



Policy Title: Clerkship Delay

Accountable Dean(s) or Director(s):

Associate Dean for Admissions & Student Affairs

Reviewed By:

Office of Admissions & Student Affairs

Office of Academic Affairs

Approval Body:

Professionalism & Promotions Committee

RELEVANT LCME STANDARD:

11.1 Academic Advising and Academic Counseling

11.2 Career Advising

POLICY STATEMENT AND PURPOSE:

The LCME states: A medical school has an effective system of academic advising in place for medical students that integrates the efforts of faculty members, course and clerkship directors, and student affairs staff with its counseling and tutorial services and provides medical students academic counseling only from individuals who have no role in making assessment or promotion decisions about them. A medical school also has an effective career advising system in place that integrates the efforts of faculty members, clerkship directors, and student affairs staff to assist medical students in choosing elective courses, evaluating career options, and applying to residency programs.

This policy outlines the process for reviewing, evaluating, and determining the approval or denial of requests to delay required third-year clerkships.

POLICY DEFINITIONS:

For the purposes of this policy, the following terms and definitions apply:

- Core third-year clerkships: Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Psychiatry, Neurology, Family Medicine, and Surgery
- “Donut”: Specific sequence in which the third-year core clerkships are completed

POLICY GUIDELINES:

I. OVERVIEW

The third-year core clerkships are structured to provide medical students with a broad clinical foundation that aligns with Tulane’s graduation competencies, prerequisites for electives and acting internships, and prepares students for USMLE licensing exams. Additionally, clerkship evaluations serve as the primary content for the Medical Student

Performance Evaluation (MSPE), making timely completion of all third-year clerkships essential for student success.

Due to the lock-step scheduling of the third year and the role of these clerkships as prerequisites for fourth-year rotations, exceptions to standard scheduling can pose significant challenges, including:

- Disruptions to fourth-year scheduling, away rotations, and completion of the Step 2 exam
- Delays in the residency Match process, potentially affecting graduation timelines
- Increased pressure on departments, faculty, and clinical sites when fourth-year students complete core clerkships alongside third-year students

II. ELIGIBILITY FOR DELAYS

The School of Medicine prioritizes a structured clerkship schedule that supports student progression and preserves vacation time for key fourth-year activities. Therefore, clerkship delays are only granted to students with compelling personal or health-related circumstances. Approval is not guaranteed and may come with additional conditions based on the nature of the request.

Importantly, clerkship delays are limited to a maximum of 8 weeks. If a student requires more than 8 weeks away, they must formally request a Leave of Absence ([see Leave of Absence policy](#)).

III. REQUEST TIMELINE & REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

Before submitting a request for a delay, students should complete the *Donut Exception Advising Form* (located in eMedley) and attend evaluative/advising meetings with the following individuals:

- Associate Dean of Admissions & Student Affairs
- Director of Career Advising to assess the likelihood of matching into the student's intended specialty
- Financial Aid to evaluate the potential impact of short- or long-term delays on financial aid status

The completed form, along with required signatures, should be submitted to the Office of Admissions & Student Affairs no later than 30 days prior to the start of the third year (for delays) or 30 days prior to the affected block (for “donut” exceptions). In extenuating circumstances, and at the committee's discretion, delay requests submitted less than 30 days prior to the start of the third year may be considered.

IV. REVIEW PROCESS

Upon receipt of the exception advising form, clerkship delay requests will be evaluated by the Exception Committee, which considers the reason for the student's request, the potential impact on fourth-year scheduling, and the impact of the request on general clerkship enrollment. The Committee reserves the right to meet with the student, either in person or via videoconferencing. Decisions are made by a majority vote of the

Committee members present. The student will be notified of the Committee's decision within two business days following the committee meeting.

Committee Composition:

- Associate Dean for Medical Education & Academic Affairs
- Associate Dean for the Office of Admissions & Student Affairs (votes only in the event of a tie)
- Director of Career Advising
- Registrar
- T1/T2 Faculty Representative
- T3/T4 Faculty Representative

V. STUDENT OBLIGATIONS

- Orientation activities for third-year clerkships are offered only once per year. Students who are approved to delay third-year clerkships are still required to attend orientation activities to ensure they are prepared to resume clinical duties when appropriate.
- Students must provide the Exception Review Committee with an update at least two weeks prior to the anticipated start of their next clerkship. This update should include their current status and anticipated return date.

LAST REVIEW DATE/APPROVAL:

Professionalism & Promotions Committee: 07/01/25

REVIEW CYCLE:

Every 2 years