

## Elective Policy

**Owner Department:** Academic Affairs

**Owner:** Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

**Affected Department(s) or Parties:** All Carle Illinois College of Medicine students

**Effective Date:** April 1, 2024

**Revision Date:** March 6, 2024

**Next Review Date:** October 27, 2026

**Policy Number:** APS-30

I. **Policy Purpose:** To define elective requirements, grading scheme, student performance assessment criteria, and enrollment process.

II. **Definitions:**

- A. Carle Illinois Elective: An elective which is conducted by Carle Illinois, either on-campus or at off-campus departmentally sponsored sites at Carle Illinois-affiliated facilities.
- B. Non-Carle Illinois Elective: A term to describe three types of electives.
  - 1. A university-affiliated elective, which is an elective sponsored by another approved medical school and offered for credit to its own students and is offered to visiting students through the AAMC VSLO system.
  - 2. A university-affiliated elective, which is an elective sponsored by another approved medical school and offered for credit to its own students but is not offered through the VSLO system.
  - 3. A non-university-affiliated elective, which is an elective sponsored by entities other than an approved medical school. To enroll in an elective in category 2 or 3 described above, submission of a “Student-Created Elective Description Form” is required a minimum of 30 days in advance of the Period during which the course is to be scheduled.
- C. A Sub-internship or Acting-internship: A clinical rotation for medical students, which allows the student to perform duties approaching what they will do as a first-year resident, i.e., intern or first-year post-graduate physician (PGY1)

### **III. Elective Categories**

- A. As defined by APS-6 Promotion and Graduation Requirements, students must successfully complete 40 weeks of electives. At least twenty (20) weeks of electives must be clinical, while the other 20 may include research, engineering, clinical or any other approved experience. Elective categories include:
1. Clinical Practice (CP): Students will become familiar with the fundamental principles of practicing in a particular specialty including diagnostic reasoning; evidence-based medicine; cost effective care; and self-directed learning. Further, students will learn to recognize manifestations of disease and manage the course of common illnesses found in the specialty. Finally, students will develop skills that address care of the healthy patient including preventive medicine; care of the patient with acute illness; and longitudinal care of the patient with chronic illness as well as care through the course of the complete illness/condition.
  2. Engineering Innovation (EI): Students will become familiar with the fundamentals of engineering and/or innovation concepts. Students will interpret and apply knowledge of mathematics, science, and engineering concepts to biological problems. Students will learn about intellectual property, business concepts, translational research, clinical strategy, reimbursement, healthcare economics and innovation.
  3. Professional Development (PD): Students will be exposed to the knowledge and skills outside the traditional medical school curriculum that will advance their success in medical practice.
  4. Research: Designed to give each medical student the opportunity to pursue a personal scholarly experience (broadly defined) and to develop fundamental understanding relevant to clinical medicine.

### **IV. Discovery Learning Electives**

- A. Discovery Learning Electives completed during the six-week Discovery Learning period may be used to satisfy the overall elective requirements (see section V). The Associate Dean for Student Affairs and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs approve students to participate in Discovery Learning electives.

### **V. Elective Requirements**

- A. Electives may have prerequisites. These cannot be waived without clear documentation of the reason for the granted waiver. One week of duration, with 40 hours of effort toward the elective, equates to a credit hour.
1. Discovery Learning electives may count up to 6 credit hours, reflecting the six-week duration.
  2. Electives must be either 1-, 2- weeks or 4 weeks in length, i.e., 1-, 2- or 4- credit hours. See below for exceptions for Sub-internships.

- a. One (1)-week electives may be 'introductory' or 'crash courses', but content appropriate for the length. They may be taken throughout the curriculum
  - b. Two (2)-week electives generally focus on a specific skill or condition. For example, a 2-week EKG reading course or a 2-week concentration on care of the normal newborn.
  - c. Two (2)-week research electives may also be completed to extend work started in another period, or to learn a specific technique.
  - d. Four (4)-week electives generally focus on advanced concepts or techniques
  - e. Depending on the intensity of an acting internship/ sub-internship, and as determined by the office of Academic Affairs, a student may be awarded more than 4 credit hours.
- B. Electives have a specified length in the course description which cannot be adjusted. That is, a 4-week elective cannot be reduced to a 2-week or 1-week elective to fit a student's scheduling needs.
- C. The number of students accepted in any period is defined in advance by the course director. That number may not be exceeded to accommodate an individual student unless the increase becomes permanent. Some electives share capacity with core clerkships; the needs of the clerkship must be considered before slots are released for elective experiences.
- D. Most electives are full-time experiences with a minimum of 32 hours of effort per week. This can include reasonable quantities of self-directed study and data collection.
1. Holiday Periods - Elective blocks which include holiday periods may require continued effort during those periods – the student may be expected to participate full-time during these periods.
  2. Absences: If a student will be absent multiple times during an elective, they should either cancel the elective at least 14 days in advance or drop the elective if it has already begun.
  3. Maximum Hours: The upper limit of time commitment is 80 hours per week. When students are enrolled in the Innovation, Design, Engineering, and Analysis (IDEA) Project course and Family Medicine Continuity Clinic Course, no elective taken during concurrently during those two courses should require more than 72 hours per week of contact time and should aim for an average closer to a maximum of 60 hours per week. Carle Illinois strictly adheres to the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) clinical and educational work hours policy.
- E. Students may not receive academic credit for courses in which they work with a family member or relative, or for work that the student performs as part of employment. For exceptions, see APS-25 – Paid Training Opportunity Policy.
- F. A course taken to satisfy a required course cannot also be used as an elective or to meet another requirement (i.e., no course may be double counted for degree requirements).

1. If a student successfully completes more than one Acting Internship/Sub-Internship the additional course credit can apply toward the 28-week elective requirement.
  2. It is fully anticipated that students will register for elective credit to have concentrated time to work on Capstone or Data Science projects; this is acceptable and is not “double-dipping.” Students will need to complete the Research Elective form for these experiences to outline what is to be accomplished in the elective period and to ensure that there is faculty oversight of the elective effort.
- G. Electives completed at other institutions may be used to satisfy the overall elective requirements.
1. If the non-Carle Illinois elective is scheduled directly with the institution/hospital offering the course (i.e., not through VSLO), the elective must be approved before the student may enroll.
  2. It is an accreditation requirement that Carle Illinois have an affiliation agreement with such institutions, and assure the student’s health and safety (e.g., processes for addressing blood-borne pathogen exposures). This process may take several months. It is recommended that students plan for an alternative if the agreements cannot be acquired in a timely manner.
  3. When dates for non-Carle Illinois electives do not align precisely with the period dates for Carle Illinois electives, vacation time may be split to cover the hiatus, or the student may register for a 2-week elective.
  4. When students are concurrently enrolled in the IDEA course and the Carle Illinois Family Medicine Continuity Clinic Course, they are still responsible for the work involved in the IDEA course, even if the student completes an off-site elective and/or takes a vacation period. They are excused from a maximum of 6 sessions of the IDEA course and/or clinic during the elective block if they are registered for an off-site (>~50 miles distance) elective. Students who remain in the area are expected to continue to attend IDEA and the continuity clinic. If a student receives a competitive fellowship/scholarship/internship that mandates the full 10 weeks be completed at a distant site, they may request an exception to the expectation of attendance at IDEA and clinic. They are still responsible for the work of the IDEA course and must complete the missed clinic sessions at another date.
- H. Carle Illinois electives cannot be split into two time periods to accommodate student schedules.

## **VI. Grading Scheme and Student Performance Assessment Criteria**

- A. All electives are graded Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory.
- B. All electives must have a tangible method of student performance assessment – multiple modes of observation and feedback are preferred. An acting internship/sub-internship performance assessment must be submitted for Carle Illinois acting internship/sub-internship experiences.

- C. An Incomplete (I) grade is accepted only if, for reasons beyond the student's control, coursework cannot be completed during the official period of enrollment due to an officially excused absence. In such cases, the additional time to complete requirements must be scheduled so as not to conflict with a subsequent course.
- D. Students who receive an Unsatisfactory (U) grade for an elective may select a different elective to complete to satisfy the graduation requirements.
  - 1. Students are not obligated to repeat the same elective to remediate.
  - 2. If a student successfully remediates an elective in which they were awarded an Unsatisfactory (U) grade, the grade will be changed to Satisfactory with Remediation (SR).

## **VII. Student Proposed Electives**

- A. If a student wants to complete an elective through Carle Illinois in a topic/field not currently represented in the elective catalog, the student may propose a "student-created" elective. The elective proposed must be full-time, must have Carle Illinois faculty oversight, and must have a tangible method of student performance assessment. For most electives proposed through this mechanism, the Curriculum Oversight Committee on Electives (Electives Subcommittee) will ask that the supervising faculty offer the elective as a standing course in subsequent periods. Student-created elective proposals must be submitted at least 30 days before the start of the requested period to be considered.
- B. Research/engineering innovation electives need additional approval to ensure that students will be adequately supervised, that IRB or IACUC approval has been granted if warranted, and to assure students have requisite training and safety measures in place. Research/engineering innovation elective proposals (via a web-form) must be submitted at least 30 days before the start of the requested period to be considered.
- C. Online courses may be accepted for credit if the course description includes a clear delineation of the time required for completion, there is a tangible method of student performance assessment built into the course, and a Carle Illinois faculty member agrees to be the point person to verify completion and complete the grading process. These will be approved through a "student-created elective" form.
- D. Longitudinal electives, such as participating in an external University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign department's course, may be acceptable in certain circumstances:
  - 1. Participation in the longitudinal experience may not interfere with regularly scheduled Carle Illinois experiences including the Family Medicine Continuity Clinic Course, required immersion clerkships, IDEA, capstone, data science, etc. Students must seriously consider their ability to balance the requirements of the longitudinal course with their medical school duties and studies. Longitudinal electives often cannot accommodate multiple absences for residency interviews, etc., so this must be considered. Students must request permission to enroll in a concurrent, longitudinal experience. The Electives Course Committee will consider an in-writing or in-person request at least 30

days before the proposed start date. Credit will be given for one week of electives credit per 32-40 hours of student effort required to complete the course. Note: agreements must be in place between Carle Illinois and the other school in question for this to result in credit; this may not be easily established so please plan far in advance with alternatives in mind.

#### **VIII. Repeating Courses**

- A. Students may not enroll in the exact same course, meaning a course with the exact same course number, title, location, and topic more than once unless they receive a grade of Unsatisfactory.
- B. Students may not complete a clinical elective that covers the same content more than three times. Students should contact the Carle Illinois Registrar for assistance in determining if a similar elective may be used for graduation requirements.
  - 1. Courses that cover the same basic clinical conditions are considered “the same” even if completed at a different hospital or institution. For example, if a student completes a “Clinical Dermatology” elective at Carle, they may also do a “Clinical Dermatology” course or similarly named elective at another medical school as arranged through VSLO.
  - 2. It would also be permissible to receive credit for two similar electives at different host schools instead of one at Carle and one away.
  - 3. Students may not do a fourth such elective for credit. Generally, an elective offered at a Children’s Hospital is sufficiently distinct from one involving predominantly adult patients to be permissible.
- C. Students may continue the same research or engineering project for multiple elective periods.

#### **IX. Enrollment Requirements**

- A. Students may simultaneously enroll in a clinical and non-clinical elective with the expectation that they must be able to complete all requirements associated with each course.
- B. While enrolled in IDEA and the Family Medicine Continuity Clinic Course, students must register for and successfully complete at least 4 weeks of elective time.
  - 1. Waiver of the 4-week requirement must be approved by the Offices of Academic and Student Affairs.
  - 2. There is a 10-week block for electives during this time. Students may register for elective coursework during the entire 10 weeks or a portion (minimum 4 weeks).
  - 3. Vacation may also occur during this block.
  - 4. A student may complete a 1-week or 2-week elective over the Winter Break, although it is generally recommended that students use this period for vacation.
  - 5. Some students will be granted leave during their four weeks of elective time for remediation activities or approved additional preparatory time for Step 1.

- C. Enrollment in Carle Illinois electives is on a first come, first served basis.
  - 1. Carle Illinois electives are open to all Carle Illinois students who meet the listed prerequisites.
  - 2. Courses that satisfy a specific graduation requirement, such as an Acting Internship/Sub-internship, may have a more stringent enrollment processes to ensure all students are accommodated. This may include allowing students to enroll in a single acting internship until a certain date to ensure placement of all students.
- D. Students who fail to appropriately register for an elective, including those taken away from Carle Illinois, will not receive credit.
  - 1. Elective enrollment requests should be completed at least 30 days in advance before the elective begins.
    - a. No retroactive enrollment will be allowed.
    - b. In extraordinary circumstances, registration can be completed up to the fourth day of the elective for 4-week experiences or the second day of a 1- or 2-week experience. Students must meet with both Academic and Student Affairs units to receive approval.

**Governing Body:** Curriculum Oversight Committee

**History:**

Created: October 15, 2019

Revised: September 1, 2021, February 2, 2022, May 4, 2022, February 15, 2023, October 27, 2023

**Approved By/Date:** Curriculum Oversight Committee on December 18, 2019; Curriculum Oversight Committee, September 1, 2021; Curriculum Oversight Committee, February 2, 2022; Curriculum Oversight Committee, May 4, 2022; Curriculum Oversight Committee, February 15, 2023; Curriculum Oversight Committee, November 15, 2023, Curriculum Oversight Committee, March 6, 2024