

Proposed change to Policy titled:

**Specific policies related to Step 1** (located on Geisel Student Handbook page 42 of 2016-17 edition)

Situation:

An increasing number of students are requesting to delay the taking of Step 1 past the start of their first planned clerkship. The only current administrative structure to handle this is to place them on leave or have them split Year 3. This leads to significant financial, administrative and clerkship planning issues.

Background:

Students are required to take Step 1 prior to the start of their first clerkship whether that be in block 1 or block 2. A significant minority of students request and are approved for the space limited option of taking their first block as a 6 week elective in order to provide more time to study for Step 1. In recent years, as students have approached their deadline, several have not felt ready to take the exam and have requested additional time. Placing these students on a leave strips of them of certain financial aid and presents visa issues. Placing them on a split status has led to an uneven distribution of required clerkship activities and significant administrative burdens.

Assessment:

It would help students, administrators and advisors to have a more clearly defined policy regarding student requests to delay taking Step 1.

Recommendation:

To edit the existing handbook section on “Specific policies related to Step 1” to include the following:

Add the underlined text to the existing language “1. All students must take Step 1 prior to beginning their first clerkship in year 3, whether the first clerkship is scheduled for Block 1 or Block 2, and no later than the last day of the first 6 week clerkship block of the academic year.

Add the following:

2. A student that requests to delay taking Step 1 until after the last day of the first 6 week clerkship block of the academic year will be on leave of absence and may not return from leave until the Step 1 has been completed.
3. Delays due to unexpected and acute life events such as illness can be permitted by the SADME and likely will also require a leave of absence.
4. A year 3 split schedule is not permitted in order to delay taking Step 1. Only under extremely unique circumstances, at the discretion of the SADME (in consultation with the Associate Dean for Clinical

Education and Advising Deans) or if mandated by the CSPC, may a Geisel student be permitted to split year 3 and delay taking Step 1. In that case, the policy regarding Definition of Full Time Student would apply.

5. Students who delay Step 1 beyond the end of the first 6 week clerkship must work directly and regularly with Geisel Academic Support to develop a detailed plan of study.