Elective Policy and Procedures
IUSM-PO-EDU-CUR-0017

LCME Standards
6.5 Elective Opportunities

Scope

This policy affects students, course directors of IUSM electives and faculty members who offer special electives. The policy provides information on policies and procedures for elective courses, both established courses offered through IUSM and special electives.

Policy Statement

The IUSM Elective Program provides students with the opportunity to select courses that
will enhance their medical education. The program makes available extensive resources that enable students to gain deeper insight into their field of choice as well as to delve deeper into areas that may enhance their overall medical experience. The Elective Program allows each student great flexibility in planning an individual program.

Reason for Policy

The rationale for this policy is to communicate the requirements and procedures for elective courses and special electives.

Approval

Approved by the Curriculum Council Steering Committee 04/26/2017.

Procedures

Elective courses are offered in the advanced sciences, clinical practice and professional development, and career exploration. They widen the student’s involvement in his/her medical education. Elective courses also provide each student with opportunities to strengthen areas of weakness and to pursue subjects of special interest. A wide diversity of faculty ranging from volunteer physicians in private practice to full-time academic clinicians and investigators offer electives. This large faculty, available at all nine campuses, provides a depth of background and represents a wide spectrum of medical interests.

The goals of the Elective Program are:

- To facilitate the student’s increasing responsibility for self-determination in education and lifelong learning.
- To provide an opportunity for the student to augment previous experience in clinical, foundational and health delivery areas.
- To enable the student to experience the practice of medicine in its various forms in a university and/or community setting and to be exposed to opportunities for careers in medicine.
- To allow the student to gain deeper knowledge and experience in the care and treatment of ambulatory and acute problems.
- To provide the student with opportunities to acquire and use skills that will be helpful in his/her next phase of clinical training and beyond.
- To provide the student with opportunities to enhance medical knowledge in areas that may complement his/her career aspirations.
- To provide special experiences to meet the needs of students with specific goals, such as research experience, postgraduate or graduate education and/or special training outside the state or country.

Electives Definitions and Approval Process:

Elective courses: The Elective Program Catalog lists courses that are offered on a regular basis and provides the students with the information necessary to allow them to
make choices that fit their schedule and their educational needs. Each elective has been carefully reviewed and approved by the Elective Subcommittee and the Clinical Component Committee, subcommittees of the Curriculum Council Steering Committee. The catalog is reviewed annually to make sure that information is up-to-date and accurate. Each elective course has a course number, title, description and learning objectives. The number is not an official university academic course number but is assigned to aid in the identification of the various electives. These numbers are extremely important as they are used in stating elective preferences and in making course assignments. There are four categories of electives:

- **Advanced Science**: designed to give students the opportunity to pursue a personal scholarly experience in biomedical sciences and to develop fundamental understanding in new areas of biomedical science relevant to clinical medicine.
- **Clinical Practice**: designed to help students become familiar with the principles of practicing in particular specialties
- **Professional Development**: designed to expose students to knowledge and skills outside the traditional medical school curriculum that will advance their success in medical practice
- **Career Exploration**: designed to allow students to explore a career of interest to better understand its scope of practice and lifestyle.

**Special electives**: A special elective is defined as any elective not listed as an elective course in the IUSM Elective Program Catalog for which a student requests academic credit. Special electives may be academic programs offered in the state of Indiana or out of state. In general, no out-of-state special electives will be approved unless it is established that the program is available to and selected by students of the medical school(s) in that state/region. To carry IUSM academic credit, a special elective request requires review by IUSM faculty and staff to ensure academic integrity, compliance with IUSM standards and appropriateness for the student’s academic program. Special electives are divided into the same categories as described above.

**Elective Subcommittee Makeup and Activities**
The Elective Subcommittee is composed of IUSM faculty from a variety of disciplines as well as educational/administrative staff. The subcommittee reviews new elective course proposals and individual medical student’s proposals for special electives and guides these electives through the approval process. For proposal requirements for elective courses, see How to Create Electives; for proposal requirements for special electives, see the Special Electives Procedures below.

**Elective Parameters and Duration**
Electives are generally four weeks long, representing (4) academic credits. An elective of two weeks in duration earns two academic credits. Start and end dates for elective courses are determined by the phase 2/MS3 and phase 3/MS4 calendars, depending on the student’s academic level. A full-time elective entails a full academic day, with at least five days per week averaged over the course of the elective and may include weekend duty, night call and/or weekend call. Duty hours for medical students while on
clinical rotations will conform to the restrictions outlined in the Student Clinical Duty Hours Policy. Medical students cannot be assigned clinical duty of more than 80 hours a week. Retroactive elective credit for previous experience in research, clinical practice or professional development will not be granted.

**Special electives:** Special electives must be a minimum of 24 calendar days (or 18 weekdays) in duration to earn four academic credits. Special electives of less than one month may be approved to meet special needs if they last two or three weeks or are undertaken in multiples of two or three weeks. A special elective of two weeks (two credits) must be a minimum of 11 calendar days (or 9 weekdays) in duration. Special electives of three weeks (three credits) must be a minimum of 18 calendar days (or 14 weekdays) in duration. Students will be allowed to do no more than two special electives of less than four weeks duration. Shortened versions of established IUSM electives are classified as special electives and will require the same reviews and approvals as are required for special electives.

**Eligibility**

**Elective courses:** Students enrolling in an elective course must comply with its prerequisites, as listed in the Elective Program Catalog. Though most electives require fourth-year status, some electives are open to first-, second- and third-year students.

Students select electives with the assistance of their Lead Advisors and Career Faculty mentors who encourage students to create a diverse MS4 year. Students may not take more than 6 electives within a single department without approval from their Career Faculty mentor in writing. In addition, students must complete one elective outside their specialty career preference. The Mentoring and Advising program monitors student completion rates.

**Special electives:** Students developing and enrolling in a special elective (as defined above) must have third- or fourth-year status and must be in good academic standing.

**Graduation and Enrollment Requirements**

To graduate, each student must satisfactorily complete a minimum of 28 academic credits. A minimum of four elective months (16 academic credits) must be established courses (non-special electives) listed in the Elective Program Catalog. A maximum of two career exploration electives (4 academic credits) may be used to fulfill graduation requirements.

**Time Off During Electives**

During the fourth year, a brief time off from electives for residency interviewing or other purposes may be allowed at the discretion of the elective course director. Time off during an elective, whether regular or special, must conform with the IUSM Scheduling Conflicts, Absences and Vacations Policy, with submission and approval of a time away request form.

**Reenrollment in Electives**

Electives classified as Clinical Practice and Professional Development may not be taken more than one time. Electives classified as Advanced Science may be taken up to two
times, unless otherwise noted on the elective description. Exceptions can be made for purposes of remediation.

**Grading and Evaluation**

Assessment guidelines for all elective courses are in the [Elective Program Catalog](#). To be approved, a proposal for a special elective must include the means by which the student will be assessed. The elective course director is responsible for assessment of the student and the assignment of a final grade within 30 days of the end of the elective. All failures or isolated deficiencies will be referred to the Student Promotions Committee for review.

Students evaluations of electives are due upon completion of the elective. For IUSM elective courses, aggregate evaluation reports are made available to course directors in order to evaluate and improve the elective experience and to students who are considering taking the elective.

**Additional Electives**

Students may take more than the seven months of required electives, but additional electives beyond the required seven months must be completed prior to certification of their graduation. The deadline to drop any additional elective(s) corresponds with the final change dates identified in the Elective Schedule Changes as noted below.

**Graduation Dates**

After all requirements are satisfactorily completed, students will graduate on the last day of the month in which the final elective or rotation is completed. A commencement ceremony will be held in May of each year for all graduates. Students who participate in an elective or rotation after April of a given year will not receive their diplomas until the completion of their last scheduled course and verification that all requirements are satisfactorily completed.

**Scheduling of Elective Courses**

IUSM students have priority scheduling for all electives. [Guest students](#) can apply for IUSM electives through the AAMC VSAS system following primary 3rd and 4th year scheduling.

**Phase 3/MS4:** Once the required fourth-year clerkships (Emergency Medicine, Internal Medicine subinternship and Radiology) are scheduled, electives are scheduled in the software management platform (E*Value, MedHub). Requests for Career Exploration electives, including ones in the Elective Catalog, must be submitted by following the Special Elective Procedures for Fourth Year Students, outlined below. Student requests for electives are processed based on order requested and availability. After elective and fourth-year clerkship schedules are completed and made available to elective course directors and administrators, schedule changes may be made in accordance with procedures listed under Elective Schedule Changes.
Phase 2/MS3: Instead of taking a vacation month in the third year, students may take any IUSM elective that is approved for third-year students. To be added to the elective, a student must get approval from the elective course director and forward that approval to the Registrar’s Office. Third-year students also may be eligible for special electives. See Special Electives Procedures for Third Year Students, outlined below.

Elective Schedule Changes
After initial electives schedules and rosters are released, schedule change requests may be submitted using the Manage Requests tool in the software management platform (E*Value, MedHub). Students should follow the steps outlined below to request elective schedule changes:

1. Students request new electives using the Manage Requests tool in the software management platform. Students must secure course director or administrator permission to add a course. Students must attach the permission as a document to the request. Requests to add electives will not be processed without permission from the course director or administrator. Requests for fourth year enrollment in career exploration electives will not be processed without completion of the special elective form (see procedure below). Students are encouraged to get their faculty advisor’s approval for any schedule change, but documentation of that is not required.
2. Students must put a drop request in using the Manage Requests tool in E*Value for any elective they wish to drop and are required to notify the course director or administrator that they wish to drop the elective.
3. All requests to drop or add an elective must be made one month prior to the start of the elective, unless otherwise noted in the course description. If a change is approved by the course director or administrator less than one month prior to the start of the elective, email approvals should be sent to one of the assistant registrars.
4. Students can view their elective schedule using the Roster Report tool in the software management platform. Course directors and administrators automatically receive notification when schedule changes are made.

Special Elective Procedures for Phase3/MS4 Students
All completed forms and support materials must be submitted to the assistant registrar by the deadlines describes below. For purposes of review and approval, 4th year special electives are classified in six categories:

1. Special electives (away rotations) offered through the AAMC Visiting Student Application Service: All completed forms and supporting documentation must be submitted as soon as approval has been received for the rotation. Please note that an affiliation agreement with the host institution or clinical location may be required, so students should submit paperwork as early as possible for electives in this category.

Students should review the VSAS host institution list for participating schools. For an elective in this category to earn academic credit, the following items are required:
• **Special Elective Request Form**, which includes:
  o A course description from the host institution (via VSAS or the school website). The course description must include detail regarding the educational experience of the course and a statement noting the number of duty/work hours expected for the student to spend weekly on the elective. The course description also should include course goals and objectives and plans for assessment.
  o Approval from the appropriate Indiana University department chair. Interdisciplinary offerings or electives not classifiable under a clinical or basic science department must be approved by the chairperson of the Elective Subcommittee or his/her designee.
  o Approval from the student’s lead advisor.
• Written approval for the rotation from VSAS (via letter or email).
• Elective schedule change request (see above) if this elective is to replace one that was previously scheduled.

2. **Special electives at IUSM and other LCME-accredited institutions**: This category includes special electives affiliated with the IUSM and all LCME-accredited institutions not using VSAS. All completed forms and supporting documentation must be submitted no later than one month prior to the first day of the month in which the elective is scheduled to take place. Example: for an elective that begins February 15th, all materials should be submitted by January 1st. An affiliation agreement with the host institution or clinical location may be required, so students should submit paperwork as early as possible for any away electives in this category.

For an elective in this category to earn academic credit, the following items are required:
• **Special Elective Request Form**, which includes:
  o A course description from the instructor. The course description must include detail about the educational experience of the course and a statement noting the number of duty/work hours expected for the student to spend weekly on the elective. The course description also should include course goals and objectives and plans for assessment.
  o Approval from the appropriate Indiana University department chair. Interdisciplinary offerings or electives not classifiable under a clinical or basic science department must be approved by the chairperson of the Elective Subcommittee or his/her designee.
  o Approval from the student’s lead advisor.
  o Approval from the proposed special elective course director.
  o Elective schedule change request (see above) if this elective is to replace one that was previously scheduled.

3. **Special electives at non-LCME-accredited U.S. and Canadian schools or sites**: This category includes electives taken at non-LCME accredited institutions and with private practice physicians not directly affiliated with IUSM. All completed forms and supporting documentation must be submitted no later than one month prior to the first day of the month in which the elective is scheduled to
take place. Example: for an elective that begins February 15th, all materials should be submitted by January 1st. An affiliation agreement with the host institution or clinical location may be required, so students should submit paperwork as early as possible for electives within this category.

For an elective in this category to earn academic credit, the following items are required:

- **Special Elective Request Form**, which includes:
  - A course description from the instructor. The course description must include detail about the educational experience of the course and a statement noting the number of duty/work hours expected for the student to spend weekly on the elective. The course description should also include course goals and objectives and plans for assessment.
  - Approval from the appropriate Indiana University department chair. Interdisciplinary offerings or electives not classifiable under a clinical or basic science department must be approved by the chairperson of the Elective Subcommittee or his/her designee.
  - Approval from the student’s lead advisor.
  - Approval from the proposed elective course director.
  - **Non-LCME Special Elective: Course Addendum**.
  - **Non-LCME Special Elective: Instructor Addendum**.
  - Elective schedule change request (see above) if this elective is to replace one that was previously scheduled.

4. **Special electives at international locations, including schools with IUSM affiliation**: All completed forms and required supporting documentation must be submitted no later than two months prior to the first day of the month in which the elective is scheduled to take place. Example: for an elective that begins February 15th, all materials should be submitted by December 1st.

For an elective to earn academic credit, the **International Travel Policy** requires the following items:

- **Special Elective Request Form**, which includes:
  - A course description from the instructor or from the host institution. The course description must include detail about the educational experience of the course and a statement noting the number of duty/work hours expected for the student to spend weekly on the elective. The course description should also include course goals and objectives, and plans for assessment.
  - Approval from the appropriate Indiana University department chair. Interdisciplinary offerings or electives not classifiable under a clinical or basic science department must be approved by the chairperson of the Elective Subcommittee or his/her designee.
  - Approval from the student’s lead advisor.
  - Approval from the proposed special elective course director or institution.
  - **Special Elective Request Form – International Elective Addendum**.
  - **Non-LCME Special Elective: Course Addendum**.
  - **Non-LCME Special Elective: Instructor Addendum**.
  - **International Travel Verification Form**.
o Elective schedule change request (see above) if this elective is to replace one that was previously scheduled

Additional documentation requested by Medical Student Education and the IUPUI Study Abroad office may include but is not limited to:

- IUPUI Student Information Form, including emergency contact information.
- IUPUI Medical History Form.
- IUPUI Waiver and Release Forms.
- Proof of orientation for foreign travel conducted by either the IUPUI Study Abroad office or appropriate IUSM faculty.

5. Career Exploration Electives Listed in the IUSM Elective Catalog This category includes fourth year enrollment in career exploration elective courses in the IUSM elective catalog. All completed forms and supporting documentation must be submitted no later than one month prior to the first day of the month in which the elective is scheduled to take place. Example: for an elective that begins February 15th, all materials should be submitted by January 1st.

Reminder: A maximum of two Career Exploration electives (4 academic credits) may count towards the graduation requirement.

For an elective in this category to earn academic credit (2 credits), the following items are required:

a. Career Exploration Special Elective Request Form, which includes:
   i. The description and objectives copied from the elective catalog. In addition, the description should include the rationale for the experience and the goals and objectives must be appropriate for the level of training.
   ii. Approval from the appropriate Indiana University department chair.
   Interdisciplinary offerings or electives not classifiable under a clinical or basic science department must be approved by the chairperson of the Elective Subcommittee or his/her designee.
   iii. Approval from the student’s lead advisor.
   iv. Approval from the proposed special elective course director. This approval must verify that there is available room for the student to enroll in the elective, given the schedule differences between third and fourth year students.
   v. Elective schedule change request (see above) if this elective is to replace one that was previously scheduled.

6. Career Exploration Electives NOT Listed in the IUSM Elective Catalog This category includes proposals for career exploration electives not currently listed in the IUSM catalog. All completed forms and supporting documentation must be submitted no later than one month prior to the first day of the month in which the elective is scheduled to take place. Example: for an elective that begins February 15th, all materials should be submitted by January 1st.
Reminder: A maximum of two Career Exploration electives (4 academic credits) may count towards the graduation requirement.

For an elective in this category to earn academic credit (2 credits), the following items are required:

a. Career Exploration Special Elective Request Form, which includes:
   i. A course description from the instructor. The course description must include detail about the educational experience of the course and a statement noting the number of duty/work hours expected for the student to spend weekly on the elective. The course description also should include course goals and objectives and plans for assessment. The description should include the rationale for the experience and the goals and objectives must be appropriate for the level of training.
   ii. Approval from the appropriate Indiana University department chair.
   Interdisciplinary offerings or electives not classifiable under a clinical or basic science department must be approved by the chairperson of the Elective Subcommittee or his/her designee.
   iii. Approval from the student’s lead advisor.
   iv. Approval from the proposed special elective course director.
   v. Elective schedule change request (see above) if this elective is to replace one that was previously scheduled.

Special Elective Procedures for Phase 2/MS3 Students

All completed forms and support materials must be submitted to the assistant registrar by the deadlines describes below. For purposes of review and approval, 3rd year special electives are classified in three categories:

1. Special electives at IUSM and other LCME-accredited institutions: This category includes special electives affiliated with the IUSM, and all LCME-accredited institutions not using VSAS. All completed forms and supporting documentation must be submitted no later than one month prior to the first day of the month in which the elective is scheduled to take place. Example: for an elective that begins February 15th, all materials should be submitted by January 1st. An affiliation agreement with the host institution or clinical location may be required, so students should submit paperwork as early as possible for any away electives in this category.

For an elective in this category to earn academic credit, the following items are required:

- Special Elective Request Form, which includes:
  o A course description from the instructor. The course description must include detail about the educational experience of the course and a statement noting the number of duty/work hours expected for the
student to spend weekly on the elective. The course description also should include course goals and objectives and plans for assessment.

- Approval from the appropriate Indiana University department chair. Interdisciplinary offerings or electives not classifiable under a clinical or basic science department must be approved by the chairperson of the Elective Subcommittee or his/her designee.
- Approval from the student’s lead advisor.
- Approval from the proposed special elective course director.
- Elective schedule change request (see above) if this elective is to replace one that was previously scheduled.

2. **Special electives at non-LCME-accredited U.S. and Canadian schools or sites:** This category includes electives taken at non-LCME accredited institutions and with private practice physicians not directly affiliated with IUSM. All completed forms and supporting documentation must be submitted no later than one month prior to the first day of the month in which the elective is scheduled to take place. Example: for an elective that begins February 15th, all materials should be submitted by January 1st. An affiliation agreement with the host institution or clinical location may be required, so students should submit paperwork as early as possible for electives within this category.

   For an elective in this category to earn academic credit, the following items are required:
   - **Special Elective Request Form**, which includes:
     - A course description from the instructor. The course description must include detail about the educational experience of the course and a statement noting the number of duty/work hours expected for the student to spend weekly on the elective. The course description also should include course goals and objectives and plans for assessment.
     - Approval from the appropriate Indiana University department chair. Interdisciplinary offerings or electives not classifiable under a clinical or basic science department must be approved by the chairperson of the Elective Subcommittee or his/her designee.
     - Approval from the student’s lead advisor.
     - Approval from the proposed elective course director.
     - [Non-LCME Special Elective: Course Addendum](#).
     - [Non-LCME Special Elective: Instructor Addendum](#).
     - Elective schedule change request (see above) if this elective is to replace one that was previously scheduled.

3. **Career Exploration Electives NOT Listed in the IUSM Electives Catalog** This category includes proposals for career exploration electives not currently listed in the IUSM catalog. All completed forms and supporting documentation must be submitted no later than one month prior to the first day of the month in which the elective is scheduled to take place. Example: for an elective that begins February 15th, all materials should be submitted by January 1st.

   **Reminder:** A maximum of two Career Exploration electives (4 academic
(2 credits), the following items are required:

- Career Exploration Special Elective Request Form, which includes:
  - A course description from the instructor. The course description must include detail about the educational experience of the course and a statement noting the number of duty/work hours expected for the student to spend weekly on the elective. The course description also should include course goals and objectives and plans for assessment.
  - Approval from the appropriate Indiana University department chair. Interdisciplinary offerings or electives not classifiable under a clinical or basic science department must be approved by the chairperson of the Elective Subcommittee or his/her designee.
  - Approval from the student’s lead advisor.
  - Approval from the proposed special elective course director.
  - Elective schedule change request (see above) if this elective is to replace one that was previously scheduled.

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**Definitions**

LCME: Liaison Committee for Medical Education is the accrediting body medical education programs leading to the M.D. degree in the United States and Canada.

VSAS: The Visiting Student Application Service is an AAMC application designed to streamline the application process for senior away electives. VSAS enables medical students to submit just one application for all institutions, reducing paperwork, miscommunication and time. Visit the [VSAS site](#) for more information.

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**Sanctions**

Students’ failure to comply with this policy will affect enrollment in and completion of electives.

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**Additional Contacts**
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elective course proposals</td>
<td>Neelum Safdar</td>
<td>(317) 274-4742</td>
<td><a href="mailto:nrsafdar@iu.edu">nrsafdar@iu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elective Subcommittee</td>
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<td>(317) 278-5408</td>
<td><a href="mailto:johnbuck@iu.edu">johnbuck@iu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scott Renshaw, MD</td>
<td>(317) 278-8755</td>
<td><a href="mailto:serensha@iu.edu">serensha@iu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td><a href="mailto:ajybarra@iu.edu">ajybarra@iu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Elective Requests</td>
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<td>(317) 274-1973</td>
<td><a href="mailto:nanmitch@iu.edu">nanmitch@iu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Judy Casper, assistant registrar</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:jucasper@iu.edu">jucasper@iu.edu</a></td>
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**Forms**

- Career Exploration Elective (CEE) – Special Elective Form
- Career Exploration Elective (CEE) Proposal Form

**Related Information**


**History**

Originated January 2010.
Revised and approved by the Curriculum Council Steering Committee 06/12/2012.
Revised and approved by the Elective Subcommittee 08/21/2015.
Revised and approved by the Clinical Component Committee 10/06/2015.
Revised and approved by the Curriculum Council Steering Committee 12/18/2016.
Subcommittee Co-Chairs updated 04/04/2017.
Revised and approved by the Curriculum Council Steering Committee 04/26/2017.
Career Exploration Electives approved by Curriculum Council Steering Committee 04/11/2017.
Procedures and Forms updated to reflect addition of Career Exploration Electives 07/24/2017.