



## MBBS FINAL YEAR Elective Period FAQs - Planning for North America

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Electives in North America need careful planning and you are advised to research online the application process and timetable for your chosen institutions early on in Year 5, although the applications will not be submitted in most cases until early in Year 6.

Some institutions only offer 4 week placements, in which case students should refer to the elective approval website for guidance about how to fulfil the MBBS regulatory and policy requirements.

Many North American hospitals/institutions follow their own timetables for confirming elective placements and you may not hear until shortly before your planned departure date. For example, Harvard will only confirm placements 4 weeks in advance.

All applications require a great deal of paperwork and you are advised to gather documents as early as possible. Requests for Medical School documentation such as letters of good standing and academic transcripts should be emailed to [medsch.elective-approval@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:medsch.elective-approval@ucl.ac.uk)

### ELECTIVE APPLICATIONS

#### CANADA

Applications to all Canadian institutions are now processed through a central portal - **AFMC Student Portal**. There is a fee of CAN\$500.

#### USA

You will find this website helpful in researching US applications:  
<http://electives.us/unilistims.html>

**Q.** Can I apply to a number of institutions?

**A.** Students can apply to more than one institution but should accept only one offer of a placement. It is also important that when you receive the first offer of a placement that you either accept or decline this as soon as possible.

A “back-up” elective should not be arranged. Declining an elective placement at short notice is considered highly unprofessional and inappropriate and, importantly, it disadvantages future UCL students who may apply to that institution.

Students applying to Harvard are advised to come in to see the Lead for Electives to discuss their options in view of Harvard’s late confirmation of placements.

**Q.** Can I apply to do a two-centred elective e.g. 4 weeks in USA/Canada and 4 weeks in a developing country?

**A.** MBBS regulations and policy require a clinical attachment of 6 consecutive weeks to be undertaken within the timetabled elective dates in one country and at one hospital or institution. For institutions in North America which are known only to offer 4 week electives, students may arrange a second 4 week elective in the same city or area. If a second 4 weeks cannot be arranged or an offer

is withdrawn whilst on elective, students must return to the UK to complete their remaining 2 week requirement within the elective time period.

**Q.** The institution to which I would like to apply has asked whether UCL Medical School would enter into a reciprocal arrangement / educational agreement.

**A.** Unfortunately UCL Medical School is not able to enter into any affiliations / reciprocal arrangements and is not able to institute formal exchange programmes. However, UCLMS does offer a Visiting Electives Programme and international students are welcome to apply in order to undertake an elective under the auspices of UCL Medical School. We can provide a letter which confirms this and which gives details of the programme.

Note: UCLA (as of August 2015) There has been a change to their policy for international students and UCL medical students are no longer eligible to apply as there is no formal affiliation between the institutions. UCLA had previously accepted the UCL Medical School Visiting Electives Programme in lieu.

**Q.** Without an agreement, the institution will only allow me to participate as an “observer”. Would UCL permit me to attend an elective as an observer?

**A.** The MBBS regulations require a clinical attachment. Observerships do not fulfil this requirement.

**Q.** The application form asks whether the student’s medical school is recognised by IMED (International Medical Education Directory) and, also, sometimes, whether it is a LCME (Liaison Committee on Medical Education) accredited school.

**A.** UCL Medical School is recognised by IMED and is included in the Directory. The Student Office can provide a letter confirming this. The LCME accreditation is for USA medical schools and UCL Medical School is therefore a ‘non-LCME accredited school’.

## **DOCUMENTS REQUIRED TO BE PROVIDED WITH THE APPLICATION**

**Q.** How do I go about organising the various documents that I need to provide for the application?

**A.** Please email Anne Thurston at [medsch.elective-approval@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:medsch.elective-approval@ucl.ac.uk)

Please give full name, student number, description of documentation required and reason required.

The Student Office can provide:–

- a Letter of Good Standing/Recommendation (which includes confirmation of student status)
- an academic transcript
- an academic reference
- USMLE Step 1 exemption letter (confirms equivalent training)
- letter confirming English language proficiency
- letter confirming training in Personal Protective Equipment
- letter with details of UCL Medical School’s Visiting Electives Programme
- letter to support your visa application (confirmation of student status/elective placement)
- and other letters

**Application forms** will require the signature of either the Dean or a Designate and the Medical School stamp. Please complete your part of the form and then send it on (or bring it in) to Anne Thurston, Electives Administrator, at 74 Huntley Street (room 138 - first floor)

[medsch.elective-approval@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:medsch.elective-approval@ucl.ac.uk)

If you have been asked for a reference concerning your **clinical skills and experience**, you should contact a consultant who has supervised you on an attachment

## **IMMUNISATION REPORT**

**Q.** In the application process, the institution has requested an immunisation report (or there is an 'Immunisation Verification Form' that is required to be signed off by a 'school health official' - a number of serological tests may need to be done as evidence of immunity).

**A.** Please contact the UCL Occupational Health Service  
[http://www.ucl.ac.uk/hr/occ\\_health/](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/hr/occ_health/)

Contact details: Tel: 0207 679 2802

Email: [uclstudentoh@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:uclstudentoh@ucl.ac.uk)

## **CHEST X-RAYS**

**Q.** I have been asked to provide a chest x-ray report (for applications to the USA).

**A.** Please contact the UCL Occupational Health Service – see above

## **HEALTH CHECK FOR CANADIAN ELECTIVE**

**Q.** Do I need to complete the medical examination required by Canadian immigration?

**A.** Recently it has become the case that students organising a medical elective in Canada have been asked as part of the visa application process to complete a medical examination at a medical practice in London approved by the Canadian High Commission. The cost of the examination is high and, unfortunately, neither the Royal Free Hospital nor UCLH are on this list of approved clinics.

## **DBS CHECKS (formerly CRB)** Disclosure and Barring Service

**Q.** I have been asked to provide confirmation of my criminal record status

**A.** If you do not have a copy of your certificate, the Medical School can provide a clearance certification letter. Please email [medsch.year6@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:medsch.year6@ucl.ac.uk) giving your full name, student number and year of entry.

A small number of elective destinations will require you to have a new DBS check completed usually within 12 / 24 months of your placement dates. Please check with your placement BEFORE requesting a new check. You can arrange for a new check through the Medical School. Please contact Stephanie Woods [s.woods@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:s.woods@ucl.ac.uk). Please note that Stephanie is based at the Whittington campus and you are required to be there in person to complete and sign the form.

## **PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY INSURANCE / MEDICAL MALPRACTICE INSURANCE**

**Q.** I have been asked to provide confirmation that I will be covered by professional indemnity insurance and to provide a copy of the policy

**A.** This is available free of charge for student members through the MDU and the MPS, but through policies which are essentially advisory and which rely on electives being properly supervised and so are of use only to students whose elective supervisor is covered by the institution's clinical negligence insurance.

It is a requirement where the host institution's clinical negligence insurance does not extend to visiting elective supervision or is stated as a condition of the elective, in which case students need to purchase personal medical negligence insurance appropriate for their chosen destination. Students visiting the US / Canada should take advice from their host institution.

One of the American institutions in 2016 provided details of an organisation through which international students can arrange this cover – see below:

USA

Academic Medical Professionals Insurance Risk Retention Group (RRG)

<http://www.academicgroup.com/students.html>

*“Academic Medical can provide visiting foreign medical students with medical professional liability insurance coverage for the specific period of time coverage is required. The quotation for cost of this coverage will be determined after a completed application is submitted. Once the quotation is accepted, proof of coverage can be issued.”*

## PERSONAL HEALTH AND TRAVEL INSURANCE

**Q.** Do I need to buy personal travel insurance?

**A.** Personal travel and medical emergency insurance for your elective is provided through UCL's insurers and the costs of the insurance premium are met by UCL. Please check <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/studyabroad/insurance> for full details of the cover provided and for the emergency and claims helplines. Please note that this insurance covers UCL business only (i.e. your time on an elective placement) with holiday travel included only on an incidental basis and only in the same country as your clinical placement. You will need to buy your own, separate personal travel insurance to cover other holiday travel or if you are planning to participate in extreme sports not covered under UCL's policy.

## VISA QUERIES

**Q.** Which visa should I apply for?

**A.** The Medical School is not able to advise on which visa students should apply for and recommend that you contact the host institution for their advice. Please visit the US Embassy Visa Application website at <https://uk.usembassy.gov/visas/>

However, one of the US institutions in 2015, provided the following information:

*“The immigration regulations require us to use the B-1 nonimmigrant visa category for medical clerkships, as it allows patient contact, while other non-immigrant visa classifications do not.”*

Another institution in 2016 provided the following information on their application:

2. What type of visa is required?

*While a visa is not required as part of the application, those students who are eligible and receive and accept an elective offer will need the appropriate visa prior to arrival in the United States. Please visit the [U.S. Department of State visa information website](#) for additional information on the type of visa required for your specific needs. For the purposes of participating in our program, typically the B1 visa is appropriate. Students from some countries may be eligible for the Visa Waiver Program.*

## **NOTES**

Please be aware that there are institutions in the USA which will not offer placements unless there is a reciprocal arrangement, and, also do not accept exemption from the USMLE Step 1 exams. There are a great number of institutions, though, which are happy to host UCL medical students.

Icahn School of Medicine at **Mount Sinai**, New York – charges US\$1,000 application fee.

Northwestern University, Feinberg School of Medicine - visiting programme only open to Global Partner affiliated institutions

UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA - visiting programme only open to affiliated institutions (Aug 2015)

**HIPPA** training certificate – there is a website and a short exam is completed online.