

3rd and 4th Year Electives FAQ

What are the Elective Requirements for Graduation?

- All students must complete at least **16 credits of electives** over **the two clinical years**
 - **(usually 1 credit = minimum of 40 hours/week)**
 - Of those 16 credits, **12 must be clinical**
 - **At least 6 must be outside of a chosen narrowly defined specialty**
 - **ie. someone going into Ortho cannot use of all their elective time doing Ortho Sub-Is/electives**
 - **Variation within a larger specialty (Medicine, PEDS, SURGERY, OB/GYN) is acceptable**
 - Your 1st Sub-I (a Geisel requirement) is not included in the total elective credit requirement *but does count for credits outside of a narrowly defined specialty*
 - For instance, a student going into Radiology who does a Medicine sub-I would have the Medicine sub-I credits count towards the 6 total credits needed outside of Radiology
 - Any subsequent Sub-Is will count toward your elective requirements
- Students may take up to 36 credits of electives

When will I have time to do electives?

- **6 weeks of time to take electives in the 3rd year**
 - Most students take 2-6 weeks of electives and 2-4 weeks of vacation/other
- **6 months available in the 4th year (July through May but must subtract time for Sub-I, Neuro, GAM, and 8 weeks of Capstone Coursework (Feb and March)).**
 - This seems like a lot of time but keep in mind that most students will also take 1-2 months off for interviews and board prep/taking
- On OASIS, elective times are set to begin on a Monday and end on a Friday. In the 3rd year, and sometimes in the 4th year, your schedule may not permit you to start and end on those days. For most electives, it is possible to start and end on a different day of the week but you'll need to contact the elective coordinator to get permission to do so.

Where can I find elective options?

- **Geisel sponsored electives are found on OASIS: <https://dms-oasis.dartmouth.edu/index.html>**
 - There are over 100 to choose from and you can sign up for them on OASIS
 - In general, you will be put on a waitlist and the elective coordinator will enroll you within 2 weeks or let you know if there is no room – you should contact the coordinator if you have specific questions
- **VSAS (Visiting Student Application Services):**
 - This service allows you to view and apply for electives that are established and run by other medical schools and are intended for 4th year students

- http://geiselmed.dartmouth.edu/admin/registrar/how_to_register.shtml
- In addition to signing up for these online, you must complete the [online non-established elective request form](#) at least 4 weeks in advance of the elective start date. The Associate Dean of Clinical Education will review these and give final approval.

Can I create my own elective experience?

- You can create your own elective experience **in conjunction with a sponsor who must be a faculty member of an accredited medical school**
- These can be clinical, research/reading, or abroad medical experiences
 - Examples include spending a clinical week or two with your prior On-Doctoring preceptor; reading/reporting on the psychological aspects of childbirth; engaging in a case-series study of patients with chronic pancreatitis; Medical work in Vietnam
- These “non-established” electives must be thoughtfully devised, require [the online non-established elective request form](#) and **be approved by the Associate Dean for Clinical Education at least 4 weeks in advance of the elective start date.**

Why do the “away” and non-established electives need to be approved ahead of time?

- To ensure adequate educational opportunities
- To give enough time to gather required documents – proof of immunization, etc.
- To ensure you are appropriately enrolled by the Geisel registrar in order to earn the credit

Where can I get advice on choice of electives?

- The **Associate Dean for Clinical Education** (Dr. John Dick) and **Assistant Dean for Medical Education** (Dr. Susan Harper) would be happy to give advice regarding elective choices.
- The **Career Roadmap on Blackboard** is an excellent resource that includes YouTube videos that give advice on elective planning
- AAMC Careers in Medicine website
- Your residency advisors
- Classmates

What elective should I choose during my 3rd year?

- Students who are undecided in career choice should attempt to use this elective time to explore a particular field that they might be interested in, especially if you will not be getting much exposure to it during year 3 (Radiation Oncology, Ophthalmology).
- Students who are interested in fields that require multiple sub-Is or visiting rotations (Plastics, Emergency Medicine, Orthopedics) should consider saving their elective for the end of the year during which time they might be able to complete an “early” sub-internship or if certain on one of those career choices, use the time to meet your requirements for getting exposure to something outside of that narrowly defined field.