UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA, FACULTY OF MEDICINE
INTERNATIONAL ELECTIVE POLICY FOR UNDERGRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

Increasingly undergraduate medical students are requesting electives in international settings. The medical and cultural benefits of these electives are recognized by the faculty. These electives pose potential risks for the trainee and the receiving community/institution, therefore proper preparation, supervision and follow up are required.

For international electives, students may be required to carry out special preparation, particularly important for those planning to work in low resource settings.

*Please note: individual students are responsible for applying for and covering the cost of any passport, visa, comprehensive insurance (such as health, evacuation and repatriation), and other requirements.*

PURPOSE:

This policy will outline the requirements for application and successful completion of international electives to receive faculty support and recognition for these activities.

OFFICE RESPONSIBLE:

The Office of Global Health and the Undergraduate Medical Education Office must jointly approve these elective activities. Students are required to comply with instructions from both the Undergraduate Medical Education Office and the Office of Global Health websites, as described by the Electives Catalogue (http://www.med.uottawa.ca/electives/eng/).

SECTION 1: ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

1.1 As per criteria outlined by the Undergraduate Medical Education Office.

SECTION 2: APPLICATION PROCESS

2.1 Applications for international electives must be submitted to the Electives Coordinator at the Undergraduate Medical Education Office a minimum of two (2) months prior to their elective start date. This will allow the student to properly prepare for the elective and allow enough time for required immunizations, visas, passports, and pre-departure training.
2.2 Students must fill out “Application Form to request approval for an International Elective” and “Release of Liability Form” available on Electives Catalogue website (http://www.med.uottawa.ca/electives/eng/international_electives.html) and submit it to the Electives Coordinator at the Undergraduate Medical Education Office.

2.3 A student’s international elective will be pre-approved by the Electives Coordinator if the following requirements are met:

(a) Student is in good academic standing (is registered as a medical student for current session, has paid tuition fees for the current session, has completed requirements for risk management, immunization record is up to date, has a police record check and is CPR certified) and is not on “Academic concern list”, as defined by the Student Guide (LINK).

(b) Student’s international supervisor must be a practicing physician. Students must provide contact information for their supervisor.

NOTE: Student must not be supervised by an immediate, extended, or in-law family member.

NOTE: For students undertaking electives after completing second year (pre-clerkship elective) these activities cannot conflict with any pre-clerkship curriculum activities, as defined on the Electives Catalogue website.
(http://www.med.uottawa.ca/electives/eng/guidelines_for_1st_year.htm)
(http://www.med.uottawa.ca/electives/eng/guidelines_for_2nd_year.htm)

NOTE: For students planning international electives during clerkship, all 4th year students are required to be in Canada or the continental USA on CaRMS Match Day, as outlined on the Electives Catalogue website.
(http://www.med.uottawa.ca/electives/eng/ottawa_students_clerkship.html)

2.4 A student’s international elective will be pre-approved by the Program Coordinator of the Office of Global Health if the following requirements are met:

(a) The destination region for the elective does not carry a warning of “Avoid non-essential travel” or “Avoid all Travel” on the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada Travel Reports & Warnings webpage.
   i. Students should read the profile of the country and the region within the country that they are traveling to on the Reports & Warnings website (http://www.voyage.gc.ca/countries_pays/menu-eng.asp and http://www.voyage.gc.ca/countries_pays/menu-fra.asp) and attach the pages to their application.

(b) Student has provided appropriate educational objectives to be accomplished while participating in their international placement.
(c) Student has provided complete addresses of the place they will be working as well as the place they will be staying, for emergency response purposes.

NOTE: Once the elective has been approved by both offices, it is possible to revoke this decision and the elective can be cancelled due to a change in conditions in the country to where the student is going, loss of in-country supervisor, OR arising academic or professional concerns on the part of the student.

2.5 PRE-DEPARTURE TRAINING FOR INTERNATIONAL ELECTIVES

2.5.1 Students must participate in a mandatory pre-departure training session, as directed by the Office of Global Health.

2.5.1.1 This training is required for all those undertaking electives in low and middle resource settings, for areas designated medium to high risk by the Foreign Affairs and International Trade Travel Reports & Warnings website, and for culturally diverse destinations.

2.5.1.2 Pre-Departure Training Sessions include didactic presentations and small-group sessions covering the following pertinent topics: personal safety while abroad, preparation for medical placements, common clinical diseases, intercultural communication, how to incorporate global health into your training, country research and cultural sensitivity, and past elective experience presentations given by medical students. Presenters include members of the University of Ottawa International Office and healthcare providers and trainees from CHEO, The Ottawa Hospital, Elizabeth Bruyère Family Medicine Centre, and the University of Ottawa’s Faculty of Medicine.

2.5.2 Students are exempt from pre-departure training (but are still encouraged to attend) if their elective takes place in countries approved by the Faculty.

2.6 Students may be required to take part in post-elective debriefing sessions, as appropriate. For all students, the Office of Global Health, along with the Student Affairs and Faculty Wellness Office, are available, at any time, to students wishing to debrief about their experience.

2.7 Upon completion of the elective, all students are required to provide a post-elective summary reflecting on their educational objectives as well as a completed Evaluation Form from both the student and their supervisor. All of the documents should be forwarded to the Electives Coordinator, Undergraduate Medical Education Office.

SECTION 3: DURATION AND REMUNERATION

3.1 International Electives are expected to be a minimum of two (2) working weeks in length (70 hours). Although there are no routine funds available for elective activities, the Office of
Global Health website outlines possible funding opportunities available. Students are encouraged to contact the Office of Global Health if they have any questions.

SECTION 4: AWARDING RECOGNITION

4.1 The completion of the elective will be recognized only once the criteria below are met.

1) Student must have their application approved PRIOR to undertaking the international elective. Application must be approved by BOTH the Electives Office and the Office of Global Health.

2) Student must have completed pre-departure training, as directed by the Office of Global Health.

3) Student must have submitted their post-elective reflective summary to the Electives Coordinator.

4) Student must have submitted their evaluation form to the Electives Coordinator.

5) Student must have submitted or ensured submission of evaluation form by supervisor to Electives Coordinator.

Committee  Date
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Executive Committee of the Senate  August 27, 2012 (12:05:15)