

FOURTH YEAR SCHEDULE & GUIDELINES 2025-2026

The fourth year for the Class of 2025 begins Monday, April 7, 2025.

PROMOTION TO 4TH YEAR

Promotion to the fourth year is contingent upon passing all third-year clerkships and the clerkship exams. Students who delayed one or more M3 clerkships must complete those before transitioning to the fourth year.

COMPLETING YOUR 4TH YEAR

Fourth year students must complete a minimum of 36 weeks/36 credits of rotations. That includes:

- Geriatrics (4 weeks)
- Sub-Internship (4 weeks)
- Longitudinal requirement (may or may not be tied to a course)
- 28 weeks of elective rotations

Students are required to take USMLE Step 2 CK by November 1, 2025.

Students must submit a copy of their proposed schedule, signed by their field specific advisor by July 7th, 2025 (details below).

BUILDING YOUR SCHEDULE

Geriatrics and Sub-internships are assigned via an optimization process in December and January. Electives are assigned via an add/drop process that starts in February, and will remain open throughout the fourth year.

Guidelines for Elective Rotations:

- At least 8 weeks must be fulfilled within the [BU System](#)
- No more than 20 weeks outside the BU System
- No more than 12 weeks of non-clinical rotations (research, quality improvement, teaching, etc.)
- No more than 16 weeks within a given sub-specialty

By July 7, 2025 your schedule should be largely complete: it should have a minimum of 36 weeks of rotations, including Geriatrics and a Sub-internship. You are responsible for submitting a copy of your schedule, with the signature of your field specific advisor, to the Office of the Registrar (camepreg@bu.edu). Schedule changes can continue to be made after this point, but students who fail to submit a schedule by this date will be brought to the attention of the Associate Dean of Student Affairs.

Important Dates:

Dec 2-13 - Enter choices for required fourth year rotations in E*Value

Jan 31 - Fourth year schedules with required courses appear on Registrar's website.

July 7 - Fourth Year Schedules, signed by field specific advisor, must be submitted to the Registrar

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES AND DEFINITIONS

Compliance: M4 students are responsible for maintaining compliance throughout the year to participate in the curriculum. Compliance holds must be resolved in order to add and drop rotations.

Course duration: Full-time rotations are calculated at 40 contact hours per week, which equates to one unit or credit. All rotations are scheduled Monday to Sunday. Most fourth-year rotations last 4 weeks. Some last 2 weeks, and some can be taken for 2, 4, or 6 weeks. Transcripts list courses in terms of their contact hours.

Course repeatability: rotations within the BU system are not repeatable for credit except where specifically stated. A rotation cannot be taken, if already completed with a passing grade.

Limited time in non-clinical electives: A student can take no more than (12) weeks of nonclinical electives. This includes research, quality improvement, teaching/scholarly electives, and intern prep courses.

Limit of time in subspecialties: Credit will be granted for no more than 16 weeks of fourth year rotations and/or electives in any one subspecialty. Examples of a subspecialty would include orthopedic surgery, pediatric cardiology, or neuroradiology but not *fields* of medicine that host these rotations like surgery, pediatrics, or radiology.

Longitudinal requirement: Students must complete 20 or more hours during open blocks on one or more [approved activities](#), such as Teaching and Quality Improvement electives, research, and self-directed learning on Blackboard.

Min and max rotations: Students must complete a minimum of 36 weeks, and can complete up to a maximum of 48 weeks of rotations in the 4th year. Grades for electives taken in excess of degree requirements will be recorded on the transcript. This does not override the categorical limits on outside elective, credits within a subspecialty, or non-clinical rotations.

Scheduling responsibility: Failure to show up for a rotation that has not been properly dropped, and rescheduled if necessary, may result in a Fail grade, as well as being reported to the MEO for professionalism.

Outside electives (VSLO): Students may search for and arrange electives at LCME-accredited United States medical schools through the [AAMC Visiting Student Learning Opportunities program](#). Upon notification that a student has been accepted for any outside elective, the student must add the elective through the electronic add/drop system.

- Students must rotate in a specialty prior to participating in outside electives in that specialty or a subspecialty. 3rd year clerkships fulfill that requirement.
- Students must be in good standing and in compliance to participate in outside electives.
- Outside electives must be finalized on the schedule at least 30 days prior to the scheduled start date
- Outside electives can be taken without earning credit, with written approval from the Registrar of the outside institution. These will not appear on the transcript, and an evaluation will not become part of the student's academic record.

Non-catalog and Non-VSLO outside electives: Students can make arrangements to rotate at institutions that are not a part of the VSLO program (including private practices), and for electives that are not offered as part of the 4th year elective catalog of LCME-accredited institutions. The [Outside Elective Approval Form](#) with supporting documents must be submitted to BU faculty and the chair of ECS for approval prior to arranging this elective. This approval must be obtained before BU can send out any paperwork on the student's behalf and before the student starts the elective.

Research: A student in good academic standing may request up to 12 weeks of fourth year credit for a research project. Students must submit an application along with all supporting documentation by the deadline set by the [Office of Medical Student Research](#). Additional time spent on the project will not be eligible for credit. Research done outside Boston University will count toward the allowed twenty weeks of outside elective time.

Global health electives: Certain elective rotations for fourth year credit offered outside the United States. All global health electives must be approved the Medical Education Office. See the Global Health Program website for more info: www.bumc.bu.edu/ghbusm/setupelective/, or contact Ana Gregory (anagreg@bu.edu).