

## Optional Clinical Learning Opportunities - MD Program

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### I. PURPOSE

The Doctor of Medicine or Undergraduate Medical Education (UME) Program (“Program”) in the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry (“School”) at Western University is a competency based curriculum that supports student experiential learning to advance competency. An Optional Clinical Learning Opportunity (OCLO) is a Program learning activity where students choose a clinical discipline or immersion as a single or multiple event(s) that allows for developing competency while assisting students in exploring career interests.

These learning events can occur with any physician or health professional with a valid Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry faculty appointment in an academic or rural / regional centre. OCLO’s were formerly known in our Program as “Observerships”.

This statement will outline processes to complete an OCLO.

### II. DEFINITIONS

**Optional Clinical Learning Opportunity:** A learning experience (formerly “Observerships”) where a student learns approaches to patient care under a faculty educator in an affiliated School learning facility.

### III. STATEMENT

Optional Clinical Learning Opportunities (OCLOs) are self-directed learning opportunities for students within Program Year 1, 2 and 4 studies, which are undertaken outside the formal curriculum. These may be completed during the single weekday for self-directed student learning, another day where there is not scheduled mandatory clinical learning or during evenings and weekends.

Faculty and students **must** be aware of the terms and limitations of an OCLO including mandatory registration, approval, assessment or evaluation (if any).

Medical Students in Year 3(Clerkship) are NOT eligible to pursue OCLOs during the Clerkship academic year.

By accepting the student as an Observer, the preceptor is accepting legal responsibility for the student involvement in patient care. Students are not permitted to complete OCLOs outside of Canada.

Students in each OCLO are expected to maintain the standards of [School Professionalism](#) and meet the ethical behavior as outlined in the [CMA Code of Ethics](#) and [adhere to all aspects of confidentiality of patient care as defined in the Personal Health Information Protection Act \(PHIPA\) of Ontario.](#)

An OCLO must follow the process described below:

#### a. Opportunities

Students are to arrange an OCLO by contacting a clinical teaching faculty member or the designated clinical department UME coordinator in London, Windsor or one of the Distributed Education (DE) (rural/regional) affiliates who are willing to host the OCLO. Students can not arrange OCLOs with Residents, and must supervised

## b. Scheduling

An OCLO is supplemental to Program curriculum and will not replace the requirements for mandatory session attendance as outlined in the Program Attendance Statement. The Program visions students utilizing OCLOs for deeper curricular understanding using clinical experience in a discipline aligned with curriculum content to advance competency in clinical care skills and explore career interests across disciplines of medicine.

In scheduling and completing an OCLO the following must be true:

- i. All OCLOs must be approved by the Program before starting. Such approval is mandatory to allow student coverage with insurance, disability and to ensure faculty compliance with School and [CPSO regulations](#).
- ii. An OCLO may only occur outside hours of Program learning or on days not scheduled for Program learning.
- iii. Absence from mandatory curriculum learning (including active large-group learning; small group learning; labs; simulated learning; special Program learning events) to attend an OCLO will not be approved under any circumstances.
- iv. An OCLO is a student privilege and may be deferred or denied if there are concerns with learner professionalism or a need for mandated Program remediation.
- v. OCLOs are registered in the Schulich HUB online platform and require approval by the Program Office **prior** to taking place
- vi. If a student misses a scheduled mandatory Program learning session to attend an OCLO, this will be addressed as an issue of professionalism under the MD Program Assessment Policy.
- vii. Students must be in good standing in the MD Program to participate (Health Clearances complete, Mandatory health and safety training completed – Clinical Location and MD Program requirements)

## c. Registration

**Please Note: Registration for OCLOs will open by September 30th each academic year**

**All** OCLOs must be registered through the Program. This is mandatory for learner safety, providing student insurance coverage. OCLOs are registered in the Schulich HUB online platform and require approval by the Program Office **prior** to taking place. A minimum of ten (10) working days is required to process the registration.

At the start of each OCLO, the student must provide an OCLO introductory letter to faculty and/ or the clinical department as well as submit the completed checklist to the appropriate UME contact outlined in the checklist prior to starting the OCLO.

## d. Preparation

To meet the regulatory requirements of the health care facilities and the province, all learners must complete annually prior to entering clinical care learning, all required modules and disease prevention requirements for quality and safe patient care:

- London Health Sciences Centre (LHSC) /St. Josephs' Health Centre London/Windsor Regional Hospital / Hotel Dieu Windsor online modules as provided by the hospital
- DE site: as requested by the host hospital or health care affiliates
- All mandatory vaccines and serology
- N 95 mask fit tests (if required)
- Module on gowning, masking and gloving from LHSC
- Review Public Health Ontario IPAC guidelines for PPE in patient care during the COVID 19 pandemic prior to starting



any OCLO

#### e. Learning Experiences

Medical students will be involved in observation and interaction with patients from the start of their undergraduate medical education.

The supervisor and/or Most Responsible Physician (MRP) are responsible for ensuring that the educational status of medical students and nature of their role are made clear to the patient, the patient's family and members of the health-care team as early as possible during the educational process.

Students must be introduced as medical students and it should be made clear to patients that they are not physicians. An explanation could be provided that the student is a member of the health/clinical care team and the experience forms an important part of their undergraduate medical education program. Where appropriate, medical students may introduce themselves to patients as medical students instead of relying on a supervisor and/or MRP to make a formal introduction.

#### f. Supervision and Education of Medical Students

The supervisor and/or MRP must provide appropriate supervision. This includes:

- determining the medical student's willingness and competency or capacity to participate in the clinical care of patients as a learning experience;
- closely observing interactions between the medical student and the patient to assess:
- the medical student's performance, capabilities and educational needs,
- whether the medical student has the requisite competence (knowledge, skill and judgment) to safely participate in a patient's care without compromising that care, and
- whether the medical student demonstrates the necessary competencies and expertise to interact with patients without the supervisor being present in the room;
- meeting at appropriate intervals with the medical student to formatively discuss their performance
- ensuring that the medical student only engages in acts based on previously agreed-upon arrangements with the MRP;
- reviewing, providing feedback and countersigning documentation by a medical student of a patient's history, physical examination, diagnosis, and progress notes as soon as possible;
- managing and documenting patient care, regardless of the level of involvement of medical students; and
- counter-signing all orders concerning investigation or treatment of a patient, written by a student under the supervision or direction of a physician. Prescriptions, telephone or other transmitted orders may be transcribed by the medical student, but must be countersigned.

In addition, appropriate supervision and education requires clear communication between the MRP and supervisor to ensure the best possible care for the patient.

Source: [Professional Responsibilities In Undergraduate Medical Education – CpsO.On.Ca](#)

**NOTE:** *It will be the responsibility of the preceptor to supervise the student in all patient interactions.*

OCLOs serve as excellent opportunities for students to complete self-directed learning in demonstrating or understanding each Enabling Competency by Stage. Therefore, students are encouraged to document these activities in Elentra.