

**Limitations to Specialty Electives  
For Medical Students**

Section: 4  
Policy number: 4.7  
Responsible Office: Student Affairs and Admissions  
Issued: 06.20.16  
Latest Review: 06.20.16

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**POLICY STATEMENT**

Students in the fourth year of medical school may not choose more than two electives in a given sub-specialty area unless they wish to forgo a vacation month in which case they may take three. However, a student may not take more than a total of four electives in a given specialty area. This excludes required courses.

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**REASON for POLICY**

The University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences is dedicated to the development of excellent physicians. Essential to this process is a broad based undergraduate medical education in preparation for the more targeted training experienced in residency. It is during residency that trainees will become more specialized; therefore the School of Medicine and Health Sciences views undergraduate medical education as the time to acquire the broad based knowledge, behaviors and skills that are most likely to prepare students for any residency and gain insight into other areas of specialty practices of future colleagues.

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**SCOPE of POLICY**

This policy applies to:

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|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deans, Directors, and Department Heads | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Faculty |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Managers and supervisors               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Students                               |   |
| Others:  |   |

**WEB SITE REFERENCES**

Policy Office: <http://www.med.und.edu/policies/index.cfm>  
Responsible Office: <http://www.med.und.edu/student-affairs-admissions/>

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DEFINITIONS	
Elective	A non-required course taken in the fourth year of medical school.
Fourth year medical student or MS IV	A medical student who is in the fourth year of the curriculum no matter how many years they have been in medical school.
Specialty	For the purposes of this document specialty shall be defined as those areas of medical study where an individual may receive general certificates of board certification. The web page of the American Board of Medical Specialties shall be used as a guide.
Sub-Specialty	For the purposes of this document shall be defined as those areas of medical study where an individual may receive a subspecialty certificate (sub-boarded). The web page of the American Board of Medical Specialties shall be used as a guide.

RELATED INFORMATION	
American Board of Medical Specialties	<a href="http://www.abms.org">http://www.abms.org</a>
Promotion and Graduation	<a href="http://www.med.und.edu/policies/files/docs/promotion-graduation.pdf">http://www.med.und.edu/policies/files/docs/promotion-graduation.pdf</a>

## CONTACTS

General questions about this policy can be answered by your department's administrative office. Specific questions should be directed to the following:

Subject	Contact	Telephone/FAX	Email contact
Policy clarification	Student Affairs	777.4221/777.4942	
Policy format	Dean's Office	777.2514/777.3527	judy.solberg@med.und.edu

## PRINCIPLES

- I) Students in the fourth year of medical school may not take more than a total of four electives in a single specialty. Within these four electives, no more than two may be general electives in the specialty and no more than two may be in a single sub-specialty area unless they wish to forgo a vacation month in which case they may take three. This includes the acting internship requirement.
  
- II) The curriculum medical program at the University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences is designed to provide students the opportunity to learn a broad base of knowledge in order to develop pluripotent graduates; those able to fulfill the goals and needs of the state and beyond. There are several reasons that the faculty has remained dedicated to this principle.
  - A) Utilizing this curriculum our graduates have had significant opportunities to be competitive for high quality residency programs.

- B) There are several nonscheduled months in the fourth year and should a student feel strongly that he/she would like to take an additional elective in a field of specialty, a vacation month could be used for that purpose.
- C) The accrediting agency for medical schools requires that we ensure our students are encouraged to pursue a broad range of interests and not just those of their chosen specialty.

## PROCEDURES

- I) Students may choose fourth year electives that are of interest to them or that they feel will assist them through skill and knowledge development.
- II) Students may take two electives in a given sub-specialty as defined by the [American Board of Medical Specialties](#). The expectations are as follows:
  - A) A student must relinquish a nonscheduled month in order to accommodate another elective.
  - B) The elective can be for credit.
  - C) The student may not take more than four electives in the specialty area (for example Pediatrics, Radiology, Internal Medicine etc.).
- III) Fourth year schedules must be approved by the campus dean prior to starting an elective. Failure to do so may make it impossible to assign credit to the elective and therefore require the student to take another elective in order to complete the appropriate number of credits required for graduation.

RESPONSIBILITIES	
Campus Dean	Approve student schedules for fourth year, making the student aware when he/she may be requesting too many electives in a specialty area or may be taking course work that has identical objectives.
Student	Abide by the rules as noted; request campus dean approval of schedule and when desired request an additional subspecialty elective in writing to the campus dean.

FORMS	
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## REVISION RECORD

- 11.19.18 – FAC Approved
- 11.19.18 – Dean Approved
- 09.27.19 – Minor Edits

Examples of acceptable schedules:

1.

General pediatrics in Grand Forks  
Away elective in General pediatrics  
Away elective in Neonatology  
Pediatric GI in Fargo  
Pathology AI in Grand Forks  
3 non-pediatric electives

This student would not be able to take any further pediatrics courses.

2.

Renal in Grand Forks  
Cardiology in Grand Forks  
General internal medicine away rotation  
Internal Medicine AI in Fargo  
4 non-internal medicine electives

No further internal medicine courses could be taken

3.

General Surgery AI in Bismarck  
ENT in Grand Forks  
Away elective ENT  
Away elective ophthalmology  
4 non-surgical electives

No further surgical electives can be taken.

Examples of schedules which are not acceptable

1.

Neonatology in Grand Forks  
Neonatology away elective #1  
Neonatology away elective #2  
Pediatric pulmonology away elective  
Pediatric AI in Fargo

This student may not take 3 identical subspecialty electives and is over the 4 specialty course requirement with the pediatric AI. The student would need to give up one of their neonatology electives or take this in place of a month off.

2.

Advanced Ob-Gyn in Dickinson  
Away elective in general Ob-Gyn  
Away elective #2 in Maternal Fetal medicine  
OB AI in Williston

This student may not take 2 electives and an AI which are all general electives in a specialty. They will need to give up a month of vacation or replace one of the general Ob electives or AI with a subspecialty elective.