

UPSOM Covid-19 Weekly **Updates in red**
May 20, 2020

Curriculum

All students

- **Addressing student mistreatment**
 - **We have asked all course, clerkship, AI, and elective directors to be sensitive to student mistreatment. This includes** long-standing discrimination based on gender, race, and sexual orientation, as well as the recent rise in anti-Asian/Asian American harassment related to COVID. We are asking that students, residents, and faculty acknowledge these events when they occur and address them in ways appropriate to the situation, regardless of whether the source is a patient or a team member. Please contact Dr. Reis or any of the deans if you are not certain how to address a concern
 - All are welcome to “attend” upcoming discussions
 - AME conferences
 - Friday, June 29 (8-9 am): Identifying and responding to microaggressions (Drs. Gonzaga, Ufomata, Bonifacino, Chang and Hamad)
 - Free online bystander intervention training is also available on the Hollaback website:
 - 30 minute mini-training: <https://www.ihollaback.org/harassmenttraining/>
 - 60 minute training to Stop Anti-Asian/American and Xenophobic Harassment: <https://www.ihollaback.org/bystanderintervention/>

MS1-2

- **OSB**
 - **Intro to Psychiatry finishes this week**
- MS1 students have been great about signing up for OMED’s academic advising meeting (wrap-up meetings) with individual faculty members. These brief meetings will take place throughout May.
- **A new remote course, Physiology Prologue for Rising MS1 & MS2 Students**, Jun16-Aug 6, is available to interested students. The goal of this course is to provide background for MS2 courses, but it will also be useful preparation for MS1 courses. It will be particularly useful for students who have not previously enrolled in an advanced physiology course. All course sessions will include key topics from USMLE First Aid. Sign up is available until June 1.
- **IPC (CP/APE)**
 - CP/APE will remain on hold until the fall

MS3-4

- **Preclerkship week** will occur the first week of June (6/1-5). It will be conducted remotely with synchronous activities Monday and Tuesday and the remainder asynchronous. Preclerkship month is underway.
- **Make-up portions of clerkships and AIs** began Monday, May 18 for students whose experiences were interrupted in March
- **Clerkships** and other clinical rotations (including **electives and AIs**) will begin on June 8. We've identified options for allowing all students to complete required clerkships, assuming no major surprises from the pandemic.
- **Bootcamp** is moving to Period 12.5 for the upcoming academic year
- Please see the appended text from Dr. Rosenstock's email on May 5, with *extensive* descriptions of current plans for M3 and M4 curriculum.
- **Away electives:** A national consortium of organizations responsible for medical student and resident education has recommended a moratorium on away rotations for the upcoming academic year. After painful deliberation UPMC and UPSOM have decided to follow this recommendation. Our students will not take "audition" rotations at other institutions (at least for the '20-21 academic year), nor will we accept outside students for such rotations. Virtually all of our peer schools are making the same decision. Everyone is aware of student and program director concerns about the impact on resident selection processes.
 - These organizations and all of us here recognize that 1) these away rotations play an important role in the residency application process, but 2) travel restrictions and variations in rotation availability may create inequity among students as they seek rotation experiences in a compressed timeframe.
- **Exceptions:** Students may request permission to do an away rotation in a program that does not exist at UPSOM or for compelling personal circumstances by contacting the OSA (Amber Fontenot)

Interviews:

The same consortium has recommended that residency interviews be remote, at least for this academic year. All UPMC residencies have been instructed to follow this approach. It appears that programs in other institutions will also be following this recommendation.

- **Quote from the national working group's executive summary:**

Virtual Interviews

- The WG recommends that all programs commit to online interviews and virtual visits for all applicants, including local students, rather than in-person interviews for the entire cycle and that the medical education community commit to creating a robust digital environment and set of tools to yield the best experiences for programs and applicants.

- **Assessments**
 - **Prometric cancellation of testing dates** has affected students all over the country.
 - **The current Step 1 system remains quite chaotic, as you well know.** While some students have dates that appear solid, many have had one or more dates cancelled and are experiencing difficulty rescheduling. This is a national problem, and the AAMC is urging the NBME to establish a prompt and equitable plan to resolve the chaos. **In cooperation with other medical schools in Pennsylvania, we have written to the governor and spoken with representatives in his office to urge Prometric to resume testing in PA.** We are also working to persuade the Dept of Health and the State Board of Medicine to act.
 - **NBME has selected a small number of pilot sites for providing the USMLE at medical schools/universities. After July they will decide whether to extend testing to other sites. Unfortunately, no school in PA was selected.**
 - **Step 1:** The Curriculum Committee approved extension of our testing deadline to December 31, 2020 (this year only). We urge students to take it as soon as possible (May, if possible), in close proximity to dedicated study time, but the option of an additional study month prior to a student's test date is available. The recent survey of our students indicates that >90% plan to take Step 1 before starting their clerkships.
 - **Step 2 CS/CK** is also currently on hold. Fortunately, all of our students who need it this year (2019-20) have successfully completed it
 - **SHELF exams** have been made available by the NBME for remote administration. We anticipate giving the exams for Period 11 on April 24, once we are certain that students, faculty, and staff have the required electronic capabilities. We intend to return to in-person exams as soon as it is feasible.
 - **Examsoft** remote is working well remotely, although admittedly not secure

Curriculum task force

- The curriculum committee approved the appointment of a curriculum task force to develop a cohesive approach to curriculum modifications to facilitate adapting to the impact of COVID 19, chaired by Dr. Buranosky and including course directors, other faculty, students, and staff representatives

Research

- **Laboratories are expected to reopen by approximately June 1, although this date is not yet certain. After that, we expect students will be able to begin/resume laboratory research if the individual lab can meet social distancing guidelines and PPE availability. A final set of guidelines is expected in the next 2 weeks. Check (and keep checking) with your mentors, but be aware that the specifics for individual labs will vary and are still a work in progress.**
- **DSRP:** Dr. Levine has announced that there will be funding for the summer research programs. Drs. Defranco and Veldkamp will be providing guidance for students to begin meaningful work in the face of uncertain availability of laboratory experience at least early in the summer.

- **LRP:** The restrictions noted above also impact many students' LRP. Drs. Defranco and Veldcamp encourage students to meet with their research mentors to determine backup plans and a modified schedule for milestones ([see above](#))
- **Research electives:** Students may schedule a third research elective month

Events

• Graduation:

- **The first-ever (and hopefully last) virtual graduation ceremony** occurred Monday, May 18. The content was very similar to past programs and has been recorded for students, family, friends, and SOM to view. We've received feedback that it was a very good and moving event, although nothing can fully replace the in-person celebration.
 - **2020_PITT_MEDICINE_GRADUATION:**
[https://www.dropbox.com/sh/nk38mxwvpxrfkc0/AABansHlkQcWZVcX_B8LzR7Oa?dl=0&preview=Pitt20 Medicine Graduation FINAL CAPTIONS.mp4](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/nk38mxwvpxrfkc0/AABansHlkQcWZVcX_B8LzR7Oa?dl=0&preview=Pitt20%20Medicine%20Graduation%20FINAL%20CAPTIONS.mp4)
 - Anyone from the class of 2020 who wishes to return next year will be welcome to walk with class of 2021 (and bring guests)
 - Each graduate will be receiving a box of graduation memorabilia, coming soon.
 - A pdf of each student's diploma was sent as the names were read during the ceremony. This will mean that students do not have to generate their own pdf as has been the case in previous years. The actual diplomas will be mailed as soon as printing is complete.

Scope and Scalpel:

- **Another first-ever virtual presentation** that demonstrated the spectacular talents and tech skills of our students occurred Sunday May 17. It was funny, wonderfully clever, and totally awesome!!!!!!

Pinning Ceremony

Will be held remotely during Pre-clerkship course (currently the week of June 1-5)

Humanism Day will be held remotely

Second Look

Was also a virtual event on April 24 from 1-2:30 with multiple additional options later in the week. Accepted students who participated provided excellent feedback about the program and complimented our students' welcoming words, warmth and positive attitude.

Service

- A 5-person coordinating committee of students (Ben, Carly, Jane, Tejasvi, and Sara) is organizing many **volunteer opportunities**. The school can't be formally involved but Dr. Thompson is helping them coordinate efforts with UPMC and Pitt. Babysitting for healthcare workers needs to be tracked—students can't be evaluated by faculty they provide services to.
- The students have opened a website, 412med.com, which links to the School of Medicine site listing volunteer opportunities and a centralized means of registering.

- We have received wonderfully grateful accolades from the Birmingham Clinic, 9th Street Clinic, and the Allegheny County Health Department about student volunteers' generosity, skill, and reliability.
- **Credit opportunities**
 - Some opportunities have the potential to be organized for elective credit. Students doing case tracking for the health department are getting elective credit for it under an established GSPH course.
 - UPMC has suggested some additional opportunities with substantial educational benefit that we are investigating making into electives. As these opportunities are clarified we will provide updates

Residency Preparation

- The ERAS timeline has been extended to October 21, 2020. As of May 5 other dates remain equivalent to previous years. <https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-residency/article/eras-timeline-md-residency/>

Facilities

- Scaife, BST, Hillman have severely restricted access
- WISER is restricted but open
- Students are study for Step 1 off-campus
- Construction on the new building is on hold but efforts are underway to reactivate it

Student Health/Travel

- A new wellness app is available to all students at no cost: Brain manager was developed by UPMC and is done at one's own pace.
 - Search "Brain Manager" in the Apple App Store or Google Play Store. Set up an account with a valid email account, and when prompted enter the access code "calmnow"
- Students should call Student Health (or their PCP) if they think they're sick.
- No testing is currently available or needed for most students—if you're sick, stay home. If symptoms worsen be sure to stay in touch with your PCP as well as family or friends.
- **PPE is available** and is thought to be adequate, but the supply is not infinite—UPMC is being very cautious in its stewardship of these important supplies since our surge is likely to come in the near future. This is one of several reasons we don't have students in hospitals: PPE is being conserved for those with an essential role in providing patient care. **The University has placed a very large order for additional PPE to facilitate laboratory re-opening.**
- Travel restrictions **remain in place**—students need to be aware. May need to leave 2wks of buffer when returning to Pittsburgh or traveling to internships

The following includes the body of Dr. Rosenstock's recent emails with details about the evolving curriculum, especially clinical scheduling.

Curriculum update

From Dr. Rosenstock's email of May 20, 2020

Rosenstock, Jason

Wed 5/20/2020 10:57 AM

UPSOM has reluctantly decided to cancel all visiting/away electives for the 2020-2021 academic year, both incoming and outgoing. This was a difficult decision to make, because away electives give not only Pitt students an opportunity to visit other institutions for exploration and enrichment, but also a chance for our residencies to get to know prospective residency applicants. However, AAMC and other national organizations have called for a moratorium on such rotations this year, due to the Covid-19 crisis, and the inherent safety risks of travel. There are also significant limitations to clinical volume and PPE that make it challenging to have more learners, especially unfamiliar ones, in clinical environments. UPMC GME has just announced that they have asked all residencies here NOT to encourage audition rotations, and many specialty organizations have followed suit. This will be a new environment for residency selection, but all medical students and residencies around the country will be dealing with this, and we don't think this will disadvantage our learners or residencies.

There is a possibility for requesting an exception in very unusual situations. National guidelines have allowed for away rotations if a student at one institution does not have the opportunity to explore a specialty at their home institution. That really shouldn't apply to any of our students—we have almost all residencies here. But if you think your situation is special, you can request an exemption by writing to us directly and explaining your situation.

No international students will be accepted this academic year.

If you have any questions or concerns, please ask.

From Dr. Rosenstock's email of May 5, 2020

Rising MS3s/MS4s:

The clinical transition year task force has completed its work, making final recommendations on how to best restart our clinical rotations to meet school requirements and allow students to get appropriate experiences, all in a shortened time frame, adhering to national guidelines, and ensuring the safety of our students and patients. This was difficult work, and hard decisions had to be made, but we think our hybrid approach will accomplish the needed goals. The Curriculum Committee approved the task force recommendations Monday 5/4; UPMC is making their final decision this week but we hope and believe they will approve this as well. We wanted to outline here what this will mean for students. Excuse the length--there's a lot to discuss.

Beginning May 11:

- **Some rising MS4s will be allowed to return to clinical sites in a limited fashion for select rotations. Others have signed up for remote electives and will take those.**

The rotations are surgery and medicine make-ups from Period 11-12 (37 students maximum) and AIs/subinternships in Medicine, Family Medicine, Pediatrics, OB/GYN, and Neurology (you should have already been offered one of these 31 spots, prioritizing students registered for that respective AI in Period 12 or Period 1). No one will be required to participate, however; for instance, students who haven't been able to self-isolate in Pittsburgh are not able to do this. Other students are selecting an AI experience of their make-up. Make-ups can be delayed until later in the year but must be done before graduation.

All students will receive PPE training on-site. No one will be taking care of confirmed/suspected Covid-19 cases. Testing is available for any student who is exposed to or develops symptoms of coronavirus.

If UPMC does NOT allow our students to return at this point, these rotations may simply have to be done later, and students will be invited to sign up for remote electives. We are working energetically with UPMC to make these rotations possible and are considering other ways of delivering at least part of the material in a remote manner.

- **Rising MS3s will choose EITHER the newly approved Preclerkship Month OR a study month. All will be doing Preclerkship Week June 1-5.**

All of this will be done remotely (except for Humanism Day activities June 5, some of which may be in-person). Although students asked to take other remote elective options offered to MS4s, we can't do that because they are four-week experiences and you only have three weeks before PCW. Preclerkship Month will help prepare you for clinical rotations, a mix of ambulatory medicine and covid-related content, about 10hpw of synchronous activity with 5hpw of asynchronous. The preclerkship Month schedule will be light enough to allow for Step 1 studying if a full study month is not desirable. Otherwise, students actively studying for Step 1 can certainly take the study month if they want--it'll be your choice. A research month might be another option but labs are currently closed and it may be difficult to obtain that.

Beginning June 8:

- **Rising MS4s will resume their calendar with Period 2, keeping the existing rotation schedule/dates, whatever you had registered for.**

We are trying to prioritize everyone's AIs and other necessary experiences before ERAS applications are due (there is no word on altered timelines for that). You'll need to work with your specialty advisors and advisory deans; you'll have some ability to move things around if you need, and we're letting everyone move things back as late as you want/need. These discussions are taking place this week.

- **Rising MS3s will begin their schedule at Period 1, off-cycle by one month.**

Step 1 must be taken before 12/31. Update LLJ with your test date/plans. If you'll be taking Step 1 during the clinical year, which most of you will be doing, you can either take a study month or 1-2 days off a rotation (even a clerkship)--although that is not preferred (if you want to take your exam during a clerkship you'll need to get permission from LLJ and your Advisory Dean). Geri and Assessment weeks will be in the same place on the calendar.

- **To allow students to "catch up" and gain scheduling flexible, as well as preparing for further disruptions later in the year, we have reduced the required clinical curriculum from 48 weeks to 40 weeks for this transition year only.**

Specifically, students will now be given the choice to take EITHER Family Medicine OR the Outpatient Medicine Clerkship (OMC), which is the adult portion of old CAMPC. This ambulatory selective will allow people to get key experiences but reduce the total amount of ambulatory time.

Secondly, Specialty Care Clerkship will be shortened to two weeks and will replace Anesthesiology in the schedule, yoked to Surgery. Anesthesiology is not equipped to have the full capacity of returning students at this point. Until that changes, this clerkship will remain on hiatus. Instead students will be given the choice to take a mix of surgical subspecialty experiences in weeks 7-8 of the Surgery block. This will be a separate clerkship, graded Pass/Fail, led by SCC faculty. Students will pick from a menu of orthopedics, ENT, ophthalmology, neurosurgery, anesthesiology (as capacity increases), and adult emergency medicine in some combination depending on availability and interest. Pediatric emergency medicine will be integrated into the now 8-week Pediatrics clerkship.

When anesthesiology is ready to go, students will be able to opt for that during this two-week period, and everyone will make up anesthesiology in some form, through clinical or simulation experiences, before graduation, in a manner to be determined.

These changes will be in effect for both years of the clinical segment for rising MS3s. In AY22, Family and OMC will each become a required clerkship again for the rising MS3s of that year, but you will still only need to take one to graduate.

Legacy issues for rising MS4s:

If you've taken CAMPC already, you've completed your ambulatory requirement and don't need to take Family Medicine in your 4th year.

If you've taken Family Medicine, you've completed your ambulatory requirement and don't need to take OMC.

If you haven't taken Specialty Care, you won't need to.

In all these situations, we encourage you to consider electives that will help round out your exposure. For instance, if you didn't get SCC, you might want to take an Emergency Medicine month, ophtho or ENT.

If you had inpatient Pediatrics but not CAMPC, you won't need to do anything more for ambulatory pediatrics—we expect that you'll get some either in FM or OMC. But we encourage you to consider a pediatric outpatient elective.

If you had CAMPC but not Pediatrics inpatient, you don't need to repeat ambulatory pediatrics in the new 8-week Pediatrics rotation. You'll be registering for the "legacy" Pediatrics, the one-month inpatient experience only.

General Issues:

Although we had discussed shortening rotations to three weeks, our scheduling system does not allow for this, unfortunately, and we've found a way to make it work otherwise.

Some clerkship experiences may be simulated or telemedicine depending on site availability and appropriateness.

Standardized patient experiences are likely to be done remotely for the foreseeable future. CCAs will be stratified/prioritized--students most at risk of trouble on Step 2CS will do it and others will not--you'll be informed about that later.

Add/drop will be opened later to allow for switches. Do NOT contact Kim Kirk to change your schedule at this time. She will contact you with further instructions. A reminder: Student Affairs handles scheduling/registration, not OMED. They'll be working first to confirm the May rotations (AIs and Make-ups, remote electives, Preclerkship vs. study month) this week, and then 4th year schedules soon thereafter.