

 <p>DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY FACULTY OF MEDICINE</p> <p>International Electives Policy</p>	<p>Policy Sponsor: Associate Deans, UGME Associate Dean, PGME</p>	<p>Approval Date: September 23, 2024 (PGME Policy Committee) September 26, 2024 (UMECC) October 1, 2024 (Faculty Council)</p>
	<p>Responsible Unit: Serving and Engaging Society</p>	<p>Amendments: September 2024</p>

A. Background and Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework to ensure the quality of the educational experience as well as the safety of medical students and trainees when they undertake international electives. This policy applies to any elective undertaken by Dalhousie University medical students and trainees outside of CACMS-accredited Canadian medical schools, and LCME-accredited sites in the United States.

The Committee on Accreditation of Canadian Medical Schools (CACMS) accreditation standards explicitly require formal processes for international electives, as outlined here:

11.3 OVERSIGHT OF EXTRAMURAL ELECTIVES

If a medical student at a medical school is permitted to take an elective under the auspices of another medical school, institution, or organization, a centralized system exists in the dean's office at the home school to review the proposed extramural elective prior to approval and to ensure the return of a performance assessment of the student and an evaluation of the elective by the student. Information about such issues as the following are available, as appropriate to the student and the medical school in order to inform the student's and the school's review of the experience prior to its approval:

- a. potential risks to the health and safety of patients, students, and the community;
- b. the availability of emergency care;
- c. the possibility of natural disasters, political instability, and exposure to disease;
- d. the need for additional preparation prior to, support during, and follow-up after the elective;
- e. the level and quality of supervision;
- f. potential challenges to the code of medical ethics adopted by the home school.

B. Application

This Policy applies to all medical students and trainees enrolled in the Dalhousie MD program and postgraduate medical education at any campus

C. Definitions

CACMS: The Committee on Accreditation of Canadian Medical Schools

LCME: Liaison Committee on Medical Education

Extramural electives: Electives that are taken at other medical schools or sites

D. POLICY

International electives must be approved by the Global Health Program (in the Faculty of Medicine) and Undergraduate Medical Education (UGME) to be recognized on a student's academic record.

For postgraduate medical trainees, international electives must be approved by the respective program director and the Global Health Program (in the Faculty of Medicine).

Types of International Electives

Partner Electives: These electives are coordinated, facilitated and evaluated by the Global Health Program. These electives are delivered by approved partner institutions with established education programs for medical students and trainees.

Student and Trainee-Led Electives: Upon mutual agreement, an elective may be allowed outside the approved list of partner institutions, with joint approval from the Global Health Program and UGME or PGME. Academic criteria and risk management criteria must be met for elective approval. An example of this type of elective is students or trainees returning to their home country.

The *International Federation of Medical Students' Association* (IFMSA) organizes professional and research exchanges that can be unilateral or bilateral. These exchanges are not organized by the Global Health Program; however, students must complete the required steps as outlined in the International Electives Policy.

Institutional Partnership Criteria

Strong institutional partnerships contribute to effective monitoring and evaluation of international electives. Institutional partnerships are approved based on the following criteria:

- i. The partner has a shared vision or principles with Dalhousie University
- ii. An education and/or research relationship between Dalhousie and the partner institution is emerging, established, or ongoing
- iii. The partner institution meets Dalhousie's recommended legal requirements, and this is confirmed in an appropriate written agreement between the parties
- iv. Infrastructure for visiting students at the partner institution can accommodate the student's learning objectives without straining institutional resources
- v. There is mutual benefit for both institutions and the relationship is sustainable
- vi. The following information will be assessed and available, as appropriate, to inform the program's review of the learning experience prior to approval:
 - potential risks to the health and safety of patients, students, and the community
 - availability of emergency care
 - possibility of natural disasters, political instability, and exposure to disease
 - need for additional preparation prior to, support during, and follow-up after the elective
 - level and quality of supervision
 - any potential challenges to the code of medical ethics adopted by the home institution
- vii. Any other criteria which may be relevant to the specific elective being proposed

Academic Criteria

Additional criteria must be met for each student and trainee's elective to be approved. These criteria address academic standing, language, and pre-departure training.

Academic Standing: All students and trainees participating in Global Health Electives must be in good academic standing as per policies within Undergraduate Medical Education or Postgraduate Medical Education

Language: The working language of the student and trainee matches the partner institution. The partner institution may provide interpretation only when it does not strain institutional resources

Predeparture Training: All students and trainees planning an international elective must complete online pre-departure training that includes information on safety, logistics, cultural competency, travel health and risk mitigation.

- Global Health Manager, in consultation with the Faculty of Medicine's Global Engagement Committee, will conduct an annual review of pre-departure training and resources to ensure relevance, and that best practices are applied in this training.
- Students and trainees completing electives in low resource settings must also complete a training session on working in them. This meets the guidelines developed by the Canadian Federation of Medical Students.

Evaluation and Assessment

Student and Trainee Feedback

Students and trainees must complete and submit an elective feedback report to the Manager, Global Health within one month of their return to Canada. These reports contribute to the assessment of that elective and inform the Global Health Program, faculty, students and trainees about international electives through Dalhousie.

Student Assessment

International Electives must adhere to the same evaluation procedures as in-country electives, as determined by the academic program. The In-Training Evaluation Reports (ITER) for international electives will be distributed by the student and be completed electronically by preceptors at the partner institution. It is the student's responsibility to ensure their preceptor submits a completed ITER within four weeks of completing the elective.

E. ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

The Manager for Global Health will operationalize this policy. The Assistant Deans Clerkship and Assistant Deans, Pre-Clerkship will be consulted as required for UGME students. The Assistant Dean for PGME and relevant program director will be consulted for residents engaging in international electives. Non-compliance will result in notification of the campus specific Associate Deans responsible for Undergraduate Medical Education, and Postgraduate Medical Education.

F. PROCEDURES

Partner Institutions: The Global Health Program will post the list of partner institutions on their website and update UGME so that the Undergraduate Medical Education electives manual can be updated. The list of partner institutions will be reviewed annually by the Manager, Global Health Program.

Application Process

- Students and trainees must meet with the Manager, Global Health, before the elective is approved.
- Students and trainees must complete and submit the Global Health International Travel Risk Assessment and Safety Plan to the Manager, Global Health at least twelve weeks before the proposed start date.
- Students must submit a completed International Clerkship Rotation Form and Clerkship Elective Proposal (in *One45*) for approval to the Undergraduate Medical Education Office at least eight weeks prior to the proposed start date.
- Trainees must have the approval of their Program Director and must follow any program timelines and requirements for the registration and approval of their elective.
- When the Manager, Global Health approves the international elective, Med 1 and Med 2 students must also register their international electives in *Banner* to ensure continued medical malpractice insurance coverage.
- Students and trainees must register their intended international elective in Dalhousie's international database (MoveOn) with the Global Health Program at least one week before the proposed start date

Risk Management

- Students and trainees are required to register their elective with the [Dalhousie International Centre](#) and through International SOS, which Dalhousie contracts to provide 24/7 travel emergency assistance to students travelling as part of their university programs.
- Students and trainees are required to register their travel with the Registry of Canadians Abroad.

Security Status: The Manager (Global Health) monitors the travel advisory reports from Global Affairs Canada. International electives will not be approved in locations where [Global Affairs Canada](#) has issued an [elevated travel warning](#), as per [Dalhousie's International Travel Policy](#).

Travel Health Requirements: Before departure, students and trainees must visit a travel clinic or family physician who advises on vaccines, medications and appropriate health measures for travel abroad

Debriefing: After completing an elective (and one month upon return to Canada), students are required to submit a post-elective reflection, elective feedback report, and complete a debriefing session with the Manager, Global Health.

G. REPORTING

Program data is presented in the Annual Report to the President's Office through the International Centre and Faculty of Medicine's Education Council and Curriculum Committee.

H. POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Manager, Global Health and the Faculty of Medicine's Global Engagement Committee. Any suggested changes will be referred to the Undergraduate Medical Education Curriculum Committee, and Postgraduate Medical Education policy committee for approval.