Limpkins

Unfortunate that this is coming out the night before a zoom session — I would like to have gotten it out earlier but had to a) have time to do it and b) have a few pieces fall into place. My hope is that the number of new questions raised may be offset by answering some that might have been asked.

Clerkship Scheduling
Thanks for your patience as we sort out the schedule for your clerkship year. I’m sure you understand that it is a complex process.

The CaRMS timeline has been established: https://afmc.ca/en/node/357. This allows us to include all rotations and evaluations up to the December holiday break on the MSPR.

Your clerkship rotations will end on May 9, instead of April 11 as previously scheduled and the total number of weeks in the program has been reduced from 132 to 130. This does give us a couple of weeks for students who miss time during clerkship or require remedial time and deferred or rewrite exams.

We are just about finished with figuring how to shorten some of the core rotations to fit everything in to the shorter timelines and establishing the capacity for learners in the various clinical rotations.

Our plan is that most students will start with block two rotations by sliding the clerkship, however, that will depend on capacity in all of those rotations. I hope you can understand that exact capacity information is challenging for each of the rotations to know, as they are projections a month out. Easier in some areas than others. We’ll then squish the clerkship by shortening some rotations as well as extending out the clerkship by four weeks.

Please find a link to a survey that we need you to complete: https://survey.ucalgary.ca/jfe/form/SV_82CnlKNUMiMOWs5. Survey closes at noon on Wednesday, May 20. What we want you to do is essentially create a ‘rank order list’ of all the disciplines in the list: just put them in order from 1-30 by clicking on them and moving them up or down the table. If you change your mind, you can fill out the survey a second time. We’ll use the last one that you put in.

We are not redoing the clerkship lottery. We know your original preferences based on the original clerkship lottery and the schedule that was developed for you out of that process. This survey data will be used in the event that some mandatory rotations do not have capacity for learners: we’d like your rank list for disciplines we’d be able to place you in so we can start everyone in clerkship on June 15th. We need to equip ourselves to take advantage of learner capacity in areas that have been less impacted, but do so in a way that aligns with student interest. As an example, we may not have full capacity for rotation X, but could place you in either ENT surgery, Neurology or Public Health. This rank list will inform those types of decisions if we are forced into them.
Our early information about capacity is looking positive — if we had good capacity in all rotations, we might not need to use these alternatives, but we’d rather have them as an option than have to scramble for them at the last minute.

We are planning for all students to complete the same duration of time in each core rotation (just want to be clear: while we’re changing the length of some of the rotations, the length will be the same for all students so that students have adequate training and are prepared to write the knowledge-based MCQ exams in those rotations).

We will still be bringing the UCLIC students back for their Calgary-based rotation blocks as usual but don’t have the exact timing of those blocks at this time.

We will be providing some time for electives: we should be able to get in the same total number of elective weeks as was planned before the pandemic (but won’t guarantee that all those electives are before the CaRMS cutoff). We’re going to try to save some of that elective time for the October to December time period, as there may be the ability to book electives at other schools at that time. That is not guaranteed: we don’t know if electives will be offered at all, some or no other schools. We will prioritize elective time for the students who have had fewer electives prior to the pandemic interruption.

We will not have an October week off. This was put in place to give students dedicated time to work on CaRMS applications right before the deadline and to give students a break after 10 months of uninterrupted clerkship.

I still feel that this will give you an education that will leave you prepared to start residency and give you the time and experiences to make you competitive in the match. However, we are at the limit of what can be done. If there is a second wave of COVID or if there is a sudden loss of capacity for any reason (e.g. outbreaks in a hospital) then we will be faced with not being able to provide you with an appropriate clerkship and if this comes to pass, we will have to contemplate graduation for some or all students in 2022. I don’t want to think about that, but it is the reality.

**Clinical Work**
Both AHS and the University have been clear that they feel it is appropriate for clerks to return to clinical work on June 15. AHS has specifically told us that they are comfortable that there are supplies of PPE that are sufficient to support having clerks in the clinical environment.

Some of your clinical work may be virtual, working with health care teams that provide care by phone or other telecommunications. Other work will involve direct patient contact. As is always the case, learners, particularly junior learners are not expected to be put into direct contact with patients where the encounter is likely to be high risk.

**Students with Special Situations**
I mentioned this in a previous communication but want to mention it again, as I haven’t had many replies: there may be some students who cannot safely or reasonably return to clinical work on June 15. If you have other health conditions or are on medications that render you immunosuppressed, you should consult with your health care providers to make a decision about
whether it is safe for you to return to the clinical environment. While no one is going to be at zero risk when clerkship restarts, individual students with significantly increased risk should consider whether or not they are going to come back now or not. Please let me know by email if you are in a situation like this and please make arrangements to talk to your health care team about your safety.

Similarly, if you have obligations to look after kids or other family members such that you will not be able to return to full-time clinical work on June 15 you should also let me know so that we can find a time to discuss your options.

**Zoom Session**
I will provide further updates as information comes available. Please remember that we have another Zoom Q and A available for the class tomorrow, Friday May 15 from 1115h to 1230h. [https://ucalgary.zoom.us/j/93742498594](https://ucalgary.zoom.us/j/93742498594).

Take care,
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