

Dear medical student,

Visiting student season is under way. Did you know that the AAMC's Committee on Student Records (COSR) Visiting Student Workgroup has developed **Guidelines Regarding Visiting Medical Students*** to help make this process less stressful and more effective for you? Please review the guidelines, particularly the "Applicant/Host Communication" and "Away Elective Notification" sections. Additionally, we strongly recommend the following:

1. **DO follow** the deadlines and notification timelines for each program you have applied to, and **DO NOT** contact the host site for an update before the published deadlines.
2. **DO apply** to multiple blocks and be flexible with your availability if there is **ONE** program that you are especially interested in. (Reserve this strategy for only your absolute, must-have rotation).
3. **DO provide requested documentation, and DO NOT** provide ANY documentation beyond what was requested (e.g., letters of interest, letters of recommendation, etc.) This creates more work for the host site and may do more harm than good in getting an offer for a rotation.
4. **DO check** your emails at least once a day and respond promptly (within 24 hours).
5. If you must cancel a rotation, **DO SO** respectively and with sufficient notice (30 days, if possible).
6. **DO complete** your Immunizations Form early.
7. **DO make sure** that any other compliance requirements are up-to-date, (e.g., Mask Fit, BLS, etc.).
8. **DO seek advice** from your specialty advisor about application strategy. Possible items to discuss with your advisor:
 - a. Number of applications to submit.
 - b. What to do if you get an offer for a rotation but are still waiting to hear back from your first choice.
 - c. If you need to cancel, how to do so without hurting your chance of getting a residency interview.
9. **DO consult** with your Office of Financial Assistance or Financial Aid to find out about possible funding options available to you if you get multiple offers and financing your away rotations is a problem.
10. **DO NOT panic** if you don't get an offer for an away rotation. This doesn't mean that you won't get an interview offer or that you won't match.

COSR is also issuing guidance to program directors and VSLO administrators to encourage a fair and successful visiting student season for all parties. We are committed to improving what we know can be a difficult and cumbersome process for both students and programs. Please share any suggestions you may have with your Registrar, Student Affairs Dean, or OSR representative. Best of luck this visiting student season!

Best regards,

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*** AAMC GSA Committee on Student Records Guidelines Regarding Visiting Medical Students**

Introduction: During the final year of medical school, it is common for medical students to seek elective rotations at other medical institutions, such as schools of medicine and academic medical centers. In fact, survey data of medical students and residency program directors strongly indicate that the visiting student process is a pathway to a successful residency match. Even with the introduction of the Visiting Student Application Service (VSAS) in 2009, and its successor the Visiting Student Learning Opportunities (VSLO) program in 2018, the complexity of this process remains onerous to institutions and students. Questions regarding medical liability, affiliation agreements, immunization requirements, scheduling, performance evaluation, housing, and communication protocols have persisted since the inception of the original guidelines that were approved in February 2000.

No medical institution is required to host visiting students. Each institution must establish its own policies and procedures with respect to ensuring quality education for its students and appropriate care of patients. These guidelines are designed to assist institutions in optimizing the process for the benefit of both students and institutions. The term home institution denotes where the medical student is enrolled. The term host institution denotes where the student is taking an elective as a visiting student.

The previous guidelines developed in 2000 addressed the application for visiting electives, faculty authority, fees, health insurance, medical liability and/or medical malpractice, immunization, performance evaluation, housing, registration, elective catalog, and student status. Since then, the landscape of the visiting student process has changed considerably, and the updated guidelines reflect effective practices to address current processes.

Applicant/Host Communication

- Students should adhere to the communication guidelines outlined by each host institution while their application is being processed.
- Each institution should publish their application processing timeline on their visiting student application platform.
- Students may request an update on their completed application only after the host institution's published application processing timeline has concluded.
- It is recommended that host institutions post an FAQ on their visiting student website.

Away Elective Notification

- Students with a completed elective application should be notified of an elective offer or denial at least 30 days in advance of the start of the elective, so that they have ample time to manage their schedule. Students may be offered an elective on shorter notice in the event that space becomes available.
- Students should be provided with at least two weeks to accept or decline an elective.
- Host institutions should allow a student to drop an elective up to 30 days before the start date.
- Students should only cancel an elective with less than 30 days' notice due to extenuating circumstances.

Application and Processing Fees

- Fees and refund policies should be well publicized on the host institution visiting student platform.
- Students should not be charged any fees until they have accepted an elective.

- Visiting students continue to pay tuition at their home institution while on a visiting elective. Thus, fees established by host institutions for visiting students, if any, should be minimal. Fees should be refundable only in the event that the elective requested by the student is no longer available.

Please note: Host institutions that are using VSLO are not permitted to charge an application fee.

AAMC Standardized Immunization Form

- It is recommended that host institutions utilize the AAMC Standardized Immunization Form. Utilizing the AAMC form streamlines the process for students, reduces the workload for home institution immunization offices completing these forms, and provides comparable data for host institutions to review.

Affiliation Agreements

- If an affiliation agreement is required, it is recommended that host institutions utilize the AAMC Uniform Clinical Training Agreement. Utilizing the AAMC form streamlines the process for students, reduces the workload for home and host institutions completing these forms.

- Affiliation agreements should only be initiated after the student has accepted an elective.

Requiring an affiliation agreement before the application is reviewed presents an unnecessary barrier for students.

Duplicate Documentation (VSLO users)

- Host institutions should not request duplicate documentation (e.g., letters of good standing, documentation of liability coverage, etc.) for information that is already verified or uploaded to VSLO.
- Institutions should not require a “pre-application” outside of VSLO before permitting the student to then submit their application in VSLO.

Please note: There are no Joint Commission standards that require a “Letter of Good (Academic) Standing” or other document that includes a school insignia or official’s signature be provided to a Host institution by a visiting student or their Home institution.

Documentation requested by a Host institution beyond the information provided in the VSLO application would be determined solely between the Home and Host institutions and not driven by any Joint Commission standards or requirements. For further clarification, please contact the Standards Interpretation Group of the Joint Commission.

Liability Coverage

- Policies regarding host institution medical liability and/or medical malpractice coverage requirements should be clearly articulated on the host institution visiting student application platform.
- Proof of sufficient liability coverage for the host institution should only be required post-acceptance. Students should not be required to purchase additional coverage prior to being accepted for an elective.

Host Responsibilities during a Visiting Rotation

- Once a visiting student has started an elective, that individual should have access to those student services at the host institution that are important to the educational purpose of the elective such as the library, personal protective equipment (PPE), student learning management systems, mistreatment reporting, and electronic health record systems.
- Host institutions should inform visiting students of their student exposure policies and procedures and other relevant emergency protocols.

- When a visiting student fails to appear on the first day of the elective or demonstrates an egregious lapse in professionalism, the host institution must notify the student's home institution.

Performance Evaluation

- Host institutions must complete an evaluation and return it to the home institution no later than 30 days after the completion of the elective. Students and home institutions must receive timely assessment of the students' performance.
- Host institutions should use the student's home institution elective evaluation. If this is not feasible, it is recommended that home institutions accept host institution evaluations.
- Home institutions should make a copy of their evaluation form available to the Host institution.