

	<p style="text-align: center;">Clerkship Delays Policy</p> <p style="text-align: center;">LCME Elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11.1 Academic Advising • 11.2 Career Advising 	Effective Date:	3/4/2020
		Current Date:	3/4/2020
		Contact:	Office of Admissions & Student Affairs
Approved By: Professionalism & Promotion Committee		Date Approved:	3/3/2020
Revisions approved by:		Date Reviewed:	

1) GENERAL POLICY STATEMENT

a) **Scope:** This policy applies to Tulane students in the MD program

b) **Responsible Department/Party/Parties:**

Policy Owner: Office of Admissions & Student Affairs

Procedure: Office of Admissions & Student Affairs

Supervision: Office of Admissions & Student Affairs

Purpose

This policy delineates the process by which delays or requests to reschedule required third-year clerkships are reviewed, evaluated, and approved or denied.

Overview

The third-year required (core) “donut” clerkships are scheduled in such a way as to provide medical students with a broad clinical foundation that is generally expected of all medical students, ensures students meet prerequisites for their electives and acting internships, and prepares students for required licensing (USMLE) exams. In addition, clerkship evaluations serve as the primary content for the student’s Medical Student Performance Evaluation (MSPE), so students’ interests are best served by timely completion of all third-year clerkships.

Because the third-year is scheduled in a lock-step fashion, and because third-year clerkships are a prerequisite for fourth-year rotations, exceptions to the customary scheduling can create significant

challenges for the student's fourth-year scheduling and his or her ability to complete away rotations, complete Step 2 in a timely fashion, apply for the Match on track with the matriculating cohort, and graduate on time. Furthermore, a student's desire to match on track with his or her existing cohort often complicates these plans, further decreasing the likelihood of success.

In addition, departments, faculty, sites, and third-year cohorts can experience overcrowding pressure when fourth-year students must complete core clerkships at the same time as third-year students.

The School of Medicine has a responsibility to train third-year students in a systematic way that allows all students to progress successfully to their fourth year with minimal interruption and preserves vacation time for important fourth-year activities. Therefore, "donut" delays or exceptions are *not* designed for students for whom there is little or no evidence they are not academically prepared to take Step 1. However, the School of Medicine recognizes that occasionally, a student might benefit from a delay or an exception to the customary third-year scheduling when evidence exists that the student is not academically prepared to take Step 1. This evidence includes a pattern of repeated academic difficulties in pre-clerkship courses, modules, and/or CBSE scores that would be consistent with a failing score on Step 1. These students may benefit from interventions that would require them to delay third-year clerkships, but that would improve their likelihood of successfully passing Step 1.

Students for whom there is no evidence of a likely Step 1 failure may have reasons for desiring to delay or partially reschedule their third-year clerkships. While the primary purpose of granting exceptions to the customary third-year schedule is to mitigate the chances of a Step 1 failure, delay or exception requests from students with compelling and extenuating personal and health issues will be heard; however, students are strongly encouraged to balance personal preferences against the professional demands and expectations they will face as future physicians. Such exception requests may not always be approved. In addition, the committee may assign additional limitations/obligations (relevant to the reason for the request), if such requests are approved.

All of these cases will be reviewed by an Exception Committee that will take into consideration the reason for the student's request, the student's past performance (for example, in the pre-clinical curriculum, the CBSE, NBME practice exams), the impact of the request on a student's fourth-year schedule, and the impact of the request on general clerkship enrollment.

2) DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this policy, the following terms and definitions apply:

- Core third-year clerkships: Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Psychiatry, Neurology, Family Medicine, Surgery
- “Donut”: Specific sequence in which the third-year core clerkships are completed
- CBSE: Comprehensive Basic Science Exam administered by the NBME and taken in the spring of the second year.

3) POLICY GUIDELINES

General Requirements

This policy is intended to provide a policy-based framework to facilitate discussion between the involved student and individuals within the institution who are invested with student performance and success. Exceptions or delays in third-year scheduling may be requested by the student, or in some cases, can be encouraged by the Committee. Students requesting an exception or delay must present their request to the Exception Committee no later than thirty days prior to starting their third year (for delays) or thirty days prior to the affected block (for “donut” exceptions). In extenuating circumstances, the Committee may grant an exception or delay in less than thirty days prior to starting their third year (for delays) or prior to the affected block (for exceptions), though these will be Committee-initiated.

The Committee will take into account, performance on practice examinations including the CBSE, prior academic performance, and personal issues that may affect third-year scheduling. The Committee reserves the right to meet with the student, either in person or electronically. The Committee decision is based on the majority of those present. The Committee will communicate its decision to the student within two business days after the committee meeting or personal meeting, whichever is later.

Committee Composition:

- Vice Dean for Academic Affairs
- Senior Associate Dean for Student Affairs (only votes in case of tie)
- Faculty Director of Career Advising
- Learning Specialist

- Registrar
- T1/T2 Faculty representative
- T3/T4 Faculty representative

Criteria for Consideration:

- Student's request
- Preclinical curriculum performance
- CBSE performance
- NBME practice exam performance
- Significant personal events or stressors

Required Documentation

For Step 1-related delays

- Before submitting a request, students should schedule and attend evaluative/advising meetings with
 - SOM's learning specialist to determine the likelihood of achieving a particular Step 1 target score and to develop a written study plan
 - Dean of Student Affairs
 - Faculty director of career advising to determine the likelihood of matching in a particular target specialty
 - Financial Aid to determine the potential impact of short- or long-term delays on financial aid status
- Students must provide required documentation by the committee meeting deadline (**generally 30 days before the block for which an exception is requested**), including
 - The donut-exception advising form
 - A written study plan developed in consultation with SOM's learning specialist
 - Documentation of NBME practice exam scores

Student Obligations:

- Orientation activities for third-year clerkships are only offered once per year. Students who are approved to delay or reschedule third-year clerkships are expected to attend these activities to ensure that they will be able to resume their clinical duties when appropriate.

- A primary goal is to provide appropriate support and successful, focused conditions for students to pass Step 1; therefore, students whose clerkship-delay requests are approved for the purposes of Step 1 studying are expected to:
 - Step away from extracurricular activities such as student government/interest group leadership/organizational roles, research projects, until the student can resume the customary third-year schedule. As decisions regarding combined-degree coursework may have additional considerations such as financial aid implications, these should be addressed on a case-by-case basis;
 - Schedule and attend regular progress update meetings with SOM's learning specialist;
 - Make active use of additional available resources as recommended by the review committee (*e.g.*, study materials, tutoring services, practice exams, etc.);
 - Provide regular progress updates to the Exception Review Committee every two weeks.
 - As physical or psychological issues may negatively impact the student's ability to follow the customary third-year schedule, screening by a professional may be recommended.

4) REVIEW/REVISION/IMPLEMENTATION

- Approvals: Professionalism & Promotion Committee
- Review Cycle: This policy shall be reviewed annually by the Office of Admissions & Student Affairs
- Office of Record: After authorization, the Office of Admissions & Student Affairs shall be the office of record for this policy.

5) RELATED POLICIES

- Policy on Academic Deficiencies and Promotion
- Promotion and Graduation Policy

6) GOVERNING LAW OR REGULATIONS

7) ATTACHMENTS