

- iii) Appeal the result of the elective evaluation to the Assistant Dean, UGME following the normal University appeals process.
- Successfully remediated electives will replace unsuccessful electives.
- Unsuccessfully remediated electives will be referred to the APC. Students with unsuccessfully remediated electives may not continue in the *Extension to Clerkship Initiative* unless sanctioned to do so by the APC. The APC will meet in the usual manner as described in the *Evaluation Policy* in Section IV, Paragraph 8. Options available to the APC are designed to discourage students from completing “desired” electives at a satisfactory level for inclusion on the transcript and “less desired” electives at a provisional satisfactory or unsatisfactory level. These options include:
 - a) Preventing the student from graduating and remove the student from the Program; and/or,
 - b) Requiring additional remediation as outlined in a new Learning Assistance Contract; and/or,
 - c) Indicating on the Student Transcript any of the following:
 - i) “Unsatisfactory” performance on the elective in question (Note: if this option is chosen, the APC will remove any electives that cause the student not to satisfy the diversification requirement);
 - ii) “Unsatisfactory” performance on the entire *Extension to Clerkship Initiative*; and/or,
 - iii) A notation indicating the reason for the unsuccessful remediation; and/or,
 - d) Providing a letter to the student's matched residency program, following the CaRMS match completion, describing any outstanding concerns with the student's performance that may require continued monitoring and remediation in the residency program; and/or,
 - e) Any other sanctions that the APC may administer to a student in the regular course of the MD Program.

2.6. *Withdrawal from the Program*

Students may choose to withdraw from the program. A letter officially stating the student's intent to withdraw from the program, including the reasons for withdrawal and the progress to date should be submitted to the Assistant Dean, UGME as soon as possible. Any elective that has already started at the time of receipt of the letter requires an evaluation.

Any electives completed up until the date of withdrawal will be considered within the *Extension to Clerkship Initiative* for the purpose of applying the procedures outlined within this policy. At the time of withdrawal, if the student has not met the requirements of the Initiative, he/she will be subject to the sanctions outlined above, including sanctions applied by the APC.

Any electives that meet the requirements of the *Initiative* up until the date of withdrawal may be represented on the student transcript at the discretion of the APC.

3. Transcript:

The student transcript will include a separate section titled: "Extension to Clerkship". Electives undertaken during the *Extension to Clerkship Initiative* will be noted in this section in the same manner as electives completed in the regular curriculum of the MD Program.

The Medical Student Performance Record (MSPR) Disclosure Form will include the following statement under the section "Explains any significant interruption or change in training":

"Extension to Clerkship Initiative"
[Dates of Program]
"x weeks of additional electives"

(where x is the number of weeks of additional electives completed by the student that qualify for the *Extension to Clerkship Initiative*).

4. Appeals:

Students should appeal using the normal University appeals process.